Jonah

- Fr Daoud Lamei - Hope in the Story of Jonah

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Fr Daoud Lamei · 09- الرجاء في سفر يونان

Story of Jonah as a Message of Hope

- One of the books that most gives hope
- There is great love from God
- At the end of the story, everyone knew God - no one was damned
  - The mariners worshipped and sacrificed to God
  - The Ninevites fasted and repented from their youngest to their oldest
  - Jonah, despite his stubbornness at the end, we know that he found salvation in the end

Hope in Forgiveness

- Jonah's Prayer in Chapter 2
  - The fact that Jonah prayed in the belly of the whale, is enough to give us hope
  - Logic would tell us there is no hope for him. Our mind would tell us that he will be there until he dies (if he hasn't already). But Jonah didn't follow logic or intelligence, but he had hope in God
- "I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, and He answered me."
  - Where did He answer you? You're in the belly of the whale... it's hot and smelly... you would think he'd say that after he gets out. The answer is in his hope
- "Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, And you heard my voice."
  - Not the belly of the fish, but the belly of Sheol (Hades)... he speaks as if he is in Hades, but the Lord delivered him from Hades
  - How did He hear your voice? The answer is in hope.
  - Do we have hope that the Lord hears our voice? Even every time we say □□□□□ □□□□□□□
- "For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the floods surrounded me; all Your billows and Your waves passed over me."
  - Whales are mammals and need oxygen, but they can't extract oxygen from the water through gills like fish, instead they have to rise up to the surface of the water

and use their blowhole to inhale oxygen. And the time between being at the surface, their blowhole is filled with water so that the next time they rise they have to blow it out.
    - Some scholars say that he wasn't in the belly of the whale, but the lung. And so he's surrounded by the water that gets in the blowhole, and he's constantly moving back and forth in the waves, but he has oxygen to breathe
- "Then I said, 'I have been cast out of Your sight"
    - A voice came to me saying "that's it you're cast out, you lost your chance, you used to be a great prophet, standing before the altar, the Lord would speak to you, and now you've lost it all."
    - This is the voice of the devil
- "Yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.'"
    - He answers himself - "I will look again toward Your holy temple"
    - You're in a whale! You don't know where you are! You could be in Africa or Asia... how will you look toward the Temple?
    - Jonah has hope that he will once again see the Lord's temple. That he isn't rejected. That the Lord will accept him.
- "The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; the deep closed around me; weeds were wrapped around my head."
    - He is drowning from the inside, not just from the outside. His soul is wet with the tears of prayer
- "I went down to the moorings of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me forever"
    - The mooring of the mountain is the base, or the bottom - he is talking about the feeling of being very low beneath the earth
    - This is, again, the voice of the devil
    - Imagine that every time the whale goes down, Jonah gets scared - he doesn't know when or if the whale will go back up
- "yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God
    - And then he takes a breath and knows that the Lord is with him
- "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; And my prayer went up to You, into Your holy temple."
    - He goes back and forth between despair and hope; fainting and prayer
- "Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own Mercy."
    - He is confessing here in his prayer - "I walked behind a lie."
    - I walked behind the lie that You are the God of the Jews - no, You are the God of all - including the Ninevites
    - I walked behind the lie that I can do whatever I want
    - I walked behind the lie that I don't care about the Ninevites and they deserve what comes to them
    - I walked behind these lies, and forsook the grace that You give me
- "But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."
    - Once he confessed his sin, his prayer becomes completely hope (instead of the back and forth we saw earlier)
    - His vow is to go to Nineveh

    - At the end of his prayer he's saying "FINE I'll go to Nineveh" and soon as he said that...
- "So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land."
    - God brought from him repentance
- God's forgiveness was full and complete, but we see that God even "forgets" the sin and doesn't account it to Jonah at all when He uses Jonah as a Type of His own Resurrection and the Salvation of all mankind
    - It's surprising, we might say - Lord use a symbol that is befitting of Your Honor and Your Glory... We might think that Jonah is not a good dude! But the Lord would say "no, no we're good now"
- Lord, how did you use his sin, his disobedience, his fleeing for a time and bring about it salvation for all?

Hope in the Salvation of All

- There are people who are very far away from God. Sometimes you think of them and think "God have mercy on them" - or you might think "these people could NEVER know God." This is how the Ninevites were
- In the time when the prophet, himself, could not imagine the idea of their salvation, God brings about their salvation
- We might think that the Lord would say "Go to Nineveh because they have started to repent; they are getting better; they have potential for repentance." But the Lord says: "Go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me."
- What kind of message does the Lord want Jonah to preach?
    - It's clear the second time - "Go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you." - PREACH
    - It's not a message of condemnation or destruction (e.g. like Sodom and Gomorrah) but a message of hope. Call them to me.
    - Jonah went and didn't give a message of hope, but rather "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" but the people still found repentance through his word
- When we think of someone who is far away, instead of thinking "this person is so far away, there's no hope for him" or "this person will never know God" - let us carry a message of hope. "Lord, do not leave this person." - "Lord, this person's life is in your hands. Open his eyes to You."
- The most difficult nations, terrorists, murderers, prisoners - all of them can repent. All of them have hope of salvation. Sometimes we look at them in disgust, or as if they are animals. How do we look at them?

Hope in the Divine Will

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