
Main Point: Salvation

God isn't just after obedience; He's after an obedience that is fueled by love.

Supplemental Scripture: Acts 4:5-22

Study Introduction

The Gospel is how Christ has saved us from our sin. Coming to be obedient to all that the Father has commanded, dying in our place, and then being raised from the dead to new life. However, the Gospel is something that God had in mind from the very beginning. Scholars call Genesis 3:15 the "protoevangelium," that is greek for the first Gospel. It is where God made clear his intent to redeem sinful humans for his glory and their good. Aspects of this story can be seen through all of the Old Testament. Over the next six studies we will look deeper into Jonah, while at the same time looking at other stories from Scripture either comparing to our contrasting with Jonah and his tale of disobedience to and exasperation with God, and how we see ourselves in that same position with the Lord of all.

Study Questions

Pre-study:

1. Who has been the most influential person to your faith? Why?
2. What from your personal study of Jonah has impacted you most up to this point?

We will be looking at the end of Jonah's prayer, his message of salvation, and its implications for us.

Read: Jonah 2:1-10

3. What resonated with you from the chapter?
4. How is Jesus like Jonah? How is He different?
5. What is something you feel you could never give up? Do you consider it an idol in your life?
6. In what three ways does the gospel change us?

All that the prophet Jonah did wrong, Jesus the Messiah did right. Knowing that you might get swallowed by a fish if you disobey might change your behavior, but knowing Jesus was swallowed by death in your place will change your heart. Through Jesus we learn that God isn't just after obedience; He's after a whole new kind of obedience, an obedience that grows from desire, an obedience fueled by love

Parallels in Acts 4:5-22

Jonah's message of salvation is certainly not confined to the Book of Jonah. It is the central message of the Bible. It runs like a thick thread through all 66 books, tying them together regardless of genre or date of authorship. The Book of Acts shows the church picking up this same message. In Acts 4:5-22 the apostle Peter is asked by the local authorities, the Sadducees, to explain by what power or name he healed a lame beggar (Acts 3:1-11). The setting is the day after Peter and John had spent a night in jail for preaching their message of salvation.

Read: Acts 4:5-22

7. Focus first on Acts 4:5-12. What claims does Peter make about Jesus?

8. Peter switches from talking about healing to talking about salvation. What connection is Peter making that exists between healing and salvation? Why should this matter for us?
9. What parallels do you see between Jonah's prayer in Jonah 2 and Peter's message in Acts 4? What differences do you see and why are they significant?

In Peter's response to this interrogation there rings a familiar tone of humble confidence reminiscent of Jonah's prayer in Jonah 2. Jonah was humbled by being in the belly of a fish, yet confident God was powerful and gracious enough to rescue him. Peter was humble enough to quickly give credit for any miracle to the name of Jesus, and was confident in Christ's sovereignty enough to speak boldly to these authorities knowing it may cost him his life. Peter's message of salvation gives New Testament clarity to Jonah's Old Testament proclamation in Jonah 2.

10. Using what you've learned up to this point, explain how one receives the salvation offered in Christ.

Like the Sadducees, some people today get upset when they hear Christians proclaim the message that Jesus is the only means of salvation.

11. What can we learn from Peter and John for how we engage those who may be hostile to the gospel?
12. Acts 4:19-20 gives the reader a quick look into the inner motivation of the people of the early church. Why are their words so important to a healthy perspective on the Christian life?

Application

1. Have you received the gift of salvation?
2. If so, then how is your heart starting to change?
3. Have you surrendered all of yourself to God? Are you running from God in any area of your life?
4. What is one achievable action step you can take this week in response to what you've discussed in this group?

Prayer

- Allow your group to pray silently for a few moments as they wrestle with the questions asked in the Application section.
- Close this prayer time by praying aloud for your group to live humble, surrendered lives before God.
- Pray for those who have not yet received the gift of salvation.
- Praise God for the ways that the gospel changes us.