

Jonah's Pit: Inside the Fish - a Place of Repentance (series part 3)

Cornerstone Community Church – Pastor Jerry Ernst

September 13, 2026

Scripture: Jonah 1:17-2:1-10

No matter how far a person has strayed, they can turn back to God in prayer.

The “big fish” was a place for Jonah:

- to pray
- allow God to do spiritual work.
- realize God gave him a second chance.

God's Character in Jonah 2:1-10

He **hears** (Vs. 2)
sends waves (Vs. 3)
receives prayer (Vs. 7)
shows loyal love (Vs. 8)
grants salvation (Vs. 9) and,
commands creation (Vs. 10)

Jonah's Prayer from Inside the Fish - a Place of Repentance (Jonah 2:1-10)

1) Jonah Called out to God (Vv. 1-4)

His cry from the depths (Vv. 1–2) - “(1) From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. (2) He said: ‘In my distress I **called** to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in **the realm of the dead** I called for help, and you listened to my cry.’”

Called: (Heb. *shava*): “**To cry out, to call for help.**”

Realm of the dead: (Heb. *Sheol*): “**grave, hell, pit.**”

1) **Hades** - realm of the dead (**departed spirits**); 2) **Underworld** (place to which people descend at death) not merely the grave.

He accepted God's correction (Vv. 3-4) - “(3) You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. (4) I said, ‘I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.’”

2) Jonah Confessed of God's Mercy (Vv. 5-6)

...from drowning to rescue (Vv. 5-6) - “(5) The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. (6) To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the **pit**.”

Pit: (Heb. *shachath*): “***pit, undergo decay, destruction.**” *often symbolizes death (Psalm 40:2)

3) Jonah Commits himself to God (Vv. 7-9)

...A vow of obedience (Vv. 7-9) - “(7) When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. (8) Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from **God's love** for them. (9) But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, ‘Salvation comes from the Lord.’”

God's love: (Heb. *hesed*): “**God's loyal, covenant love.**”

4) Jonah's Obedience releases God's curse (Vs 10) - *"(10) And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land."*

- God speaks, the fish obeys, and Jonah is spewed - alive & recommissioned.

Jonah 1:17/Matthew 12:40: *"(40) For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."*

- Jonah's descent & rise mirror Christ's burial & resurrection.
- Both emerge with a mission to proclaim repentance: Jonah to Nineveh; Jesus' gospel to the nations.

Lessons from Jonah's Prayer of Repentance

- 1) You can pray anywhere, even from self-inflicted trouble** (Vv. 1-2, 7)
- 2) God's discipline aims at restoration, not destruction** (Vv. 6, 9)
- 3) Gratitude completes repentance** (Vs. 9)
- 4) Obedience precedes deliverance** (Vs 10)
- 5) God turns the "Agent of Judgment" into an "Instrument of Grace"** (fish)

Question: Have you ever stopped running from Jesus and repented?

Psalms 40:1-2 – *"(1) I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry. (2) He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand."*