

JONAH: THE PRODIGAL PROPHET

WEEK # 4 BASED ON TIMOTHY KELLER'S BOOK



A: SURRENDER

“Jonah’s whole problem was the same as ours: a conviction that if we fully surrender our will to God, he will not be committed to our good and joy... [But] a God who substitutes himself for us and suffers so that we may go free is a God you can trust” (66).

- What from Rainer Schimpf’s story is a good metaphor for surrender?
- When is a time in your life that you realized you needed to surrender to God?
(write a note to yourself about this)
- What are attitudes we need to surrender in order to fully surrender to God?

JONAH’S PRAYER (2:2-9)

“I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me;

out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice.

³ For **YOU CAST ME INTO THE DEEP**, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me.

⁴ Then I said, ‘I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.’

⁵ The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head
⁶ at the roots of the mountains.

I WENT DOWN TO THE LAND WHOSE BARS CLOSED UPON ME FOREVER;

yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God.

⁷ When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.

⁸ Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of **STEADFAST LOVE**.

⁹ But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay.

SALVATION BELONGS TO THE LORD! ”

D: ATONMENT

“it is only when the death of another secures our forgiveness that we can speak with God” (77).

- What is Jonah thinking about, hoping for, longing for in the temple?
- What attitude must be surrendered?

B: JUST DECISION

“Jonah knew that there was divine justice and that he deserved it” (74).

- Why is it hard for us—especially in our American, suburban culture—to accept divine justice?
- What attitude must be surrendered to accept God’s justice?

See the back for more insight from Tim Keller.

E: CHESDH

The Hebrew word, *chesdh*, is often translated “steadfast love” (like here) or “grace”.

- Why do you think it takes the whole prayer before Jonah makes reference to this key characteristic of God?

C: NO FIX

“[Jonah] realizes that he stands condemned and permanently barred for his sin and rebellion, and there is no possible way to open those gates himself or make good his debt” (75).

- Why would we think we could do this by ourselves?
- What attitude must be surrendered?

E: CHESDH CONTINUED

See the back for more insight from Keller.

B: JUST DECISION

“We live in an age marked by ‘The Triumph of the Therapeutic.’ We are taught that our problem is a lack of self-esteem, that we live with too much shame and self-incrimination. In addition, we are told, all moral standards are socially constructed and relative, so no one has the right to make you feel guilty. You must determine right or wrong for yourself. In a society dominated by such beliefs, the Bible’s persistent message that we are guilty sinners comes across as oppressive if not evil and dangerous. These modern cultural themes make the offer of grace unnecessary, even an insult” (74).

E: CHESDH CONTINUED

“Salvation comes only from the Lord” (Keller’s translation; also Easy-to-Version). “Salvation belongs to God alone, to no one else. It is not a matter of God saving you partly and you saving yourself partly. No God saves us. We do not and cannot save ourselves. That’s the gospel” (80).