

Prayer in times of Crisis

Starter

Have you every marvelled at the wonders of prayer and what it means?

If you had to describe prayer to someone, what would you say?

Context

Jonah was a prophet during the time of King Jeroboam 2 of Israel (2 Kings 14:23-28). At this time, the Assyrians who were the dominant power were busy enlarging their kingdom elsewhere, which allowed King Jeroboam 2 to capture much of Syria for Israel. The Lord called Jonah to go to the great Assyrian city of Nineveh to pronounce judgment upon it. Jonah attempted to escape the Lord's calling by sailing to Tarshish, which was probably in the western Mediterranean. Eventually he obeyed the Lord and went to Nineveh, at the heart of the Assyrian Empire.

We enter the story at chapter 2 where Jonah, having fled the country, jumped on a boat and because of a storm has been thrown into the sea where a big fish has swallowed him up.

Have you ever thought, this cannot be true because no-one can be swallowed by a fish? This is an interesting question. [Check out this article](#) for a deeper look.

My belief is, if Jesus can perform miracles like healing the blind and raising the dead, and God created the heavens and the earth, he could very easily have made this happen.

Let's read Jonah 2 - [Click here to get the passage](#)

Questions

Prayer is the ability to speak to the creator of the universe. Prayer has been modelled throughout the bible by prophets, by the psalmists, Jesus and the apostles. It is not defined in the bible anywhere, but its basic meaning is to ask. This is shown in the Lord's prayer. Jesus gives us a framework for asking God to act by building his kingdom, promoting his reputation, and forgiving and sustaining us, his servants.

Albert Mohler Jr says "For the Christian, praying is supposed to be like breathing, easier to do than to not do"

1. Do you agree with that quote? why/ why not?
2. Why is prayer so difficult for some of us?

So often I think that people believe there is only one way to prayer. That is to close your eyes and then say some words. Pete Greig in his Book "How to Pray" shares 6 simple ways on how to pray. [Click here to find out what they are.](#)

Quote - "I believe the best tool to deal with a crisis is to pray" Matt Huckle

Let's spend some time with a character in the bible that prayed in a crisis.

Notice where Jonah is at this moment in time, he speaks with real honesty. Jonah is at rock bottom; he has had enough. But this comment also shows us that Jonah was a man of God. The language he uses here shows us that he would have known the psalms. Notice the similarities

“In my distress I called upon the LORD, and cried out to my God; He heard my voice from His temple.” (Psalm 18:6)

“Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; all Your waves and billows have gone over me.” (Psalm 42:7)

“For I said in my haste, “I am cut off from before Your eyes”; nevertheless You heard the voice of my supplications when I cried out to You.” (Psalm 31:22)

I am so thankful for the Psalms as this gives us some real honesty about where Gods people have been at. Being a follower of Jesus has and will never be easy. With all the uncertainty there is at the moment, what a privilege that God allows us to be open and honest to him. This was no different when the Psalms were written.

3. If you had to write a psalm, what would it say?

In the next three sections we see two areas that Jonah focuses on

Jonah describes his trouble, his cry to God, and God’s faithful answer. (3-7)

Jonah declares his commitment to God. (8-9)

4. Get a pen and paper and write a letter to God using this model.
 - talk about your troubles, even cry out to God
 - talk about recommitting to God.
5. How did you find that process?

I said earlier that ““I believe the best tool to deal with a crisis is to pray”. It shapes our thoughts on who God is. I encourage you to reflect upon the 6 simple steps that Pete Greig suggested and apply one of these this week.

6. Which one are you going to choose?