

God's Calling Requirements Part 60

From the Life of Jonah Part 2

The Fasting of Jonah

"1 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly, 2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. 3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. 4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. 5 The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. 6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. 7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple. 8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. 9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD. 10 And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land." (Jonah 2:1-10 KJV)

When Jonah disobeyed God and went by ship to Tarshish, the Lord sent a strong wind against the ship and forced the men to throw Jonah into the sea in order for the wind and the sea to calm down. After that the Lord had prepared a great fish that swallowed Jonah. And he stayed in the belly of the great fish three days and three nights. ***"17 Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."*** (Jonah 1:17 KJV) Most likely he was fasting during that time for no food is there in the belly of the big fish.

In that atmosphere Jonah prayed to the Lord, ***"1 Then Jonah prayed unto the LORD his God out of the fish's belly,"*** (Jonah 2:1 KJV) In whatever place you are and in whatever time God is ready to hear your cry and your prayer. God is there always for you when you are coming to him repenting of your sins and your shortcoming. *The basic important thing for prayer is that God want you to have the right relationship with Him through Jesus Christ our Lord and that can come when you are willing to repent of your sins and turn away from your wrong ways.*

"2 And said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice." (Jonah 2:2 KJV) In his prayer Jonah here cried to God because he was in severe trouble and in emergency, for he was swollen by the great fish and does not know if he is going to live and got saved out of that trial. *We learn here that in distress and in our emergency we cry out to God to save us from any trouble that we are passing through and that endanger our lives.* God heard Jonah cry and prayer out of the belly of the great fish. Jonah said, ***"out of the belly of hell cried I."*** *The troubles that we pass through and the dangers that we are exposed to and threaten to perish are the gates of hell that are working against God's church. That is why we need to cry out to God in our distress for He is the only one who can save us from such calamities as He promised us in His Word that the gates of hell will not prevail against the Church of God. "18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon*

this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Matthew 16:18 KJV) So here the great fish that God provided to humble Jonah and his arrogance is considered as part of hell, and that mean when Jonah disobeyed God and run away from the calling of God in his life he put himself in danger of hell. The disobedience of Jonah had put him under the threat of hell and the power of darkness. Jonah said, ***"I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the LORD."*** The reason of Jonah's affliction is his disobedience to God. ** Many workers and those who are called by God to serve Him they are under affliction and under severe trials because they are disobedient to God and because they are doing their own. * When you do your own, then put in your mind that God shall put you under such trials to discipline you and to humble you as He did with Jonah.*

I am fully convinced, even now, the Lord is valiant in His discipline and anger against such workers who disobey God and put aside the mission and the work that He had entrusted to them to do.

The Lord put Jonah in such trials, for three days and three nights, that he was under the threat of death at any time, darkness, fasting, horror, no sleep, no food, terrible feelings, and painful conscious toward God, in order to teach him a lesson not to put God at his back.

The Lord may put you in such circumstances, as He put Jonah, that even you don't like to eat in order to humble you and to teach you your lesson, and in order for you to repent and go back to God. Therefore, use such opportunities; go into fasting with the attitude of repentance and return to God, that you may come out from the trouble that you are in.

"3 For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me." (Jonah 2:3 KJV) Jonah told God that He cast him into the deep, in the midst of the seas, the floods compassed him, and the waves of the sea passed over him. What then Jonah would expect from God to do for him? Jonah even said to the men on the ship take me and throw me in the sea; up to this point and he is not willing to repent, he was a bad testimony even to the non believers and put God to the test, that is why God spank him in such a way.

I had experience with people who know the Lord and still they do sin, and when I face and tell them that your sin will bring you to hell, they will answer and say it is fine for them, up to this point they put God to the test, that is why the Lord in His fierce anger discipline such workers and teach them a lesson not to blaspheme God.

The Lord shall do the same with you if you persist in your arrogance, disobedience and running away from God's call in your life.

God also will keep allow such trials to pass into the people lives, because many they don't realize that God will do such unless they will pass through it, that is why God allow such people to pass the painful experience while they are alive in order to repent, before they will die and go to hell.

