

## Bouncing Back from the Bottom

### I. Slide#1 **Announce:**

- A. **Slide#2 Children at Risk:** 3pm. New Room. Charlotte Paulsen will be explaining *Fair Trade*: what it means, how it impacts the world, and how, as consumers, we can make a difference in the lives of many, **by** Keeping food on the table, children in school and families on their land.
- B. **Slide#3,4 Women's Retreat:** Latin word meaning *to pull back*. Ladies come **pull back**, from life's **busy schedule**, from all of **life's pressures**, allowing God to be your refuge & strength.

### II. Slide#5 **Intro:**

- A. We left off with Jonah in the Mediterranean, looking like Jason Bourne floating in the East River, at the end of *Bourne Ultimatum*.
- B. **Jonah 2 slows down the pace of the story.**
  - 1. This is a tool used by writers, and especially the Biblical writers. When the pace **slows down**, the writer wants you to **focus** on something or catch a specific detail. Here we see a little window into the life of Jonah in this slow down prayer.
- C. Remember the last time you were out swimming at the lake or the pool, and everyone was jumping around, screaming and yelling? **What happened when you went under?**
  - 1. **It gets quiet real quick doesn't it.** The water muffles all the sounds.
  - 2. **Slide#6** So it is getting **quiet** and **dark**, and Jonah is slowly sinking down deeper and deeper down into the **darkness**, into the **pressure** of the deep water.
  - 3. There is where we find Jonah today. Sinking further into the darkness, farther away from his family and friends, down he goes. **And then Jonah cries out to the Lord from inside of the belly of the fish God sent to save him. Jonah finally prays. He wouldn't** pray for God to save the pagan sailors, **but** he does to thank God for saving him.
- D. **Slide#7** (1:17) The **great fish** might have been...
  - 1. **A Sperm whale** (*Physeter macrocephalus*) Known to have swallowed unusually large objects including even a 15't shark.<sup>1</sup>
  - 2. **A Whale sharks** (*Rhineodon Typicus*) have swallowed **men** who later were found **alive** in the sharks' stomachs.
  - 3. **Slide#8** If man could prepare **a big fish** (submarine) to hold a man for 3 weeks even 3 months, **couldn't God** prepare **a big fish** (what ever it was) to hold a man for 3 days?
- E. This is the prophet's description of his plunge into what appeared to be a watery grave.

<sup>1</sup> Frank T. Bullen, Cruise of the Cachalot Round the World after Sperm Whales. London: Smith, 1898

- F. The Hebrew phrase, **3 days & 3 nights**, need not to be understood as a 72-hour period...but as 1 24-hour period & parts of 2 other days.
- G. **Slide#9** Gen. George Patton<sup>(old BloodnGuts)</sup> said *Success is how high you bounce when you hit bottom*
1. Patton's words remind us that **all of us** hit bottom at some point.
    - a) Life has its ups/downs, its highs/lows. No matter how you try to stay on the high peaks of the mountain, **at** some point you descend into the deep dark valley. At some point you hit bottom.
    - b) You may hit bottom when **you make** wrong, foolish choices, **or** you may hit bottom **because of** the wrong foolish choices **of others**.
      - (1) **When your money runs low, or your health is snatched away. When depression drags you down and you can't seem to find any hope. When you find out divorce is now inevitable. When you feel all alone and God feels far away - you look around and discover you've hit bottom.**
  2. Everybody goes through it at some time or another. Everybody hits bottom. The real issue is: **How do you bounce back when you hit bottom?**
    - a) **Let's ask a man who's been there.** He knows what's like to go *as low as you can go*.
      - (1) **Jonah went to the bottom and bounced back.**
- H. **Slide#10,11 Title: *Bouncing Back from the Bottom***
- I. **Outline: *To Bounce Back: Cry Out - Ask 3 Questions - Expect His Hand of Help.***

### III. **Slide#12 TO BOUNCE BACK...CRY OUT (1)**

- A. Let's go inside Jonah's *living prayer closet*, inside his *living tomb*.
- B. **Slide#13** Imagine...
1. What does it **smell like** in there? (Seaweed, rotten food, salty, stale water)
  2. What does it **feel like** in there? (Slimy, slippery, wet, warm)
  3. What does it **look like** in there? (pitch black. **prob not like Geppetto/lamp**)
  4. What could he **hear** in there? (Gurgling, digestive noises, whale gas)
- C. **Slide#14** C. S. Lewis said, A proud man is always **looking down** on things and people; **and**, of course, as long as you're **looking down**, you **can't** see something that's **above you**.
1. Jonah had turned his gaze away from God, **to himself**. **When he hits bottom, he begins to look up.**
- D. **Slide#15**<sup>blank</sup> Lots of people say they don't have time to pray.
1. **You find time to pray when you hit bottom.** **When** trouble grinds your life to a halt, **when** you become desperate to figure out what to do, suddenly you find time to

pray. **When** you get sick or hurt and you don't know when you'll get better, you'll find time to pray. **When** the seeds of your disobedience produce a harvest of chastisement, suddenly, you find time to talk to the Lord. **When** the devil whispers that you've gone too far, that you have no hope, that you might as well give up and get it over with, **then** it's time to look up in prayer to God.

