

Jonah's God, My God

[The Book of Jonah]

**God's servant like Jonah:
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Introduction

A servant like Jonah

My favorite book in the Bible is Jonah. The reason I liked Jonah was because I was challenged when Professor Futato, who taught Hebrew when I was attending Westminster Seminary, taught Jonah in Hebrew. Especially when he interpreted Jonah chapter 1 in Hebrew, I began to be attracted to Jonah because of his insight. Then, when I went to Fuller Theological Seminary I took Professor Charles Van Engen's missionary class. And he introduced a book that he liked and he wanted us to read it. The title of the book was "Jonah and the Worm" (author: Jill Briscoe). Professor Van Engen said that he likes this book after the Bible. So I was curious about what kind of book it was. I bought it and began to read it. And I could not get it off from my hand after I started reading it because I loved the book. This book made me feel more attractive to Jonah. So I meditated on the Book of Jonah from chapter 1 to 4, and I preached in my church. And after preaching, I have enjoyed the grace of God in my everyday life that I was like Jonah. Like Jonah, I saw my own disobedience to the command of God. But I was grateful to God because God still loved me and cherished me like he did to Jonah. As I enjoyed this gracious blessing from God, I liked the Book of Jonah more than before. And it is my confession that by God's great love and grace who loves such pastor like me who is like Jonah, I cannot help but thank God for being here with me and has guided me and led me thus far.

With thanksgiving in my heart, I wrote this book, "Jonah's God, my God." I am grateful to God for challenging me to write this book. I also thank God for allowing me to share this book with you. My hope and prayer is that the God of Jonah will give you great grace and love as I share this book with you.

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Pastor James Kim
(Recognizing that I am a pastor like Jonah)

Jonah's God (1)

[Jonah 1:1-6]

I remember two movies with similar names. The two films are titled "Mission" and "Mission Impossible". Comparing these two films, we are more attracted to the movie "Mission Impossible" than "Mission". The reason is that the hero in the mission film "Mission" is killed in the end after suffering while he was preaching the gospel in the jungle, while the hero in the movie "Mission Impossible" ultimately defeat the wicked and win. We like the result of the movie that the hero defeats the wicked and triumphantly. But we do not like the hero dying. Our human nature instinct loves to live. We don't like to sacrifice and martyr for Jesus and His mission. This is the image of Christians in our modern church.

Pastor William Chadwick used two words to describe the modern church Christians in his book "Stealing Sheep": "Church shoppers" and "McChurch". This is what Pastor Chadwick said about "Church shoppers": 'Church shoppers refer to those who come into the church for personal gain and leave the church for the same reason. The problem is that the modern church is filled with church shoppers and church consumers and thus it is not stable.' And this is what he said about "McChurch": 'The McChurch is a church that allows the fast-food Christians to choose from a variety of programs, replacing traditional house churches and their relationship-centric values. Just as fast-food-loving customers go to McDonald's and choose their favorite foods from the menu, the fast-food Christians demand what they want from the McChurch. And after they experienced that the church offered to them, they go away like the McDonald customer who throw away a hamburger wrapper on the highway after they finished eating. This is what Pastor Chadwick said about the modern church Christians: 'People are no longer loyal to the church that is rooting in church history and tradition. The consumer sentiment has changed the nature of the commitment to the church. The church has changed from serving to wishing to be served. When a family chooses a church, the denomination is pushed to a secondary problem and the question "Does this church fulfill our needs?" becomes the highest priority (Chadwick). What do you think of Pastor Chadwick's words?

As I look at Jonah's selfishness and disobedience under the heading of "Jonah's God (1)" based on Jonah 1:1-6, I want to meditate on how God fulfilled his will even through such servant like Jonah. We want to receive lessons from God. I hope and pray that we may be obedient to what God wants from us.

First, God wants us to join his mission.

Look at Jonah 1:1-2: "The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me'." This is the scene where God is calling Jonah. What was God's command toward Jonah? It was to arise, go to that great city, Nineveh, and cry against it (v.1). What was he supposed to preach to the people in Nineveh? It was "the message I(God) gave you(Jonah)" (3:2). Why did God command Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against it? The reason is that Nineveh's wickedness had come up before God (v. 2). In other words, because the sins of Nineveh "have piled up as high as heaven" (Rev. 18: 5), God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach against it (Jon. 1:2).

The sins of this world we now live in are piling up as high as heaven. The sins that cannot be imagined are enormous in this world. So now God is calling us to join him in his mission. God is telling us to go to this world and preach against this sinful world. What does God want us to preach against this sinful world? Don't you think God is telling us to cry out to this world, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 3:2)? We must arise and go to this world and preach the message of repentance and the message of the gospel. We must humbly join this

God's mission. The surprise is that God wants to accomplish the mission of salvation through us who are like Jonah. As we know, the name "Jonah" means 'dove', 'insensitive, and 'senseless'. Interestingly, the name "Amittai," the father of Jonah, means "my truth, my faithfulness." I think these two names show the truth that appears in the whole flow of Jonah. The truth is that even though Jonah is insensitive and senseless, Jonah's Heavenly Father God is true and faithful to Jonah. We who live in this sinful world are as insensitive and indifferent as Jonah, but our Heavenly Father is truthful and faithful to us. And the true and faithful God wants to accomplish his sovereign will through us, like Jonah, who is insensitive and indiscreet. What should we do? We must humbly obey and participate in God's mission.

Second, God is calling us on his mission.

Why is God calling me and you on His mission? Is it because we are qualified? It is not. God never calls us conditionally. Aren't we as insensitive and foolish as Jonah? Isn't God calling us to missions, even though we are like Jonah who didn't concern about the 120,000 dying souls of the Nineveh? Doesn't God want to use such people like us who are insensitive and lacked the heart to save they dying souls? God calls us because our God is God who has abundant grace and mercy (Jon. 4:2). God wants to manifest his glory through us. Then how should we respond to God's calling?

We must have conviction in God's calling. But now many Christians are living a faith life without conviction of God's calling. Now we are living in this sinful world and forgetting that God is calling us. We are forgetting the purpose God has created us in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:10). We are not sure why God chose such people like us who are not wise by human standards, not influential and of noble birth but who are "the foolish things", "the weak things", "the lowly things" and "the despised things"(1 Cor. 1:26-27) . We are living without knowing God's purpose of choosing us. Why did God choose us? Why did he call us? What is God's purpose? God's purpose is for us to participate in his mission to share the gospel of Jesus Christ and save God's chosen people. Why? The reason is that God wants everyone to be saved and to know the truth (1 Tim. 2:4). This is the heart of our Heavenly Father.

What about our hearts? What is our hearts toward this sinful world? Do we, like our Father's heart, want everyone to be saved and to know the truth? So, are we heading toward this world with the heart of Jesus Christ (Phil 1:8)? We must have a conviction of God's calling. Many times we wonder why God called us. And one of the reasons why we wonder is because we look at ourselves rather than God. We cannot but doubt the calling of God when we look at ourselves who are unfaithful, rather than seeing God who is faithful and gracious. At that time, we must hold onto the Word of God. The God's Word Romans 11:29 tells us: "for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable." We must have conviction that God's call is irrevocable. Also we must have conviction that God has called us to his mission and he wants to use us to save the dying souls. In doing so, we can have confidence in the Lord and courageously and consistently fulfill God's mission. And eventually with God's help there will be completion of God's mission.

Lastly, God is demanding our obedience to his calling.

God, who wants us to join his mission, is calling us and demanding us for obedience. God who demands our obedience is God who deserves our obedience. But the problem is that we are disobeying God's calling. Then we lie (including deceiving ourselves) and make excuses to justify our disobedience. As an example, look at King Saul in 1 Samuel 15:22-23. King Saul disobeyed God's command. God's mission to him was this: "... Go and completely destroy those wicked people, the Amalekites; make war on them until you have wiped them out" (v. 18). However, King Saul disobeyed this mission of God (v. 9). "But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs--everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy

completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed” (v. 9). Then he lied to the prophet Samuel: “I have carried out the LORD's instructions” (v. 13). So Samuel asked him: “What then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? What is this lowing of cattle that I hear?” (v. 14) At that time Saul's excuse was this: “The soldiers brought them from the Amalekites; they spared the best of the sheep and cattle to sacrifice to the LORD your God, but we totally destroyed the rest” (v. 15), “The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the LORD your God at Gilgal” (v. 21). What a plausible excuse? King Saul's excuse was that he disobeyed God's command in order to sacrifice to God. Aren't we now disobeying God's command with this kind of excuse? If so, God's Word to us is clear: "... To obey is better than sacrifice ... "(v. 22).

How did the prophet Jonah respond to God's command? The prophet Jonah did not want to join the mission of God. He disobeyed God's command. Rather, he fled from the Lord. Look at Jonah 1:3 – “But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish.” He fled to Tarshish, the opposite direction of Nineveh, the missionary place where God told him to go. He was trying to hide from the Lord. The phrases “away from the Lord” and “to flee from the Lord” do not mean that Jonah was trying to escape from the omnipresent God. This is impossible (Jer. 23:24). This means that Jonah ran away from the Lord as far as he could from Nineveh so that he thought God had to find another servant to send him to Nineveh (Park Yun-sun). Why then did Jonah disobey God's command? There are three possible reasons:

- (1) The first possible reason is that Jonah doubted that Nineveh would hear the word of God that he proclaimed (Denison).

The prophet Jonah, who prophesied the Israel's abundant blessings as a prophet for Israel (cf. 2 Kgs. 14:25, 26), proclaimed to the Israelites to repent and return to God. But the Israelites who were sinning did not obey the words of Prophet Jonah. So Jonah doubted that the people of Assyria, the Israel's enemy, would hear him since his own people the Israelites didn't hear him. Therefore, Jonah disobeyed God's command to go to Nineveh and preach against them.

- (2) The second possible reason is that Jonah knew that God would use Assyria (the capital: Nineveh) as a 'stick' to discipline Israel.

Jonah knew that because of the progressive rebellion (sin) of Israel, God would discipline the Israelites with the Assyrian (Compare: Hos. 11:5; Amos 5:27) through his contemporary's prophets Hosea and Amos prophets (cf. Hos. 1:1, Amos 1:1, 2 Kgs. 14:23). Therefore, if Jonah had patriotism as a prophet of Israel, he would certainly have hoped for the destruction of Assyria. So he disobeyed God's command to go to Nineveh and preach against them.

- (3) The third possible reason is that Jonah knew that God is “a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity” (Jon. 4:2).

Jonah disobeyed God's command because he knew that if the people of Nineveh repented, God would forgive them (MacArthur). Jonah didn't love the people of Nineveh, who were the Israel's enemy and the dying souls, with the heart of God. Though God's thought was that the Ninevites would repent and be saved, the thoughts of God's servant Prophet Jonah was that Nineveh should be condemned. Maybe Jonah might have thought of this in his head: 'If Nineveh repents, God will bless rather than bring disaster on the Ninevites. But God will not bless the Israelites because the Israelites live in sin. Instead, God will bring disaster on the Israelites. Therefore, God will turn away his face from the chosen Israelites and turn his face toward the Gentile Ninevites.' Maybe Jonah had this fear and may

have disobeyed God's command. In the end, Jonah disobeyed God's command because he wanted his will be done instead of God's will. This Jonah's disobedience reflects the Israelites who disobey God's command, as though the godless Gomer of Hosea reflected the Israelites who were guilty of idolatry. Just as God's servant Jonah did not disobey God's commands, the Israelites, the people of God, was disobeying God's command. After all, Jonah is making the sad spiritual situation of the people of Israel. And the sad spiritual state of the Israelites is disobeying God's command and God's divine calling. What is the consequence of their disobedience? It is the discipline of God.

If we disobey God's calling, God will discipline us. The Creator God chastened Jonah, who disobeyed his call. Look at Jonah 1:4 – “Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up.” Here we can think of two kinds of storms:

(1) Storm of Perfection

In Matthew 8:23-27, God the Creator has given the disciples of Jesus a storm to perfection. Although they were obedient to the Lord's Word, God gave them the storm of perfection for their faith to grow.

(2) Storm of Correction

This storm of correction is the storm that appears in Jonah 1:4. The Lord loved disobedient Jonah and gave him the storm of correction so that he might obey God's command. Here the "great wind" was used as a stick of God's discipline to Jonah (God's first tool). Why does God discipline us when we sin? The Scripture Hebrews 12:4-11 reveals five reasons:

- (a) Because God loves us (v. 6)
- (b) Because we are God's children (v. 6)
- (c) Because God wants us to share his holiness (v.10)
- (d) Because God wants to train us (v. 11)
- (e) God wants us to bear the peaceful fruits of righteousness (v.11).

God used the great wind as stick to discipline Jonah. The sailors and Jonah responded differently to this discipline of God. Look at the response of the sailors (means “salts”): “Then the sailors became afraid and every man cried to his god, and they threw the cargo which was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them” (v. 5a). The sailors called their god when the ship was about to break up (v. 4) because of God's discipline. In other words, they prayed to their god. Then they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship (v. 5). Isn't it interesting that God ‘threw’ the storm in the sea (v. 4) and the sailors ‘threw’ the cargo into the sea (v. 5). It seems that unbeliever sailors are more likely to follow God's actions than God's prophet Jonah. How then did Jonah respond to God's discipline, the great wind? Look at verse 5b: “But Jonah had gone below into the hold of the ship, lain down and fallen sound asleep.” Although God told him to “Arise, go to Nineveh” (v. 2), Jonah ‘went down’ to Joppa (v. 3), ‘went down’ to the ship (v. 3), and ‘went down’ into the hold of the ship (v. 5). He was doing the opposite thing from the command of God. To this Jonah, who was contrary to the Word of God, God once again echoed his command through the unbeliever's captain. Look at verse 6: “So the captain approached him and said, “How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish.” Although God told him “Arise” (v. 2), Jonah ‘went down’ to Joppa (v. 3), ‘went down’ to the ship (v. 3), and ‘went down’ into the hold of the ship, “where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep” (v. 5). I cannot but wonder how Jonah could have been asleep so deep when the ship was about to break up because of the great storm that sent (v. 4). At that time, the captain of the ship said to Jonah “Get up, call on your god” (v. 6). God reminded Jonah the command of God “Arise” (v. 2) through the captain, “Get up” (v. 6). The captain of the ship was God's

second tool [the first tool of God is "the great wind" (v. 4)]. Not only did God discipline Jonah who was disobeying God's command through the great wind and the great storm, God also reminded Jonah the command of God again through the Gentile captain. Nevertheless, Jonah was disobeying the command of God. When the Gentile sailors were crying out to their own gods, Jonah fell into a deep sleep. How should we think of this Jonah?

In the image of disobeying Jonah, we can see our own disobedience to God. Although God is saying to us, "Arise and go", aren't we going to opposite direction? Aren't we just keep on going down like Jonah, trying to run away from God? And when God throws a disciplinary storm in our lives, aren't we just laying down and falling in deep sleep like Jonah without knowing that God is disciplining us? When we are spiritually insensitive and indiscreet, God still doesn't give upon us. Instead, God even uses an unbeliever to remind us his command again and make us to cry out to God. What should we do? We must obey God's command. We must obey the calling of God. God is calling us to his mission. He wants us to participate in his mission. I hope and pray that we be obedient to God and live to fulfill God's will by participating in his mission.

A pastor like Jonah, A pastor like Amittai

"The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai" (Jonah 1:1).

The meaning of the name "Jonah" is "dove", "insensitive, senseless".

Jonah lived according to the meaning of his name.

He was a indiscreet prophet.

His mind had no sense of direction.

God called on Jonah to go to the great city "Nineveh" (v. 2)

but Jonah arose and free to the opposite direction of Nineveh (v. 3).

This indiscreet and insensitive Jonah disobeyed God's command.

Pastors like Jonah disobey God's commands.

Pastors like Jonah cannot discern God's will.

Pastors like Jonah do whatever they want.

The name "Amittai," the father of Jonah, means "my truth, my faithfulness."

The Bible only tells us that "Amittai" is the father of Jonah who was a prophet of Israel at the time of Jeroboam king of Israel and he is from Gath Hopher (2 Kgs. 14:25, Jonah 1: 1).

But when I meditate on the book of Jonah, I can see that God, who is a true father to Jonah who is indiscreet and insensitive, is true "Amittai"(my truth, my faithfulness) to Jonah.

The Father God of Jonah sent a "great wind" and "great storm" to Jonah (Jonah 1:4) when Jonah ran away from the Lord, went down to Joppa and went aboard and sailed for Tarshish (v. 3).

The Creator God moved the nature in order to make disobedient Jonah to obey God's command.

Not only that, God also prepared a "great fish" (v. 17) for Jonah when he was thrown into the sea (v. 15).

After that, God spoke to Jonah again, "Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city, and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you" (3:1-2) so he obeyed God's command [(v. 3) "So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD"].

A pastor like Amittai obeys the word of God.

A pastor like Amittai 'Arise and go' (v. 3) and 'cry out' (v. 4) when God commands him to "Arise, go" and "cry" (1:2).

A pastor like Amittai manifests God's truth and God's faithfulness.

‘Arise ... Go ... Cry’

"Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me" (Jonah 1:2).

I summarize the word of God that came to Jonah in three words:

The first word is "Arise".

God commanded the prophet Jonah to "Arise" (v. 2).

According to this command, the prophet Jonah "rose up" (v. 3).

But he did not go to Nineveh, but ran away to Tarshish.

He 'went down' to Joppa, 'went down' into the ship (v. 3),

'went down' into the hold of the ship, "lain down and fallen sound asleep" (v. 5).

To Jonah who fell into a deep sleep, the Gentile captain of the ship went to him and said:

"How is it that you are sleeping? Get up, call on your god

Perhaps your god will be concerned about us so that we will not perish" (v. 6).

God used the captain to remind the disobedient Jonah his command "Arise" (v. 2).

In other words, the captain's word "Get up" (v. 6) was an echo of God's "Arise" command (v. 2).

God commands us to "Arise."

We must arise. We must arise and shine the light of Jesus (Isa. 60:1).

But if we do not arise and lie down and sleep deeply like Jonah

God will remind us again of the word "Arise" to us even through a non-believer.

We must listen to the voice of God that echoes through the non-believer and repent.

And must obey the command of God.

The second word is 'Go'.

God commanded the prophet Jonah to "go to that great city Nineveh" (Jonah 1:2).

But Jonah disobeyed the command and tried to run away to Tarshish (v. 3).

He tried to flee to as far as he could from Nineveh so he ran away to Tarshish in the west of Nineveh.

As a result, God had "a great wind" on the sea, causing "a great storm" to occur in the middle of the sea (v.4).

The ship in which Jonah was in was about to break up (v. 4).

God commands us to "go."

We must go. We must "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Mt. 28:19).

But if we do not go and try to run away like Jonah

God will give us trials of "a great wind" and "a great storm" in our lives.

We will face a great crisis.

But we must keep in mind.

The great crisis for us is a great opportunity that God is giving us.

Trials such as "a great wind" and "a great storm" in our lives are

an opportunity for us to depend on God more and to reflect on ourselves before God.

We should reflect ourselves before God and not before people and the world, and see if we are guilty of disobeying God's command, or that we are far from God. Therefore, if we become aware of our "great sin" like "the great city" Nineveh (Jonah 1:2), then we must the great grace of God by repenting the our great sin (Rom. 5:20). And by God's great grace, we must obey (Jonah 3:3) the God's command that when he gives us a second chance (vv. 1-2),

The third word is 'Cry'.

God said to Jonah, " Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it" (1:2a).

The reason is because "their wickedness has come up before Me" (v. 2b).

"the evil spirits have been raised before me" (v.2).

But Jonah disobeyed the God's command, and the ship that Jonah aboard was about to break up (v. 4) because God caused the great wind to fall on the sea so that the great storm arose (v. 4).

At that time the Gentile sailors were afraid and cried to their gods (v. 5).

Later, these sailors who cried out to their gods cried out to God (v. 14).

And Jonah cried out to God in the belly of the great fish (2:2).

As a result, Jonah was given a second chance (3:1-2).

So he obeyed God's command and went to the great city Nineveh (v. 3).

What did he cried out to Nineveh as he went through the city one day's walk? (v. 4)

It was "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (v.4).

I do not understand it.

Why did the prophet Jonah cry out to the Ninevites: "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown"?

Obviously, God told Jonah to "proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you" (3:2).

