*Grace Group Study Guide*

 *Jonah Week 2 – Pure Grace*

*Jonah Chapter 2*

As I considered Jonah’s psalm and adventure in the belly of a fish this week I was reminded of a story that I read in school back in about the fifth grade called “The Whipping Boy.” The story is centered mainly on two characters: Prince Horace who is heir to his father’s throne (also known as “Prince Brat,”) and Jemmy who we come to know as the whipping boy.

As his nickname indicates, Prince Horace is a spoiled, rotten little heathen of a child who frequently misbehaves in order to get attention from his father. But as we come to find out, since he is a prince and heir to the throne, no one can lay a hand on him for any of his behavior; thus, the need for a whipping boy. When Horace misbehaves and acts out, Jemmy receives his punishment.

Throughout the first part of the story we see Prince Horace completely immune to the fact that someone else receives time after time the punishment that was meant for him. Until later in the story where the roles are reversed and after being kidnapped, Jemmy is thought to be the prince. Even the kidnappers knew better than to lay a hand on the prince, so they wailed on Horace, whom they thought was the whipping boy.

As the story ends, the dynamic changes between these two boys. Jemmy is pardoned from his fate as whipping boy and he and Horace become the best of friends. Why? Because Horace got a taste of what it felt like to be in Jemmy’s position.

Perhaps you’ve already started putting pieces together in order to figure out why I mentioned this story. Jonah’s attitude as we’ve read about him is a lot like Prince Horace’s. They enjoy entitled positions and they are being taken care of, so why worry about anyone else? But once the roles are reversed, how quickly attitudes begin to change.

Bob Deffinbaugh makes a good observation about this type of mindset in the 21st century Church. *“…let me point out one significant difference between Jonah’s thinking and ours today. Jonah, thinking with the mindset of the Old Testament Jew, rested and relied on his election as an Israelite, failing to see his relationship to God in terms of grace, but in terms of some kind of intrinsic worth, based upon his race and perhaps even on his calling as a prophet. Today we tend to presume upon God’s grace. We use the grace of God as an excuse for our disobedience.*

His comments bring to my mind at least one particular scripture. Dealing with our position as believers and Jonah’s position as an Israelite I think of Ephesians 2:8-9 which says ***“8For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.*** As believers we are in a privileged position as children of God…but it’s not a position we earned as Paul tells us. It’s a gift of God and we have been called to share that gift just like Jonah was.

*"'Not called!' did you say? 'Not heard the call,' I think you should say. Put your ear down to the Bible, and hear him bid you go and pull sinners out of the fire of sin. Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity, and listen to its pitiful wail for help. Go stand by the gates of hell, and hear the damned entreat you to go to their father's house and bid their brothers and sisters, and servants and masters not to come there. And then look Christ in the face, whose mercy you have professed to obey, and tell him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish his mercy to the world.""* *- William Booth (founder of the Salvation Army)*

**If William Booth was in our meeting tonight, how do you think you would respond to his statement?**

So often as we go on in this life we forget about the “joy of our salvation.” That moment when we knew we had just gone from certain death to life everlasting. The farther away we get from remembering that joy, the less sensitive we become towards those who desperately need the same grace and mercy that the Lord lavished upon us when we came to know Him. Jonah makes an incredible statement at the end of his psalm that encompasses the theme of the whole Bible and it’s found in verse 9: “Salvation is of the Lord.” — [Jonah 2:9](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Jonah%202.9)

*“Salvation is the work of God. It is he alone who quickens the soul “dead in trespasses and sins,” and it is he also who maintains the soul in its spiritual life. He is both “Alpha and Omega.” “Salvation is of the Lord.” If I am prayerful, God makes me prayerful; if I have graces, they are God’s gifts to me; if I hold on in a consistent life, it is because he upholds me with his hand. I do nothing whatever towards my own preservation, except what God himself first does in me. Whatever I have, all my goodness is of the Lord alone. Wherein I sin, that is my own; but wherein I act rightly, that is of God, wholly and completely. If I have repulsed a spiritual enemy, the Lord’s strength nerved my arm. Do I live before men a consecrated life? It is not I, but Christ who liveth in me. Am I sanctified? I did not cleanse myself: God’s Holy Spirit sanctifies me. Am I weaned from the world? I am weaned by God’s chastisements sanctified to my good. Do I grow in knowledge?*

*The great Instructor teaches me. All my jewels were fashioned by heavenly art. I find in God all that I want; but I find in myself nothing but sin and misery. “He only is my rock and my salvation.” Do I feed on the Word? That Word would be no food for me unless the Lord made it food for my soul, and helped me to feed upon it. Do I live on the manna which comes down from heaven? What is that manna but Jesus Christ himself incarnate, whose body and whose blood I eat and drink? Am I continually receiving fresh increase of strength? Where do I gather my might? My help cometh from heaven’s hills: without Jesus I can do nothing. As a branch cannot bring forth fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can I, except I abide in him. What Jonah learned in the great deep, let me learn this morning in my closet: “Salvation is of the Lord.”* - Charles Spurgeon

**Do you know the Lord’s salvation? If so, when was the last time you sat in awe of it? What was the method in which He brought you to salvation?**

**Do you ever feel spiritually entitled or privileged as a child of God? Is that a good thing or a bad thing?**

**What similarities have you see so far between Jonah’s experiences and experiences that you’ve had in your own life?**