

Lessons from the World's Worst Missionary
Jonah 1:4-17
How God Pursues Prodigals

I. He Sends Storms to Get Our Attention. (v. 4-5)

Our God is infinitely creative. *He can send the storm in so many different ways.* When you're in the storm, you tend to be fearful, angry and frustrated. It's only later that you realize the storm was a severe mercy from the Lord.

II. He Allows Others to Suffer Because of Our Sin.

Everyone on board is endangered by Jonah's sin. Jonah was the sinner in this situation, and yet his foolish rebellion endangered everyone around him.

III. He Sends Someone to Challenge Us. (v. 6)

The world doesn't want our sermons. The world wants our prayers.

IV. He Exposes Our Disobedience. (v. 7-9)

Jonah is now found out by the casting of lots (v. 7). That may seem like a chance event but as Proverbs 16:33 reminds us, *"The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the Lord."*

V. He Makes Us Face the Consequences of Our Own Foolish Choices.

Jonah knows it's his fault. So when the sailors ask what they should do to make the seas grow calm again, he offers the only solution that makes sense: *"Pick me up and throw me into the sea and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you"* (v. 12).

VI. He Reveals His Grace in the Midst of Judgment.

This is the part of the story we know best: *"But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights"* (v.17).

Why did he send the fish? First, to rescue Jonah from the sea. If he hadn't sent the fish, Jonah would have died in the ocean. Second, to bring him to repentance.