So I am sure Jonah would have proclaimed the commandment of God to the people of Nineveh, was "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" all?

Maybe God told Jonah that 'Forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown because you're your wickedness has come up before me (1:2). So repent and return to me. Then I will not bring upon you the destruction' (3:10).

Maybe Jonah worried that God might relent from sending calamity on Nineveh (4:2)

that he proclaimed to the Ninevites "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (3:4)

instead of proclaiming to them 'Repent and return'

since he wanted and expected God to bring calamity on the great city Nineveh (4:5)?

The bigger question is maybe God was crying out to disobedient Jonah through "a great wind", "a great storm" (1:4) and "a great fish" (v. 17).

If this is true, I wonder what God was crying out to Jonah.

Maybe he was crying out 'I am concern about you' (4:11).

I think that God had more concern about his anointed servant Prophet Jonah more than the 120,000 Gentiles the Ninevites who didn't know the difference between their right and left hand (v. 11).

God commands us to "cry".

We must go to this sinful world and cry out.

We must say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt. 3:2; 4:17; Mk. 6:12).

We must go to all the world and preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all people (Mk. 16:15).

God who speaks to the believers even through the non-believers

“All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship. But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish” (Jonah 1:5-6).

After I preached the Word of God Ecclesiastes 4:1-3 under the heading “They have no comforter”, I had a bible study on Jonah 1:1-6 with my church elder and the deacons. Although I already meditated and proclaimed it several times, I had blessed time studying the passage again. Since the indwelling Spirit gave me some insight to the passage, I am writing down what the Spirit has taught me tonight during the church leaders’ bible study. The insight that I got was that God even uses the non-believers to speak to us, the disobedient believers, again.

In Jonah 1:5-6, God sent the storm of correction to the disobedient prophet Jonah that the ship on which Jonah was about to break up (v. 4). And God spoke to Jonah again through the Gentile sailors who were worshiping their gods (idols) and the captain of the ship so that Jonah might have second chance to obey God’s command of “Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it” (1:2).

First, God used the non-believer sailors.

God used non-believer sailors to give his servant Prophet Jonah the opportunity to repent and turn to God in the midst of a ship that was about to break up. When God sent the storm of correction to the disobedient prophet Jonah so the ship that he boarded was about to break (v. 4). So the non-believer Gentile sailors became afraid and every man cried to his god (v. 5). But in such a crisis, Jonah didn’t cry out to God. Instead, he fell into a deep sleep below deck (v. 5). Since Jonah was God’s servant, shouldn’t he cry out to God by seeing the non-believer sailors crying out to their own gods? Shouldn’t he realize his sin of disobeying God’s command and repent his sin when the ship he boarded was about to break up due to the storm that God sent? But Jonah was asleep. While he was sleeping deeply, the non-believer sailors threw the cargo into the sea in order to lighten the ship (v. 5). What is interesting here is that as God ‘threw’ a great wind on the sea in order to make his disobedient servant Jonah to repent his sin and to obey God’s command (v. 4), the sailors “threw” the cargo into the sea (v. 5). But Jonah fell into deep sleep even in the midst of such crisis. Who resemble more like God’s doing? Was it God’s servant Jonah who was sleeping or the non-believer sailors who was throwing the cargo into the sea? It wasn’t Jonah. It was the sailors who resembled God’s doing. Later in the story, the sailors cast lots to find out who was responsible for the calamity and the lot fell on Jonah (v. 7). So Jonah confessed that “I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you” (v. 12). And he told them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea” (v. 12). Jonah realized that the reason God threw a storm in the sea was to throw Jonah himself into the sea.

Second, God used the non-believer captain.

God, not only used the non-believer sailors, but also he used the non-believer captain of the ship to remind Jonah that he was disobeying God’s command (mission). God used the non-believer captain of the ship and his words to Jonah, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us, and we will not perish” (v. 6), not only to wake him up but also to remind him the God’s command of “Arise” by echoing the God’s command in his heart (v. 2). To Jonah who was in deep sleep, the captain’s word “Get up” was a good opportunity for Jonah to remember the God’s command “Arise, go to Nineveh ...” (v. 2). Also, when the captain

said “call on your god!” to Jonah (v. 6), God gave Jonah a good opportunity for him to pray to God and repent his sin. However, Jonah didn’t pray to God. In the end, Jonah prayed to God when he went down into the belly of the great fish that went down to the depths of the sea (ch. 2). Don’t we see this image of Jonah in us?

Jonah’s God is our God. And while our God is speaking to us, we often have insensitivity to the Word of God and discernment of the Word, just as Jonah is insensitive and indiscreet. As a result, we often disobey God’s word, like Jonah, and often receive disciplines from God. The problem is that even when we are subjected to God’s discipline, we do not realize our sin of our disobedience and we are also asleep deeply in spirit, just as Jonah fell asleep deeply under the deck. We are spiritually sleeping even in the midst of “a great storm” in our lives because we are spiritually insensible and indifferent. As a result, we do not hear God’s voice. But since God is faithful even to such sinners like us, he doesn’t give up upon us. Rather, he speaks to us again and again. He does so even through the non-believers around us. God speaks to us again even through the non-believers’ actions and images that resemble Jesus. The reason is so that we can repent our sins and return to God. God uses the non-believers around us to echo his commands in our hearts. What should we do? We must listen to the voice of God even through the non-believers around us. And we must obey God and fulfill God’s will. This is because God’s mission is our mission.

Jonah's God (2)

[Jonah 1:7-17]

We Koreans seem to be good at lying. When I watch the Korean dramas, I don't know why people are lying so much. Even if it is a lie that cares for a loved one, a lie is a lie. But I don't know why it is called 'a good lie'. Especially I don't understand why they keep on denying after their lies got exposed rather than acknowledging their sin of lying. Maybe it is because they think that people are unwilling to forgive them even though they confess their lies honestly. So what they do is they keep on denying the fact that they lied until people find that they lied. For example, the Korean politicians keep on denying their lies even though those lies get exposed (I am sure not all the Korean politicians are like this). The reason is because they may think that even they confess honestly, it is difficult to avoid blame. So it seems that some of the Koreans have developed excuses. For Americans, it seems a little different. For example, American politicians confess honestly what they done wrong and ask for forgiveness rather than keep on denying it (I am sure not all the American politicians are like this). Maybe there is a cultural difference. How about Koreans and Japanese? We Koreans tend to blame on others while the Japanese tend to say 'It's my fault'. When a Japanese corporation goes bankrupt, its bosses are entirely responsible, but if a boss in a Korean corporation takes responsibility, he is not forgiven and is buried, so he does not acknowledge his own mistake. Do Koreans really lie a lot? Do you think the Korean society (culture) is the society (culture) that cannot but lie? Is it often the case that even in the church, when we confess our sins (wrongs), people condemn us without forgiveness? Also, do Koreans really say "It's your fault" more than to say "It's my fault"? We are seeing many negative things happening in Korean society and Korean church right now. Are we saying that this is "my fault" and "my responsibility"?

We have learned three things about God last time based on Jonah 1:1-6: (1) God wants us to join his mission, (2) God is calling us on his mission, and (3) God is demanding our obedience to his calling. But if we disobey God's calling, God disciplines us. I am going to think about two things about Jonah's God based on Jonah 1:7-17: "(1) Jonah's God is the God who makes us to be responsible for the consequences of our disobedience and (2) Jonah's God is the God who makes us to confess our sins before men.

First, Jonah's God is the God who makes us to be responsible for the consequences of our disobedience.

Look at Jonah 1:7-8: "Each man said to his mate, 'Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity has struck us' So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. Then they said to him, 'Tell us, now! On whose account has this calamity struck us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?'" In the background of today's text, when the ship on which Jonah was aboard was about to break up due to the great wind that God had sent and the great storm, the Gentile sailors were crying out to their own gods and there was no answer (vv. 4-5). So the sailors cast lots to find out who was responsible for this calamity (v. 7). The act of casting lots had two meanings in the old days. First was to find out whose fault is it (1 Sam. 14:41-42). And second was for divine guidance (Esth. 3:7; Prov. 16:33). In today's text Jonah 1:7, the reason why the sailors cast lots was to find out whose fault was it. In contrast to Jonah, who avoids responsibility, the sailors cast lots to find out who was responsible for the calamity. In Jonah, the Hebrew word for 'responsibility' comes out four times (Jonah 1:7, 8, 12; 4:10). What does this teach us? It teaches us that our God is a just God who asks our responsibility when we are disobedient like Jonah and running away. What was the result of casting lots? Look at Jonah 1:7 – "Each man said to his mate, 'Come, let us cast lots so we may learn on whose account this

calamity has struck us.’ So they cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah.” Because Jonah didn’t go to the pagan city Nineveh to reprove the Ninevites, the work was reversed, and the Gentile sailors reproved Jonah for his sin of disobedient (Park Yun-sun).

We are often irresponsible in our actions. In other words, we have an instinct to not take responsibility for the wrong behavior we have committed. We often lie or make an excuse to rationalize our irresponsible behavior when our wrongdoing is known to others. An example is King Saul (1 Sam. 15:22-23). When Samuel rebuked the disobedience of Saul (not destroying Amalekites), Saul lied to Samuel (vv. 13, 20) and also made irresponsible excuses (vv. 15, 21). Jonah was irresponsible. To what extent is Jonah irresponsible? Look at Jonah 1:5 – “... But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep.” How could Jonah have slept in a situation where the great storm caused the ship to break up? Jonah went down to the bottom of the ship and was deeply asleep, not because of the tiredness of his journey, but because his spirit was dark. This was Jonah's irresponsible sleep. How could Jonah fell in sleep deeply without any remorse of conscience while the captain and the sailors on the ship were afraid that the ship might be break up completely? (Park Yun-sun). Jonah was deeply asleep spiritually. How can we know this? A spiritually awake person runs toward the Word of God. In other words, the spiritually awake man obeys God's command. But a man who is spiritually sleeping, like Jonah, is fleeing from God's command. Don't we, like Jonah, sleep this irresponsible sleep? Aren't we disobeying God's commands by running away from God and are spiritually darkened, unable to feel the remorse of conscience? To Jonah, God spoke through the non-believer captain: "How can you sleeping?" (v. 6).

Do you know the secret of the survival of "rodents" who dig the ground and live under the ground? Their olfactory is very developed. The smell plays an important role not only in the search for food, but also in protecting themselves since their bodies are small and they don't have weapon to defend themselves. So their olfactory is an indispensable shield to protect themselves. From the standpoint of the rodents, whether they go out of the house or in the house, there are full of their enemies who have their eyes on them. In the sky, hawks are paying attention to their movements with a sharp eye, and on the ground they have to face wildcats, badgers and weasels from time to time. They cannot be relieved when they come into their house because the snakes attack them without making any sound. So when rodents like rats and squirrels fall asleep, their olfactory is awake without falling asleep. If a snake raids into the entrance of their house, does the smell of the snake come in first by the wind blowing into their house. Although are sleeping, they can smell the snake because their olfactory is awake. So they quickly wake up and deal with the dangerous situation. So the important problem of life and death depends on their sense of smell. It is not only the rodent that needs the sense of smell to be awakened. We the children of God need an organ that should never fall asleep. We must always keep our spiritual senses awake. The world we live in is a sinful world. There are hidden temptations here and there that try to attract us and to drive us into sin and death. They are all deadly temptations that are like the land mines on the battlefield. And the devil is watching the opportunity to swallow us more actively. The devil is more sharply looking at us than the eagle on the sky, looking for opportunities to attack us without making sound like a snake. Therefore, it is our spiritual sense that has to be always awaken even when we are asleep. And we must not avoid being responsible when God exposes our sins through our awakened spiritual senses. Rather, we must make a decision of faith. That decision of faith is that we are to take responsibility for the consequences of sin that we committed to God. We Christians should be responsible before God. God asked Jesus to take responsibility for our sins. That's why Jesus bore our sins and died on the cross. Therefore, we as disciples of Jesus must be Christians who are responsible. A true Christian is someone who takes responsibility.

Second, Jonah's God is the God who makes us to confess our sins before men.

In today's text, Jonah 1:7, the sailors cast lots in order to find out who was responsible for this calamity. And the lot fell upon Jonah. At that time, the sailors asked Jonah these questions: “Tell us, who is responsible for

making all this trouble for us? What do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?" (v. 8) These questions reminded Jonah God's calling as a servant of God. The questions functioned as a good reminder to Jonah in ways:

- (1) The question "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us?"(v. 8) is a question that reminds Jonah of his irresponsible behavior (Compare the Jonah's irresponsible act of running away from God with the sailors' responsible act of casting lots to find out "who is responsible for making all this trouble for us").
- (2) The question "What do you do?" (v. 8) means 'What is your occupation?' and this question reminds Jonah that he is a servant of God who has received God's calling (Compare the Jonah's unfaithfulness in fulfilling his job to go to Nineveh and to proclaim the Word of God with the sailor's faithfulness in fulfilling their job in bringing people safely from one place to another).
- (3) The question "Where do you come from?" (v. 8) is a question that reminds Jonah the God's command to go to Nineveh instead of fleeing to the opposite direction of Nineveh, Tarshish.
- (4) The question "What is your country? From what people are you?" (v. 8) is a question that causes Jonah to remember the responsibility of obeying God's commandments as God's chosen Israelites.

What was Jonah's answer to these questions? Look at Jonah 1:9 – "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land." If we divide the content of this Jonah's answer into two, they are first the Jonah's confession about himself and the second is the Jonah's confession about God.

(1) There are two confessions about Jonah himself:

- (a) First, "**I am Hebrew**" (v.9). It is likely that this Jonah's confession is understood by the Gentiles. The reason is that the ancient Near Eastern people knew that the Israelites were Hebrews.
- (b) Second, "... (I) **fear the Lord**" (v. 9). This is a little questionable. The reason is if Jonah truly feared God, how could he disobey the God's command and running away from Him? Jonah's actions and confessions disagreed.

(2) There are two confession about God:

- (a) First, "**the LORD**" (v. 9). Jonah's confession that "I worship the LORD" does not agree with his action in disobeying the Lord's command and running away from Him.
- (b) Second, "**the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land**" (v. 9). Here Jonah made this confession about God because he was watching the great storm on the sea that God raised. In addition, Jonah was proclaiming that the God of heaven is the most powerful creator God and he is the God of Israel in front of the sailors who cried out to their own gods. Although he supposed to go to Nineveh and proclaim the Word of God to the Ninevites, instead he proclaimed "the God of heaven" to the sailors in the ship. What an amazing God's grace and providence? I am amazed that God used even disobedient servant of the Lord Jonah to proclaim who God is to the Gentile sailors in the midst of Jonah receiving God's discipline.

As to these Jonah confessions, we can see three responses in the text today:

(1) The first is the sailors' response.

Look at Jonah 1:10 – “This terrified them and they asked, ‘What have you done?’ (They knew he was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so).” Here the word “terrified” in verse 10 is derived from the same root with the word “fear” in verse 9. But in verse 9 Jonah was speaking about fearing God, but in verse 10 the Scripture speaks about the sailor’s fear. This word ‘fear’ comes out three times in Jonah (vv. 5, 10, 16). The sailors were “extremely frightened” (v. 10) because not only saw the great storm (v. 4) but also they heard from Jonah about “the LORD God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land” (v. 9). Compare the Jonah’s response in running away from the Lord even though he said he feared God with the sailors’ response in fearing God after they heard Jonah’s confession about God. So the sailors say to Jonah, "How could you do this?" (v. 10). After all, the prophet who sinned against God was rather rebuked by non-believer sailors. How embarrassing is this? The servant of God was rebuked by the Gentiles. This was Jonah's first discipline. The rebuke from the mouth of the sailors, "How could you do this?" would have certainly struck Jonah's conscience at that time.

(2) The second is the nature's response.

Look at Jonah 1:11b – “... for the sea was becoming increasingly stormy.” Even though Jonah confessed his sins publicly, the storm of the sea did not cease, but rather became increasingly stormy. Why? The reason was that Jonah didn’t make true repentance. The true repentance doesn’t end in confession by opening your mouth. The storm that came because of the sin of the Jonah, which eventually harmed the sailors, required a decisive repentance from Jonah to calm the stormy sea.

(3) The third is the sailors' response.

Look at Jonah 1:11a – “So they said to him, ‘What should we do to you that the sea may become calm for us?’” This question of the sailors urged Jonah to show decisive repentance without ending in just mere confession of sin anymore. What was Jonah's answer to the sailors’ question? Look at verse 12: “He said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you, for I know that on account of me this great storm has come upon you.” Here, the interesting thing is that the word “on account of me” (v. 12) is the same word with “account” in verse 7. In verse 7, the sailors “cast lots so we may learn on whose account this calamity had struck us.” And in verse 12, Jonah acknowledged that he was responsible for that calamity and confessed his sin in front of the sailors. So Jonah told them to pick him up and throw him into the sea because he knew that on account of him the great storm had come upon them (v. 12). This was Jonah's action of repentance.

As I saw this Jonah's action of repentance, the writing of Dr. Hwang Sung-joo's ‘Bible Health’ came to my attention: ‘People who like baths are generally progressive and often active. So it is not unusual for them to live healthy and long. Those who do not like baths are somewhat shrunken and lack the will to self-management. It is necessary to keep in mind that in the reality that there are all kinds of false health myths, simple habit of cleaning oneself as well as cleansing the surrounding is the cornerstone of health. In recent years, it has been scientifically proven that 2 to 3 times of warm-cooling alternation (3 minutes in cold water and 1 minute in cold water is effective in relieving stress. Since ancient times, bathing has been widely used as fatigue recovery and relaxation that relieves body fatigue and mind tensions. And bath makes a good progress of the blood circulation, activates metabolism and promotes skin respiration. In particular, in the case of warm-cooling alternation, it maximizes the expansion and contraction of the capillary vessels, supplying nutrients and oxygen to the whole body, and making the blood vessels younger and fresher. In addition, there is so-called exercise effect of discharging waste by sweating. However, if you are exposed to hot bathing or sauna for a long time, your body may be irritated, which may result in physical

exhaustion and side effects. Regular bathing is also necessary for Christian life. Christian life without confession and repentance will fall into the stage of helplessness. How can we expect a lively spiritual life if the ability to remove waste products is paralyzed? Incomplete human beings cannot avoid sinning as they live in conflict with neighbors with distorted personalities in distorted social structures. It is impossible not to sin in this world, but the way to acknowledge sin and turn away from sin is always open. As a child who fell on the mud floor runs immediately toward his parents, a mature Christian who realized his sin immediately confesses his sins before God. Confession is our work and forgiveness and cleansing is God's work in Christ. There is a saying that the maturity of faith depends on the depth of sin confession. The retired pastor's sermon 'Knowing God deeply is to realize how sinful I am' is in my ear' (Internet). This is what John 1:9 says: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We must acknowledge, confess, and repent of our sins before the Holy God. And when we repent our sin, we must do so like Jonah who not only confessed his sin but also show the action of his repentance. In particular, we must be Christians who are responsible for the damage done to the people around us because of our own disobedience. And we must confess our sins honestly not only to the God, but also to those around us who have been hurt or harmed because of us. When we do that, the "big storm" that has come to all of us will grow calm.

Jonah's God and our God is God who makes us responsible for the consequences of our disobedience. Also, Jonah's God and our God is God who makes us to confess our sins before men. However, our God did not ask us about our responsibility for our sins and asked Jesus, his only begotten Son. God asked Jesus to bear responsibility for our sins by crucifixion of his begotten Jesus. Before Jesus died on the cross this is what he cried out to heavenly Father God: "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing" (Lk. 23:34). This is the grace of God. We should know this grace of God. The more we know this grace of God, the more we will obey God's Word. But when we are not filled with grace and disobey God's Word, we must confess our sins to God by relying on the shed blood of Jesus on the cross. We must confess our sins to God with the assurance of forgiveness. Then God will forgive our sins.

A responsible Christian

"And they said one to another," Let us draw lots and let them know that this evil has come upon us because of them. Then they chose lots, and the lot fell on Jonah" (Jonah 1:7).

Are we Christians who are responsible?

One day, I thought about three questions as I was studying Jonah 1:7-17 in the Bible study with my Church leaders. And I tried to apply the three lessons that I learned to our lives. The three lessons are: (1) First, when God exposes our sins, we must sincerely confess those sins to God. (2) Second, we should not blame others. (3) Third, we must strive to be a responsible Christian by saying, "It is my fault." The reason why I applied these three lessons in our lives was because I thought that there was and still is a sinful tendency in us that had been tried to lie even before God, to blame others and to avoid each of our own responsibilities. What do you think? Do you think there is such a sinful tendency in you?

