



Sunday, January 19, 2020

Preacher: Min. Elijah McDavid III

Sermon: Never Let Me Drown

Scripture: Jonah 2:1-10 (NRSV)



**CURRICULUM
GUIDE**



Sermon Summary

Min. Elijah used the Old Testament story of Jonah to illustrate that some of our best prayers come at the moments after our worst mistakes. He reminded us with Jonah 2:1, that God specializes in loving us at our lowest points: "I called to the Lord, at the depth of my destruction, and God heard my cry." Although we are all undeserving, we can all receive the forgiveness of God. We should be a reflection of God's answered prayer in our lives for the world to know and see.

1. Prayer reminds us that God loves us at our lowest
2. Prayer is the process where God massages our minds back into positive thinking
3. Prayer is the moment when God places a "not yet" after our false forevers
4. Prayer isn't finished when God answers. Complete prayer requires that we are changed and live as a reflection of that answer

Getting To Know You Questions:

1. What is the biggest fish that you have ever caught in real life (no stretched fish stories)?
2. Min. Elijah discussed how sometimes our prayers start focused on God but then our mind drifts into doubt and confusion. How do you train your mind to stay focused while praying?



Into The Bible Questions:

1. Min. Elijah said some of our best prayers come after our biggest mistakes. Jonah was in an extremely difficult situation as he sat in the belly of the fish. List three takeaways from Jonah's prayer that you can include in your prayers during difficult circumstances.
2. In Jonah 1:2, God tells Jonah to go to the city of Ninevah and preach against them because their "wickedness has come up before me. (NIV)" In Jonah 3:2, God tells Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh "and proclaim to it the message I give you." What are the differences in God's command in those two verses? What events in chapter two do you think influenced the change?
3. Read Jonah 1:17 and Jonah 2:10. What do these scriptures tell us about Jonah and his circumstances?

Life Application Questions:

1. Min. Elijah mentioned that punishment and deliverance can be the same thing. How do you reconcile that in your mind and what examples do you have?
2. Have you ever felt distant in your prayer life due to regret and shame? How were you able to move past those negative feelings and stay connected to God through prayer in that season?
3. Min. Elijah said that "prayer is the process when God is adjusting our minds so that we can see our circumstances through the eyes of God." What does this statement mean to you? How has God adjusted your mind through your prayer life?
4. Jonah suffered from what Min. Elijah described as "sanctified selfishness" and never changed. Instead, he was angry that God spared the people of Nineveh although God just spared his life. How can you ensure that you're able to celebrate God's works in the lives of others and not just in your own?
5. God used something that usually seems worthless and disgusting to save Jonah's life. Yet Jonah didn't change. How has God done something similar in your life? What was the outcome?



"Can I Push It?"

Min. Elijah stated that the tragedy of the story of Jonah was that he received grace but was unwilling to extend it. Ultimately, he was angry that God extended grace to people he did not feel were worthy. What can the modern church learn from the story of Jonah about elevating ourselves to a position to judge what God should do concerning others?

Spirit Work:

Min. Elijah mentioned that he prays with his eyes closed because he is expecting to see things differently when he opens his eyes. Take time this week to be deliberate in what you see when you open your eyes after praying.



Activity:

Min. Elijah used Jonah being swallowed by the fish as he was plunging into the sea to illustrate that sometimes our punishment and our deliverance can be the same thing. Draw a Venn diagram listing experiences in your life with the categories 'punishment' and 'deliverance.' In the middle, connect the link between the two, showing how God was working while you were still in the metaphorical belly of the fish. For example; job loss = punishment, new job = deliverance, job transition is how God was working = link.

Additional Question for Married Couples Villages:

1. Min. Elijah said that even in the midst of disobedience and poor decision making, Jonah kept the lines of communication open with God. Discuss areas in your marriage where the lines of communication have been breached. How can you work together to restore or maintain good communication lines with each other?
2. Have you ever experienced a low season in your marriage that seemed like God abandoned you, but your relationship was really being primed to achieve new things? How were you or your spouse able to change your perspective while being in that situation? How did it prepare you to handle the next challenging season?

Additional Question for Young Adult Villages:

1. Min. Elijah described the belly of the fish as being dark, uncomfortable, and stinky. He said that Jonah was at his lowest, yet he prayed like God loved him. Describe a time when you were at your lowest. How did God show you that God loved you?
2. Recall a time when you declared a situation as a “false forever” when it was really a “not yet” from God. How did you discern God’s not yet?

Additional Questions for Parents’ Villages:

1. Read the book of Jonah, and discuss what lessons can be learned. How can we incorporate these lessons into our family?
2. The lines of communication between the LORD and Jonah were always kept open. What practical ways can we keep the lines of communication open with our children?

Additional Questions for Women Villages:

1. Minister Elijah declared that deliverance belongs to the Lord, and that sometimes God is waiting for us to believe what He has already ordained. What areas of your life are you looking to God for deliverance?
2. Has God ever used a situation where you felt abandoned to push you towards your purpose? What was the catalyst that caused you to change your perception of the situation to make you aware that God was preparing you for something greater?