

## A tale of two storms

### Msg

#### Introduction

- We all experience storms in our life - they are often unexpected and can severely shake our faith and confidence.
- Scripture is full of stories of people dealing with literal - and figurative storms they endured.
- This morning I want to look at two different storms, and learn about the one who sent the storm
- **Jonah** Consider the storm Jonah faced.
- He had Gods call to go to Nineveh - but instead of obeying, he fled in the opposite direction.
- So God sent this storm to get his attention
- See **Jonah 1:4-5 (ESV)** *(4) But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. (5) Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep.*
- **Paul** Paul on the other hand had been arrested in Jerusalem and was given safe passage from there to the protection of Felix the governor in Caesarea because there was a plot to kill him
- There he sat for a couple of years - until finally he appealed to have his case heard in Rome before Caesar.
- The set sail for Rome (against Paul's advice) and soon sailed into a storm
- Let's read **Acts 27:13-20 (ESV)** *(13) Now when the south wind blew gently, supposing that they had obtained their purpose, they weighed anchor and sailed along Crete, close to the shore. (14) But soon a tempestuous wind, called the northeaster, struck down from the land. (15) And when the ship was caught and could not face the wind, we gave way to it and were driven along. (16) Running under the lee of a small island called Cauda, we managed with difficulty to secure the ship's boat. (17) After hoisting it up, they used supports to undergird the ship. Then, fearing that they would run aground on the Syrtis, they lowered the gear, and thus they were driven along. (18) Since we were violently storm-tossed, they*

*began the next day to jettison the cargo. (19) And on the third day they threw the ship's tackle overboard with their own hands. (20) When neither sun nor stars appeared for many days, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope of our being saved was at last abandoned.*

### **The reason they were in the storm**

- Important to note the storms came to both of these men
- Yet - the way they got into the storm was very different
- **Jonah** was running from God's call. See **Jonah 1:1-3 (ESV)** *(1) Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, (2) "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me." (3) But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.*
- **Paul** was following the Lord's instruction to tell the Gospel in Rome. See **Acts 23:11 (ESV)** *(11) The following night the Lord stood by him and said, "Take courage, for as you have testified to the facts about me in Jerusalem, so you must testify also in Rome."*
- This was while he was still in Jerusalem - and hadn't even been whisked away to Caesarea yet. The Lord had called him to Rome - and Paul was heading there when the storm hit.
- **Point:** We must not judge a person just because they are in a storm.

### **The purpose of each storm**

- **For Jonah** corrective. God had called him to Nineveh, and Jonah ran. God sent the storm to turn him back!
- God provided the great fish to swallow him - and from there Jonah cried for mercy **Jonah 1:17 (ESV)** *(17) And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*
- See his prayer from the belly of the great fish!
- **Point:** God loves us enough to send us storms to correct our course when we are headed away from Him. **This storm was a result of God's love for Jonah - even as Jonah ran**
- **For Paul** that God's glory be revealed. Paul made glorifying Jesus his entire life's goal! Anywhere he was - he brought glory to God.
- In this storm, he was able to testify to the sailors, his jailers and ultimately the people on Malta. None of these would have heard without the storm

- **Point** When we surrender our lives to God, even the storms are for His glory. If our goal is His glory, we can rely on them. See **Rom 8:28 (ESV)** (28) *And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.*
- **In both cases** God is in the reconciliation business. He is **always** working to redeem fallen man
- As I studied these two storms - one thing became abundantly clear - God was working to bring lost people to himself.
- This is why Jesus came: **Luke 19:10 (ESV)** (10) *For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."*
- See the parables of the lost in Luke 15
- Let's go through each story and see how true this is
  - The sailors on the boat worshipped God when the calm came: **Jonah 1:16 (ESV)** (16) *Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.*
  - The people of Nineveh heard God's word and repented. See **Jonah 3:3-10 (ESV)** (3) *So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. (4) Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (5) And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. (6) The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. (7) And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, (8) but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. (9) Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish." (10) When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, **God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.***
  - In Paul's story - he warned them not to sail, but when the storm came and they were desperate (throwing tackle and cargo overboard - they were ready to listen to Paul
  - See **Acts 27:21-26 (ESV)** (21) *Since they had been without food for a long time, Paul stood up among them and said, "Men, you should have listened to me and not have set sail from Crete and incurred this injury and loss. (22) Yet*

*now I urge you to take heart, for there will be no loss of life among you, but only of the ship. (23) For this very night there stood before me an angel of the God to whom I belong and whom I worship, (24) and he said, 'Do not be afraid, Paul; you must stand before Caesar. And behold, God has granted you all those who sail with you.' (25) So take heart, men, for I have faith in God that it will be exactly as I have been told. (26) But we must run aground on some island."*

- When they arrived (via shipwreck) at Malta - the islanders watched a snake bite Paul, and when he didn't die - they listened to him, and he healed them (and the governor) and they blessed Paul
- He was given freedom in Rome and was able to preach the Gospel and minister to believers
- He was ultimately re-arrested, but from prison wrote letters of encouragement to the churches and spelled out the Gospel message for even us today
- He was able to testify to the palace guard, other prisoners and even before Caesar himself

## **Application**

### **We are in the reconciliation business**

- God is in the business of bringing the lost to himself
- We see this in both stories
- And we are his partners (Matt 28 - go ye)
- See **2 Cor 5:17-20 (ESV)** (17) *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. (18) All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; (19) that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. (20) Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.*

### **God's not finished**

- Maybe we have run like Jonah - or prioritized something else.
- One of my favorite verses - **Jonah 3:1 (ESV)** (1) *Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying,*

- God's not finished with us yet!
- No matter how far you've run - God's plan and purpose still stands

**Jonah never learned**

- Spared by the fish
- Saw revival in Nineveh
- Waited for their destruction and was angry it didn't come
- Never connected the dots
- We must: forgive as we've been forgiven
- See parable of the man who owed much

**What is the purpose of the storm are you in?**

- Do you find yourself in a storm today?
- What is God doing?