



Jesus and Jonah

A Resurrection Emphasis in the Gospel of Matthew

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You know the story of Jonah and the whale¹. Jonah was the reluctant prophet whom God sent to Nineveh -- an infamously evil city in Jonah's day. Jonah chose not to go and disobeyed God. He ended up on a ship in a storm, and the superstitious sailors blamed him for the storm and the danger they were in, so they threw him overboard. God provided a giant fish to swallow him and miraculously kept Jonah alive for three days inside the fish before spitting him up on the shore. Jonah learned his lesson, he went to Nineveh, preached the gospel, and the city repented!

Jesus uses the story of Jonah to help us understand His own death, burial, and resurrection from the dead. Here's what Jesus said:

Jesus said, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

For as **Jonah** was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the **Son of Man** will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. Matt 12:39-40

The story of Jonah is a foreshadow of Jesus and His death, burial, and resurrection². Jonah was "buried" when he was swallowed by the whale; and given "new life" three days later when he was spit up on shore. In a much greater way, Jesus was "swallowed up" in death; and three days later He physically rose from the dead -- He is alive -- never to die again!

¹ False teachers claim that Jonah's story never happened; they claim that it is just a parable as they continually rip the miraculous out of Scriptures. As conservative Lutherans, we hold that it is a true story of one of God's prophets, as Jesus confirms in the Gospel of Matthew.

² In Biblical studies, Jonah is a "type" of Christ, and Christ is the fulfillment of that type, called the "antitype". Something about the "type" corresponds and teaches us about Jesus. The New Testament makes the connections for us. Other familiar OT "types" revealed in the NT include Adam, Moses, Manna, Passover Lamb, Bronze Serpent, Melchizedek, Solomon, et al --> these all teach us about Jesus and His work of salvation for us!

Think about what is happening here: *Jesus is predicting His own resurrection from the dead! And it happened just like He said!* **NO ONE COULD DO THAT BUT GOD HIMSELF!** Only God can overcome death and return to life by His own power! One of the things that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ does for us is to confirm that Jesus is the almighty, all-powerful Son of God!

[Jesus was] designated the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by His resurrection from the dead Romans 1:4

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the greatest miracle of all; it is the sign that God has given to the world that proves that Jesus really is the Son of God! God came into the world to do the work of salvation for us! It is now complete, the work is finished! The Resurrection proves it! You can have *complete confidence* and *full assurance* of eternal salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ!

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the greatest miracle of all; it is the sign that Jesus is the Son of God, and it is also the basis of your *justification* before God!

[Righteousness] will be counted to us who believe in Him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord; He was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification. Romans 4:24-25

The word *Justification* or *Righteousness* in the New Testament means a *legal verdict* of “**Not Guilty!**”. Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, God the Father declares you not guilty of your sins; you are justified by faith through the Lord Jesus Christ. Righteousness is a gift that God freely gives to you!

In the Resurrection, God the Father accepts the sacrifice of His Son on the cross for your sins; and He **proves it to** you by raising His Son from the dead on the Third Day. It is as if God the Father is giving you a receipt that says “*your sins have been paid in full*”. The Son of God was *declared guilty* in your place and He died for you; now you are *declared “not guilty”* and you are given eternal life. You are righteous because of Jesus who died, and more than that, who rose from the dead on the Third Day. This is all captured in the word “*Justification*.”

- ⇒ This means that your sins have been forgiven; they are removed from you and they'll never be heard from again.
- ⇒ This means that you have peace with God; you have a good, clean, and clear conscience through faith in Jesus.
- ⇒ This means that you have eternal life: the certain hope of the resurrection of the dead and the life everlasting.

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is the greatest miracle of all;

1. Jesus predicted it before it happened
2. It is the sign that proves that Jesus really is God *in the flesh!*
3. It is basis of your *justification* and *righteousness* before God!

When Jesus used Jonah as an example of His own resurrection, one of the things that He implied was that **one greater than** Jonah is here. Jesus is more than a prophet; He is God Himself! Jesus was teaching the people to listen to Him like they would listen to a prophet ... Jesus speaks with authority and His Word is true.

The prophet Jonah would go on to preach the Gospel to the evil city of Nineveh, and they listened and believed Jonah's words. The city was spared from destruction.

Jesus is far greater than Jonah, He speaks with the authority of God, because He is God! *We are to listen and believe His words.* The resurrection of Jesus Christ teaches us that He is the all-powerful Son of God who has come into this world to bring eternal salvation. We are to listen and believe His words. **Jesus speaks the words of eternal life to you.** Here are some examples:

Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. Whoever believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. John 11:25-26

For God so loved the world, that He gave His Only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. 1 John 5:11

Jesus Christ . . . is the true God and eternal life. 1 John 5:20

This is just a sample of the many promises God has made about eternal life. Today hear these words and listen to the promises of the crucified, buried, and risen Son of God, **and believe them!** Eternal life is a gift that God freely gives to you through faith in Jesus.

Faith is not a work that you do; nor a decision that you make. It is a gift that God gives you! Faith hears the words of life in Jesus Christ, knows that they are true, and that they apply to you. Faith makes the promises of God personal! Today believe that the Son of God has risen from the dead on the third day and gives you eternal life!

Can you believe that an ancient prophet of long ago helps us to understand what Easter Sunday is all about?! Just as Jonah was in a fish for three days, so too Jesus was dead and buried for three days! On the Third Day, Jesus rose from the dead! He is alive! He has risen from the dead never to die again!

- ✚ He is the Son of God!
- ✚ He has earned your justification and righteousness before God!
- ✚ and He speaks the words of eternal life to you!

Today may you hear these words, know that they are true, and put your faith in them!

Amen!

GOD'S PROMISES OF ETERNAL LIFE!

In Christ was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. John 1:4

For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life John 3:36

“Truly, Truly I tell you, whoever hears My word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life. John 5:24

For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the Last Day.” John 6:40

Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of My hand. John 10:28

Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in Me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. John 11:25-26

Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. John 17:3

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. John 20:31

EASTER PRAYER

Father in heaven, You raised Your Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead as the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. Fill all Your baptized people with the joy of His victory, and send us forth as witnesses to His resurrection.

Lord, wherever Your Gospel is preached throughout the world, create and sustain faith in all who hear it, delivering them from the power of darkness and bringing them into the Kingdom of Your risen Son Jesus Christ. Lord, bless our efforts here at Trinity Lutheran Church and School to make disciples as we baptize and teach your Holy Word.

Heavenly Father, in every time of need, hear the prayers of those who call upon You, especially those who are in distress, those who are lonely and homebound, the sick, the dying and the mourning. May Your Son ever be their joy in sorrow, their health in sickness, and their life in death.

King of the nations, remember in Your kindness all who bear authority in our land, and give them wisdom and integrity that they may serve us according to Your will.

Lord we pray today for our church body, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, and ask that your powerful Holy Spirit will be at work through your Holy Word to create and strengthen faith and to make disciples of many people.

Into Your hands, O Lord, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in Your mercy, through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, Amen!

Matthew 12:38-42

Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.” 39 He answered, “A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here. 42 The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon’s wisdom, and now something greater than Solomon is here.

Matthew 28:1-10

¹After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb. ²There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. ⁴The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men. ⁵The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. ⁶He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you." ⁸So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. ⁹Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."