

It's Not About the Fish II!

Overview

On Sunday mornings in the room back here and this morning we learned about a 17 year old fellow who had a horrendous automobile crash and his body is so broken. So we want to pray again even now and want to continue to pray for our Pastor Kuke who's going through some very useful tests we trust and is looking forward to the doctors coming up with some kind of a path.

We have others in the church who are actually here this morning have had minor surgeries and are with us this morning and I'm happy to see you here God bless you and we're rejoicing because Bill Richards on the East Coast we prayed for him prayed for him prayed for him and he's got a complete bill of health, the cancer gone, praise God. So Heavenly Father we thank you for good news we thank you for prayers answered we lift up these people as well to this morning this young fellow who's going through a trial and his mother also is facing serious surgery that family's getting blistered and I just lift them up to you this morning.

Lord we don't know all the necessary details but my prayer is that through these challenges physical as they are somehow or other there will be a drawing to the master the great comforter the great healer the Redeemer of the soul. So Father God I pray that even that there might be a chaplain or some kind of a minister who would find their way to this young man's bedside and and in some way shape or form inform him of the glorious mysteries of redemption. I pray Father God you'll soften his heart toward the same and for our brother Kuk we thank you Lord God for his wonderful ministry he's known far and wide he's a deep man of God walks in biblical truth and loves the presence of.

Jesus Lord, I pray that you'll restore him I know he has a message to preach I know that there's still a stirring in his soul and Lord, I pray for his I pray for a joyous return to the place of usefulness in terms of the pulpit ministering to people I pray it in.

Jesus name and everyone would say amen.

Be comfortable please I intend at the conclusion of my message to invite you to come forward and we'll gather around the front and I won't explain that to you just now but that seems to me to be an appropriate way to conclude what I have for you this morning I'm still going to continue in my bid to share with you thoughts that come out of the book of.

Jonah the book of.

Jonah is a book often found of course in Sunday school curriculum and because little children love to hear the story about a man who's swallowed by a fish and then chucked up on the seashore that's a cute story but this four chapters is absolutely essential for us even to understand the doctrine of our humanity and what redemption is really all about I hope this morning to enlighten you from the Word of God now the Word of the Lord came to.

Jonah the son of Amittai saying arise go to Nineveh that great city it was a huge city and it was the capital of a massive empire that touched Iraq Iran that whole region and eventually spread down even into Egypt and there had been a prophecy that that Assyria Nineveh was going to be destroyed because of their desperate wickedness but now the Lord calls.

Jonah go and talk to him about it go to Nineveh that great city and cry out against it for their wickedness has come up before me but.

Jonah arose to flee to Spain from the presence of the Lord he went down to Joppa found a ship going to Spain had the fare and paid went to a special cabin and down in the hold somewhere and there had a lovely ride all the way to Spain he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord that is mentioned twice just in these few verses fleeing from the presence of the Lord trying to get away from the Lord's shadow pretending that God isn't there now we know that we know that the glory that was in the temple which is called the Shekinah glory remember Solomon oversaw the construction of a temple and the day it was dedicated the presence of the Lord was so powerful that the priests had to run for their lives this is important that happened somewhere between 957 and 960 remember that the timing then we when we say 957 BC that's 957 years before the Lord.

Jesus time here in the earth so somewhere between 1960 and going backward 19 at 9 that is 957 the glory was in the temple and the glory of God was manifested in that temple over Kings reigns over decades at times of glorious revival and at times of apostasy the Lord's presence was still there until the Lord had had it with Israel and the glory of God departed from the temple according to Ezekiel chapter 10 and chapter 11 the glory of the temple left in 592 so we were talking 957 that the glory entered the temple 562 times counting down to.

Jesus time.

Jonah was present in that time between 950 and 592 so.

Jonah was familiar with the presence of the Lord but he's gonna run from it he's gonna get as far away from the temple where the Shekinah glory shines so powerfully that the priests at times run for their lives he's gonna try and get away from that it's wonderful that in the book of.