We Christians must face our sinful tendency that wants to avoid our responsibility. We must be more honest with ourselves before God. We should no longer avoid taking our own responsibilities and blaming others for bad situations that we are in. If you are still blaming others and rationalizing your own sinful choices without acknowledging your responsibility before God, then you will surely be in self-pity and self-defeating and have victim mentality. And you will still be making irresponsible remarks and actions in church without any hesitation as you disobey God's command in an irresponsible manner. What do you think Heavenly Father will do these irresponsible children of God?

I came to realize more about the answer of that question by studying Jonah 1:7-17. God made the storm of discipline against Jonah, who was disobeying God's command and running away to the opposite direction of Nineveh, Tarshish (vv. 2-4). As a result, the ship that Jonah was aboard was about to break up (v. 4). But Jonah, who had gone below deck, fell into a deep sleep (v. 5). To this Jonah, God asked for responsibility and eventually Jonah confessed his sins in front of the Gentile sailors and captains, and made a decision of repentance. Here I have come to realize a little bit of God's faithful love and God's responsible actions. In his faithful love, how did God act responsibly to unfaithful Jonah who was in deep sleep irresponsibly?

God made Jonah to acknowledge his irresponsible action through the Gentile sailors' responsible actions.

When the sailors cast lots to find out who was responsible for the calamity that they were going through, God made the lot to be fall on Jonah so that Jonah had to confess his irresponsible action of disobeying God's command and running away from God (v. 7). God also exposed Jonah's irresponsible actions through the four questions of the Gentile sailors. These four questions are:

(1) First question was "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us?" (v. 8).

This first question of the sailors was a question that probably made Jonah to recognize that the calamity came upon them because he disobeyed God's command, which is his irresponsible act. So Jonah had to acknowledge that "I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you" (v. 12). He could not

blame anyone anymore. Also he could not blame the environment he was in. He couldn't but admitted and acknowledged that it was his fault (v. 12).

(2) Second question was "What do you do?" (v. 8).

God enabled the Gentile sailors to ask Jonah "What do you do?" so that Jonah realized his irresponsible act of running away from God instead of fulfilling his prophetic responsibility and mission. To Jonah who had lost his sense of mission and calling, God approached him responsibly.

(3) Third question was "Where do you come from" (v. 8).

This question would have caused Jonah to remember Nineveh, which God had commanded him to go. Because Jonah had fled in the opposite direction, even though he had to go to Nineveh as God had commanded, the sailors' question "Where do you come from?" made Jonah to face himself with his disobedience to God's command.

(4) Fourth question was "What is your country? From what people are you?" (v. 8).

Through this question God made Jonah to remember the responsibility of obeying God's commandments as God's chosen anointed prophet.

Isn't it amazing? Isn't it really surprising that God even uses the non-believers' questions to expose our sins of disobeying God's commands, to make us realize and to acknowledge our sins? In the end, Jonah confessed who he is and who God is before the Gentile sailors. In other words, Jonah confessed in front of the sailors "I am a Hebrew and I fear the Lord God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land" (v. 9). Also, he confessed that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord (v. 10). The sailors who heard this confession from Jonah, they became extremely frightened and said to Jonah, 'How could you do this?' (v. 10) I am sure this rebuke from the sailors struck Jonah's conscience. When the sea was becoming increasingly stormy, the sailors asked Jonah, "What should we do to you that the sea may become calm for us?" (v. 11) Then listen to Jonah's reply: "Pick me up and throw me into the sea" (v. 12). Not only Jonah knew that because of his disobedience, the Gentiles had encountered the great storm, but also he knew that the only way to calm the stormy sea was to throw himself into the sea. So Jonah told the sailors to "Pick me up and throw me into the sea" (v. 12). He knew that this responsible action was the only way to save the sailors.

God even used the Gentile sailors not only to expose Jonah's sin of irresponsible disobedience but also eventually to acknowledge his sin of disobedience. This same God is making us to acknowledge our sins of irresponsible disobedience through non-believers around us. We must no longer be our irresponsible Christians. This is because our irresponsible acts not only cover the glory of God, but also damage non-believers. Because of the irresponsible disobedient act of Jonah, the ship on which Jonah was aboard was almost destroyed. Likewise, because of our irresponsible disobedient act, we can damage the non-believers around us. Therefore, we must be Christians who are responsible. How should we take responsibility? First, we must confess to God our sins of disobedience with assurance of forgiveness. Then we must confess our sins to even the non-believers who are victimized by our irresponsible acts of disobedience. We must ask for forgiveness for the storms of their lives through our irresponsible acts of disobedience. As we do so, we must make a decision of repentance like Jonah. Just as Jonah told the sailors to throw himself into the sea, we must throw ourselves to the blood of Jesus that he shed on the cross. We must never end with just confessing our sins with our lips. If we are Christians who are truly responsible, we must show our actions that we have repented our sins. This will stop "this great storm" (v. 12), which has come unto the unbelievers through us. Then the stormy sea will become calm (v. 15). Then, like Gentile

sailors, non-believers will fear God greatly and worship God (v. 16). And then we will also experience the grace of God's salvation by entering into the "big fish" God has prepared (v. 17) and we will look again toward God (2:4) and cried out to him in prayer. Then will experience the grace of God's salvation (deliverance). I hope and pray that all of us may become responsible Christians who experience God's salvation.

Jonah's God (3)

[Jonah 1: 11-17]

Pastor AW Tozer, who was called the 21st century prophet, said this: 'God calls man to worship first and then to worker.' I cannot but agree with what he said. However, I think we are trying to do something for God like Martha (Lk 10:40), rather than trying to be true worshipers who worship God in spirit and truth (Jn. 4:23). Here we must remember the relationship between "being" and "doing". In other words, our actions must come from our being. For example, our good deeds should come from our character that resembles God's goodness. The Bible divides the true worship into two categories:

(1) The first is the people who worship God as they focus on who God is.

These worshipers acknowledge the sovereignty of God. Look at David in 2 Samuel 12:20. When the first baby of King David and the Uriah's wife Bathsheba died due to the consequence of his sins, David went into the temple and worshiped God. Look at Job also in Job 1:20. He lost all his riches and children, and he fell on the ground and worshiped God.

(2) The second is the people who worship God as they focus on what God does.

They worship God after experiencing God's power. Look at the Gentile sailors in Jonah 1:16. After they threw Jonah into the sea and after they saw the sea stopped its raging (v. 15), they feared the Lord greatly and they worshiped the Lord (v. 16).

I want to meditate on Jonah 1:7-17 under the title of "Jonah's God (3)" and think about who is Jonah's God again. In short, Jonah's God is the God who makes us to worship him. I hope and pray that all of us can be established as a worthy worshiper in the sight of God while meditating on the today's text.

Third, God is the God who makes us to worship him.

When Jonah was rebuked by the sailors (vv. 8-10) and was questioned by them "What should we do to you that the sea may become calm for us?" (v. 11), Jonah told them "Pick me up and throw me into the sea" (v. 12). The reason is because Jonah knew that on account of him that this great storm had come upon them (v. 12). What were the responses of the sailors?

(1) The first response of the sailors was they rowed desperately to return to land.

Look at Jonah 1:13 – "However, the men rowed desperately to return to land but they could not, for the sea was becoming even stormier against them." Even though God's will was to throw Jonah into the sea, the sailors tried to change God's will in a way by not throwing Jonah into the sea but trying to save him. It is interesting to note that the sailors fought against the great storm which God sent and tried to turn the ship back to the land God had made to save Jonah (v. 13) even though Jonah confessed that his God had made the sea and the land (v. 9). They heard about God through Jonah, but because they had not yet experienced him, in the ignorance they tried to win God by wrestling with God. This word "return" is also found in Jonah 3:8, 9. Look at Jonah 3:8 – "But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands."

The word "turn" here means to give up, that is, to repent. The king of Nineveh proclaimed through the decree to the Ninevites to turn from their wicked way and from their violence which was in their hands because of the word of God heard through the prophet Jonah (vv. 7-8). This behavior of the king of Nineveh is in contrast to Jonah in Jonah 4. Jonah wanted Nineveh to be destroyed (4:5). When the word of God came to the Ninevites through Jonah, beginning from the king, cry out to the LORD in repentance (3:5-9), may be in contrast to Jonah in Jonah chapter 1 in where Jonah fell into a deep sleep (1:5). As the Ninevites prayed hard to God in order to turn the will of God (3:5-9), the sailors did their best to row back to land (1:13). Look at Jonah 3:9 – “Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish.” As the king of Nineveh tried to turn His burning anger (3:9), the sailors did their best to row back to land in order to turn the God’s will of throwing Jonah into the sea (1:12-13). The king of Nineveh did it for his people, and the sailors did it for Jonah. The king of Nineveh and the sailors tried to turn God's will for others, but Jonah seemed to think only of himself. The interesting thing was the sailors’ response. Try to contrast. Jonah didn’t only concern about 120,000 dying souls of Nineveh, but also did not concern about the Gentile captain and the sailors who were in the ship, while the Gentile captain and the sailors in the ship were concerned about Jonah. What is more surprising is that the Gentile sailors fought against the stormy sea in order to save Jonah even though they knew that disobedient Jonah was running away from God. It seems to me that the Gentile sailors’ heart in trying to save Jonah resembled God’s heart than God’s servant Jonah’s heart. What happened when the sailors rowed desperately to return to the land? Look at Jonah 1:13 – “However, the men rowed desperately to return to land but they could not, for the sea was becoming even stormier against them.” Although the sailors tried to save Jonah by overcoming the great storm that God threw, they could not. The reason was that the more they did the sea became even stormier against them [Ref.: The sentence “the sea was becoming even stormier” in verse 13 appeared already in verse 11. The interesting Hebrew word in those two sentences is the word "continuing." This word “continuing” indicates that the stormy of the sea is steady and gradual].

(2) The second response of the sailors was they prayed to the Lord.

Look at Jonah 1:14 – “Then they called on the LORD and said, "We earnestly pray, O LORD, do not let us perish on account of this man's life and do not put innocent blood on us; for You, O LORD, have done as You have pleased.” What is interesting here is that the subject of the prayers of the Gentile sailors has changed. How did it change? The sailors who were praying to their own gods in Jonah 1:5 prayed to the Jonah’s God in Jonah 1:14. The words "cry" used in Jonah 1:5 and 1:14 are two different words in Hebrew. The word “cry” used in Jonah 1:5 was used to describe that the sailors cried out to their own gods because they were in need. But word “cry” used in prayer to God in the Jonah 1:14 is the same word as 1:2 (“cry against it”) and 3:4 (“cried out”). And this word was used to a prayer of proclamation to God rather than to ask God for help. The more interesting fact is that when the captain of the ship woke Jonah up and said to him “Get up, call on your god” (1:6), here the word “call” is the same Hebrew word as “called” in Jonah 1:14. The question we can ask here is, "How could the Gentile sailors be able to pray to Jonah’s God?" Dr. Park Yun-sun thought: "While they were talking to Jonah, they would have received from him an idea of Jehovah religion more than what is written in this book" (Park Yun-sun). I think the verse 14 confirms what Jonah already told the sailors about who God is in verse 9. Of course, Dr. Park Yun-sun said doesn’t appear in the book of Jonah. But we can speculate that Jonah and the sailors might have more conversations about God and Israel's religion. Whether this speculation is right or wrong, one thing is certain that the sailors prayed to Jonah’s God. This fact confirms that Jonah's message to the sailors shown in v. 9 has been passed on to them. Then what was the content of the sailors’ prayer? It was “do not let us perish on account of this man's life” (v. 14). This means that the sailors were requesting to God not to destroy them because of throwing Jonah into the sea (Park Yun-sun). This prayer tells us that God judges people's behavior by the punishment of crime and that the person can be appealed to the trial (Baldwin). The Gentile sailors prayed for God's justice: "do not turn innocent blood upon us" (v. 14). Here, the word

"innocent blood" means that Jonah didn't do anything wrong to the sailors, so now if they kill Jonah in the sea, they would be killing the innocent man" (Park Yun-sun). Look at verse 14: "for You, O LORD, have done as You have pleased." What this verse seems telling us is throwing Jonah into the sea by the sailors was God's will and his decision. In other words, when the sailors finally threw Jonah into the sea, it was because God had decided to do so.

(3) The third response of the sailors was to throw Jonah into the sea.

Look at Jonah 1:15 – "So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging." Here the word "throw" comes out four times: "Then the LORD threw the great wind on the sea (1:4), "they threw the cargo into the sea" (v. 5), "Pick me up and throw me into the sea" (v. 12) and "Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard" (v. 15). Because God threw the great wind into the sea, God eventually made Jonah to be thrown into the sea by the sailors. The interesting thing is that the word "raging" appears only here in verse 15. The word refers to rage and anger. Here the sea is almost personalized and behaves like obeying his Creator. Look at Isaiah 30:30: "And the LORD will cause His voice of authority to be heard, And the descending of His arm to be seen in fierce anger, And in the flame of a consuming fire In cloudburst, downpour and hailstones." Creator God used the stormy sea so that Jonah might hear God's majestic voice and obey the command of God. What happened when the sailors threw Jonah into the sea? Look at Jonah 1:15 – "the sea stopped its raging." When the violent storm (v. 4) swallowed Jonah, it became silent (v.15). The calmness of the sea confirms that Jonah sinned against God.

(4) The fourth and final response of the sailors was to offer a sacrifice to the Lord and made a VOW.

Look at Jonah 1:16 – "Then the men feared the LORD greatly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows." The word 'fear' in Hebrews comes out four times in Jonah chapter 1: 'the sailors became afraid' (v. 5), "I feared the LORD" (v. 9), "the men became extremely frightened" (v. 10) and "the men feared the LORD" (v. 16). Although Jonah confessed to the sailors "I feared the LORD" (v. 9), but it is not easy to see whether he truly feared God when he see his actions. In contrast, the Gentile sailors became afraid when the ship was nearly broken (v. 5) and they became extremely frightened when they heard the Jonah's confession (v. 10). They began to fear God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land (v. 9) and eventually they feared the Lord greatly because when they threw Jonah into the sea, the sea stopped its raging (v. 15). Who truly feared God? Is it Jonah or the sailors? Eventually the sailors worshiped God in true reverence. What a surprise? Through Jonah who disobeyed God's command and ran away from God, God made himself known to the Gentile sailors and eventually they became the worshipers to God.

What was God's response to the responses of these sailors? God prepared a fish to swallow Jonah. Look at Jonah 1:17 – "But the LORD provided a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights." Here, the word 'provide' appears three times in Jonah chapter 4: "God provided a vine" (v. 6), "God provided a worm" (v. 7) and "God provided a scorching east wind" (v. 8). What does this teach us? It teaches us the fact that our God is the God who provides. Look at Genesis 22:14 – "Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide, as it is said to this day, "In the mount of the LORD it will be provided."

Through disobedient Jonah, God has made known who he is to the sailors. Also, God made Jonah to confess his sin in front of the sailors and made him to bear his responsibility for what he had done. By doing so, God calmed down the stormy sea. As a result, God made the sailors to worship God. The sailors who had wrestled with the Almighty God, God made them pray to God. And eventually God made them defeat in the wrestling with God, and made them obedient to throw Jonah into the sea. And the Gentile sailors experienced the power of the

Creator God and eventually worshiped God. Who is this God? This God is "the Lord God of heaven, who made the sea and the land" (1:9). In the end, the Gentiles worshiped Creator God whom they only heard but now experienced him through wrestling with him, prayer and obedience.

We must worship God. The reason is that our God is God who is worthy to receive worship from us. God, who makes us to worship him reminded me the gospel song "The Heart of Worship" and made me to praise God with that song:

"When the music fades All is stripped away
And I simply come Longing just to bring
Something that's of worth That will bless your heart
I'll bring you more than a song
For a song in itself Is not what you have required
You search much deeper within
Through the way things appear You're looking into my heart
I'm coming back to the heart of worship
And it's all about you, It's all about you, Jesus
I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it
When it's all about you, It's all about you, Jesus
King of endless worth No one could express
How much you deserve Though I'm weak and poor
All I have is yours Every single breath
I'll bring you more than a song
For a song in itself Is not what you have required
You search much deeper within
Through the way things appear You're looking...

A pastor who receives grace from the non-believers

“Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before” (Jonah 1:13).

Today, when I was preaching the Word of God, the Spirit gave an insight. So after I had prayer time, I came into my office, set in front of the computer and started writing this Quiet Time. The insight was God showed his grace to disobedient Jonah through the Gentile sailors. And that grace was God let Jonah know that ‘God is gracious’. The reason God gave grace to Jonah was so that Jonah, like his God, could be also gracious to the people of Nineveh.

How did God cause Jonah, who was disobedient, to receive grace from the Gentile sailors? We can see in the text Jonah 1:13 that the sailors are gracious to Jonah. Jonah said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea” (v. 12) because he knew that the sailors had met the great storm because of himself. But sailors strive to save Jonah rather than throw him into the sea (v. 13). This is the grace that the sailors had given to Jonah because the sailors should have thrown Jonah into the sea. Since the ship was about to break up due to Jonah’s disobedience and Jonah told them to pick him up and throw him into the sea, the sailors could pick Jonah up and throw him into the sea. But they didn’t. Instead, they tried to save Jonah. Isn’t this grace that the sailors had given to Jonah? Think about it. If all the non-believers have fallen into a crisis because of a pastor and the pastor told them to throw him into the sea, then what should be the normal respond of the non-believers? Shouldn’t it be ‘Because of you pastor we are in crisis now’ and throw the pastor into the sea? But instead of doing so, if the non-believers try to save the pastor by doing their best to row back to land rather than throw it into the sea, isn’t this grace? Isn’t this the grace that the non-believers give to the servant of the Lord? Don’t you think something has changed? Isn’t it normal that Jonah, the servant of the Lord, should give grace to the non-believer sailors? Why did God allow disobedient Jonah to receive grace from the non-believer sailors? I think there is God’s amazing love and grace. That amazing grace and love is that God was telling Jonah that God is a gracious God. Therefore, God wanted Jonah to be gracious to the people of Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian, the enemy country of Israel.

But the question is, “Did Jonah know that his God was a gracious God and gave grace to the people of Nineveh?” The answer seems to be “yes” but in reality it is “no”. In other words, it seems like Jonah, who prayed inside the belly of a great fish (chapter 2), was saved (2:9-10), a second chance was given (3:1), went to Nineveh and proclaimed to the Ninevites “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned” (v. 4), gave grace to the Ninevites. But when we look at Jonah chapter 4, Jonah “was greatly displeased and became angry” (4:1) because God had compassion and didn’t bring upon the Ninevites, who repented and turned from their evil ways, the destruction he had threatened (3:10). So this was how Jonah prayed to the Lord: “O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live” (4:2-3). In this prayer, Jonah seems to know that God is gracious by his head but not actually in his heart. In other words, the servant of God Jonah didn’t imitate the gracious heart of God. That was why Jonah was greatly displeased and angry, even to the point of wanting to die, because God showed grace to the Ninevites instead of sending calamity to them. Jonah’s anger was not right in God’s sight (v.4). Although God gave grace to such disobedient servant Jonah through the sailors, Jonah greatly disliked giving grace to the Ninevites. Although God gave Jonah the second chance, but Jonah didn’t want to give the Ninevites a second chance. That was why Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry because God gave the Ninevites the second chance. How selfish is the servant of the Lord who does not know the grace of God?

The more I think about Jonah, the more I see myself. A disobedient pastor, nevertheless, God gives grace to such unworthy servant of the Lord like me through the non-believers around me. Especially, I am receiving a lot of grace and love through my long-time friends. Because I cannot pay back to them, I am just praying to God for them. Why does God give grace to me even through the non-believer friends around me? It is because not only that God is teaching me that God is gracious, but also to build me up to be his servant who imitates the gracious heart of God so that I can be gracious to others. Isn't this the grace of God?

Jonah's God who has done what he has determined

"So they picked up Jonah, threw him into the sea, and the sea stopped its raging" (Jonah 1:15).

