

Seeing Jesus in the Inversions  
JitOT #7 | Jonah  
November 21, 2021

### Pre-Sermon Remarks

- Final sermon in this series, next week is Advent

## PRAYER

### Introduction

- Mom picking up painting, several of my daughters have gotten into it
- Concept of negative space: that which is around the object
  - Related concept in music: the space between the notes

### The Bible's Positive Space: Messiah

- God creates humanity for partnership, to image him and rule
- Mankind does not do what God created us for
- Focus drawn in on this figure: rescuer, a ruler, a communicator

### Type and Pattern

**Romans 5** <sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin in the likeness of Adam's transgression. He is a type of the Coming One.

- Τύπος - pattern, example, image
- John 3:14 Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the wilderness...
- 1 Corinthians 10:3 The rock (of water in the wilderness) was Christ
- Hebrews 8:5 The tabernacle is a copy and a shadow of the real thing

### Typological People

\*Maybe you're familiar with this type of bible reading.

- Isaac: special chosen son, walks up a hill with wood, sacrificed
- Joseph: hated by his brothers, punished for a crime he didn't commit, saved all the people
- David: shepherd who came from humble background and became the ruler of God's people

But then...you come across certain stories in the bible that leave you scratching your head.  
*Why is this in here?!?* That is what we are going to explore today.

**Big idea: Even the negative spaces can draw us to Jesus, if we have eyes to see**

### I. Samson, the Worst Rescuer *Story recap | Judges 13-16*

- Amazing start | godly parents, angel visit, Nazarite vow, "He shall begin to save Israel"
- Quick downfall | Philistine marriage, betrayal/revenge, prostitute, Delilah/arrest
- Saving death | hair grows back, strength returns, kills the lords of the Philistines

### Similarities

- Angelic birth announcement
- Set apart, dedicated life
- Death that defeated evil

### Contrasts

- Served only himself
- Used by God in spite of himself
- Story ends in death

## II. Saul, the Worst King Story recap | 1 Samuel 8-31

- The people's choice | handsome, decisive leader, gets off to a good start, Spirit-filled
- Descent into madness | heart of fear, offers a sacrifice, jealousy of David
- Loss of kingship | Long Saul-vs-David drama, visits a witch, dies in battle at own hand

### Similarities

- Loved by the people
- Filled with the Spirit
- Strong, victorious king

### Contrasts

- Physical beauty, spiritual poverty
- Driven by fear
- Selfish death for himself

## III. Jonah, the Worst Prophet Story recap | Jonah 1-4

- Unique calling | Go to Ninevah of Assyria, warn them of judgment but offer grace
- Resistant prophet | ship other way, storm, swallowed by a fish
- Reluctant obedience | finally goes, worst sermon ever, upset by their repentance

### Similarities

- Prophet of God
- Three days in sheol
- New life after death

### Contrasts

- Unwilling to love enemies
- Resistant to God's will
- Bitter about mercy and grace

*These negative examples are given to us to help us more clearly see Jesus.*

### Gospel Connection

- Jesus, the best redeemer | lived his life in service of others, gave his life to save us
- Jesus, the best king | no fear or jealousy but loved by God, selfless sacrifice
- Jesus, the best prophet | lovingly spoke God's truth, was swallowed by death but rose

*Question: what about seeing Jesus in the negative situations of your own life?*

- Imagine if you were living in this story? Really, Samson? Oh man, Saul started so well.
- Have you ever had a situation where you were frustrated, disappointed, something didn't go the way you wanted. Have you ever struggled to see Jesus in that situation?
  - Friendship or romantic relationship that went south
  - Financial hardship or ruin
  - Societal upheaval and wishing there was a leader who could bring well-being?
  - Family problems, family not on speaking terms
  - Disagreement and conflict, even within the church family
- *This is a negative space! How could this be good? Where is Jesus in this?*

## Jesus in the Negative Spaces

What is Jesus doing in these difficult times?

1. Growing our character | James 1:2-4
  - a. You believe some form of prosperity gospel, it's so pervasive
    - i. Main version: *if you do xyz, then God will bless you in this exact way*
    - ii. Purity culture version: amazing marriage and sexual relationship
    - iii. Political prosperity: amazing country with no problems
    - iv. Family: your children will turn out amazing
    - v. Church: this church can be the perfect church
  - b. **James 1** <sup>2</sup>Consider it a great joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you experience various trials, <sup>3</sup>because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. <sup>4</sup>And let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking nothing.
2. Increasing our reliance on him | 2 Timothy 4:14-18
  - a. <sup>14</sup>Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds. <sup>15</sup>Beware of him yourself, for he strongly opposed our message. <sup>16</sup>At my first defense no one came to stand by me, but all deserted me. May it not be charged against them! <sup>17</sup>But the Lord stood by me and strengthened me, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. So I was rescued from the lion's mouth. <sup>18</sup>The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed and bring me safely into his heavenly kingdom. To him be the glory forever and ever. Amen.
3. Joining us in our hardships | Hebrews 2:17 ...a merciful high priest, like us in every way
  - a. As we get ready to celebrate Christmas, *Immanuel* means "God with us"

## Closing Questions

When you read the bible, do you look for Jesus in the negative spaces?

- Maybe ask different questions, like "how does this inversion show me the need for Jesus?"

When you look at your life, do you see Jesus at work in the negative spaces?

- Write down a list of every hard thing, then one by one, thank God for them

Are you making space for reflection in order to experience Jesus' comforting presence?

- Luke 2:19 *Mary pondered these things in her heart*
- Even the practice of silence and solitude can feel in itself to be a negative space
  - *Should I be singing? Learning something? Talking with a small group?*
  - What if this "negative space" practice was itself a way for Jesus to show up?

**Ruth Haley Barton** In solitude our thoughts and our mind, our will and our desires are reoriented Godward so we become less and less attracted by external forces and can be more deeply responsive to God's desire...[Silence and solitude] are not an end in themselves; they are merely a means for the intimacy of relationship and for the work of transformation that only God can accomplish.