2. **When you hit bottom it's not time to wallow in self-pity.**

a) **Are you here?** - It may be as serious as a divorce, parents, kids, house loss, work, school, ministry.

b) The wonderful truth is even when you've hit bottom, He still hears your prayers.

3. **Jerry Levin was assigned as Middle East bureau chief for CNN. He viewed his assignment as a new adventure. But his adventure took a turn for the worst when in 1983 Jerry felt a light tap on his shoulder. A short bearded man in his early twenties pushed a green handgun into his stomach. 2 1/2 hours later he was led into a building and shoved into a room, where they shackled his right arm to a radiator, and then they left. Jerry waited and listened; he was alone. He was a Hezbollah Hostage. Days passed in a blur of monotony and fear. It was here that the most remarkable thing happened. Jerry prayed for the first time in years. He prayed to God, and to Jesus, and he prayed "God, please forgive men like these," he prayed, "because they are in part responsible for bringing me to You and Your Son." Jerry realized...God used his imprisonment to get his attention.**

4. **Slide#16 Ps.116:3,4 The pains of death surrounded me, And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me; I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I implore You, deliver my soul!"**

E. **To bounce back from the bottom, you begin by crying out to the Lord in prayer.** But Jonah shows us when we hit bottom **we also need to...Ask 3 Questions...**

#### IV. **Slide#17 TO BOUNCE BACK...ASK 3 QUESTIONS (2-9a)**

A. Jonah doesn't really **ask God** for anything. **Instead**, he asks himself **3 very important questions:**

1. **Slide#18a Where am I?**

a) Jonah expects to drown soon after hitting the water, yet he finds himself alive. **But where does he picture himself?**

b) (2) **Out of the belly of Sheol I cried** - (not really in the *place of death* but in the *fear of it* for sure)

c) **Sheol** = the place of the dead. Jonah compares being in the deep blue sea in the dark belly of the great fish to being buried in the grave.

(1) Jonah is in a hard place, a place of punishment, a dark place, **but** not a hopeless place.

(2) **He's at the bottom, but he's not done yet. I'm down, but I'm not out.**

2. **Slide#18b How did I get here?**

- a) (3a) For **You** cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas.
- (1) Jonah realizes **God** brought him to the bottom.
  - (2) He didn't get here by **chance**, but by **divine providence**.
  - (3) Remember...you're only **God's prisoner**. Never a prisoner of sailors, a fish, the sea, nor of a prison itself. Eph.3:1 **I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord**.
  - (4) God sent Jonah to the bottom to give him **a little more time to think**, to give him **another chance to make the right decision**.
  - (5) Jonah is still able to choose, but he also is able to understand the truth: God brought me here to **help me, not destroy me**.

B. **Slide#18c What's my next move?** Jonah faces **choices** & chooses wisely.

1. (4) **Yet I will look again** toward Your holy temple.
2. (7) **When my soul fainted within me, I remembered** the Lord...
3. (9) **But I will sacrifice** to You with the voice of thanksgiving; **I will pay** what I have vowed.
4. Jonah is ready to sacrifice - to give up **his own will** for **God's will**.
5. **Instead of running from** God's presence, Jonah begins to **seek** God's presence.

C. **If you want to bounce back** after you hit bottom, you need to come to ask the same 3 questions:

1. **Slide#19a Where am I?**

- a) **At the bottom** things can look pretty dark. You can look around you and decide you've finally gotten to the place where there's no help or hope for you.
- b) **It'd be easy** to lay down and give up.
- c) **It'd be better** to realize what Jonah did...I'm down **but** I'm not out.
- d) I may be at the bottom, **but** this is not the place to quit...  
**It'd be better** to learn **courage, patience and persistence**.

2. **Slide#19b How did I get here?**

- a) Jonah is at the bottom because he's running from God.
- b) Not everyone is there for that reason.
  - (1) **Maybe it's your own fault, or somebody else's fault. Maybe it's nobody's fault; just one of those unexplainable things that happen.**
  - (2) But in the bigger picture, you need to understand that **behind everything that happens to you, God is at work**.
  - (3) **He often brings us to the bottom** like He did Jonah, **not to destroy us, but to help us**.
  - (4) If you are a child of God nothing happens to you **by accident**, **but** only through God's plan and purpose.

