

Turning to God in Your Distress



David Wilkerson (1931-2011) July 23, 2020

Disobedience is walking contrary to God's revealed Word. Stubborn disobedience brings a spirit of slumber and apathy. We all know the story of Jonah when he was fleeing "to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord." God sent a great storm and "Jonah [went] down into the lowest parts of the ship ... and was fast asleep" (Jonah 1:3, 5). His disobedience had brought on a fierce storm but he was oblivious to the chaos and pain he was causing and drifted into a spiritual stupor.

The captain of the ship awakened Jonah from his sleep and the crew questioned, "For whose cause is this trouble upon us?" (Jonah 1:8). Jonah urged the crew to cast him overboard, but they ignored him and headed for land (1:13). Their actions said they knew they were on their own.

Jonah was utterly powerless. Even if he was spared from the storm, he was in no condition to prophesy to Ninevah, which had been his original calling (see 1:2). Scripture tells us, "The Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" (1:17). Why would a merciful God take Jonah so low? He was in a living hell, but after three days and nights, "Jonah prayed to the Lord his God" (2:1). Why didn't Jonah pray before this? It was because he was convinced, "I am cast out of Your sight" (2:4). He thought, "I'm a dead man; I can't go any lower. God has turned his back on me."

Nothing could have been further from the truth! When Jonah went overboard, the fish was there, ready to swallow him — evidence that the Lord was at work. Satan had succeeded in robbing Jonah of any hope of God's grace for three days and nights, but the truth was that God was speeding him on his way to Ninevah — his place of obedience. Soon the prophet would be walking in sunlight again, fulfilling his calling.

The storm you're in is meant to give you a revelation of God's mercy and grace. If you're walking in disobedience, run to him now, quickly repent, and pour out your soul to him. He won't keep you long in the whale's belly because he is a loving God who longs to restore you. The intensity of your time "in hell" will speed you on your way to complete victory — so keep your trust in him.

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