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# WALES' 8TH RECOVERY SUNDAY

27 OCTOBER 2019



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LIVING ROOM CARDIFF  
OPENING THE DOOR TO A NEW LIFE



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## **ORDER OF SERVICE:**

Speaker 1 ( Welcome)

Speaker 2 (Opening Prayer)

Hymn 1 : 944 Amazing Grace...

Speaker 3 : First Reading

Speaker 4 : Second reading

Hymn 2 : 895 O love that wilt...

Speaker 5 : (Jonah - Part 1)

Speaker 6: (Jonah - Part 2)

Speaker 7 : (Jonah - Part 3)

Speaker 8 : (Jonah - Part 4)

Hymn 3 951 Abide with me...

Speaker 9 : Sermon or Address

Speaker 10 : Prayer

Hymn 4 : 883 Give me joy.....

The Blessing

## **SPEAKER 1 : (INTRODUCTION)**

Every year since 2012 a special service has been prepared for this time of year called the Recovery Sunday Service. Here is our service for this year.

Recovery Sunday reminds us how fragile we all are, and that we are all human. It reminds us that we are all imperfect and that there is a massive flaw in all of us. Because of this we often feel inadequate when facing life and all its various problems. We turn to alcohol, drugs, gambling, sex, the control of others and so many other different things to fill the emptiness inside.

As we think about this today we are going to look at one of the great Bible stories – the story of Jonah. We will see how relevant it is for us today. Let us first of all turn to God in prayer.

## **SPEAKER 2 : (OPENING PRAYER)**

Our Father and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we turn to you to ask for your blessing on our service. We seek your blessing on everyone taking part and on us all as we think about recovery.

You are our Higher Power and it is only through you that any recovery is possible. It is only with you that it is possible to live a full life and feel the peace that we are all seeking. That is what we pray for today – for peace in our hearts and to be at peace with you, with each other and with ourselves.

This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen

### *Hymn 1:*

944 (Caneuon Ffydd) : Amazing Grace

## SPEAKER 3 : FIRST READING

Our text today is found in the Old Testament, the story of Jonah. This is how the story begins:

### Jonah Flees From the Lord

1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”

3 But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

4 Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. 5 All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. 6 The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

7 Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

9 He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

10 This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

11 The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?”

12 “Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”

13 Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. 14 Then they cried out to the Lord, “Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man’s life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased.” 15 Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. 16 At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

17 Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

## **SPEAKER 4**

**Then Jonah prayed to God from the belly of the fish:**

From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. 2 He said:

“In my distress I called to the LORD,  
and he answered me.

From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help,  
and you listened to my cry.

3 You hurled me into the depths,  
into the very heart of the seas,  
and the currents swirled about me;  
all your waves and breakers  
swept over me.

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

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

6 To the roots of the mountains I sank down;  
the earth beneath barred me in forever.  
But you, LORD my God,  
brought my life up from the pit.

7 "When my life was ebbing away,  
I remembered you, LORD,  
and my prayer rose to you,  
to your holy temple.

8 "Those who cling to worthless idols  
turn away from God's love for them.

9 But I, with shouts of grateful praise,  
will sacrifice to you.  
What I have vowed I will make good.  
I will say, 'Salvation comes from the LORD.'

## *Hymn 2*

895 (Caneuon Ffydd ) O love that wilt....

### **SPEAKER 5: JONAH (PART 1) :**

Even though the Old Testament story of Jonah is 2,800 years old, it's amazing how relevant it is for us and our world today. Jonah ignores God and runs away from him by going on board a ship. When a storm arrives and he is thrown into the sea, he realizes his need for God and yields to the Almighty.

This is a story about spiritual journey. Jonah was running away from himself and had decided to go as far as he could. That is so often what we all do – run away from ourselves and from life's problems. Alcohol, drugs, gambling, sex, the control of other people, can fool us into thinking that we can run away from ourselves. Others try to escape by amassing money and material things, through status, self-importance and by ego-centricity.

After trying to escape from himself, Jonah felt he had reached the depths, with water engulfing him and the bolts of life closing behind him. Millions feel like that today – as if they are nearly drowning, with everything closing around them. No amount of alcohol, drugs or money or status makes it possible for us to escape from ourselves.

### **SPEAKER 6 : JONAH (PART 2) :**

It is said that everyone, at some point in their lives, needs to ask themselves two questions, "Who am I and who is God?" This is what happened to Jonah in the belly of the fish. He had to face himself and answer those two questions.