This week I read the book "From Embers to a Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church" [Harry L., III Reeder] and I had time to stop and think about the "Prayer and Predestination" section. The reason is that I was stimulated in my mind by the connection between prayer and predestination that the author is talking about. When I think about the connection between this prayer and the predestination, it reminded me that I challenged my church members to pray. The way of prayer is to hold onto the promise of God and proclaim it. For example, when I pray for Victory Presbyterian Church, I hold on to the promise of the Lord, Matthew 16:18 ("... I will build my church ..."), and proclaim to the Lord like this: 'Lord, Victory Presbyterian Church is Your church. You have promised that You will build Your church. May you fulfill that promise in Your time and in Your way.' Also, when I pray to God for myself, I hold on to the promise I received from God through the Church College Retreat during my first year of college. And that promise Word of God is John 6:1-15. Although I am like two fish and five loaves of bread, if I surrender my life to the Lord, I believe that the Lord will use me to accomplish the miracle of two fish and five loaves. In the midst of proclaiming the Word of God's promise and praying to him, I could not help but sympathize with the Pastor Reeder's writing in "Prayer and Predestination" section of his book. In particular, for me, who believes in John Calvin's predestination, Pastor Reeder's message to trust God's predestination in prayer not only made me to sympathize with what he said but also challenged my heart. When I thought about God has chosen me before the foundation of the world in love and planned my entire life in this earth, and accomplishing what he intended to do in my life, I have gained peace, strengthen and security. After receiving this precious grace, I was studying Jonah 1: 7-17 in our Church Leader Bible Study, and God helped me to realize that God had done what he has determined even through such disobedient and unfaithful servant of the Lord, Jonah. So I am meditating again on this Word of God under the heading of "Jonah's God who has done what he has determined" based on Jonah 1:15.

As we have already meditated, Jonah's God is the God who calls on Jonah and gives him mission. The mission was "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it" (Jonah 1: 2). But Jonah did not fulfill God's mission but rather disobeyed the mission and ran away. He ran away to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, the opposite direction of Nineveh (v. 3). Perhaps the reason why Jonah ran away to Tarshish was so that he could be far away from Nineveh, the destination God had commanded him to go. It seemed that he wanted to run away from Nineveh in the opposite direction, perhaps thinking that if he flew away far away from Nineveh, God would raise up another prophet and send him to Nineveh. But Jonah's thoughts were gradually broken down by God. The reason was because God wanted to use his servant Jonah to fulfill his will.

Jonah's God worked in the Jonah's life in order to accomplish what he had determined even through the disobedient Jonah. First thing that God did was to throw a great wind on the sea so that the ship that was heading toward Tarshish was about to break up because of a great storm (vv. 3-4). The reason why God gave the storm of discipline to Jonah is because God wanted Jonah to confess his sin and repent and go to Nineveh, to cry out against the great city Nineveh which was God's given mission to Jonah. But Jonah went down to the bottom of the ship and was sleeping deeply, even when the ship was nearly broken (v.5). But God used the Gentile captain of the ship to remind disobedient Jonah in order to accomplish what he already determined to do through Jonah. How did God do this to Jonah? God used the Gentile captain. The captain of the Gentile went to sleeping Jonah and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god!" (v. 6) and this was God's reminder to Jonah God's command "Arise, go to

Nineveh the great city and cry against it ..." (v. 2). Obviously, God told Jonah to go and cry against it, but Jonah rose up and ran away. He also went down to Joppa and went down to the ship (v. 3). He also went down to the bottom of the ship and was deeply asleep. To this Jonah, God used the words of the Gentile captain to make him arise. And though Jonah did not go to Nineveh and cry against it, God was making Jonah cry out to God (ch. 2). Now, before going to Nineveh, Jonah had to realize the sin of his disobedience through the storm of discipline, to confess his sin to God and to repent his sin to God. In this process, God used not only the Gentile captain but also the Gentile sailors, so that Jonah could confess and repent his sins. Not only did God awake Jonah up from his deep sleep through the captain (Of course Jonah awoke from sleep and didn't cry out to God right away in Jonah chapter 1. But he did so in Jonah chapter 2 when he was inside the great fish), but he also made Jonah to confess and repent his sin of disobedience through the sailors. In order to fulfill their responsibility the sailors cast lots to find out whose account the calamity had struck them. And the lot fell on Jonah (v. 7). Then the sailors said to Jonah, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?" (v. 8). I am sure this four questions pierced Jonah's conscience. For example, when the sailors asked Jonah, "What do you do?", I am sure Jonah's conscience was pierced because as prophet who feared God (v. 9) was disobeying God's command and running away to Tarshish, the opposite direction of Nineveh. So when the sailors asked Jonah "who is responsible for making all this trouble for us?" (v. 8) Jonah could not help but confess that "it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you" (v. 12). Jonah, who had been harming even the non-believer sailors because of his disobedience, eventually told them that "he was running away from the Lord" (v. 10). So in order to accomplish what he had determined through Jonah, God made disobedient Jonah to confess his sin of disobeying the God's command and of running away from God's presence even to Gentile sailors. And God did not stop here. In order to accomplish what he had determined through Jonah, God made Jonah not only to confess his sin with his lips but also make him to repent by making him to say "Pick me up and throw me into the sea" (v. 12). At that time, the sailors did not throw Jonah into the sea, but they did their best to row back to land (v. 13). But they couldn't because "the sea grew even wilder than before" (v. 13). Isn't it interesting to see the sailors wrestling with the Creator God in order to save Jonah? What do you think, when God who made the sea become gradually wilder than before when the sailors did their best to row back to land?

When we are disobedient to God's command and are running away from the Lord, God sends a storm of correction in our lives, not only that the ship of our lives is nearly broken, but also he raises storms in our hearts. The more we do not show we are truly repented but just mere confession of our sins, more and more the storms in our hearts become faltering and we will never enjoy peace. The stormy sea will not stop. Until we have shown our repentance, both the internal and external storms will become increasingly stormy. In the end, we see in Jonah 1:14 that the sailors surrendering and crying out to the God of heaven who made the sea and the land. Isn't it amazing? Is it not surprising that the sailors who cried out to their own gods (v. 5) when the ship was nearly broken (v. 4), they cried out to Jonah's God, the Lord God of Israel (v. 14)? God not only made Jonah to proclaim to the sailors that he is the God of heaven who made the sea and the land (v. 9) but also enabled the sailors to experience the God of heaven who made the sea and the land so that they cried to the God of heaven instead of their own gods. God even used disobedient Jonah, who supposed to go to Nineveh and proclaim God's message, to proclaim who God is to the sailors in the ship and eventually made the sailors to cry out to him. God, who does what he determined to do, not only worked in disobedient Jonah's life but also with the sailors' through his disobedient servant Jonah. What amazing grace and providence of God this was? Finally, the sailors were no longer against the will of the Lord (v. 13) they threw Jonah into the sea (v. 15) after praying to Jonah's God (v. 14). Then the sea stopped its raging (v. 15). The stormy sea that swallowed Jonah became calm.

Our God is the God who does what he has determined. God, who loves us and chose us before the foundation of the world, is God who gives us mission and uses us to accomplish his will. If we are like Jonah, disobeying God's command and avoiding our calling and fleeing the mission given to us, we must immediately confess our sins and repent and turn to God in obeying the Lord's command. We must commit ourselves to fulfilling the mission the Lord has given us. If we are like Jonah, fleeing from God's presence, then God will throw

a storm of discipline into our lives. And when we go through God's discipline, we must not be like Jonah who went down to the bottom of the ship and fall in deep sleep. We must not be deeply asleep without even knowing the storm of the discipline that God is giving us. We must listen to the voice of God, even through a non-believer around us whose words echo God's command in our hearts. And as the captain who told Jonah to get up, we must get up from our deep spiritual sleep and seek God. We must pray to the God of salvation who is pleased to forgive our sins. How should we pray? We must confess our sins and repent. We must not confess our sins only with our lips. Instead, we must make a decision like Jonah. God requires us to act in repentance. If we confess our sins to God and repent, God will instantly calm the stormy sea of our lives that troubles our hearts. We will enjoy the peace of mind that the world cannot give.

Jonah's God (4)

[Jonah 2:1-10]

According to the article 'Difficulties in the job' by Eland Company in Korea, the difficulty of the work that seems to be intricately intertwined can be summarized in two ways. One is the difficulty of human relations and the other is the difficulty of work. According to the results of the survey, the difficulty of human relations is about twice the difficulty of work. Everyone wishes for a job without difficulty, but the pain in one's work may be the will of God and the price of sin (Internet).

There are six parts of the meaning of the job in God: (1) First is the means to understand the command of God and to accomplish the will of God; (2) Second is the means to train and succeed in God's way as Christians; (3) Third is the means of learning obedience as the children of God; (4) Fourth is the means to fulfill and serve each other's needs; (5) Fifth is the means to resemble God's holiness; (6) Sixth is the means by which we seek God (Internet). From the fifth and sixth meanings, the difficulty in the work is the God's given means to resemble God's holiness and to seek God by remembering sin. A Christian worker who seeks the meaning of a job in God must not only withstand the difficulties and sufferings of his profession but also grow up to realize the will of God and rejoice and appreciate in difficult places.

In Jonah 2:1-10, Jonah's prayer comes out. Look at Jonah 2:1 – “Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish.” Here, the Hebrew word for "prayer" is used as a meaning of thankful prayer (1 Sam. 2:1; 2 Sam. 7:27) (Park Yun-sun). Why did Jonah give such a prayer of thanks to God from the stomach of the great fish? The first reason is because of repentance through the sufferings of God. The second reason is because Jonah looked at God again in his sufferings. I hope and pray that as we meditate on Jonah 2:1-10, we can meet God who gives us suffering because of our sins and be challenged by Jonah who looked to God again in his sufferings.

First, our God is the God who gives us sufferings.

Look at Jonah 2:2 – “and he said, "I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice.” Where does suffering come from? This is what Pastor Kim Sung-young said: “The Bible says that the cause of all human suffering is sin. In his book ‘The Problem of Pain’, C. S. Lewis makes a clear statement of human sin and suffering. To solve the problem of suffering, one has to solve the problem of sin fundamentally. This is true happiness, freedom, and overcoming suffering in Christ” (Internet). Our initial response to suffering is 'Why does God give suffering?' We can also ask the question, 'How does the God of love cause his children to suffer?' Although I am not sure the answers to these questions, one thing I'm sure of is that there is a blessing in suffering. I remember reading a book by Pastor Ok Han Hum, ‘There is a will in suffering.’ In the book, Pastor Ok says, 'Suffering is a disguised blessing.' I agree with what he said. Whether suffering is because of our sin or not, I believe that the suffering that God gives is for our own good. One example is Jonah from Jonah chapter 2. Look at Jonah 2:3 – “For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas,” We have already meditated on the fact that the sailors had thrown Jonah into the sea (1:15). But today's text Jonah 2:3 says that the Lord threw Jonah into the sea. What does this tell us? It was God's plan to throw Jonah into the sea by the sailors in order to calm the stormy sea that was created by Creator God who threw the great wind on the sea to make disobedient Jonah to confess and repent his sins. Jonah recognized and acknowledged that God had done all these things in the stomach of the great fish. The lesson we have to learn here is that if we disobey God's command like Jonah, God will give us the afflictions of a storm of correction or of discipline for us so that we may turn from the path of disobedience to the path of obedience.

What were the sufferings of Jonah? The Bible tells us that they were at least four sufferings:

(1) Jonah's first suffering was the stomach of the great fish.

To better understand this suffering, we cannot ignore the Hebrew word "min". This Hebrew word comes out three times in Jonah chapter 2: (a) "From inside the fish" (v. 1), (2) "In (from) my distress" (v. 2), (3) "From the depths of the grave" (v. 2). These three phrases describe one situation. The situation is that Jonah in the stomach of the great fish. In other words, the two "min" phrases in verse 2 describe Jonah's experience in the stomach of the great fish. The word "suffering" has the meaning of "narrowness" and "fear". In a way, Jonah seems to be in fear in a narrow fish stomach. The word "from the depth of Sheol" was imagined as an underground cave, which was modeled after a Palestinian burial cave. Jonah was trapped in the fish and was almost dead. Because God threw Jonah deep into the sea, Jonah went down to the root of the mountains (v.6). Jonah was totally incapacitated in some ways. He was trapped like a prison so he could not do anything but only prayer. The verbs in verse 5 say, "encompassed me", "engulfed me" and "wrapped around my head" tell us that Jonah had the fear of captivity. He was entangled in all these without hope.

(2) Jonah's second suffering was the Lord's waves.

Look at Jonah 2:3 – "... And the current engulfed me All Your breakers and billows passed over me." Here the word "breakers" refers to God's given waves that were breaking Jonah (Park Yun- sun). God was breaking Jonah's hard heart through his tools such as the great winds, the captains, and the sailors. Look at Psalms 88:7 – "Your wrath lies heavily upon me; you have overwhelmed me with all your waves. Selah." Also, look at Psalms 42:7 – "Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me."

(3) Jonah's third suffering was the feeling that Jonah was expelled from God's sight.

Look at Jonah 2:4 – "So I said, 'I have been expelled from Your sight'" The word "expelled" here is also found in Genesis 3:24 – "So He drove the man out; and at the east of the garden of Eden He stationed the cherubim and the flaming sword which turned every direction to guard the way to the tree of life." This verse tells us that God drove disobedient Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden. When Jonah said "I have been expelled from Your sight" was Jonah's feeling rather than the fact. When Jonah was going through the sufferings of his own disobedience that he was receiving from the storm of discipline, which he received from God because of his unrepented and harden heart, he felt that God left him and God was not watching his sufferings. This feeling was not only for Jonah. The psalmist also has such feeling and this is what he said: "For You are the God of my strength; why have You rejected me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" (Ps. 43:2), "Yet You have rejected us and brought us to dishonor, And do not go out with our armies" (44:9).

(4) Jonah's fourth suffering was that he was fainting away.

Look at Jonah 2:7 – "'While I was fainting away,'" The word 'faint' here means 'to decline'. In other words, this word tells that Jonah was in an extreme discord. The situation of Jonah's suffering was total incompetence in which he could not escape (or be saved) by his own power. So for Jonah it would have been extremely disconcerting to have such a situation for three days.

I have learned a lesson about suffering from Henry Nowen's book, "Turn My Mourning into Dancing". We often experience sadness while living our faith. The cause of the grief is pain and suffering. In such a situation, we make efforts in many ways to overcome the pain and suffering. We often try to deny, ignore, grumble and complain. But we should think about how God wants us to respond. The way God wants us to respond is to grieve the pain and suffering. This is the first step of dancing. The second step of the dance is to face the causes of pain and suffering. Nowen said that we should look straight the hidden loss that placed us in the prison of injustice, shame and guilt that paralyze us. The third step of dancing is to go through pain and suffering and loss and wound. We should never pour too much energy into denying it. The fourth step of the dance is to meet Father God in pain, suffering, loss and wound (Nawen).

Suffering leads to maturity. Augustine said, 'As the stars shine brighter in the dark night, the soul becomes nobler in the midst of suffering.' When we know that suffering is God's will and strive for a life of repentance, we will grow spiritually more through suffering. Suffering was hard to bear at the time. Sometimes it is like death, and it feels darker than death. However, the pearls are made in the pain of chewing the sand. As the psalmist David confessed, suffering is good for us. Because of suffering, we learn more of God's ordinances and realize our own lack: "Before I was afflicted I went astray, But now I keep Your word" (Ps. 119:67), "It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes" (v. 71), "I know, O LORD, that Your judgments are righteous, And that in faithfulness You have afflicted me" (v. 75).

Second, when God gives us suffering, we must look to God again.

When Jonah was going through the sufferings, he looked upon God again. Look at Jonah 2:4 – "So I said, I have been expelled from Your sight Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple." Why did Jonah feel that he was expelled from the sight of the Lord? This was because Jonah remembered his sin inside the stomach of the great fish, the sin of disobeying the God's command, especially his sin of fleeing from the presence of the Lord. Here, 'fleeing from the presence of the Lord' means fleeing from the word of God. In other words, Jonah was fleeing from the command of God, "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it" (1:2). As a result of Jonah's fleeing geographically far away from his mission field, Nineveh, he felt God was far away from him while he was inside the stomach of the great fish. What was Jonah's determination in this feeling? Look at verse 4: "Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple."

In my life of faith, I was very disappointed with me because I wasn't able to truly repent my sins. I was very discouraged and even depressed because of my failures to obey God's commands. But God encouraged me to look upon Him again through the word of God "Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple" (2:4). Look at Jonah 2:7 – "While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, And my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple." When Jonah felt that he was expelled from God's sight and thus was utterly depressed, he remembered the Lord and he prayed to Him. The interesting thing is that Jonah's prayer went up to God. Although Jonah went down to Joppa, went down to the ship (1:3), went down below deck (v. 5), went all the way down to the heart of the seas (2:3) and went down to the roots of the mountains (v. 6), his prayer went up to Lord (v. 7). This teaches us that our prayers should go up to God even when our spiritual life is going down due to our disobedience. This decision of Jonah reminds me of the words of Psalm 42:5, 11 and 43:5 – "Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God."

Our God is the God who gives us suffering. When we disobey God's command, our God gives us suffering as discipline of love. What should we do when we receive such a discipline of God's love? We, like Jonah, must look to God again. In doing so, we will experience God's salvation. Then, like Jonah, we can confess this: "Salvation is from the Lord" (Jonah 2:9).

When all the hope of the world is cut off

“Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish, and he said, 'I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice.’” (Jonah 2:1-2).

Our people live with hope. We cannot live without hope. Because we have hope, we are eating, drinking, working and living day by day. The hope that some of us have is hoping to 'get better' and strive to overcome the current adversity and painful environment. Others are not giving up their lives but endure and persevere in the midst of difficulties with the expectation that "I will be able to succeed someday". There is hope for something in us, so we are enduring day by day. If this hope in us dies, we are alive but actually we are good as dead. That's why we are struggling to keep hope in us. But what would we do if we lose even the hope that we struggle to keep alive?

In Jonah 2: 1-2, Jonah, who had been disobedient to God's command and was on a ship and fleeing to Tarshish in the opposite direction of Nineveh (1:2-3), was eventually thrown into the sea by the sailors (v. 15) and prayed to the Lord in the stomach of the great fish (2:1). In other words, he prayed to God when all the hopes of the world had been cut off. Jonah looked at God and prayed to him in an impossible situation where there was no hope of living any more in human's perspective. Jonah looked at God and asked God for help in the life and death situation where he could not save himself and no one could help him. What is surprising is that even in such circumstances Jonah offered a thanksgiving prayer to God. How can we know this? The Bible says, "Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the stomach of the fish" in Jonah 2:1. Here the word "prayed" was used as a prayer of thanksgiving (1 Sam. 2:1; 2 Sam. 7:27). How could Jonah be able to give thanks to God even when all the hope of the world was cut off? There were two reasons:

First, Jonah was able to give thanks to God even when all the hope of the world was cut off because he repented of his sins through God's given suffering.

When Jonah disobeyed God's command and was running away from the presence of God, God threw the great wind on the sea. As a result, all the Gentile captain and the sailors were in danger because of Jonah. When they were suffering because of the great storm, God made Jonah to confess his sins to the sailors. Moreover, God made Jonah to show the action of his repentance by making him to be thrown into the sea by the sailors. And when he was thrown into the sea God provided a great fish to swallow Jonah (1:17). As a result, Jonah was able to give thanks to God in his prayer inside the stomach of the great fish even though he was in a situation where all the hopes of this world had been cut off. Although he was cut off from all the hopes of the world, he was able to give thanks to God because he enjoyed freedom from sin by repenting his sins of disobedience.

We can offer a thanksgiving prayer to God, even when we have lost all hope in the world. Though our circumstances seem to be hopeless, if we can confess our sins and repent, we can give thanks to God. Even if our hope of the world is cut off, we can give thanks to God if the problem of our sin can be resolved in Jesus Christ. If we are cut off from everything we believe in because of our sins, we must believe in Jesus who is our true hope. And we must confess our sins to God by relying on the merits of the cross of Jesus. We must show the actions of repentance. We must make a decision. If the problem of our sins can be resolved in Jesus Christ, we must thank God, even though all the things we believe in and all our hopes are cut off. We must give thanks to God for our true hope Jesus Christ who crucified on the cross and shed his precious blood for forgiveness of our sins and our salvation, even all the hope of the world is cut off.

