

Jonah 2:1-2, 9 “Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, saying, “I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!”

When I was in High School, I had a friend who lived on Twin Lakes Golf Course in Federal Way. The house his family owned was right on the course and you could literally walk out his back door and stand on the fairway. I have so many memories of picking up golf balls at night, cleaning them and selling them to make baseball card money.

One year, he had a birthday/slumber party with about 15 freshman boys. Needless to say, it was a rowdy bunch. After dark that night we decided to have a squirt gun fight. We loaded up a bunch of water guns and ran out onto the golf course to have a water fight. Well, one of the boys decided to load up his squirt gun with a few broken glow sticks he had bought at the store and spray us with that instead of water. Now, not only could that chemical have blinded us all, it also did glow in the dark. This young boy sprayed it all over the fairway right behind the house.

All over the ground was glow in the dark spray patterns that could be seen from every house in the neighborhood. Those patterns light up the darkened golf course like fireflies and they were all right in front of the house. There was no denying it. Rest assured my friends Dad got many calls about it and eventually had to pay a fine and repair to the golf course.

Being exposed is a painful thing; we want to run and hide and cover our faces and head and hope it goes away – but God sees us anyway. How many times do we find ourselves in the belly of the whale looking at our choices and wishing we could go back and change it. Well, we can't. But what we can do is influence the trajectory going forward. As we look at the life of Jonah, like so many biblical figures, we see how NOT to respond. Jonah was in the depths of his disobedience and had every opportunity to allow God to change his heart. When he landed on shore, he saw the greatest spiritual repentance and reformation in world history as Nineveh turned to God. But he missed it - he remained hard and rebellious.

Whatever your situation is, don't allow your heart to become hard and miss the true freedom that God has for you.

As we celebrate 250 years of independence, Lets celebrate and be so grateful for a God who redeems us from our exposed places in our heart and heals us so we can be used by him to reach a world that needs the same thing.

I love you and God loves you!

Pastor Eric Lundberg