Jonah we already know that God from the scripture God is all-powerful the biblical word or the theological word is omnipotent the Lord is all knowledge he knows all things omniscient in the book of Jonah. it's fortified in our thinking God is all places and you can't get away.

That's called omnipresent because there he was almost in Spain 2,500 miles from God's proposed destination. He can't get away from God now how does he know to begin with that he's not escaped well the captain of the ship comes down to where he's having a lovely afternoon nap and says are you nuts this ship is about to break up. All of my friends pagans have called upon their individual gods to no effect who are you who's your God maybe you're the problem. Well it turns out that through kind of a weird process it was determined by all on board he's the problem.

Who are you? Well I serve the Lord and as a matter of fact I'm probably your problem I've been trying to get away from Him but it looks like I didn't manage to do that. What are we gonna do we're all gonna die, he said. There's only one thing that you can do throw me overboard and that'll save your ship they actually prayed to the Lord God they prayed to Jonah's God and said please forgive us don't don't punish us for killing your your prophet, your man, and with that they threw him overboard well there's no creature hidden from God's sight.

Hebrews 4 chapter 4 verse 13 nothing is hidden from a sight the word says but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give account there's nowhere to hide the psalmist said if I if I make my bed in hell you're there if somehow I can soar up high up into the heavens I can't escape you no matter where I go you're there God is omnipresent so he goes into the ocean into the Mediterranean lovely place to go for a cruise ship ride we're not going there we're going to Kingston Jamaica man for those of you don't know I'm taking her on a cruise out of Kingston Ontario and we're gonna visit I don't know how we're gonna pack it all in but we're gonna visit all 1,000 islands that are in the st. Lawrence that's coming up something to get excited about this is how we're celebrating 60 years I know how to make a plan.

Matthew 12 record something for us do you know the book of Jonah is nowhere mentioned in the Gospels like a quote of a verse Jonah's not mentioned but the story of Jonah plays a very large part and so many people miss this some of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 12 are asking. Jesus and with a smirk on their face said teacher we'd like to see another sign from you but he answered an evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign no sign will be given to you except the sign of the Prophet.

Jonah for just as Jonah was there three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish so will a son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth just as for just as Noah was three days so.

Jesus says I will be three days if you're gonna argue with me that. Jonah survived for three days down there you have to take just as out of this past just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale I will be in the belly of the earth. Jonah was dead because I will be dead what value is the resurrection if I had simply fainted and the very fact that Jonah was swallowed by a fish a fish that was provided by the Lord. Isaiah 53 it pleased the Lord to bruise. Jesus it pleased the Lord to bruise him . God prepared the fish and God prepared the activities as ugly and horrendous as they were that Pilate was involved crucify him we won't have anything to do with all of that that pleased the Lord to bruise him in order to bring about our redemption just as Jonah was three days in the belly of the whale.

So will a son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth I told you last week about what goes on in the belly of oil it's got two stomachs the first one turns up whatever it just got swallowed and beats it up into smaller part then it goes into the second stomach and that's where it's turned into soup sounds wonderful.

Jonah did not survive that but pastor says he called he called from the belly of the fish and said Oh God read a couple of verses later it says he called from hell he called from hell you see everybody who dies the Word of God says it is appointed to everyone in this room and everyone listening by the Internet it's appointed everybody on the entire planet you have to die and it says everyone has to die once but after that comes the judgment after you die you still have to face judgment so what part of you dies your physical canopy your tent this house is what passes we're on a journey from birth to what we call death. That's what we know that's what we see that's what we heal here but the journey is not from birth to what we call death the journey is from birth to death to judgment to eternity your soul will never perish there's no proof in the Word of God that your soul will be totally annihilated and you won't be aware of anything you'll be as dead somehow in your spirit soul as your body is and whatever condition it's found to be in. No your soul will not be annihilated you will never get away from God he couldn't get away from God by sailing to Spain and you can't get away from God no matter what you do people commit suicide to end it all that ends nothing it's the beginning of the next state pastor we hope this sermon gets really happy soon the place has gone dead quiet you're still in the soup aren't you death there's three states of death physical death it's appointed on to everyone.

