

Welcome and Introduction

Thank you for coming. We are glad you are here! This morning we want to lift up the name of Jesus and we want to praise him for his faithfulness and love. In his prayer for the Ephesians Paul prays that we may grasp how wide, how long and how high and deep is the love of Christ for us. My prayer is that at the end of this service you will go from here transformed by the power of His love. May we experience His presence as we worship and hear His word. Let's us sing the songs in our hearts following the lyrics in the screen. For those who are self-isolating at home or couldn't come this morning, you can read through the sermon and listen to the songs on YouTube. We will be meditating today on the book of Jonah.

Scripture Reading and Open Prayer

Ephesian 3:14-21 - A Prayer for the Ephesians

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family^[a] in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Song 1 – Forever by Michael W. Smith

<https://youtu.be/3lPdtqgouCc> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

*Give thanks to the Lord, Our God and King
His love endures forever
For He is good, He is above all things
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise*

*With a mighty hand and outstretched arm
His love endures forever
For the life that's been reborn
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise
Sing praise, sing praise*

*Forever God is faithful, forever God is strong
Forever God is with us, forever and ever, forever*

*From the rising to the setting sun
His love endures forever
By the grace of God we will carry on
His love endures forever
Sing praise, sing praise
Sing praise, sing praise*

His love endures forever

*Sing praise, sing praise
Sing praise, sing praise*

Song 2 – Great is Thy Faithfulness / Thomas O. Chisholm 1951

<https://youtu.be/ErwiBz1QA4o> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

Great is thy faithfulness, Oh God my father
There is no shadow of turning with thee
Thou changest not, thy compassions they fail not
As thou hast been thou forever wilt be

Great is thy faithfulness
Great is thy faithfulness
Morning by morning new mercies I see
All I have needed thy hands have provided
Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me

Summer and winter, springtime and harvest
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside

Intercessory Prayer (Andrea Moises)

Heavenly Father, thank you for being the light of the world, guiding our steps on your path. Your word says that you are a Good Father who gives us good gifts so we thank you for the gift of life, for our families and for church, a community of your children that you have gathered together to worship, serve, pray and love. Give us strength to live as ambassadors for you in this world. Please Lord, bless each one of our brothers and sisters here as well as the ones who were not able to join us today. Would you bring healing to those who are sick, comfort those who mourn and save those who need to be saved. You're the King of kings, Lord of lords, so we want to put our trust and our hope in you, because we know your love endures forever! We rest our concerns, needs and

prayer requests on your faithful hands. Please anoint the preaching of your word and help us to be in tune with your will so we can follow your ways all the days of our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen

Preaching and Teaching – The book of Jonah

Oh, the Overwhelming, Never-Ending and Reckless Love of God

Introduction

I love studying the prophets in the Bible. It is so beautiful to see how God called and used each one of them. However, Jonah seems different from all the others as there is no mention of God calling him in the book to be a prophet. Jonah also doesn't do anything extravagant or extraordinary. Actually, we see the opposite, Jonah is reluctant and the book starts with him disobeying God and finishes with him complaining. It looks like he is very depressed and it is important for us to understand the background. The Assyrians were the enemies of the people of Israel and they were oppressing and destroying all the nations around them. Later the 10 tribes of the north (Israel) were taken into exile by the Assyrians. It would be great if we could read the whole book as it is only 4 chapters, but our time this morning doesn't allow us to. The story is well known to us, however, I would like you to take some time this week to read and meditate on this book. God is at work in Jonah's life and each chapter of this book we can see something meaningful and fascinating about God's love.

Chapter I – His Love Never Leaves You

1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me. 3 But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. We will never have success in running away from God. We can try to run away, just like Jonah but we can never hide from His presence. David in Psalm 139 describes well in words what I mean that we can't hide or run away from God. He knows us so well and he even knows our thoughts. He is ever present and He is an omniscient God. **1 You have searched me, LORD, and you know me. 2 You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar. 3 You discern my going out and my lying down; you are familiar with all my ways. 4 Before a word is on my tongue you, LORD, know it completely. 5 You hem me in behind and before, and you lay your hand upon me. 6 Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain. 7 Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. 9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, 10 even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. 11 If I say, “Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,” 12 even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. Psalms 139:1-12** He loves us with an overwhelming and reckless love and he calls us to be prophets to the nations. Just Like Jeremiah. **4 “The word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”** The prophet Isaiah was already ministering in Jerusalem when he had that powerful encounter with God in the temple. What about you? Has God called you? Has He ever asked you do something? Have you accepted God's call for your life? He has a purpose and a call for each one of us. I remember when God called me. When I was teenager I

was struggling to live a godly life. I used to go to church every Sunday, but during the week I wouldn't read my Bible. I was living a double life and I wasn't giving testimony of a true disciple of Jesus. I would go out and drink with my friends and couldn't be an influence in their lives. On the contrary, my non believer friends had a big influence on me and I was doing everything they were doing. I remember when I heard God speaking to me in Ephesians, chapter 5 and on verse 14 it says: ***“Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”*** I didn't even know those verses were in the Bible. God uses different ways to speak to us. It is easy for us to think that our disobedience will only affect us and not anybody else. However, in this story it shows clearly that it doesn't only have consequences for us but also to others. ***5 “All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.”*** It is not always like this, but sometimes the storms and battles we go through in life are consequences of our own choices and disobedience. We see here that Jonah is in a very difficult situation. He knew that the storm was happening because of him. He is depressed and he is ready to die. However, God's love chases Jonah. God's love rescued Jonah from death. ***17 Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.***