Second, Jonah was able to give thanks to God even when all the hope of the world was cut off because he looked again toward God of salvation in his suffering.

Jonah didn't look toward God when he was disobeying God's command. Rather, he fled to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord (1:3). He also didn't look toward God, even though the ship was nearly broken due to the great wind and the great storm that God threw on the sea. But God didn't give up Jonah, and eventually made him to look toward God inside the stomach of the great fish. What kind of God did Jonah look toward? He is the God of salvation (2:9). He looked toward the God of salvation, who could save him from his sins. At last, Jonah looked toward God of salvation from the stomach of the fish that was deep in the sea. Jonah sought the God of salvation in the situation that all the hope of the world was cut off. And he prayed to the God of salvation. He gave a prayer of thanks to God. And he confessed, "Salvation is from the Lord" (v. 9). Although Jonah wasn't saved yet and was still inside the stomach of the great fish, he gave God a prayer of confession that salvation is from the Lord. When he did, God saved Jonah not only from his sin, but also from the stomach of the great fish what was in the deep sea where all the hope of the world was cut off. Unlike Jonah, who disobeyed God, the great fish obeyed God's command and vomited Jonah upon the dry land (v. 10).

We must look toward the God of salvation, even when all the hope of the world is cut off. When there is no hope of salvation in this world, we must look to Him who is the hope of true salvation. There is no salvation of the world. When no one in the world is able to save us, we must look to the Lord, the true savior. And we must pray for the salvation of God by faith. In doing so, God will not only save us from our sins, but He will also deliver us from the situation in which all our hopes of the world are cut off. Victory!

Thanksgiving prayer in suffering, Unexpected God's salvation

“Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish,” (Jonah 2:1).

How could Jonah give thanks to God even in times of sufferings? He remembered the grace of salvation that God had given to him in the past. Then what was the grace of salvation that God had given to Jonah in the past? God saved Jonah when he was thrown into the sea by commanding the great fish to swallow Jonah (1:15).

This is not the salvation we pray for and expect. The salvation we are praying and expecting is that when we ask God for deliverance, God deliver us right away. For example, when Apostle Peter, who was sinking into the water, said to Jesus “Lord, save me” (Mt. 14:30) Jesus "immediately" stretched out His hands and took hold of Peter and they got into the boat (vv. 31-32). Although Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came toward Jesus but became frightened and began to sink because he saw the wind (vv. 29-30), don't you think Peter walked on the water with Jesus when they were getting into the boat together? However, God caused Jonah to enter into the stomach of the great fish (Jonah 1:17) instead of putting into the ship again (v. 3) [even though the ship was about to break up (v. 4)] when Jonah was thrown into the sea (v. 15). Who will pray and expect this kind of salvation? Who would expect to be delivered in suffering (cast into the sea) to another suffering (in the stomach of the great fish)?

Why didn't God deliver Jonah like Apostle Peter but was delivered to the stomach of the great fish? Though we can never fully understand God's will (Job 5:9, 37: 5), I think there are at least two reasons:

The first reason seems to be that God made Jonah to realize that when he disobeyed God's command (1:2-3), he was going down the road of disobedience.

The Lord's command was to “Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me” (1:2). But Jonah went down to Joppa, and went down into the ship (v. 3), and went down below the deck (v. 5) and went down to the roots of the mountain (2:6). This path of disobedience is downhill.

The second reason seems to be that God made Jonah to pray inside the stomach of the great fish and to make him realize that "Salvation is from the Lord" (2:9).

Maybe if Jonah was delivered to the ship like Peter, then he would not have confessed “Salvation is from the Lord” (2:9) even though he would offer the prayer of thanksgiving. And looking at the "Lord's temple" (v. 4) of the Lord, which may be felt far and wide in the deep, deep sea fish, Jonah would have thought humanly that it was impossible for him to receive deliverance from the situation. At that time, he could only look toward the God of salvation. And he realized that God was the savior, not in the ship, but in the stomach of the great fish. Therefore, although Jonah was not yet delivered from the stomach of the great fish, he gave thanks to God with assurance of salvation (vv.1, 9).

Like Jonah, we must also give thanks to God in our suffering. In the midst of going through suffering, we must remember the grace of God's salvation in the past and give thanks to God in advance with the assurance of salvation. Though the way in which God saves us from suffering differs from our prayer and expectation, we must

give thanks to God in advance, believing that salvation is from the Lord, and God will save us in his own way and thus will fulfill his purpose of our suffering.

Benefits of sufferings

“and he said, "I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice” (Jonah 2:2).

How do we respond to the hardships we have in our lives? Henry Nowen suggests to respond in four ways in his book, "Turn My Mourning into Dancing." There are 4 steps to dance with God:

(1) The first step is to grieve the pain and suffering we go through.

We have to cry when we have to cry. We must weep in front of the cross. And when we go through pain and suffering, we must go to our Heavenly Father and tell him what we are going through. But I think many of us don't want to acknowledge our pain and suffering, but rather try to deny, ignore, or suppress them in our hearts deeply. If we do, then our sufferings will not benefit us. Rather, as in the case of the Israelites in the Old Testament, there will be a greater likelihood of committing sin to God by grumbling and complaining.

(2) The second step is to face the causes of pain and pain.

We must look straight at the hidden loss of injustice, shame and guilt that paralyze us. What causes pain and suffering? We must know what the cause is so that we can look straight to our pain and suffering. Many times we seem to be unaware of the cause of our suffering and pain. So we cannot face the causes of pain and sorrow, and even though we know the cause, our human instincts are familiar with avoiding the cause rather than directly look straight at them. We cannot enjoy the grace given by God through pain and suffering until we face the cause of the pain and suffering that we are experiencing.

(3) The third step is to go through pain and suffering, loss and wound and pass through it.

We should never pour too much energy into denying our pain and suffering. Rather, we must enter into the suffering, pain, loss, and wounds as we acknowledge them. We should not evade anymore. We must enter the tunnel of pain and suffering. Though it may be dark and frightening, we still have to enter that tunnel. Without entering the tunnel of pain and suffering, there is no benefit of the suffering.

(4) The last fourth step is to meet Heavenly Father in pain, suffering, loss and wound.

We must enter into the tunnel of suffering, pain, loss and wound and feel the pain, suffering, loss and wound of Jesus. Then, there is healing in our pain and wounds. Furthermore, we can be used as a tool of the Lord as a wounded healer.

We can summarize the sufferings of Jonah in four parts:

(1) First, the suffering of Jonah was the stomach of the great fish.

Look at Jonah 2:1 – “Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish.” Jonah's first suffering was "the depth of Sheol" (v. 2). Like a darkened cave, Jonah, who was in the stomach of the great fish deep in the sea, was struck by the painful situation that looked around the north, south, west, and there seemed to be no solution. He was imprisoned like the Israelites who had been imprisoned in front of the Red Sea at the time of the Exodus (though this was King Pharaoh's thoughts and not the thoughts of the Israelites). Everything Jonah believed in this world was cut off. When we are in hopeless desperate situation like Jonah, we must look to the Lord who is our true Hope. This is the first benefit of suffering.

(2) Second, the suffering of Jonah was the Lord's wave.

Look at Jonah 2:3 – “For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me All Your breakers and billows passed over me.” Here the word “breakers” refers to God’s given waves that were breaking Jonah (Park Yun-sun). Not only God was breaking the ship that Jonah was aboard, but also Jonah's heart as well. God was breaking the harden heart of Jonah, who forgot the Lord's mission and disobeyed God's command and running away, so that he might soften Jonah’s heart in order for him to obey God’s command. This is the second benefit of suffering.

(3) Third, the suffering of Jonah was the feeling that Jonah was expelled from God’s sight.

Look at Jonah 2:4 – “So I said, I have been expelled from Your sight” Jonah had this feeling because he was running away from God (1:3). In other words, Jonah was trying to flee from God’s presence so he felt that God had left Him and was far away from him. In a word, Jonah felt that God forsaken him. So are we. When do we feel that we have been forsaken by God? It is when we disobey God's commands like Jonah and flee far away from God's presence we can feel that God has forsaken us. Especially when we are in trouble, no matter how we pray to God, we receive no answer of our prayer from God. Then we can feel that God has hid his face from us and God has forsaken us. That was how the psalmist felt. That was why he cried out like this in Psalms 22:1 – “My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.” We can have a feeling that God has forsaken us when there is no answer of prayer from God and no help in spite of groaning and crying. This feeling of being forsaken by God must have been greater pain than physically suffering by God’s wave and being in the stomach of the great fish. It is the most painful feeling that we have been forsaken by God than any discipline, as if we were stuck in a dark room when we were disciplined by our father, and felt that we were abandoned by our beloved father rather than discipline by our father's stick. But in this suffering, the blessing that God gives us is that we may hear the cry of Jesus “‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’-- which means, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” of the crucified Jesus (Mk. 15:34). When we hear this voice of Jesus Christ on the cross, we are convinced and assured that we are not forsaken by God forever because of Jesus, the only begotten Son of God was forsaken by his own Father God for us. This is the third benefit of suffering.

(4) Fourth, the suffering of Jonah was that he was fainting away.

Look at Jonah 2:7 – ““While I was fainting away,” The word 'faint' here means 'to decline'. This word tells that Jonah was in an extreme discord. The situation of Jonah's suffering could not escape (or be saved) by the power of man in his total incompetence, and it was an extreme despair that such a situation was three days old. In the desperation of experiencing total helplessness and total incompetence, the grace that God gives us is to look to Him who is the hope of salvation. And by looking at the Lord of salvation, God enables us to confess from our hearts and lips that "Salvation is from the Lord" (v. 9). This is the fourth and great benefit of suffering.

We must enjoy the grace of God through suffering in our lives. In particular, like Jonah, when we are running away from God by disobeying God's command, we must enjoy the benefits of God's suffering while dancing with God through the great winds of suffering that God gives us. Hence, we also pray that we may confess like the psalmist: "It is good for me that I was afflicted, That I may learn Your statutes" (Ps. 119:71).

All God's breakers

**“For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me
All Your breakers and billows passed over me” (Jonah 2:3).**

There are too many people who break the family. Many husbands are breaking their families and many wives are breaking their families as well. Even their children are breaking their families. Many parents and parents-in-laws are breaking their families as well. It seems like everyone is breaking the family. Everyone is breaking the peace of the home. The spiritual family, the church is same. There are too many people who are breaking the church. Not only the pastors are breaking the church but also the elders are breaking the church as well. Now even the wives of the elders are starting to break the church from behind. Furthermore, now even the deacons are getting up and breaking the church. There are too many people who are breaking the peace of the church. It seems that there are so many people around us who are breaking the church unity. Obviously, the Lord wants us to use us to build up our homes and his churches, but we are refusing to join in the work of the Lord. We are disobeying the Lord's command. We are more and more destroying than building. We are destroying our families and even the Lord's churches. Although we must become the peacemakers, we are becoming the peace-breakers. What would Jesus do to us, the breakers, who disobey the Lord's command? The Lord sends the waves of life to break our harden hearts of the disobedient.

In Jonah 2:3, Jonah prayed to God in the stomach of the great fish, saying that “You hurled me into the deep, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me.” Here, the “breakers” are the waves that break themselves (Park Yun-sun). The Creator God was breaking Jonah's harden heart by using his tools such as, the great wind, the great storm, the Gentile captain and the sailors. As a result, Jonah prayed in the stomach of the great fish while looking at God because of his broken heart due to the great wave of the Lord. Jonah, who had fallen asleep at the below deck of the ship and didn't even pray to God when the ship was about to break up, was broken by the great wind that God had sent to him. As a result, he finally prayed to God in the stomach of the great fish. The Lord broke Jonah's harden heart so that he could pray to God. In other words, only those whom the Lord breaks look to Him and pray humbly.

We are breaking the families and the churches. Although it is obvious that God wants to build His church and our families, we are disobeying God's command to build His church and our families. Thus, God is now breaking the heart of those who disobey, those who break the peace of the church and the family. He does so in order to build us up as peacemakers, not peace-breakers. God even use such disobedient servants like us to proclaim the Word of God to such sinners like Ninevites so that they can repent their sins and reconciled not only with God but also with each other. In order to faithfully bear this ministry of reconciliation and of making peace, we must become more and more broken. I hope and pray that our harden hearts will be broken so that we may humbly cry out to God and obey God's command even through it will be painful when the great waves of the Lord will come into our lives.

Jonah's God (5)

[Jonah 2:1-10]

Can you give thanks to God in times of sufferings?

I think about Jonah's prayer. Jonah eventually prayed in the stomach of the great fish in Jonah chapter 2 even though he had an opportunity to do so when he was disobeying the command of God, running away to the opposite direction of Nineveh where God wanted him to go and cry against it, and the ship that aboard was about to break up and when all the Gentile sailors were crying out to their own gods. In such a hopeless circumstance that is in the stomach of the great fish Jonah surprisingly offered a prayer of thanksgiving instead of complaining. How can we know this? When we look at the Hebrew word of "prayed" in Jonah 2:1, it was used to express thanksgiving in 1 Samuel 2:1 and 2 Samuel 7:27. So, I would like to think of two things from Jonah 2:1-10 under the title "Jonah's God (5)": (1) How was Jonah able to give thanks to God? (2) What was Jonah's response to the God of salvation? I hope and pray that we may enjoy the grace of God while meditating on these two things.

First, how was Jonah able to give thanks to God?

Jonah was able to give thanks to God because he experienced the God of salvation. Look at Jonah 2:9 – "... Salvation is from the LORD." When Jonah was offering this prayer to God, he was still in the stomach of the great fish. And he was crying out to God in his sufferings. He determined to look toward God again and to pray to him in the feeling that he had been expelled from the sight of God. We can think of two things in Jonah's prayer:

(1) Jonah's prayer can be said to be a prayer to God on the basis of past salvation.

Look at Jonah 1:17 – "And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights." God prepared a great fish to save Jonah, who had been thrown to the sea. Jonah remembered this past salvation and offered the prayer of thanksgiving to God in the stomach of the great fish.

(2) Jonah's prayer is a prayer to God with the assurance of future salvation.

Look at Jonah 2:2 – "and he said, "I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice." Being already experienced God's salvation through the great fish when Jonah was thrown into the sea, Jonah believed that God would save him from the stomach of the great fish, like the stomach of Sheol, as well so this is what he confessed in Jonah 2:2. This confession of Jonah's prayer was based on his trust in God's faithfulness. Jonah, who was saved by God before in Jonah 1:17, had conviction that God would save him again from the stomach of the great fish so that God would fulfill his sovereign will through such disobedient servant like Jonah. Considering the Prophet Jonah's conviction of God's salvation, Apostle Paul's firm hope of 2 Corinthians 1:10 came into my mind: "He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us."

Then where did God save Jonah? God saved him from the stomach of the great fish. How does today's text specifically describe this fact? In Jonah 2:1-2 describes the Jonah's situation by connecting three occurrences of

the Hebrew word "min" (from): (a) "From inside the fish" (v. 1), (2) "In (from) my distress" (v. 2), (3) "From the depths of the grave" (v. 2). These three phrases describe one situation. The situation is that Jonah in the stomach of the great fish. Look at these two phrases in verses 3 and 6: "the deep, the very heart of the seas" (v. 3) and "the roots of the mountains, the pit" (v. 6). The deeper the "pit" is (v.6), the hotter the petition for God will be, and the experience of salvation as a prayer answer will be even more amazing than the shallow pit. Jonah met his savior God, who can make everything possible in his impossible situation. The lesson that this gives us is that we can experience God more deeply in the impossible situation like Jonah's situation that is in the stomach of the great fish,

Listen to the three testimonies of salvation from the dead that appears in the Book of Jonah: (a) The first is the sailors' testimony of the salvation. God saved the sailors from the life and death situation where the ship was about to break up due to the stormy sea by making them to throw Jonah into the sea (Jonah ch. 1). (b) The second is the testimony of Jonah's salvation in Jonah chapter 2. Look at Jonah 2:9 – "Salvation is from the LORD." (c) Finally, the Ninevites' testimony of salvation from God's calamity. We will see this in Jonah chapter 3. When I think about these three testimonies of salvation, I think Jonah's testimony of the salvation is the key. I think that the sailors' testimony and the Ninevites' testimony are ultimately centered on Jonah's testimony of salvation. The salvation of the sailors refers to Jonah's salvation, and the salvation of the Ninevites is the result of Jonah's salvation. God made Jonah to believe and to confess that "Salvation is from the Lord" (2:9) so that he might go to Nineveh and eventually proclaim to the Ninevites the message of salvation that he already had experienced. In other words, Jonah proclaimed to the people of Nineveh the God of salvation whom he had met (experienced) through his experience of salvation. Jonah was able to boldly proclaim to the Ninevites the message of repentance that he repented in the stomach of the great fish and of salvation that he had experienced after he confessed "Salvation is from the Lord" (v. 9) .

Second, what was Jonah's response to the God of salvation?

It was to worship God with thanksgiving. Look at Jonah worshipping God with a song of thanksgiving: "But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving ..." (v. 9). When did Jonah worship God with a song of thanksgiving? It was in the stomach of great fish from where he wasn't saved yet. But after he was convinced that the faithful God who saved in the past would save him again in the present, he worshiped God with a song of thanksgiving. This is different from our instinct. Our instinct is we give thanks to God if God answers our prayer of salvation, not if we are in crisis like Jonah who was in the stomach of the great fish. Why then did Jonah decide to sacrifice with a voice of thanksgiving to God? The reason is because Jonah has experienced the grace of God. Look at Jonah 2:8-9: "Those who regard vain idols Forsake their faithfulness, But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving That which I have vowed I will pay Salvation is from the LORD." Here in verse 8 we can see the transformation of Jonah. Jonah wanted the sailors to know how wrongly they were directed by their false idols. Jonah knew that idols could deceive those who worship them, whether they have the charm of attracting their hearts or not, because their idols are empty shells and the idols have no life (Baldwin) [Word study (v. 8): Idolaters is described in two Hebrew words: (1) 'Hebell': Breath that evaporates quickly; (2) 'Sseo': emptiness, void]. But in contrast to idolaters, Jonah sacrificed to God with a voice of thanksgiving (v. 9). Why? It was because Jonah kept the grace of God in his heart [Word study (v. 9): 'God worshipers' is described in one word: "grace". This word means 'faithful love', 'mercy', and 'lovingkindness'. In Hebrew, it is 'hesed' and it means God's covenant love]. Here, Jonah looked back at the past before he came in the stomach of the great fish, which he had forsaken God's covenant love in disobeying God's command. As he was doing so, not only that he confessed that his life was empty, vain and void like breath but also pointed out the sins of idolatry of his own people, the Israelites (Hos. 4:12; Am. 5:26). Eventually, Jonah experienced the presence of God through prayer (Jonah 2:7) in the great fish, looking again toward God's temple (v. 4). As a result, he had come to see the foolish sin that he followed falsehood and vanity, and had come to experience the faithful love of God. This is the biblical principle. In other words, those who receive the grace of God are obliged to worship God in a song of thanksgiving. We see an interesting contrast

when we see Jonah giving thanks to God. When we look at Jonah 1:16, the sailors first offered sacrifices to the God of Jonah. What was their motive? It was the fear of Jonah's God, "God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land" (1:9). Here, the fear of the sailors is different from the 'fear' that Jonah had in 1:9. The sailors offered a sacrifice to God in fear (v. 16). However, Jonah experienced the grace of God, and offered sacrifice (worship) as a song of thanksgiving, rather than afraid of God in fear.

One day a sister of a member of the short-term mission team gave me a prayer note. In that prayer note, there were five prayer requests. And two of the five prayer topics were about her future: 'Pray for me so that I may give all my future worries and anxieties to God' and 'Pray for me that God may open the way for the future'. I also have a prayer topic for the future. I am sure many of you have a prayer topic for your future as well. However, 1 Corinthians 1:26, which I meditated on before and was the precious challenge to me, I want to share with you too: "For consider your calling" There is a lesson to be learned here. We, who have more future than the past, need to stop once in the midst of rushing toward the dreams, visions and goals of the future and look back on the past. We must think about the moment when we first believed in Jesus, when we were filled with joy of salvation, when we became God's children by forgiving such sinners like us who had no choice but to die forever. When we consider the standards of man, we were foolish, weak, and despised (1 Cor. 1:26-27). But God saved us and brought us thus far. This is totally God's grace. Thus, we must give thanks, praise, and worship God.