"4 Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple." (Jonah 2:4 KJV)

Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; what Jonah stated is correct that he was cast out from the sight of God and that was the outcome of what he did for he was the one who moved God to discipline him in such a way. *Realize now that all what you are passing through from hard ship and calamities, losses and pain are the outcome of the work of your flesh that moved God to discipline you in such a way. Such way of thinking will pave the way for you to repent and to come back to God.*

yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. Here Jonah make a clear statement that show an evidence of his repentance. Here Jonah decided to look again toward the temple of God in Jerusalem. The holy temple was the place ordained by God for the Jewish to worship, to go to that place three times a year in their feasts, and that was the place ordained for them to bring all what they want to give or offer to God. Jonah was a prophet attested in the Northern Kingdom, and we know that the Northern Kingdom was divided from the southern Kingdom where the holy temple of God was located, but even with that still the Jewish were required by God to go and worship Him in that place. So here Jonah realize while he was about to die and in that terrible situation that he need to go back to God, to go back to God's temple and to the ordinances of God.

Those who left God by leaving God's church are required by God in coming back to Him that they need to go back to His church where they had been taught God's Word and God's ordinances and fulfill them toward God.

Yet I will look again toward thy holy temple. Jonah with such statement wanted to do things right with God as he will be doing things right with God's temple. *In the same way those who had run away from God, then they need to do things right with God as they come back and do the right things with the church they left.*

“5 The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. 6 I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.” (Jonah 2:5-6 KJV) Here Jonah continued in his discourse and what he was passing through, that the waters reached almost to take away his soul, and he reached down deep to the depth, down to the bottoms of the mountains, he was almost buried by the earth, the weeds were wrapped about his head, and considered to be dead. But Jonah now said about God, ***“Yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God.” (Jonah 2:6 KJV)*** Jonah here started to see clearly, that God had saved his life and did not allow his body to die and get corrupted, and that is another sign of repentance acknowledging the good things that he received from God while God was disciplining him. Jonah here further said, ***“O LORD my God.”*** which means that he will be once again allowing God to be the ruler over his life and he will be ruled with God.

Jonah said, ***“the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head.” (Jonah 2:5 KJV)*** Jonah was forced to fast in the belly of the fish, for the weeds were the only things that around which are something non eatable.

Can you see now clearly the good things that God is giving to you while He is disciplining you, chastising you for your wrongs ways of life and your defection from His calling to you to serve Him? Can you appreciate that even this time God had spared your life and you are not yet dead so that you have still the chance to repent? Can you say to God as Jonah cried, “O LORD my God.”

“7 When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple.” (Jonah 2:7 KJV) Jonah said here, ***When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD:*** In that he confessed that he was a hard headed person that he remembered God when his soul was about to die. Only at that moment he prayed to God and was willing to humble down. ** Don't be like Jonah, humble down, and don't be stubborn, because you don't know if God will keep you alive while you are under His judgment.*

“Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;” (Ecclesiastes 12:1 KJV) ** Remember the Lord early while you are young, while you are strong, while you are not in trial, and come back to Him and to His church and do what is right and just and be good example to others.*

“8 They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy.” (Jonah 2:8 KJV) Here *Jonah reached a good conclusion that you need to take heed of, that those who follow and keep pleasure and worldly things in their lives will be in danger of trouble and with such they will forsake their own mercy.* Jesus also said to His disciples the following when Peter was trying to stop him from going on toward suffering: ***“24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (Matthew 16:24-25 KJV)*** Jonah did not want to suffer, Jonah give in to his anger and pride, Jonah followed his own understanding and not God, Jonah did not want to forgive, Jonah nursed grudges in his heart, Jonah wanted to pamper himself with a trip on a ship to Tarshish, opposite to the direction that God was sending him to Nineveh, but now you can see clearly where he end up? In the belly of hell, in the belly of great fish, in the floods, in the waves of the sea, to the bottoms of the mountains, a divine judgment environment! *Do you want to be there and pass through such? Do you want to forsake your mercy or rather to repent and to come back to God and start to serve Him?*

** Worldliness will take you away from God and from His service and you need to renounce all the factors that will pull you away from God and from His church and from God's service.* ***“15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. 17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” (1 John 2:15-17 KJV)*** *Don't allow worldly pleasures and the material things of this life take you away from God. Don't allow the ambition of education, the ambition of migration, wrong marriage or a sinful life style take you away from God.*

Paul reported about one of his worker whose name is Demas who left him, ***“10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.” (2 Timothy 4:10 KJV)*** *Don't be like such example of people who deserted God and His ministry and their salvation is questionable and their names might be even blotted out from the book of life, but rather keep focus on those faithful who keep God and keep serving Him and keep abiding with His will and His plan.*

“9 But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.” (Jonah 2:9 KJV) Jonah here fully repented. He is now giving thanks to God even he is still in the belly of the big fish because He can see the goodness of God toward him even he deserted God.