Hebrews 9:27 we all have an appointment with death but it's it's physical death and that's not the death that God was speaking to Adam about if you touch that apple you eat that fruit it's not an apple if you eat that fruit at the moment you do you'll die did Adam die no the moment he ate that fruit looked at Eve and said what have we done and then they ran and hid they were still alive but you see at the moment of we'll go back to that at the moment of physical death. it's a separation of your spirit soul from your body but the second state of death is spiritual death and that's what Adam and Eve experienced the moment you eat the fruit you see God was saying all the trees in this garden are yours but that tree that's mine you don't even think about touching that that's my tree don't cross the line the moment you do you'll be separated from me separated from God in spiritual death means and it's quoted for us in Ephesians 1.

Ephesians 2 it says you were dead in your trespasses in sin dead unto God so no wonder the atheist says I don't believe in God I'm not surprised you're dead you're spiritually dead you can't comprehend God you can't find them there's no there's no to you there's no substance for any reason to believe in God because you're spiritually dead. It's what the Word of God said in the moment you eat that fruit you'll be separated from God and to this day we're separated until we experience redemption so salvation is restoring our relationship with the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords but there's one more state of death and that's eternal death. So here we are in this world separated from God because of our because of our sinfulness dead in our trespasses and sins we're offered the great escape from that by confessing.

Jesus and the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us and new life new creation all things are made new but if that doesn't happen then from this life being spiritually dead facing God after death and being judged for your denial to accept Jesus you will experience eternal death.

Matthew 25 verse 46 and these will go away into everlasting punishment but the righteous will go into eternal love we go back again to the Luke 16 where Jesus tells what's called a parable I think it's a parable but parables are not necessarily fiction a parable is a story to enlighten us in Jesus case it's always to enlighten us about spiritual dynamics and spiritual principles. I believe that Lazarus the story of a rich man Lazarus I believe it happened absolutely so.

Jesus was using this story to enlighten those who were before him and enlightened everyone thereafter the rich man and the poor man the rich man dying subtly but he was an ugly individual and he cared not for that poor letter out there living at his gate that man at the gate had to hope for some kindness. Some kindness a piece of bread half of a nap anything to keep him surviving he lived a wretched life that that poverty-stricken man the Word of God says that at the day of his death the angels came and carried him to the bosom of Abraham, and what happened to the rich man who died within the same circle of time it says he died no mention of angels rescuing him and they both went to the same place it's called in Hebrew it's called sheol but sheol all has two compartments one compartment is reserved from the for the unrighteous from Abel down until the cross of Jesus Christ.

Everyone who died during that time if they didn't serve God if they lived in unrighteousness then they went into this place called Sheol but they got dumped into a compartment that's a pretty ugly place to be so much so that the rich man cried out even calling upon Lazarus within the hearing of God somebody help me, I'm on fire give me a drop of water for my tongue. The answer was no no you had your day that poor man he had a rough time in his life he's now resting peacefully and now you are getting your just desert fine then send somebody please send Lazarus back send him back to talk to my five brothers and tell them get your life right with God. You don't want to end up here so that rich man. Although he died and was separated from his physical body he was very conscious of the life that he'd live very conscious of the fact that five brothers are gonna end up being his neighbors in this horrible place.

He was able to be heard he had some kind of voice we don't know an awful lot about the poor man except he was living with Abraham the bosom of Abraham as I've already mentioned several times bosom buddies when we use that kind of term it means close close friends Abraham is the friend of all of his children and every Jewish synagogue Abraham is adored he's mentioned endlessly he's their hero because he's the great great great grandfather of the whole family so when somebody who's Jewish departs from this life from Abel on to the crucifixion they go to the place called Sheol but they're there with Abraham awaiting the redemption now it's sort of like a prison. it's sort of like a prison because you see these people who are in Sheol although they endeavor to live a righteous life the Bible says there's non-righteous no not one so the righteousness that they had attained was simply endeavoring to keep the law of God and not step out into the heavy traffic and get run over but none of them from Abel to the crucifixion could be escorted into heaven because there's no-righteous no not one.