II – Chapter II – His Love Reaches You

No matter how far you've gone away from him and doesn't matter the situation you are in. It is never too late to cry out for help. Now Jonah is deep in the belly of the fish and he calls God for help. ***1 “From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. 2 He said: “In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry”.*** Jonah comes to his senses and realizes he has gone astray. He also learns important lessons. ***8 “Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them.”*** It is very easy for us to fall into the sin of idolatry and to deviate ourselves from God's purpose and calling for our lives. What are your idols? Is it success, power, comfort, reputation? Anyway, when we turn our backs on God we are hindering ourselves to receive His grace and His love that is ours. I don't know if you remember hearing on the news about the young football team from Thailand, it was about two years ago, they were trapped in a cave. I was really moved by the rescue operation. In our church we prayed that the rescue team would have success. I don't know why they went on and on exploring that dark cave. It is just like us with our idols and with our sins. One sin calls another, until we realize we are trapped in darkness. However, there is nothing that God can't change and there is nothing too difficult for God. He is able to rescue us if we cry out to Him. He chases us and he finds us wherever we are. One person died in the rescue operation, but the football team came out of the cave one by one and they were saved. ***10 “And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.”***

III - Chapter III – His Love Gives You a Second Chance

God insisted in giving Jonah a second chance and speaks to him a second time. ***“Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: 2 “Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.” 3 Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh.*** He messed up first, but at this time God uses Him powerfully. His obedience had a tremendous impact on the lives of the Ninevites. A true revival broke out in the city. The second chance was not only for Jonah, but for the entire population of the Great City of Nineveh – more than 120.000 thousand were

saved. They all repented and God changed his plan and saved them. **5 The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. 6 When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust.**

Chapter IV – His Love Extends to All Creation

His love extends to all nations, cities, tribes and tongues. God is merciful and compassionate, slow to anger and abundant in love. He wants everyone to be saved. What a contrast to Jonah's love. He is again depressed and very angry. **1 "But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. V2b...I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3 Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."** What does mercy and compassion mean? It is to be generous and kind to people that doesn't deserve it. This is exactly what God has done for us, we were all God's enemies, but His grace and mercy has saved us. His mercy never ends, it renews every morning and great is His faithfulness. **"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness." Lamentations 3:22** God is having a personal chat with Jonah. Is it reasonable? V.4 Have you got any right to be angry? **9 "But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" "It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."** What is your concern? Are you willing to reason with God. He loves the nations. His desire is to send us to preach the gospel of salvation to all. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations". It is important for us to remind ourselves that no one is outside of God's love. **16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16**

Conclusion

God's love is overwhelming and is never ending. His love never leaves you so you can't run from it. His love reaches you and doesn't matter how far you have moved away from Him. He loves recklessly, he takes risks for you. He goes beyond what we can imagine. God sent His own son and He died to rescue us from our sins. His love pursues you and chases after you. As the good shepherd, he will leave the 99 and goes after you. Today he is giving you another chance to respond to His love. He wants you to love and obey him. "My sheep hear my voice and they follow me". He is calling you again. **19 Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. 20 Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.** Like Paul, it is my prayer that you may grasp how wide, long, deep and high is the love of Christ for you.

Response Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

We thank you for your love, which is overwhelming and never ending. Your love is also so kind and patient with us. We are sorry for the times we've tried to run away from you, which we've realized it is impossible. Forgive us Lord for turning our back on you and for worshiping other gods. We are sinners and we please ask you to forgive us. Thank you because your love chases us and gives us another chance. We want to open our hearts to you again this morning. Come and dwell within us, Jesus, and be in the center of our lives. We want to respond to your love so help us to obey and follow you all the

days of our lives. We give our lives, our dreams and our future to you and we trust in your unfailing love, In Jesus' precious name we pray, Amen

Song 3 – Reckless Love - Cory Asbury

<https://youtu.be/7GGJ8cyYNzQ> - Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

Before I spoke a word, You were singing over me
You have been so, so good to me
Before I took a breath, You breathed Your life in me
You have been so, so kind to me

Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God
Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the ninety-nine
I couldn't earn it, and I don't deserve it, still, You give Yourself away
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God, yeah

When I was Your foe, still Your love fought for me
You have been so, so good to me
When I felt no worth, You paid it all for me
You have been so, so kind to me

Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God
Oh, it chases me down, fights 'til I'm found, leaves the ninety-nine
I couldn't earn it, and I don't deserve it, still, You give Yourself away
Oh, the overwhelming, never-ending, reckless love of God, yeah

There's no shadow You won't light up
Mountain You won't climb up
Coming after me
There's no wall You won't kick down
Lie You won't tear down
Coming after me

Final Prayer and Apostolic Blessings

Let's finish our service this morning praying the Lord's prayer together:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.

Have a blessed week and see you next Sunday!