Thanksgiving in suffering

“Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish, ... But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving That which I have vowed I will pay Salvation is from the LORD” (Jonah 2:1, 9).

Suffering is painful and distressful. And when we are in pain and distress, we usually groan in wounds and tears. We even make a grudge. We blame on others. We have to blame somebody for it. We blame a situation too, not just the people. We blame the people and the situation, but we do not blame ourselves. The reason is that if we are so painful and distressful, we tend to become more selfish. And if we are selfish, we will not only able to think that suffering has come because of ourselves, but we cannot. That's why we cannot learn through suffering. Not only that we cannot learn about ourselves through suffering, but also we cannot learn the Word of God. As a result, we are not thankful to God in suffering.

But the prophet Jonah decided to give thanks to God in the midst of suffering and to offer sacrifices to God in thanksgiving (Jonah 2:1, 9). How is this possible? How could Jonah be determined to give sacrifice to God in thanksgiving (v. 9), in the situation where he was hurled into the very heart of the seas and the currents swirled about him (v. 3) and he was inside the fish (v. 1)? How could Jonah have been thankful to God in the painful feeling of being expelled from God's sight (v. 4) and when his life was ebbing away (v. 7)? What was the secret?

First, the secret was because Jonah remembered the grace of God's salvation, which he had already experienced.

Isn't this something we cannot understand? Wasn't Jonah in the stomach of the great fish and suffering? Then how can we talk about Jonah's experience of salvation? God saved Jonah by preparing the great fish and commending the fish to swallow Jonah (1:17). Jonah, who experienced this past grace of salvation, was able to give thanks to God (2:1) [The Hebrew word for "prayer" is used as a meaning of thankful prayer (1 Sam. 2:1; 2 Sam. 7:27)]. How could Jonah be grateful for Gods' salvation of being swallowed by the great fish and was suffering in the stomach of the great fish? Isn't the salvation that we usually pray for and expect deliverance from suffering like a "big fish stomach"? But Jonah didn't offer the prayer of thanksgiving when he on the dry land Jonah 2:10), but when he was still in the stomach of the great fish (vv. 1-9). Although he was saved from one suffering from another (greater) suffering, he was able to give thanks to God in such suffering because he remembered the grace of God's salvation that he had already experienced. Even in the midst of suffering, those who remember the past grace of salvation and celebrate in the present cannot but give thanks to God. Let us give thanks to God even in the greatest sufferings as we remember God's grace of salvation that we have experienced in the past.

Second, the secret was because Jonah had the assurance and hope of God's salvation for the future.

The reason why we can give thanks to God in the midst of suffering is not only because of the grace of salvation that God has given us in the past, but because we believe that God, who saved us in the past, will also save us from our present sufferings. Because of this conviction and hope of salvation, we are able to praise and pray in thanksgiving to God, even though we are now going through suffering. That's what Paul and Silas did in Acts chapter 16. Paul and Silas prayed and praised God (Acts 16:25), although they could have been executed the next

day in prison. How could this be possible? It was because they had confidence and hope of God's salvation. Especially because Paul believed that God would lead him to Rome and stand before Caesar, he was sure that God would save him from the prison in Philippi. That was why he was able to pray and praise God. Likewise, Jonah was able to give thanks to God in hope of salvation because he believed that God, who had saved him in the past, would also save him from the stomach of the great fish (Jonah 2:1, 9). In other words, he believed and hoped for God's faithful love of salvation, so he decided to give thanks to God and to offer a sacrifice to God with the voice of thanksgiving in the midst of suffering. We believe that the faithful God who saved us in the past will not only save us in our present sufferings but will also save us from the sufferings we will face in the future, because our God of salvation is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). When we believe and hope in this faithful God of salvation, we can eagerly desire and hope in God of salvation and give thanks to God even though we are in the midst of such 'a stomach of a great fish' that seems despicable.

Third and last, the secret is because Jonah kept the grace of God in his heart.

Look at Jonah 2:8-9: "Those who regard vain idols Forsake their faithfulness, But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving That which I have vowed I will pay Salvation is from the LORD." Here the phrase "vain idols" is described in two Hebrew words: (1) 'Hebell': Breath that evaporates quickly; (2) 'Sseo': emptiness, void. In other words, vain idols mean something like vanishing as quickly as breathing. Those who serve vain idols that vanish as quickly as breathing abandon God's grace. For example, if we love material more than God, and worship false material, we abandon the grace that God has given us. As a result, we cannot worship God with the voice of thanksgiving. When we live in this world, pursuing the vainly worldly things from Monday to Saturday, we are forsaking the God's grace that God is giving us on the Lord's Day. If we fail to keep God's grace in our hearts from Monday to Saturday, then we cannot have thanksgiving in our hearts when we go to church on the Lord's Day and worship God. Not only that we cannot come in before God with thanksgiving in our heart but also we cannot praise and worship God with the voice of thanksgiving. But if we keep in our hearts the grace that God has given us, we can thank God in the Lord's presence on Sunday and give thanks and praise to God. Interestingly, idol worshipers abandon the grace of God and worship the things that quickly disappear like breathing, but God worshipers go to God and worship Him with thanksgiving in their hearts by keeping God's faithful covenant love (Hebrew: "Hesed") in their hearts. It was Jonah who worshiped God. He was able to give thanks to God in his sufferings because he kept the grace of God in his heart. Jonah determined to offer sacrifice to God with the voice of thanksgiving because he realized little bit of God's covenant love of not forsaking Jonah who disobeyed God's command and forsook his mission and tried to flee from God. In the end, those who have experienced the grace of God cannot but offer a prayer of thanksgiving and decide to worship God with thanksgiving in their hearts. We must also give thanks and prayer to God as we experience God's grace in our lives. To do so, we must faithfully keep the grace of God in our hearts.

Though suffering is painful and distressful, we must glorify God through our suffering. To do so, we must look to the God of salvation in suffering. And we must remember the grace of salvation that God has given us in the past and celebrate those graces in our present sufferings. As we faithfully hold on to the past graces God has given us, we must be convinced in the present suffering that our faithful God of salvation will save us now in our present afflictions. When we have this conviction of God's salvation, then we can hope in God in despair. When we have this hope of salvation, we can endure our suffering with faith. We can look at God's salvation quietly. We must look to the God of salvation in suffering. We must remember the past grace of God's salvation, the present conviction of salvation, and the hope of future salvation. In doing so, we will be able to pray and worship God with thanksgiving in our hearts.

Assurance of salvation

"... Salvation is from the LORD "(Jonah 2:9).

Do you have assurance of salvation? When we think about 'assurance of salvation', we tend to think about our conviction that we will go to heaven after we die. Of course, this conviction is based on believing in Jesus Christ. In other words, the basis of our assurance of salvation is faith in Jesus Christ who died on the cross for forgiveness of our sins and the resurrected from the dead for our righteousness (Rom. 4:25). Besides the conviction of this salvation, another assurance or deliverance of salvation that we must have is the assurance that God will save (or deliver) us from the circumstances of our sufferings. We desperately need assurance of salvation (deliverance) that even it is impossible for us to be saved in human perspective, Almighty God is able to deliver us even under the impossible circumstances. And our faith and trust toward the God of salvation should not be changed even though God's salvation (deliverance) is not according to our expectation. The reason is that our God is God who does not change. In other words, because our God is the unchanging God of salvation, we should not doubt the God of salvation even though he saves us unexpected way. Rather, we must confess by faith that "Salvation is from the Lord" (Jonah 2:9) even in the situation where God saves us unexpected way.

The unexpected salvation experienced by Jonah was the stomach of the great fish (Jonah 1:17-2:1). After God made Jonah to confess his sin through a lot of the sailors (1:7-10), God made Jonah to be thrown into the sea by the sailors (vv. 11-12). Therefore, not only did God save the sailors from the stormy sea (v. 15), but also saved Jonah by providing the great fish and made the great fish to swallow Jonah (v. 17). Was Jonah expecting this salvation from God? If I were Jonah I would probably expected God to deliver me through a passing ship when I was thrown into the sea. In particular, I would expect God to save me through the ship that was heading toward Tarshish where I want to go and not Nineveh. And if the sailors of the ship that was heading toward Tarshish see me and deliver me from the sea, then I will rationalize my own disobedience by saying that it is the grace of God's salvation through those sailors and also that it may be God's will for me to go to Tarshish instead of Nineveh. However, Creator God didn't use a passing ship to save Jonah, but he used the great fish. And God made the great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the great fish for three days and three nights (v. 17). This was the situation of salvation that Jonah couldn't have expected. Why did God give this unexpected salvation to Jonah? Why did God use the great fish instead of a great ship to save Jonah? Imagine living three days and three nights in the stomach of the great fish. If we were Jonah, could we give thanks to God for the great fish and the fact that we are in its stomach? Can we accept it as God's salvation? Surprisingly, Jonah offered the prayer of thanksgiving to God in the stomach of the great fish (2:1). How could Jonah give thanks to God in such unexpected situations of salvation? It was because Jonah realized the grace of God that He had given to Him in the stomach of the great fish (v. 8). And Jonah did not abandon that grace of God (v. 8). Jonah acknowledged his sins to God, and humbly accepted that grace of God. In the midst of that, Jonah sought God. He cried out to God in his sufferings (v. 2). In the unexpected situation of salvation, in the stomach of the great fish, God made Jonah to be thankful to God and made him pray to God. God made Jonah to look only toward God of salvation in the hope of salvation when he was in the stomach of the great fish by making him totally incompetent and despair (v. 4). And God made Jonah to confess in the stomach of the great fish, "Salvation is from the Lord" (v. 9).

What is the situation of salvation that we expect from God? What is the painful situation we are facing now? Aren't you looking for God's will in that painful situation? Aren't you throwing the question "why" and "what" many times?: 'Why did God lead me to this situation?', 'Why doesn't God save me from this painful situation even though I prayed and expected him to answer?', 'What is God's will?' Have you ever come to a situation where

you did not expect God to answer your prayer like that? Do you feel like you are in the stomach of the great fish? Have you ever been in despair because there is no hope of being delivered from your situation? That is the situation of salvation that God has given you. In such a situation God makes you to offer a prayer of thanksgiving. And in that situation, God wants you to remember the past salvation graces that God has given you. In such a desperate situation, God wants you to desire and seek the God of salvation. God wants you to have assurance of salvation as you look at the God of salvation even in such unexpected situation. And in the context of such unexpected salvation, God expects you to truly confess, "Salvation is from the LORD." In doing so, God will save you from the unexpected situation of salvation to the expected situation like Jonah who was delivered to the dry land from the stomach of the great fish. And God will give us a second chance to fulfill God's given mission to us. I hope and pray that we will be able to deeply experience this wonderful God's salvation and providence of God today.

Jonah's God (6)

[Jonah 3:1-10]

How should we view the crisis in our journey of life? When we encounter a crisis, we often think, "Why did this crisis come to me?" When we do that, we tend to blame on someone whom we think that brought crisis in our lives. And we tend to immerse in the crisis we faced in this thought and resentment. As a result, we don't see others other than ourselves. And we are even more depressed in despair by falling into the swamp of crisis and losing the desire and hope of salvation. Is this the reaction of the crisis that God who controls the crisis wants from us? I don't think so. I think crisis can be a good opportunity for us to experience His love in depth. Also, crisis can be the good opportunity for us to love those who are going through the similar crisis in their lives. If we don't leave the Word of God in our crisis, then it can be a good opportunity for us to trust God and obey His Word so that His Word can become our possession (Ps. 11:51, 55-56). But the question is how many of us does see crisis in our lives as God's given opportunity? I would like to think about God who gives us another opportunity under the title "Jonah's God (6)".

Second, Jonah's God is the God who spoke to Jonah the second time.

Look at Jonah 3:1 – "Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time." In Jonah chapter 2, Jonah prayed to God in the stomach of the great fish when he was suffering (2:1). The conclusion of his prayer was "Salvation is from the Lord" (v.9). Eventually, God answered Jonah's prayer (v. 1) and he commanded the fish to vomit Jonah onto dry land (v. 10). God who delivered this salvation gave Jonah another chance to obey God's command. We know this from Jonah 3:1 – "Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time." What was the second word of God to Jonah? Look at Jonah 3:2 – "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." Compare this word of God with the first word to Jonah from God in Jonah 1:2 – "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." The same is true of the first seven words: "Go to that great city of Nineveh." The difference is that in the first word of God, God told Jonah the reason why Jonah should go to Nineveh ("because its wickedness has come up before me") while in the second word of God, God told Jonah what he should proclaim (the content of the message). What Jonah should proclaim was "the message I give you" (3:2). And what is that message that God gave to Jonah? It may be "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned" (v. 4). What was Jonah's response to the Word of God that came to him the second time? In a word, Jonah's response was obedience. Look at 3:3 – "Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh." Compare this verse with Jonah 1:3. In Jonah 1:3, Jonah's response to the God's first command was "But Jonah ran away from the LORD" But in Jonah 3:3, when God spoke to him the second time, Jonah's response was "So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD." Jonah, who had fled from the presence of the LORD and had fled far from the word of God, was running toward the word of God. In the end, God made Jonah to return to His word and gave Jonah back His Word, and he wrote that Word deeply in Jonah's heart. So Jonah went into the city of Nineveh and walked for a day and proclaimed the word of God (v. 4).

What does it mean by the message that Jonah proclaimed to the people of Nineveh, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown?" (v.4) Here, '40 days' seems to have a special meaning when we look at the 40 days of the Noah's flood (Gen. 7:17; 8:6), the 40 days when Moses was on Mount Sinai (Exod. 24:18), it took 40 days for Elijah to go to Mountain Horeb (2 Kgs. 19:8) and so on. And the choice of the word "be overthrown" is meaningful. There are two reasons for this: (1) First reason is that this word is written in the stories of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19:21, 25. (2) The second reason is that this word may mean better change. When Jonah didn't miss the

second opportunity God gave him and went to Nineveh and proclaimed “Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown”, God gave the Ninevites the opportunity of repent their sins. I think there were two choices for the people of Nineveh: (1) When they heard the words proclaimed by Jonah, they could repent, or (2) the city of Nineveh collapsed and fell. Why then did God told (or allow) Jonah to proclaim to the Ninevites that "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown"? We can find its possible reasons in the phrase "extremely great" in verse 3. In Hebrew this phrase “extremely great” is written as “great to God” which refers to the importance of the city [In NIV, it is translated as "a very important"]. The importance here is that Nineveh is a religiously important city. According to Wiseman, in 'Nineveh of Jonah', there were many shrines that were devoted to the gods of Nineveh such as 'Nabu', 'Assur', 'Adad', 'Ninurta', 'Ishtar' of Nineveh. So what is the purpose of which God gave Jonah to said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (3:4) and "cry against it" (1:2)? As a city full of religious idolatry, as in Sodom and Gomorrah, God reveals the justice of God by sending a prophet Jonah to proclaim the word of God, because "the wickedness has come up before Me" (v. 2). He also wanted them to repent their sins so that they could be saved by God. So Jonah went to Nineveh and proclaimed the message of God.

Here is one question we should think about. It is when the word of God came to Jonah the second time. It was after when Jonah was disciplined by God through the great wind and the great storm because of his disobedience to the God’s command in running away from the presence of the Lord, and after he confessed his sin before God and men, and after he was saved by God from the stomach of the great fish. What lesson does this give us? In the Book of Jeremiah, the stiff-necked Israelites didn’t listen to the word of God that was proclaimed through Prophet Jeremiah, not only twice but “again and again” (Jer. 11:7). But Jonah was obedient to God when the word of God came to him the second time. What is different? Those who confess their sins after the God's discipline, and have experienced repentance and salvation, will obey God's word for the second time. But those who don’t realize their sins and do not repent even after the God's discipline have no fruit of obedience, no matter how many times the word of God is proclaimed to them. Therefore, whenever the Word of God comes to us, our hearts must be pierced by the word of God and there must be a response “What shall we do?” (Acts 2:37). This is the response of the Christians who run to the Word. In doing so, there is true repentance (Acts 2:38), and such a repentant heart is good soil that can receive the word of God humbly. Our God is God who gives us the Word of God again. The reason is that God gives us another chance to obey God and fulfill God's will. Through another word, God wants us not to miss another opportunity that is given to each one of us.

There was an American named Mark Dubrin in English Ministry at Seohyun church in Korea. When he was in good health, he had to go back to America. When he suddenly had to leave Korea, I prayed for him and thought about baptizing him because he really wanted to receive it. The reason was I heard his confession of faith in his Lord and Savior once again, and his confession that he did all the service in the church by God’s grace alone. But on the day when Mark left to America, I and some brothers and sisters in Christ visited Mark in order to worship God together and to baptize him. But I was unable to fulfill that plan and had to send him back to America. Although God not only gave me one chance to baptize Mark but few more times, I didn’t baptize him. I was disobeying God’s command to baptize him (Mt. 28:19). At that time, I wasn’t sure God would give me a second chance to baptize him. But few months later, when I also came back to America, God gave another opportunity to baptize Brother Mark in the Name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. But Heavenly Father didn’t give his one and only Son Jesus the second chance in regard to bear the cross and be crucified on the cross for our salvation. Why didn’t God have Jesus the second opportunity? The reason is because God loves us so much that He wanted to save us. What shall we do when this God of love speak to us the second time?

God's grace

''Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it, for their wickedness has come up before Me.' ... 'Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you''(Jonah 1:2; 3:2).

When we compare Jonah 1:2 with Jonah 3:2, there is a similarity. Both the first word of God to Jonah (1:2) and the second word (3:2) begin with the same words: "Arise, go the Nineveh the great city." But comparing the two verses, there is also the difference. The difference is that in the first word of God, God told Jonah the reason why Jonah should go to Nineveh ("because its wickedness has come up before me") (1:2) while in the second word of God, God told Jonah what he should proclaim, the content of the message (3:2): "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (v. 4).

As I was meditating on these two verses, I thought about this: 'If the order to God's commands were changed, how would Jonah respond?' In other words, if God told Jonah the content of his message (3:2, 4) first instead of the reason to go to Nineveh (1:2), I wonder how Jonah would have responded. I think Jonah would have obeyed God's command. In other words, if God said to Jonah the first time "'Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you" (3:2), I think Jonah would joyfully go to Nineveh and proclaim to them "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (v. 4). The reason is that Jonah foretold that God would punish Israel by using the Assyria (the capital: Nineveh) as a 'stick'. In other words, if Jonah had patriotism as a prophet of Israel, he would have hoped for the destruction of Assyria. Therefore, if God first commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh and proclaim to the Ninevites "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (v. 4), then he would quickly obey God's command and went to Nineveh instead of running away from Nineveh and running away to Tarshish, the opposite direction from Nineveh. The prophet Jonah was the servant of the Lord who had not imitated the heart of God. Although he was disciplined by God because he disobeyed the first command of God (1:2), repented and prayed in the stomach of the great fish, and was saved, Jonah didn't have the heart of God who is "a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity" (4:2) Instead, I think Jonah went to Nineveh and gladly cried against the Ninevites "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown", thinking in confusion that he had the holy and righteous God's heart. But the amazing grace of God is that God used such prophet like Jonah, whom he loved and chose as his servant, even though he knew the Jonah's heart. In other words, the grace of God is the fact that God used Jonah, who didn't have the heart of God, to fulfill His will.

I am a pastor like Jonah. I am proclaiming the Word of God even though I don't have the God's heart. There are many times when I didn't feed the God's flocks properly whom God has entrusted to me. Instead, I hit their hearts with my interpretations of the Word of God as if Jonah had proclaimed to the people of Nineveh, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown." My own heart and sinful heart must be broken first, but I would rather preach the Word of God by wanting the hearts of the flock to be broken. Even such pastor like me, God still loves me and uses me. Isn't this God's amazing grace?

Jonah's God (7)

[Jonah 3:5-10]

Long time ago, when my kids were little, I was little bit shock by what one of my kids said to her sibling. At that time I was watching a Korean drama and a guy was making a loud voice in his speech. And my kids were playing toys together and one of the kids who heard his speech told her sibling that 'Daddy makes loud too.' When her sibling heard her saying it, he said to me, 'Daddy, she said your preaching is loud.' When I heard him saying that, I was surprised. I thought that these two kids were thinking of my sermon as if it was "a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal" (1 Cor. 13:1). So I thought I should repent. Especially on that day afternoon, I learned from my mentor pastor that 'Preaching is the power of influencing' (the power of sermons and the work of the Holy Spirit), but my sermon has lost its meaning to my children because my sermon is noisy to my kids. The next day I heard from my elder pastor that I am arrogant and a close co-worker also agreed that I was proud. In short, it was a week that was not easy for me because of the 'loud sermon' and 'arrogant personality' and the bitter sound of sermon. I am having time to pray before God and repent.