And sinful man cannot go to heaven all these people were in this place called Sheol in the bosom of Abraham hoping and hoping I'm hoping that Isaiah chapter 53 would come true they would praise the Lord to bruise him and then he would play the supreme penalty now I want to remind you that this place called Sheol, on the good side of Sheol that place is called paradise. Paradise we're talking now Old Testament days from Abel until the resurrection morning every believing Jew ended up in a place called paradise does this not ring a little bell for you as Jesus is hanging on the cross, there's a man hung on either side of him, The one is blistering him and accusing him putting him down that man is a criminal he's going to die on the other side of.

Jesus is another criminal but he's not blistering Jesus and he calls out to the fellow on the far side of Jesus and says what are you doing man why don't you honor this. Jesus you and I are criminals and deserve what we're getting now how did he know the next set how did he know to say the next sentence we don't know but here's what he called out he said this man has done nothing wrong then the man turns to Jesus and says... When you get to your kingdom listen to all the understanding this criminal knew better than the high priests in the synagogues this man.

Jesus he's being accused by by the high priest by described by the Pharisees as being a man of the devil he's not he's a good man then he turns to Jesus it in effect says I believe in you and when you arrive in your kingdom will you please remember me and Jesus says this day you will be with me in Abraham's blizzard paradise now I got a little suggestion for you I'm getting boost goosebumps on this one here's my suggestion the last person to go to paradise was that criminal how can you say that pastor day because three days later he came forth from the grave.

Jesus did and the Word of God says he led captivity captive you're not getting goosebumps I feel sorry there they were in paradise being with Abraham was paradise no shame no pain no real tears no sorrow here we are with grandpa Abraham sons of Abraham and we got something wonderful to look for I wonder what's gonna happen today how come it's not happening yet sounds like I was waiting for the second coming when's he coming when's he coming with but suddenly.

Jonah lay silent and whatever condition in the belly of the whale dead as a doornail.

Jesus lied silent in the grave that was a mortal grave as Jonah's as Jonah's remains are being churned up churned up and turned into food for the whale he is very much conscious of the fact that he blew it and he needed to repent so he's in he said somewhere in shield and on what side of shield was he in I believe he was on the paradise side he had not committed the unforgivable sin and he cries out and he says Lord I blew it I know I'm wrong I'm asking you to forgive me give me another chance to go back and make it right I'll go to Nineveh I don't believe in what I have to do at Nineveh but you said to do it and out he did not want to take the message to Nineveh he didn't even like them but he said I'll do it for you.

Jesus also went to paradise and he had great news his body was cold but was not suffering corruption there's a prophecy of that back in the Old Testament you will not let your righteous one suffer controversy the body of.

Jesus did not begin to decay so the whale is instructed by the Lord spit him out so you say now wait a minute Dave you just said that whatever's left of Jonah is in this fish soup in the whales belly it's about as good a condition as a lot of like my mom and dad are dust but there's going to be a resurrection morning when out of their graves are going to arrive so out of the grave of the belly of the whale.

Jonah it was spit out onto dry land he didn't even have to swim to shore the I believe the whales name was Herman and all of a sudden Herman burped and this man was caught it was a resurrection moment and Jesus said I'll give you a sign you've already had a sign.

Jonah rose three days after being in the belly of the whale that's the sign in three days I will rise again from the dead and if you don't believe it you have turned your back on the sign that you've asked for death now where is your state great where is your victory.

Ephesians 4 8 he says when he ascended up on high he led those who were in captivity he led them out of there I'm coming unglued when I'm my little cave in the basement of our house just going over these thoughts and mulling them over and I get picture the words become pictures to me in my head I see.