This is what everyone suffering from dependency must do before they can

recover – they must ask themselves, “Who am I and who is God?”

As soon as Jonah asked himself these two questions, his situation changed. That is the experience of everyone in recovery.

Jonah discovered that only God could raise him from the depths. No human being or human endeavor could do this. Everyone on the journey to recovery must also come to this realization – only God is able to raise us from the depths and only God can give us the strength to conquer whatever we need to conquer.

### **SPEAKER 3 : (JONAH PART 3) :**

Before he changed his ways, Jonah followed his own will and not the will of God. He did whatever he wanted to do without considering God’s wishes. In the belly of the fish, he yields completely to God and decides that he is going to do what God wants him to do from then on. After doing this he realizes that God is giving him the necessary strength to do what needs to be done. He goes to Nineveh and experiences amazing success there. He realizes that God and Jonah are at work in Nineveh, not Jonah alone.

This is what everyone on the journey to recovery must do – submit to God’s will so he can work through us. We so often think that we know better than God and disrupt his plans. We need to be like Jonah and submit completely to God and have complete faith in him. When we do this we receive strength beyond ourselves to do whatever is required of us. No matter what is troubling us, God is with us to help us face the problem.

After receiving his message from God, Jonah went to Nineveh and shared that

message. And this is one of the main keys to recovery – we must share everything we have received if we are to continue on our journey of recovery.

### **SPEAKER 4 : (JONAH PART 4) :**

Jonah learnt life's greatest lesson - love is the only answer. He found the love which was within himself and he found the love which is the foundation of the universe – God's love.

Everyone seeking recovery has to learn that love is the only answer. Everyone in recovery is on a journey to find the love which is within themselves – everyone goes on their individual journey to find that love within ourselves which is part of the cosmic love.

At the end of the day neither alcohol, drugs, sex, gambling, the control of other people or anything else can provide an answer. Neither status, an important job, expensive car, money, self-importance nor anything else will do either. Love is the only answer – the discovery of the love within us which is part of the eternal love of God.

That is what Jonah discovered 2,800 years ago and this is the message for us today.

Love is the only answer.

### ***Hymn 3 :***

951 (Caneuon Ffydd) Abide with me.....

## SPEAKER 9 : SERMON OR SHORT ADDRESS

### *Some possible points :*

- The background to the story of Jonah
- The relevance of the story today
- Running away from God
- Running away from ourselves
- Reaching the bottom – no way out
- Who am I and who is God?
- Only God can help us recover
- Doing our own will and submitting to God's will
- Yielding to God
- Receiving strength by yielding to God
- Love is the only answer
- The love within us and the eternal love of God

## SPEAKER 10 : (PRAYER)

### *Let Us Pray :*

On Recovery Sunday we turn to you in prayer. We think of all the people who are in need today – everyone seeking recovery. The ones who are dependent on alcohol, on drugs, gambling, sex, the need to control others or anything else enslaving people today.

We give thanks for the “Living Room” which offers support to everyone looking for recovery. We thank you for all the work that the “Living Room” has done since it was established as the first ever “all addictions” day centre in Wales. We thank you also for CAIS, the Living Room's parent company; Adferiad / Recovery, a

new entity which addresses co-occurring addiction and mental health problems; and all the other organizations and Fellowships working selflessly to help others. Also, we give thanks for the work of “Cynnal” giving support to clergy and their families so that they can better accomplish their work in serving you. And we think of those who have experienced the joy of recovery and who are able to live a fuller life.

We pray that everyone will be able to live life in all its fullness – the life that Jesus so often talked about.

You are our Higher Power who can lift us from the depths. As you raised Jonah from the depths, so you are able to lift us all – as long as we work with you on the journey to recovery.

We realize that we often run away from ourselves. Not only through alcohol and drugs, but also through things like the pursuit of money, possessions, power, self-interest and self-importance. Open our eyes to see that the things of this world are never going to satisfy us and that the true happiness we seek comes from within.

Guide us to see that it is only by yielding to you that we will experience true joy. Guide us to see that joy comes only from doing your will and not our own. And above all today, guide us to see that love is the only answer to all our problems. Make us seek within ourselves the love that is present in all of us, this love which is part of your eternal love.

This we ask in the name of the greatest love the world has ever seen, in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray saying, Our Father, who art in heaven.....

*Hymn 4 :*

883 Give me joy....

**THE BLESSING :**

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
Courage to change the things I can,  
And wisdom to know the difference.  
Amen