What is repentance? "Repentance" refers to the words of the Old Testament as "Nakham" (repentance) and "Shub" (turn), and in the New Testament terms, "Methanoia" (change of mind) and "Epistrofe" (Change of behavior). In a word, repentance means turning away from sin and turning to God in heart and action (Internet). There are three elements in repentance:

(1) It is an intelligent element.

This is a change of thinking. It is knowledge of sin. Look at Romans 3:20 – "Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin."

(2) It is an emotional element.

This is a change of emotions. It means to mourn for sin committed against the holy and righteous God. So it is the grief of piety. It is also a wail of sin. Look at 2 Corinthians 7:9-10: "yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death." Look at Psalms 51:7 – "Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow."

(3) It is a willing element.

This is a change of purpose. It means a propensity to pursue internal conversion apology and sanctification to depart from sin. So this is a determination of will. Look at Acts 2:38 – "Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Look at Luke 15:18-20: "I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' So he got up and went to his father. "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him."

Based on Jonah 3:5-10, I would like to think of Jonah's God in two ways under the title "Jonah's God (7)": (1) First, our God is God who makes us to repent (vv. 5-9), (2) Second, our God is God who turns His will (v. 10).

First, our God is the God who makes us to repent.

Look at Jonah 3:5 – "Then the people of Nineveh believed in God; and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them." God gave Jonah a second chance to go to Nineveh and proclaim the words he commanded to Jonah. So Jonah went through the city one day's walk; and he cried out and said, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (v. 4). The reaction of the people of Nineveh was repentance. We can think of this Nineveh response of repentance in three ways:

(1) They believed in God.

Look at Jonah 3:5 – "Then the people of Nineveh believed in God" God even used Jonah, who disobeyed, who ran away, who was guilty of sin and was exposed by the sailors through lots, to proclaim the message of God to the non-believer sailors. As a result, the sailors believed in God and sacrificed to Him (1:16). However, in Jonah chapter 3, God used Jonah to speak His message to the Ninevites. As a result, the people of Nineveh believe in God. This shows that the people of Nineveh took the words proclaimed by Jonah seriously as the word of God.

(2) They called a fast and put on sackcloth.

Look at Jonah 3:5 – "... and they called a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them." This is the sign of repentance on the surface. This action of repentance is not only of the people of Nineveh, but also the king of Nineveh (v. 6). Look at Jonah 3:6 - "When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes." This was a public ceremony that King Nineveh himself lowered. This self-deprecation and extreme discomfort is one way of expressing the obedience to God's correction (Baldwin).

(3) They repented to God earnestly.

Look at Jonah 3:8 – "But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands." After the king of Nineveh declared both man and beast to cover with sackcloth and fast he commanded the Ninevites to pray earnestly to God. Furthermore, he gave orders to his people to demand a change of life: "Each will depart from the wicked way, and from the violence done by the hand" (v. 8).

I once confessed my sins to my beloved my Bible study class members that I used to teach on Sunday. Then there were two different reactions. One member had advised me to have Heavenly Father's point of view in which God already forgave me if I asked God for forgiveness of sins. Another member spoke about himself that he had a heavy heart even after asked God for forgiveness. How about you? How is your heart after you have sinned and sought for God's forgiveness? Do you have peace in your hearts in the assurance of forgiveness or do you still have heavy hearts in the midst of affliction? I was struggling about what true repentance is. Then I meditated on Matthew 3:8 and 10: "Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. ... The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire." The background to this statement is that John the Baptist saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them "You brood of vipers! ... Produce fruit in keeping with repentance" (vv. 7-8). In some ways, the Pharisees and Sadducees were those who kept the law more strict than us. But John the Baptist told them to bear the proper

fruit of repentance. What does this tell us? If we confess our sins and repent and do not bear the fruit of repentance (v. 8), the good fruit (Mt. 3:10), then we have to doubt whether it was true repentance or not. We have to bear fruit of action. The Bible says to bear fruit in keeping with repentance (v. 8). What is the fruit of repentance? There are two meanings: passive and positive.

(1) The passive direction of fruit is the compensation of the sins that had been made before.

When Zacchaeus repented, he said “if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount” (Lk. 19:8). The Lord said, ‘If you remember that your brother has something against you, first go and be reconciled to your brother. You will not get out until you have paid the last penny’ (Mt. 5:23-26). If we are against someone, we must reconcile with him or her. And if we did someone wrong materially, then we must solve it with material. This is the passive fruit of repentance.

(2) The active direction of fruit is the fruit of righteousness (Phil 1:11), and its life must be renewed.

The life of Christians is a life weaving fine linen cloth (Rev. 19:8), and we have to clean and splendidly weave without scratches, nicks, and wrinkles (Internet). It turns out that Nineveh's repentance movement was not a ritual of food and shelter that was stopped by fasting or wearing clothing, but a moral repentance movement (Park Yun-sun). How can we know this? (1) They cried out to God and prayed, (2) Their fasting didn't save them from the danger of destruction, but their changed life made God to reconcile with them. Fasting is not just about not eating food. We should not fast in the mouth, but we must participate in acts that are appropriate for the eyes, the ears, and the feet (Park Yun-sun).

The question of Westminster Questions 87 tells us, "What is repentance unto life?" The answer is, "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner, out of a true sense of his sin,² and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience."

Second, our God is the God who turns His will.

Look at Jonah 3:10 – “When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.” God, who made Jonah to repent from his sin of disobeying the God's command, gave him second opportunity to go to the city of Nineveh and shout, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." Hearing this, the king of Nineveh and the rest of the Ninevites responded in three ways: First, they believed in God (v. 5), Second, the king of Nineveh declared fasting and wore a thick veil (v. 5), Third, they called on God earnestly and repented their sins (v. 8). Did the king of Nineveh and the rest of the Ninevites truly repented? The answer is yes. To know if they truly repented, we can tell by thinking of a word that is repeated four times from verse 8 to verse 10: "... each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands" (v. 8), " Who knows, God may turn and relent ... "(v. 9), "... withdraw His burning anger ..." (v. 9), “When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way ...” (v. 10). The repentance prayer of king Nineveh and his people did not end in confessing sin to God. They didn't end with fasting and crying out to God, but they turned away from the wicked way of old life (vv. 8, 10). This is why God turned His will. God's will for Nineveh was "disaster" (v. 10), like the word proclaimed through Jonah. However, through the proclamation of Jonah, the king of Nineveh and his people repented and turned from their wicked way, God relented concerning calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He didn't do it (v. 10).

Jonah's God is the God who turned His will when the people of Nineveh repent of their sins and turned from their wicked way. This God is our God. Our God is God, who turns His will and doesn't reprove us when we repent and turn back from our sins. To this God we must repent of our sins. We must turn from our sinful ways. In doing so, our God will turn His will and will not bring upon us the discipline that He intended to bring us. May this blessing of repentance be with us all.

God who turns His will

“When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it” (Jonah 3:10).

We often feel guilty when our sins are exposed through the Word of God. And often we are disappointed and discouraged by ourselves. And this disappointment and discouragement can lead us to spiritual depression. But here is a very scary strategy of Satan. It is that Satan makes us to keep on looking at ourselves (our sins, our guilt and so on) and not allowing us to look at Jesus Christ who died of the cross to forgive our sins. Satan never lets us look at Jesus and what He has done on the cross but making us concentrate on what we didn't do that we supposed to do and what we did that we not supposed to do. As a result, Satan is making us to live in guilt by our sin. Satan doesn't allow us to enjoy freedom from our sins, but rather to provoke the sinful instincts of the old nature to make us continue to commit the same sin again and again. What should we do? First, we must confess our sins. When God makes us realize our sins through His holy Word, we must also acknowledge our sin as what God said to be sin. When God speaks to us through the Word of God, 'It is sin,' then we should say, 'Yes, Lord. I agree'. We must acknowledge our sin to God. But the problem is that we confess our sins and then commit the same sins again. Like a dog that returns to its vomit (Prov. 26:11), there are many times when we commit the same sins again and again. What is the problem? The problem is that we don't hate the sin we have committed as God hates the sin. The reason is that we don't fear God. If we fear God, we must hate sin (8:13). But our old nature loves sin instead of hating it. That's why we continue to commit the sin. What must we do? We must repent our sins. We shouldn't end in confessing our sins, but we must truly repent our sins. What is true repentance? True repentance is to turn away from the sinful way we are walking and walking toward the way of the Lord.

In Jonah 3:10, we can see the people of Nineveh who are truly repentant. When the Ninevites heard the word “Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown” through the prophet Jonah (v. 4) the people of Nineveh believed in God, they called a fast and put sackcloth from the greatest to the least of them (v. 5). “When the word reached the king of Nineveh, he arose from his throne, laid aside his robe from him, covered himself with sackcloth and sat on the ashes” (v. 6). And the king “issued a proclamation and it said, "In Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let man, beast, herd, or flock taste a thing. Do not let them eat or drink water. But both man and beast must be covered with sackcloth; and let men call on God earnestly that each may turn from his wicked way and from the violence which is in his hands” (vv. 7-8). They did so because they expected that God would turn His will and that His wrath would not destroy them (v. 9). In the end, when King Nineveh and the people truly repented of their sins and turned away from their evil ways, God looked upon their true repentance and turned His will to bring calamity on them. And God didn't bring calamity on them (v. 10). Why did God turn His will? The reason is that King Nineveh and the people of Nineveh had turned away from their way of sin.

I personally remember two things when I think about why I cannot turn away from the path of sin. First, I was a little afraid when I thought of God, who did not discipline me when I didn't truly repent my sins but was in silence. Although I supposed to fear God more, I wasn't and this means that I didn't fear God enough not to commit sins against Him. I was little afraid when I thought of God because I knew that I was willing to accept God's discipline. But why doesn't God discipline me even though I have been continued to commit the same sin? The reason is that God is waiting for me to truly repent and return to Him (Rom. 2:4). Another thought is that when I didn't repent my sins, there was a time when my harden heart would melt because of the grace of God rather than

the discipline of God. No matter how much I think, only things that I did was committing sins against God. But what I have experienced was that God had given me greater love than to strike a rod of discipline, so that my heart was melt and turn away from sins and turn to God. For example, I don't recall having discipline from my father that much. In my memory, I remember being disciplined by my father twice when I was in junior high school. Of course, when I was disciplined by my father, it was painful. So I cried and asked my father for forgiveness. But when I was in high school and wandering and sinning, my father didn't discipline me. Rather, my father was kneeling down in the living room and was praying to God as I entered the house around 3:00 am. But now when I think about those days, I think it was my father's love and God's grace through my father that brought me back to the Lord instead of my father's discipline. His love and grace struck my conscience and made me to turn away from sin and turn to God. It was the my father's knees of prayer, rather than the stick of my father's discipline, that had made me turn away from sins and turn to the Lord.

When our Heavenly Father makes us to turn away from our sins, he not only uses the stick of discipline but also gives us His love and grace even more. Why does God do that? The reason is because God wants us to turn away from the way of sin. When king of Nineveh and his people turned away from the wicked way of sin, God saw them turning and turned His will concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. When we turn away from our sinful path, God will turn the will of disaster toward us. I hope and pray that all of us will experience God's grace, love, mercy, and compassion as God turns His will of disciplining us because we truly repented our sins.

Jonah's God (8)

[Jonah 4:1-11]

The theologian and humanist, Dallas Willard, gives us words that make us think about "spiritual development and emotions" in his book "Renovation of the Heart". Among them I would like to share with you three precious lessons and applicable words: (1) 'We should listen to the words of reason even when we express emotions or are caught up in emotions.' Our lives must be driven by the facts rather than feelings, We must live the Word-driven life. Here, the Word-driven life is being led by the Word and is living by faith. (2) 'Self-control refers to the continuing ability to control self in order to accomplish the actions and personality that one chooses or decides, even if he doesn't feel that way. Self-control is we do things that we need to do even though we don't want to and we don't do things because we are not supposed do them. For those who don't have solid character, emotions can be deadly to their self-control. What do you think about the phrase 'emotion can be deadly to their self-control'? If we aren't led by the Word and obey the Word, then we will live under the control of emotions (that is, lose control) and do what we do not want to do. Look at Romans 7:19 – "For the good that I want, I do not do, but I practice the very evil that I do not want." (3) 'Today Satan captures us through emotions. He makes emotions more important than ever in our lives, and provokes a sense of guilty about having or not having certain feelings.' What Satan pursues is to maximize the role of emotions so that emotions are based on our actions or character changes even though that basis or foundation is the insights, understandings, and convictions about the truth. For instance, Satan is making us to devote ourselves to the feelings of need, rather than having us to be led by the Word of God to serve the Lord's church.

In Jonah 4:1-11, we see angry Jonah (v. 1) who is led by his emotion rather than the Word of God: "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life" (v. 3), "... he became faint and begged with all his soul to die, saying, "Death is better to me than life" (v. 8). How did God respond to Jonah, who is so angry enough to ask God to die? Look at Jonah 4:4, 9: "The LORD said, 'Do you have good reason to be angry?'" (v. 4), "Then God said to Jonah, 'Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?' ..." (v. 9). Today I would like to think of three things about God who said to Jonah "Do you have good reason to be angry?" under the heading "Jonah's God (8)". I hope and pray that we may have the grace of God in our meditation of His Word.

First, Jonah's God is God who turns (Jonah 4:1-4).

In Jonah chapter 3, when the word of God came to Jonah the second time, Jonah obeyed God's word and went to Nineveh and cried out to the people of Nineveh, " Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown" (3:4). The responses of the Ninevites were believing in God, fasting and repentance (v. 5). This was the thought of the king of Nineveh: "'Who knows, God may turn and relent and withdraw His burning anger so that we will not perish'" (v. 9). As he thought, God saw the people of Nineveh repented and turn away from the wicked ways, and didn't bring down the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them (v. 10). What was Jonah's reaction then? Look at Jonah 4:1 – "But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry." Jonah was very displeased and angry. We don't understand why Jonah responded this way. If the Ninevites, who don't believe in God, hear the words which Jonah proclaimed and believe in God and repented, shouldn't Jonah rejoice and be happy? How could he be greatly displeased and be angry? It seems that Jonah wanted Nineveh to be overthrown as he proclaimed to the Ninevites (3:4). But Jonah was angry because Nineveh wasn't overthrown, but the Ninevites believed in God and repented their sins and God didn't bring calamity to Nineveh. How should we understand this? There is a historical reason for this. Jonah was fulfilling his prophetic mission during the time of Jeroboam II (782/781-753 BC).

During that time the Israelites had to offer money to the great nation Assyria because Israel was a servant country to Assyria. And especially when Jonah was doing his prophetic mission, it was a time of great rebellion against Assyria. So I am sure Jonah really wanted to see Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, to be destroyed. But God didn't destroy the city of Nineveh. That was why Jonah was greatly displeased and very angry. Surprisingly, Jonah prayed to God even in this angry state. Look at Jonah 4:2 – "Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity." In this Jonah's prayer, Jonah said to God why he disobeyed God's command of "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it ..." (1:2). And the reason was because he knew that God was the God who turned His will. Does this make sense? Does it make sense that Jonah knew that God would turn his will to the people of Nineveh, and that was why he disobeyed the God's command and ran away? Jonah didn't end here. He prayed to God like this: "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life" (4:3). I don't understand how he could pray like that. It seem like Jonah really hated the people of Nineveh, the enemies of the Israelites, even to the point of death.

I compared the Jonah's prayer of Jonah 4:2 with the one in Jonah chapter 2. When I did so, I found something interesting. Although Jonah had experienced God's salvation (2:9-10) after he repented his sin (vv. 2-7), he was greatly displeased and angry by the fact that God relented concerning the calamity upon the Ninevites because they repented and turned from their wicked way (v. 10). At least if Jonah who had repented and experienced the salvation of God, he shouldn't have offered the prayer to God in anger because of no calamity on the Ninevites who repented and turned from their evil ways. To such Jonah, God said: "Do you have good reason to be angry?" (4:4). Is Jonah's anger worthy of God's sight? If Jonah truly knew God as he said in Jonah 4:2, and if Jonah had truly experienced God's grace, mercy, great love, how could he ask God for him to die? In other words, if Jonah truly experienced gracious and compassionate God, who is slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and One who relents concerning calamity (v. 2) in the stomach of the great fish (ch. 2), then how could Jonah be angry enough to ask God for him to die? I think Jonah knew God only by his head. In other words, it seems that Jonah didn't know God with his heart. If he knew, he would never have been angry with God and prayed when like that in 4:2 when he saw the Ninevites repented and turned away from their evil ways and thus God turned his will to bring calamity upon them (vv. 5-10). In a word, Jonah was a prophet who didn't have God's heart. And that's why he couldn't express God's heart. Rather, he desperately wanted his will to be done - the destruction of Nineveh despite the repentance of the people of Nineveh. Aren't we like Jonah?

Our God is the God who turns His will. Although his servant Prophet Jonah didn't turn his own will of destruction of Nineveh, the God of Jonah saw that the Ninevites believed in God, repented and turned away from evil ways, didn't bring upon them the calamity which He had declared. Here, what does it mean by God turned or relented His will? This is what Pastor James Packer said in his book "Knowing God" (Ch. 7: 'Unchanging God') about God's immutability: 'God's life doesn't change (Ps. 102:26-27). God's character doesn't change (Jam. 1:17). The truth of God also doesn't change (Isa. 40:6-8). And the ways of God don't change. God's goals and the principles of action are consistent. At any time, God doesn't act out of His character. God's purposes don't change (Num. 23:19). But we see in the Scriptures that God 'turned' or 'regretted' not only in Jonah 3:10 ("then God relented concerning the calamity") but also in Genesis 6:6-7 ("And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth"), 1 Samuel 15:11 ("I regret that I have made Saul king"), 2 Samuel 24:16 ("the LORD relented from the calamity") and Joel 2:13-14 ("And rend your heart and not your garments " Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil. Who knows whether He will not turn and relent And leave a blessing behind Him"). How should we look at these verses?

There are two cases where we may change God's mind and His plans: (1) lack of foresight to predict everything, or (2) lack of foresight to enforce them. But our God, who is the omniscient God, has foresighted so neither he changes his mind nor he overturns his plans. Although it seems to us that God's purpose was to Nineveh

was to overthrow the city as Jonah's proclaimed but He foresighted that they would repent. That was why God relented concerning the calamity. This is how great God's will is. Look at Joel 2:13 – "And rend your heart and not your garments " Now return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in lovingkindness And relenting of evil." This fact should makes to repent more. Even when we are wandering like a prodigal, if we repent and return to Father God, our God will love us and forgive us. Look at Ezekiel 36:37 – "This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Once again I will yield to the plea of the house of Israel and do this for them" God accomplishes His great will through our prayers. God, who makes us to repent, does not punish us through our repentance prayer (God's holy will), but forgives and receives us (God's loving will) (Packer). Shouldn't we repent and turn back to God who forgives us and who doesn't punish us? In doing so, God will turn His will and will not bring calamity on us.

Second, Jonah's God is the God who prepares (Jonah 4:5-8).

When Jonah saw that God relented and didn't bring calamity on Nineveh, he prayed to God in anger and went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself (Jonah 4:5). When God gave Jonah the second opportunity to go to Nineveh, he obeyed God and entered the great city of Nineveh through the west side of Nineveh. However, when he made the shelter at the east side of Nineveh, I think this means that he didn't plan to go back to his house at all. Why didn't he build the shelter on the east side of Nineveh for himself? The reason is that Jonah sat under the shelter in the shade in order to see what would happen in the city of Nineveh (v. 5). How angry did Jonah was that he went out of Nineveh and build the shelter to see what would happen to the city of Nineveh? To this Jonah who prepared the shelter for himself, God prepared three things:

(1) The first was a vine.

