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Grace Notes Radio Program

SERIES: Jonah

THEME: Did he repent?

**SONGS: Sin will take you farther
You saved me**

INTRO: The definition for the word 'repent' is 'to feel remorse, contrition or self-reproach for what one has done or failed to do'.

Oswald Chambers writes...

Repentance always brings a person to the point of saying "I have sinned." The surest sign that God is at work in his life is when he says that and means it. Anything less is simply sorrow for having made foolish mistakes.

Welcome to Grace Notes. Today, our host, Barbara Sandbek, will look at Jonah's prayer from inside the fish and see if he is truly repentant. But first, let's hear a song that so aptly fits the situation Jonah has gotten himself into.

***** **WRITER: Harold McWhorter**

**** SIN WILL TAKE YOU FARTHER *** LENGTH: 3:40**

VERSE 1

***As a child I foolishly turned God away
Not knowing the heartache a sinner must face
But God in His goodness has let me return
To share with His children this lesson I've learned***

CHORUS

***Sin will take you farther than you wanna go
Slowly but wholly taking control
Sin will leave you longer than you wanna stay
Sin will cost you far more than you wanna pay***

VERSE 2

***So with pleasure and promises sin took control
Leaving me dying with nothing to show
Gone were my loved ones and my dearest friends
Only a Savior could love me again***

Repeat Chorus twice

TAG

Sin will cost you far more than you want to pay

Jonah's sin sure cost him far more than he wanted to pay – and it almost cost the lives of everyone on the boat. The pagan sailors' casting of lots to help remedy the situation resulted in the casting of JONAH into the sea.

Jonah's disobedience had angered God. He thought he could get away from the Lord, but God saw him on the SOIL, He saw him in the SHIP, He saw him while he SLEPT, and he saw him in the SEA.

I wondered why Jonah didn't just pray and confess his sin rather than be thrown overboard? But no, He'd rather die than tell those heathen Ninevites how to be spared destruction. Jonah wasn't off the hook, though, In fact, HE was the bait. Jonah 1:17 says...

The LORD HAD PREPARED a great fish to swallow up Jonah.

Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

I imagine it was pretty scary inside that fish. Now, I'd be doing some serious praying and repenting, wouldn't you? But did Jonah? Let's see.

Listen to Jonah's prayer recorded in Jonah 2 and see where his heart is. It reads...

"In my distress I called to the LORD, and He answered me.

From the depths of the grave I called for help, and You listened to my cry.

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.

I said, 'I have been banished from Your sight; yet I will look again toward Your holy temple.'

The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head.

To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever.

But You brought my life up from the pit, O LORD my God.

"When my life was ebbing away, I remembered You, LORD, and my prayer rose to You, to Your holy temple.

"Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs. But I, with a song of thanksgiving, will sacrifice to You. What I have vowed I will make good. Salvation comes from the LORD."

Jonah said some right words – but none that expressed remorse, contrition or regret for his disobedience. There was no self-reproach – in fact he didn't show the least bit of humility. Perhaps he expected to be delivered – after all he was GOD'S PROPHET.

Sure, he was grateful, but who wouldn't be. And he did agree to do what he was told. But was he simply saying what he thought God wanted to hear? Kind of like a fox-hole conversion prayer, "God, get me out of this mess and I promise to...such and such."

**Contrast his prayer with that of King David's after his sin of pride.
2 Samuel 24:10 reads...**

David was conscience-stricken after he had counted the fighting men, and he said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done. Now, O LORD, I BEG You, take away the guilt of Your servant. I have done a very foolish thing.

In Psalm 51, you can almost hear David crying as he uttered these words after he was confronted with his sin of adultery and murder...

- 1-3: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your unfailing love.
According to Your great compassion, blot out my transgressions.
Wash away all my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.
For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.
Against You only have I sinned and done what is evil in Your sight.**
- 10: Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.**
- 15: O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare Your praise.**
- 17: The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God You will not despise.**

David again wrote in Psalm 32:5...

**...I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD"-- and You forgave the guilt of my sin.**

David was troubled by his sin. Guilt brought him to a place of repentance and led him to confess it and ask God for help.

Let's look at some New Testament examples of repentance...

The Apostle Peter denied knowing Jesus, and the cock crowed, reminding him that the Lord had predicted he would do so. His reaction?

Luke 22: 62 says...he went outside and wept bitterly. Peter was not the same cocky man he was before.

When the Prodigal son returned home after suffering the effects of his waywardness, he spoke these repentant words to his father in Luke 15:21...

"...`Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son."

I want to say, though, that it is not the ACT of repentance – the right words, or even a vow like Jonah made that saves a person. We could confess our sin all day long and it wouldn't save our souls. God's saving of Jonah's life shows us that God extends salvation based on His grace and mercy – not on OUR actions. Jonah didn't deserve to be saved according to his actions, and neither do we. Remember, Ephesians 2:8-9 says...

For by grace are you saved through faith, and that not of yourselves it is the gift of God. Not of works lest any man should boast.

Even in his unrepentant state, God met Jonah where he was and offered salvation. Jonah acknowledged his need of God, believed He could save him and God did. That's what it takes.

Romans 5:8 says...

God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners (in an unrepentant state) Christ died for us.

God's love is the key that can set us free from eternal death. There's nothing we can DO to merit His grace. If we think so – we're dead wrong. All we can and must do is to accept it. Acknowledging that Jesus is the only one who can save us and turning from our sin to God IS an act of repentance. Jonah did indeed conclude his prayer correctly - 'Salvation is of the LORD'.

******* WRITER: Michael Puryear**

***** YOU SAVED ME **** LENGTH: 3:40**

Verse 1

***As I look into the mirror I know
I wouldn't be here if not for You.
When I caused You so much pain
and You could've turned away
Your faith held true.
When my life had turned to ashes
You were the constant line
my only source of hope.***

Chorus

***You saved me - at each and every turn
as I stood frozen on the bridges I would burn.
You saved me when I was my own worst enemy
Your love is the key that set me free.
Lord You saved me.***

Verse 2

***When I look up at the cross
and consider all it cost I stand amazed.
Then I'm driven to my knees
'cause my mind cannot conceive Your endless grace.
You know the very number
of every hair upon my head.
You loved me and You chose me
before I took my first breath.***

repeat Chorus 2x

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Join us on our next program. Until then, let your grace notes be a song of praise!