Jesus arriving among them looking in the words of John in the book of Revelation looking like a lamb that had already been slain they recognized all these people in hell had never seen him these people if they'd never seen him but when he came among them they knew him and what did he tell them over the space of 72 hours we don't know but it had to be absolutely closed it had to be absolutely closed I'm inviting you now to come and join me right up here at the front would you all stand and those of you who are physically able would you come and just gather here at what we call the altar one of my favorite songs I him it's only sung as far as I know once a year in most churches this is a song that I as a youngster I'd love to hear it because as this song was sung in the churches where I was raised I could see it happening I could see it happening the song goes like this low in the grave he lay.

Jesus my Savior waiting the coming day.

Jesus my Lord up from the grave he rose with a mighty triumph over his foes his foes your enemies are his enemies he rose a victor from the dark domain and he lives forever with his saints to reign he arose he arose hallelujah Christ arose.

Matthew 27 and the graves were open. Jesus grave open but.

Matthew 27 says graves were open and many bodies bodies that have been turned into dust a thousand two thousand years hence those bodies took on form and they arose from the dead they came out of the graves after his resurrection and they went into the holy city and they appeared to many do I believe in the resurrection I believe yet so he led the Old Testament believers out of their graves out of not the graves out of Sheol out of paradise.

He led them out through the universe I know you already reflected on this with you Doug one that Doug not this one on a Sunday and I thought I talked about how glorious it must have been as all of these people had lived in the Old Testament days and had gone out and looked up at the stars. And said he's out there somewhere but he's so grand and so glorious so far I wonder I wonder which planet does he live on he doesn't live on a planet remember remember he created the universe he doesn't live in the universe. He lives beyond the universe and I looked this up a few hours ago how many galaxies are there. Do you know how big a galaxy is when you look out there in the sky you're looking at a gallery do you know how many galaxies they are something like a quadrillion.

Like galaxy after galaxy. Like millions upon millions upon millions and all these Saints went beyond all of that, to God's heavenly home. What a ride it must have been and here I've preached this in camp meetings. I've come preached on groups I've preached this so loud screaming so loud. I won't do it to you now but I've preached this very verse it's in Psalm 24 and if ever there was a passage of scripture that becomes vivid to me like I can see something happening it's in Psalm 24. This is how it goes some angel I think shouts lift up your heads O ye gates and be ye lifted up you everlasting doors so the King of glory can come in but wait a minute as the King of glory is coming in millions of Old Testament Saints are arriving with him it's not.

Jesus coming into the holy city of heaven it's all the Saints it's Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Ezekiel and Daniel and Jeremiah and on and on and on and all of those all of those who serve God in righteousness and they're arriving finally at home. Oh grave where is your sting where's your victory hallelujah to God who is the king of glory another angel asked as though he doesn't know as though this angel doesn't know David you're making this up. No I see it happening lift up your heads O ye gates be you lifted up you everlasting door at the King the glory will come in and an angel says the angels like a little child who says grandpa will you read me that story again my favorite story. I've read it to you a hundred times, I know but that's my favorite.

They just want to hear the answer an angel asks who is this king of glory and the response comes back from myriads of angels the Lord strong and mighty the Lord mighty at battle lift up your heads O ye gates even lift them up you everlasting doors and the King of glory shall come in who is the king of glory the Lord strong and mighty the Lord in and battle Oh Oh Oh I'm going to finish here that song was the highlight for three years for me every year when I was at college. The college gathered in a big place in downtown Toronto called Massey Hall every person in the college had to be there all the students whether you're graduating this year or no everybody was in the choir and graduation exercise always concluded with the whole college choir singing this song. I knew it off my heart I knew every word I knew every lick and I would be crying through we sang it because to me it was so real so real so real so real I can't handle stodgy starchy religion gotta be alive to me there's gotta be something alive amen well there's more not to my sermon now but there's more I want to share so much more that there's so much truth about our redemption about God's plan in that silly little book of Jonah.