3. **Slide#19c What's my next move?**

- a) Do what Jonah did...turn to the Lord.
  - b) If you're at the bottom because of **disobedience**, you need to *confess your sin and repent*.
  - c) Disobedience might not be the reason you've hit bottom, but you still need to turn to the Lord.
    - (1) You need to come to an understanding that just because you've hit bottom doesn't mean God has abandoned you.
    - (2) You can still turn to Him for **comfort**, turn to Him for **strength**, turn to Him for **wisdom** and **guidance**.
      - (a) Too often folks who hit bottom become bitter and angry, instead of turning to the Lord. Don't let that happen to you.
      - (b) Turn to Him & remember that even in the deepest darkness, Jesus walks w/you.
  - d) Slide#20 Corrie ten Boom, When the **train** goes through a tunnel & the world gets dark, do you jump out? Of course not. You **sit still & trust** the engineer to get you through.
- D. Bouncing back after hitting bottom involves: Cry out in prayer, asking 3 questions, & finally...

## V. Slide#21 TO BOUNCE BACK...EXPECT HIS HAND OF HELP (9b-10)

- A. (8) This verse showcases his *self-rt pride* as he notes **their worthless idols** vs. **his sacrifice of thanksgiving**. [note: never says sorry, never confesses sin, never omits wrong doing]
  - 1. We know he says, *ok God I'll do it...but* we know the heart *isn't* fully fixed (from ch.4)
  - 2. **Idol...anything you value more than God.**
    - a) Slide#22 *The human heart is an idol making factory.* John Calvin
    - b) "The pain you are experiencing is God prying open your hands to take back all the gifts you are holding **more dearly than Him.**" Tim Keller
  - 3. Instead of locating our identity **in Christ**, we locate our identity in things **smaller than Christ**. - Your role. Your reputation. your **Spot**. Your spouse.
- B. Slide#23<sub>blank</sub> Why do you think God answered Jonah's prayer then?
  - 1. God's love for **Jonah**. Gods compassion on the **Ninevites**. God's Grace...period.
- C. (9) **Salvation is of the Lord** - If God owned a Tee-shirt I believe on the front it would say **Search** & on the back it would say **Rescue**. (Search & Rescue)
  - 1. **Salvation** both **spiritually**/salvation & **physically**/deliverance.
  - 2. **Salvation is a gift of God & not an achievement of man.**
- D. Slide#24 (10) So the Lord spoke to the fish, & it vomited Jonah onto dry land - Isn't this the greatest show of **God's Grace to Jonah**...in which end he came out of the great fish???
- E. When you hit bottom, sometimes you wonder if you'll ever bounce back.
- F. Jonah figures out where he is, why he's there, and what his next move is, but he also knows if he is ever going to see the light of day again, it will be because **God rescues him**.

G. In his book, *A Sacred Sorrow*, Michael Card writes, “**Lament** is one of the most direct paths to the true praise we know we have lost. **In fact**, **lament** is not a path to worship, **but** the path of worship.”

H. Slide#25 My Poem: Jonah 2

1. Into the Deep, No more Sleep. Whale Breath, Almost my Death.  
Out of sight, But not out of Gods. Watery Grave, What's my Odds?  
Warm seaweed all *mooshy*. I feel like human Sushi.  
3 nights & 3 days. From the belly I prayed.  
God a Shaker & Mover. Did a *Whale Heimlich Maneuver*.  
Oh, to again Kiss the Dust. I guess for me...it's Nineveh or Bust.

I. Slide#26 Jesus died for us so we can be **rescued** from the **pit** of **sin**.

1. Let me also add that there is **no pit** in life *He cannot save you from* if you will **trust Him**.
- J. The most important thing you need to remember when you hit bottom is **not how far you've fallen** or how **impossible** your situation seems. The most important thing to remember is *Who* can rescue you from the pit.
- K. **A man** fell into a pit and try as he did, he could not get out.  
**A counselor** came along and said, "I feel your pain."  
**A Logic professor** came along and said, "It's logical that someone would fall down there."  
**A politician** pledged to appoint a committee to work on how to help people out of pits.  
**A Pharisee** walked by and said, "Only bad people fall into a pit."  
**A news reporter** promised the exclusive story on the plight of those who fall into pits.  
**An IRS collector** asked if he was paying taxes on the pit.  
**A TV evangelist** said, "Just confess that you're not in a pit."  
**An optimist** said, "Things could be worse."  
**A pessimist** said, "Things will get worse."  
*But then* Jesus came by, and seeing the man, *took him by the hand and lifted him out of the pit*.
1. If you live long enough, you will find yourself at the bottom. **The bottom may fall out for you financially, or emotionally, or spiritually, but it will come.** Everybody spends time at the bottom. *The important thing to know is how to bounce back from the bottom.*
2. **He is completely and utterly helpless to save himself; God must save him.**
  - a) The old hymn expresses it this way:  
I was sinking deep in sin, Far from the peaceful shore,  
Very deeply stained within, Sinking to rise no more;  
But the Master of the sea, Heard my despairing cry,  
From the waters lifted me - Now safe am I.  
*Love lifted me, Love lifted me; When nothing else could help Love lifted me.*

3. Jonah has shown us how to do this: **by** Crying out in prayer, **by** asking 3 questions, **by** *Expecting His Hand of Help* [**Or by turning to & trusting in** the Lord to save/deliver you]
- L. Do you need help getting out of your pit today? Why not call out to the Lord and let Him lift you up?