Jonah also declared, ***I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD.*** Jonah decided and committed himself once again to obey God and to start to serve Him once again and fulfill his vows and what he had promised God.

Jonah also declared, ***Salvation is of the LORD.*** Jonah aware that his salvation was in danger because he disobeyed God and did not do his ministry and the mission that God asked him to do. *True, when you move away from God and stop serving Him and stop the mission that He entrusted to you then you are losing your salvation, but when you repent and come back to Him and start to serve Him your salvation and the plan that God has for you will be restored.*

My Dear and Beloved: Truly Jonah repented as he promised God and said, ***“I will pay that that I have vowed.” (Jonah 2:9 KJV)*** Therefore, when Jonah repented and promised God to do right of what he vowed and go back to serve God, the Lord relieved him as He spoke to the fish and it vomited Jonah in a dry land that has no water. ***“10 And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land.” (Jonah 2:10 KJV)***

The same for you, if you had disobeyed God, if you had broke your vow with God and did not do what He asked you to do, then you need to repent, pray and fast to the Lord and commit your life to Him again to do what He asked you to do, so you will be relieved.

If you are passing into struggle and hardship as the trial that Jonah was passing through, then put in your mind that the Lord will not relieve you as long you are not repenting and the trial will continue until you repent and surrender your will in full to God.

Don't be arrogant and don't allow your pride to rule you, but rather humble down, repent of all your sins, repent of doing your own will; the end of the suffering that you are passing through is in your hand to reverse in the way that you make your decision right with God, and right by coming back to His church and back to the ministry that He asked you to do, and back to fulfill all your vows and all what you commit yourself to do for Him.

Sit will God, pray and fast, write down all your sins, and all what you fail to do for God and repent from all such sins, so the Lord will have mercy on you, forgive you and restore you back to the good plan that He has for you.

The Lord is calling us as a church to have holy living, repenting of our sins and our own doing, and to submit ourselves, through prayer and fasting, fully unto Him to be an instrument of righteousness to live our lives for Him and to go on and serve Him. God, the Holy Spirit is calling us to reach new places and new people with the gospel of Jesus and with the Word of God and we need to submit fully to do all that for God and for His glory.

My Prayer: *Father God I come before you in the name of Jesus who died for my sins on the cross and rose from the dead to give me eternal life.*

Confess your sins now to the Lord _____, Now renounce all the wrong steps and decisions that you have taken against the Word of God and the will of God. Renounce doing your own will, and doing things against His will. Renounce the sin of loving the world, your pride and arrogance. Renounce the love of money, renounce your grudges and your unforgiveness. Repent of breaking your covenant with God for the sake of worldly things, like education, migration, for the sake of marriage or a style of life that you want to live and do your own. Repent of the sin of breaking your vows and commitment to God.

Repent of all such and dedicate yourself once again to serve Him and to go on in the direction that He wants you to move.

Lord I cry to you by reason of mine affliction, hear me O God; out of the belly of hell cried I, heard my voice O Lord. For you had cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all your billows and your waves passed over me. Lord, I am cast out of your sight; yet I will look again toward you and your church. The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me forever: yet you have brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God. When my soul fainted within me I remembered you: and my prayer came to you. Truly Lord I observed lying vanities and I forsook my own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto you in your church with the voice of thanksgiving; Lord I will pay that that I have vowed. Salvation is of the LORD. Lord speak and take me out of this trial that I am passing through in Jesus name, Amen.

Lord I pray for my Brethren who repented and come back to you, Lord have mercy on them and speak Lord and take them out of the trial that they are in. Lord restores them back to your good plan that you have for them. Lord I pray that they will submit themselves fully to you and start to reproduce the fruit of repentance, the fruit of the Holy Spirit that you want to see in their lives, and fruit of new souls they bring to you.

Lord we commit ourselves as a church to prayer and fasting that you will open to us a new mission fields, and a new missionary journeys to be started, new workers to be called and set apart for the new work of yours. Lord we commit ourselves to go wherever you send us.

Lord refill us with the Holy Spirit once again, Lord protects us and provide for us and enable us to plant new Bible studies and new congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us and free us from harm so that we will not feel pain. May the grace of Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

Dr. Ramiz Khalaf
The Church Overseer
Church of God
United Arab Emirates
Email: thebread1@gmail.com
Mobile Tel #: 00971551902647

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