

# Down to the Deep

## The Book of Jonah Chapter 2

### Morning Prayer (Used by John Stott)

*Good morning, heavenly Father; good morning Lord Jesus; good morning Holy Spirit.*

*Heavenly Father, I worship you, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. Lord Jesus, I worship you, Savior and Lord of the world. Holy Spirit, I worship you, Sanctifier of the people of God.*

*Heavenly Father, I pray that I may live this day in your presence and please you more and more. Lord Jesus, I pray that this day I may take up my cross and follow you. Holy Spirit, I pray that this day you will fill me with yourself and cause your fruit to ripen in my life: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.*

*Holy, blessed and glorious Trinity, three persons in one God, have mercy on me Amen.*

### Settle Down

Take some time to settle yourself and calm your mind. Breathe deeply and invite the Lord into your awareness. Review where you have been and what you have been doing for the past 24 hours. When did you experience God with you during that time? When did you feel absent from Him? Thank Him.

### Scripture Reading

Jonah described the sensation of drowning. Read chapter 2 paying careful attention to the images and feelings conveyed.

1. When in your life have you experienced a dissent into darkness, depression, disillusionment, or despair? Reflect on what that experience was like for you.
2. Jonah 2:6-7 describes a turning point. He was headed *down* to the roots of the underworld and the Lord brought him *up*. When have you experienced that “*down, up*” movement in your life? Take time to journal your answer.
3. In Jonah 2:8-9, Jonah, out of a sense of love and gratitude, renews his vows to the Lord. The renewal is more than a recommitment to a task at hand; it is the recommitment to a relationship with the Lord. What daily, weekly, or monthly rituals help keep you in relationship with God?

### Out of the Depths I Cry to You

*What lies hidden beneath the superficial surface of our souls?*

*What treasure or trial might lurk in the murky depths?*

*An underwater world, where sea creatures swim languidly looking for a nibble*

*While sea monsters prowl for prey.*

*It's a place of dreams and forgotten memories where myths and metaphors are born,*



*Where poetry and painting originate.  
A place where ghosts and goblins haunt and guardian angels hover.  
A dark womb of creativity and chaos into which midnight monks cast their nets,  
Hoping for a catch that will sustain their empty lives for another day.  
Sadly "No Fishing" signs keep the cognitive majority away from the deep.  
Only the eccentric and deviant venture near.  
By choosing quantity over quality, clarity over confusion and the pragmatic over the profound,  
We strip Reality of all her adorning beauty leaving her cold, calculating, and boringly predictable.  
In our affluence we exchange absent gods for present goods and substitute entertainment spectacle for  
the sacred.  
Expectations are diminished to what can be seen, bought, or experienced and our ancient instinctual  
capacity to be astonished is abandoned.  
But the deep does not disappear just because we fail to fling our fragile web of words into the caldron of  
chaos.  
"Out of the depth I cry to you O Lord. Hear my voice. Hear my voice!"<sup>1</sup>*

### Readings for Reflection

Being estranged from God means being unaware of and out of touch with the heights and depths of our personality; it means being estranged from our center and unable to live our own truth. The sickness and lostness of humanity which the Gospels describe is a condition in which we are carried away by unconscious fears and desires, are deaf to the promptings of an intuitive wisdom, reject forces within ourselves making for health and healing, and find the spring of life poisoned. Out of touch with our true center, "the heart's heart," we are driven by an innate need to find another center, an absolute to give order and direction to our life; we are liable to find ourselves compulsively attached to some cause or object which takes the place of our true center. *Christopher Bryant, The River Within, page 30*

I have frequently seen people become neurotic when they content themselves with inadequate or wrong answers to the questions of life. They seek position, marriage, reputation, outward success or money, and remain unhappy and neurotic even when they have attained what they were seeking. Such people are usually contained within too narrow a spiritual horizon. Their life has not sufficient meaning. Meaningless inhibits the fullness of life and is therefore equivalent to illness. Meaning makes a great many things endurable—perhaps everything" *Carl Jung in Memories, Dreams, Reflections page 340*

The moment that any of us embarks on work that deals with our fellow humans at the core and depths of being where God and sin and holiness are at issue, we become at that same moment subject to countless dangers, interference, pretenses, and errors that we would have been quite safe from otherwise. So called "spiritual work" exposes us to spiritual sins. Temptations of the flesh, difficult as they are to resist, are at least easy to detect. Temptations of the spirit usually show up disguised as invitations to virtue. *Eugene Peterson in Under the Unpredictable Plant*

### Benediction

O God of the deep, we trust you to meet us when we enter into places of darkness and death, in sorrow and sin, in confusion and chaos. Your loving-kindness is greater than any other force in the universe. Thank you for your servant Jonah and your son Jesus who have traveled the road before us. Guide our steps and you did theirs. Amen

<sup>1</sup> Artwork (Acrylic Collage on Paper, 12 x 12 inches, 2019) and Reflection by Steven Stuckey