Look at Jonah 4:6 – "Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine." Why did God provide Jonah the vine? The reason is to ease Jonah's discomfort (v. 6). How angry Jonah was that he prepared the shelter on the east of the Nineveh city when the sun was shining that brought him discomfort. To this Jonah, God prepared the vine so that it could give shade to Jonah for his head to ease his discomfort. This is the love of God. I imagined what the heart of God would be to prepare Jonah the vine who didn't even acknowledge his sin but who sat down in the shade of the shelter and was waiting to see what would happen to the city. Was God's heart comfortable? Or, when God saw Jonah who has heart opposite to God's heart, I wonder if God suffered. Without knowing and not even caring about God's heart, Jonah was very happy about the vine because it gave him comfort (v. 6). Isn't this strange? Shouldn't Jonah very happy because the people of Nineveh believed in God and repent their sins after listening to Jonah's proclamation? How could he be very happy because pf the vine that God provided? If things worked out according to his will, Jonah was happy. But if it didn't, he was greatly displeased and angry. Isn't this our image?

(2) The second was a worm.

Look at Jonah 4:7 – "But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered." There was a professor named Van Engen at Fuller Seminary that I attended. I took his class once and he introduced a book to the students, saying that there was a book he loved after the Bible. And the book was "Jonah & The Worm" by Jill Briscoe. In this book, the author gives us some valuable lessons through an obedient worm, in contrast to the disobedient Jonah. For example, God's command to the worm was to chew on the vine that God prepared for Jonah, who made the shelter on the east side of the city of Nineveh. The worm's obedience to God and its slow footsteps to Nineveh gave me the impression that it

was in contrast to Jonah's action of running away to the opposite direction from Nineveh, that is Tarshish. God, who had prepared the vine for Jonah, prepared the worm so that it could chew the vine. As a result, the vine withered (v. 7). The fact that the vine was withered tells us that the shadow (comfort for Jonah) is gone and the suffering had begun.

(3) The third was a scorching east wind.

Look at Jonah 4:8 – “When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live.” Jonah would have been in agony because the shelter was gone. God made the worm to chew it. But now the scorching east wind was blowing. As a result, the sun blazed on Jonah's head and he grew faint. It is interesting to note that in Jonah 1:4, God prepared the great storm for disobedient Jonah and thus the ship that he was aboard was about to break and in Jonah 4:8, the sun blazed on Jonah's head and he grew faint to the point where Jonah wanted to die. One thing we must notice here is the fact that when the worm chewed the shelter, the word "chewed" (v. 7) and “blazed” (v. 8) are the same Hebrew word. What does this mean? Both the worm and the east scorching wind didn't happen by accident, but in the plan of God, God disciplined his servant Jonah. As Ezekiel 7:9 said, our God is God who smiting his disobedient children. In the end, when God smite Jonah, this was what Jonah asked God: “It would be better for me to die than to live” (Jonah 4:8).

Third and last, Jonah's God is the God who has compassion (Jonah 4:9-11).

How did God respond to Jonah, who asked for himself to die? Look at Jonah 4:9 – “Then God said to Jonah, ‘Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?’ ...” To this Word of God, Jonah's reply was this: “... I have good reason to be angry, even to death” (v. 9). Jonah was so angry that he said to God “I have a good reason to be angry, even to death” (v. 9). But what was Jonah's “good reason” to be angry? Why was he so angry? It was because of “a plant” (v. 6) that withered (v. 7). Isn't it funny that Jonah, who was “extremely happy about the plant” (v. 6), was so angry because the plant withered (v. 9)? What did God said to Jonah who was so angry, even to death because of the plant he had compassion on? Look at Jonah 4:10-11: “Then the LORD said, "You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight.” Here God contrasted with the plant that Jonah had compassion on with the more than 120,000 persons of Nineveh whom God had compassion on. While Jonah “had compassion on the plant for which he did not work and which he did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight” (v. 10), God had compassion on the Ninevites whom he cultivated and whose souls were eternal (v. 11). Although Jonah was very angry because the plant withered, God told Jonah “Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?” (v. 11) And this is how the book of Jonah ends.

When I look at the book of Jonah from chapter one to chapter 4, the book ends with no mention of Jonah being changed. The book ends with the fact that Jonah's heart didn't resemble God's heart. It ends with Jonah being still angry at God even to death. I cannot find in the book of Jonah that Jonah, who was angry enough to die because of the plant, was obedient to God's will. In fact, he was disobedient to God even to the end. I cannot find anywhere else the image of Jonah, the servant of God, who is persuaded by the Word of God and had compassion on the people of Nineveh, whom God loves. Do you think God had compassion on such servant like Jonah?

Every time when I personally meditate on Jonah, I often have a question that is thrown into my heart: 'Did God love the Ninevites who were more than 120,000 person or did he love his servant Jonah more?' Did God love the Ninevites who repented their sins as they fasted and who turned from their evil ways or Jonah who seemed like

repented his sins but actually didn't, who was so angry enough to die and who didn't have God's heart toward the Ninevites? I personally think that God loved his foolish and disobedient servant Jonah more than 120,000 people of Nineveh. The reason is that Jonah was a covenant people of God and a chosen servant of God. Even though Jonah was senseless and foolish, who disobeyed the command of God, and that we cannot see God's heart of loving his enemies, God sent Jesus to this earth and die of the cross for such sinner like Jonah. Although Jonah disobeyed the command of God, Jesus obeyed the will of God the Father until the death on the cross (Phil. 2:8). Although God turned His will of bringing the calamity on Nineveh, God did not turn His will on Jesus to die on the cross. Even though Father God heard his one and only Son Jesus cried on the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mt. 27:46), God didn't relent His will on Jesus. Rather, God poured out all his wrath to His only begotten Son Jesus. What God had prepared for Jesus was the cursed cross (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13). Why did God prepare the cross for Jesus? It was because God prepared eternal life for us. God gave His only begotten Son Jesus to die on the cross. Why did God do that? It was because God had compassion on us. It was because God loves us. He loves us so much that He didn't even spare His own Son Jesus to die on the cross. Does God love His only begotten Son Jesus more or us?

Prophet Jonah who does not have the heart of God

“But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry. He prayed to the LORD and said, "Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life” (Jonah 4:1-3).

The postmodern era emphasizes emotion over reason. So people pursue emotional and sensual things in all areas, speak and act as they go through their emotions. In a word, one of the characteristics of the postmodern era is emotionalism (Kim). I think there are two big problems with this emotionalism. One of the problems is that our emotions are not drawn by our rational logic, and another problem is that our emotions aren't flowing out of solid character. These two problems are interrelated. For example, if we, Christians, aren't drawn by faith in the fact of the Word of God, but are drawn only drawn by feeling, our faith cannot be solid. Not only our faith, but also our character cannot stand firmly. If we don't stand firmly in the sound doctrine and rely on unsound emotion, our hearts are cannot be renewed and cannot imitate Jesus. Instead, our hearts may wonder around and be changed in bad way. How can our hearts be changed in bad way? We will not be able to walk straight in faith but will fall into relativism, pluralism and syncretism. Aren't we now so degraded?

When I think about the servant of God, Prophet Jonah in Jonah 4:1-3, I think he was a servant of God who didn't have the heart of God. For example, even though Jonah knew that God is slow to anger (v. 2), he himself was very angry (v. 1). Although Jonah knew that God relents concerning calamity (v. 2), he didn't relent his heart toward the people of Nineveh. He wanted God to bring calamity on them (3:10). It was because he didn't love the Ninevites. So after he prayed to God in his anger (vv. 1-3), he left the city of Nineveh, and built a shelter on the east side of the city, and sat down in the shade to see what would happen to Nineveh (v. 5). Not only that Jonah didn't relent his heart toward the Ninevites, he also didn't imitate the heart of God who turned His will toward the Ninevites. Instead of praying to God “Yet not as I will, but as You will” (Mt. 26:39), in a sense Jonah prayed to God ‘Yet not as You will, but as I will’. That was why after Jonah prayed to God in anger (Jonah 4:2), he went out of the city, built the shelter and waited and expected God to relent His will again and to bring calamity on the city of Nineveh. Like God, Jonah wasn't gracious and compassionate toward the people of Nineveh. The reason was because Jonah's heart wasn't driven by reason but by his emotion of anger. Jonah's heart wasn't controlled by his knowledge of God which he knew by reason (v. 2), but his heart was controlled by his emotions that hated the people of Nineveh by dying or living, and anger toward God (v. 1). And this feeling of hatred and anger, which had dominated Jonah's heart, made him unable to forgive the people of Nineveh. Isn't it surprising that Jonah didn't change his heart about bringing calamity on Nineveh and didn't forgive the Ninevites even though he himself experienced God's forgiveness when he repented his sins in the stomach of the great fish (ch. 2)? Who was Jonah that he refused to forgive the Ninevites whom God already forgave when they repented their sins and turned from their evil ways? In short, the servant of God, Prophet Jonah, did not have the heart of God that even loves his enemies. Jonah had no heart to love the dying soul of more than 120,000 people in Nineveh (4:11). Although God had compassion on those more than 120,000 dying souls in Nineveh, Jonah didn't have compassion on them but on himself. So Jonah prayed to God in anger without giving up on his will (vv. 1-3). Did his anger have good reason?

Jonah, who was dominated by the feelings of hatred and anger, wasn't gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness toward the people of Nineveh. Although Jonah knew in his head that God "a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity" (v. 2), but he didn't receive the guidance of his reason, but was driven by his anger and hatred toward the people of Nineveh (vv. 2-3) in his prayer (v. 2) and in actions (v. 5). In a word, Jonah was not a God's servant who had the heart of God. Nevertheless, God was gracious and compassionate on Jonah. God was slow to anger and quick to love Jonah (v. 2) who firmly believed that he had good reason to be angry (v. 9). It seems to me that God was compassionate on Jonah who didn't have God's heart more than those 120,000 Ninevites who didn't know the difference between their right and left hand (v. 11). Do we feel the heart of Heavenly Father who loves us and embraces us with His great love?

'Father, I want my heart to be where Your heart is.
Father, I want my tears to be where Your tears are.
Father, I want my eyes to turn to the soul whom You see
Father, I want my two feet to turn to the dark ground where You cry
My heart wants to know the heart of the Father
My will wants to be the will of the Father
My whole body wants to know the heart of my Father,
My whole life wants to be Your life.

(Gospel song: 'The Heart of Heavenly Father')

“Do you have good reason to be angry?”

“The LORD said, ‘Do you have good reason to be angry?’” (Jonah 4:4).

Do we have good reason to be angry? Do we have the right to be angry at this moment? In this world we live in, there are many things that are irritating, and I often hear people say 'I'm annoyed'. Also, there are too many reasons for us to be angry in this world. It seems that there are many people who are on the brink of anger. When I think about why so many people are angry both internally and externally, I think one of the reasons is dissatisfaction. Because we don't have the satisfaction of life, we lost the balance of emotions and we get angry.

Prophet Jonah was angry (Jonah 4:1). He was angry because God didn't bring the calamity upon the people of Nineveh (3:10). Jonah wanted God to bring the calamity upon the Ninevites but God didn't because God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way (v. 10). Therefore Jonah was very displeased and angry (4:1). In the midst of this anger Jonah prayed to God. He offered his prayer to God in anger: “Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life” (vv. 2-3). When we consider Jonah's prayer, Jonah disobeyed the command of God, “Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and cry against it” (1:2), because he knew who God is (4:2). Jonah's excuse was that he ran away to Tarshish in disobeying the command of God, because he knew that God is “a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity” (v. 2). Is this the good reason for Jonah to disobey the God's command? Then we see Jonah asking God to die in the midst of anger. Did Jonah have good reason to be angry? (v. 4) Jonah disobeyed the first command of God (1:2) for no good reason at all. But he obeyed the second command of God by going to Nineveh “according to the word of the Lord” (3:2-3). But God didn't bring the calamity upon the people of Nineveh (v. 10) which made him greatly displeased and angry (4:1). He was so angry that he asked God “O Lord, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life” (v. 3). Did Jonah have good reason to be angry? (v. 4) So Jonah went out of the city of Nineveh with great anger and went out to the east side of the city, where he built the shelter for himself and sat under the shade to see what would happen to the city? (v. 5) For this Jonah, who didn't have the Father God's heart and was stubborn with his own will, God provided the vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort (v. 6). And Jonah was very happy about the vine (v. 6). What a contrasting Jonah's response? Jonah, who was greatly displeased and became angry (4:1) because God didn't bring the calamity upon the people of Nineveh, was very happy because of the vine that brought him comfort (v. 6). Jonah's selfish heart was very far away from God's lovingkindness (v. 2). His heart, which desired his comfort, wanted Nineveh to be destroyed. Then God provided the worms to chew the plant at dawn on the next day (v. 7). After this, God also provided the scorching east wind and sun rose blazed on Jonah's head (v. 8). As a result, Jonah grew faint and he wanted to die. He said “It would be better for me to die than to live” (v. 8). “But God said to Jonah, ‘Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?’” (v. 9). Jonah said, “I do ... I am angry enough to die” (v. 9). The reason why Jonah was angry enough to die was because of the withered plant that he didn't work, which he didn't cause it to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight (v. 10). Although God had compassion on the people of Nineveh (more than 120,000 persons), Jonah had compassion on the plant that came up overnight and perished overnight (vv. 10-11). Did Jonah have good reason to be angry?

Today, God is asking us the same question: “Do you have good reason to be angry?” (Jonah 4:4). Do we really have good reason to be angry? Can we confidently say that we have good reason to be angry in God's sight?

Why are we so angry? Is it because the people of Nineveh are not destroyed, or because the plant that eases our discomfort is gone? Do we really have compassion on whom God has compassion on?

‘God, help me to be a worm-like pastor’

**“But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered”
(Jonah 4:7).**

God, help me not to be a disobedient pastor like Jonah.

Help me not to be the pastor who runs away instead of going to the mission field that God sent me.

Help me not to be a pastor who forgets God's mission and backslides.

Help me not to be the pastor who doesn't embrace the souls that God has entrusted to me.

God, help me to be a worm-like pastor.

Help me to walk faithfully to the place of the ministry that You have sent me.

Help me to go where God wants me to go even though I am slow like the worm.

Help me to walk like a turtle while looking at the destiny that You gave me.

Help me to be driven by the mission that You gave me.

Help me to be driven by the promises Word of God (Jn. 6:1-15; Mt. 16:18).

God, I want to move forward by dreaming only Your vision.

Help me to be the pastor who is obedient to Your command.

God, if You want me to only chew the plant, I want to obey your command.

God, help me to feed the flock that You have entrusted me with the Word of God and the tears of prayer.

God who prepares the unprepared servant of the Lord

“Then the LORD said, “You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight” (Jonah 4:10-11).

One of the steps that must be taken in preparing to become a minister by God's calling is to go to the seminary and study theology. And the seminary students have to study Biblical theology, systematic theology, historical theology, practical theology, and so on. But the problem is that pastors who studied very hard can graduate from the seminary like laity. Although compare to entering into the seminary, they have the increased biblical and theological knowledge, but they can become not only more arrogant, but also more stubborn people. When I think about what the cause is, I think it may be because their head is ready at the seminary, but not their hearts. Although they learned who God is in their head, but they didn't learn God's heart. There was change in their knowledge, but not in their hearts. Then what will happen to the church in which those who graduated from the seminary and received ordination from the presbytery to serve the body of the Lord? But what we believe is that the faithful Lord prepares a pastor who is not ready for His church because He loves His Church. How does God prepare him?

Prophet Jonah, the servant of God, was not prepared. Although he knew in his head that the Lord is gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity (Jonah 4:2), he didn't had the heart of God. He wasn't gracious and compassionate to the people of Nineveh. He was quick to anger. He was lack in lovingkindness. He didn't turn his will toward Nineveh. What was Jonah's will toward Nineveh? His was for Nineveh to be overthrown (3:4). That was why when the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time (v. 1), Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, went through the city one day's walk and cried out and said, “Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown” (v. 4). But the people of Nineveh believed in God, called a fast, put on sackcloth (v. 5) and cried out to God (v. 8). And they turned from their wicked way and from their violence which was in their hands. When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked ways, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon the Ninevites (v. 10). But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry (4:1). What was the reason? It was because God has turned His will. In other words, Jonah was greatly displeased and angry because God didn't bring the calamity on the city of Nineveh. So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city, where he built the shelter for himself, and sat down in the shade to see what would happen to the city (v. 5). This I don't understand because God already relent His will but not Jonah. Jonah didn't turn his will toward Nineveh. He was stubborn. Since he is the servant of the Lord, shouldn't he submit to His will? But Jonah prayed to God in anger (v. 2) saying “Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life” (v. 3). Indeed, Jonah was very unprepared servant of the Lord. To this Jonah who was angry and stubbornly insisted on his will in prayer, God provided three things for Jonah: the plant (v. 6), the worm (v. 7) and east scorching wind (v. 8). Why did God prepare these three things for the unready prophet Jonah? It was because God wanted to teach His servant Jonah the heart of God. What was the heart of God? It was the compassionate heart to save the people of Nineveh who didn't know the difference between their right and left hand (v. 11). What a contrast. Jonah had compassion on the plant for which he didn't work and which he didn't cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight (v. 10). But God had compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals (v. 11). How couldn't Jonah have compassion on Nineveh on which God had compassion? How could he have compassion on the plant that eased his discomfort? How could he be extremely happy about the plant (v. 6) but was greatly displeased and angry because God didn't

bring the calamity upon the Ninevites (3:10)? God who had compassion on this unprepared Jonah was preparing Jonah's heart to become like God's heart.

God prepares the servant of God. God prepares the servant of God, whom God has chosen, even though he is not prepared in many ways. What God prepares is the Lord's servant's heart. In other words, God teaches him the heart of Heavenly Father. And God sends him to those whom God wants him to go so that he may serve them. Like God who forgives and accepts them when they repent and return to God, God prepares His servant to forgive and accept them as well. In other words, God prepares His servant, not only to make him to have the heart of God, but also to make him to obey God's will with the heart of God. Therefore, God fulfill His will in this earth through His servant that was already fulfilled in Heaven. May God's will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven.

” Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way; Thou art the Potter, I am the clay.
Mould me and make me After Thy will, While I am waiting, Yielded and still.

Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way; Search me and try me, Master, today.
Whiter than snow, Lord, Wash me just now, As in Thy presence Humbly I bow.

Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way; Wounded and weary, Help me, I pray.
Power, all power, Surely is Thine, Touch me and heal me, Savior divine.

Have Thine own way, Lord, Have Thine own way; Hold o'er my being Absolute sway.
Fill with Thy Spirit Till all shall see Christ only, always, Living in me.”

[Hymn: “Have Thine own way, Lord”]

Conclusion

“Jonah’s God” is the God who gives such foolish person like me a mission. God said to me, “Arise ... Go ... Cry’. God commanded me to go, preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and make disciples of Jesus Christ (Mt. 28:19, Acts 16:10). My responsibility is to obey the Word of God. But as a pastor like Jonah, I am avoiding my responsibility and disobeying the command of God. As a result, God allows me to experience the adversity of life and even the crisis. God is awakening me who is spiritually sleeping, and reminding me His command again even through the non-believers around me. Also, in the midst of it, God is also exposing my sins and making me to confess my sins to the non-believers. And God wants me to throw myself in the blood of Jesus on the cross. In the course of that process, God makes me to receive grace even from the non-believers so that I may realize that God is a gracious God. Furthermore, God makes me to learn the heart of God through even the non-believers by exposing my sins, confessing my sins to them and making me to receive grace from the. Although when God breaks me and my heart through the suffering that I go through because of my disobedience, God makes me to look to Him again and cry out to Him even in situations where I have no hope. He makes me look to the God of salvation with the assurance of salvation, giving thanks to God in faith. And the God of salvation answers my prayer and rescues me from the deep pit of suffering. It is the grace of God's salvation.

"My God" is the God who gives me another opportunity to take on my mission. When God gives me the second chance, I also have to obey God's word like Jonah. But I must not obey the word of God as I want to and as my will. Rather, I must obey the God's word as God's will to be done and not my will. God's will and what God wants is for people to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ, to repent of their sins, to turn from sin and turn to God. In doing so, God is the God who will relent His will of punishing their sins. The reason is that God is "a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity" (Jonah 4:2). I want to imitate this God and His heart. I want to be a worm-like pastor who obeys the word of God in front of God who loves me and has chosen such person like me who is worse than the worm. I hope and pray that God will continue to prepare me, who is very unprepared, so that I may be able to fulfill His mission with His heart.

With thanksgiving to my God, Jonah's God,

Pastor James Kim

(Praying for imitation of the heart of God which had compassion to one soul)