

The Futility of Works (1:12-13)

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I. Introduction

A. The offer that Jonah makes to the mariners was a voluntary one.

1. Keep in mind that Jonah is a type of Christ in his death and resurrection.
2. That is definitely stated in the N.T. by the Lord Jesus Himself Matt 12:40.
3. He is clearly a picture of the Lord Jesus under the judgment of God.
4. He was also a picture of God's substitute for sinners who are facing eternal death.
5. Finally Jonah becomes a picture of Christ bringing salvation to all the world.

B. One Must Die

1. In our last message we saw that the only way the storm could be calmed was for Jonah to be cast overboard to die.
2. There was no other way - no alternative.
3. In the very same way, there is no salvation apart from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6)
4. However humanity is slow to believe God's Word even as the sailors were reluctant to believe Jonah.
5. They tried in their own efforts to save themselves before they came to the conclusion they couldn't do it. (1:5,13)
6. Most of us must exhaust all of our own devices before we come to trust in Christ alone for our salvation.
7. For the first 20 years of my life, I trusted in my church and my baptism as my hope of eternal life. I had to throw it overboard and trust in Jesus alone for my salvation.

C. Most people when they begin to think of their spiritual welfare, do so in the light of spiritual reformation.

1. We try to give up our bad habits, we try to quit lying or stealing, swearing, whatever it is that disturbs us.
2. This is the so called religious way to find acceptance and forgiveness.
3. Religion says if we give up our vices and bad habits, live a decent life, join a church, we

will become acceptable to God.

4. That leads us to a consideration of law and grace.

II. Law and Grace

A. Israel was placed under a system of law - you will find this taking place in Exodus 19:3-8.

1. God gave Israel the law with its ten commandments and scores of religious rituals which were to be performed.

2. To the demands of the law, Israel ignorantly and blindly replied; all that the Lord has spoken we will do (Ex 19:8)

3. So God gave the law to the Jewish people and for 1600 years they groaned under its yoke, only to find that they could not by

their own efforts keep it.

4. The key to their failure is that one little word in Ex. 19:8 "DO".

5. The law was a perfect expression of God's requirements for holiness and perfection.

6. It was a good law and holy but the problem is that sinners cannot keep it.

7. Imperfect man fell far short of its demand

B. God actually gave the law not to save sinners but to reveal to them the reality of their sin.

1. The law was given to make us desperate to find a way to God outside of our own efforts.

2. Paul tells us in Gal. 2:16 that we cannot be justified by the law of Moses.

3. The law could tell us how to live but it was powerless to help us live it.

4. God knew when He gave the law that no human who is a sinner could keep it. Then why give it at all?

5. Apostle Paul answers that question in Gal. 3:24-25.

6. He expands on that same idea in Gal. 4:1-5.

C. The law was never intended to save a person from sin but to prove and demonstrate the weakness of our flesh and the total inability of human nature to measure up to its demands.

1. God gave the law in order that we would admit that we are failures in being what He wants us to be.

2. When we come to the end of ourselves, we will then cast ourselves upon Christ.
3. The law is our schoolmaster that instructs us of our need to receive Christ. It literally takes us by the hand and leads us to Him.

III. Overboard with Jonah

A. This lesson is graphically illustrated in the book of Jonah.

1. The sailors tried everything in their power to save themselves.
2. But there was only one way to be saved - Jonah must die.
3. Utterly exhausted, they dropped their oars, ceased their toiling and cast themselves upon God's mercy. (1:14-15)
4. when they obeyed the word of Jonah, in one moment of time more was accomplished than in hours of rowing.

B. The moment they believed the word of God, that Jonah had spoken, the struggle was over peace at last.

1. The vicarious death of Jonah meant life for the trembling sailors.
2. when they ceased struggling and believed God's Word salvation came in an instant.
3. That is still God's plan - Rom. 4:5, "To Him that worketh not but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."
4. How slow we humans are to grasp this plan of salvation.
5. Let me ask you - are you trusting or trying?

C. God demands faith in His Son - nothing else will suffice.

1. All of our efforts to be good, honest, upright, have no saving value.
2. Of course there is virtue in honesty, goodness and charity.
3. All of us are expected to value those things but they are no substitute for the blood of Jesus. when it comes to the saving of the soul, they are worthless. Why?
4. If the doing of those things could merit salvation and acceptance with God - then why did God send His Son.
5. Not only send Him but to die a death in ignomy and shame.
6. If virtue and commandment keeping is sufficient, then Christ died in vain.

IV. Isaiah makes it even more Definite (Is 64:6)

A. Bible does not say our overt sins such as lying, stealing, cursing, adultery, are as filthy rags.

1. Amazingly it says - all our righteousness is as filthy rags.
2. Think of it - all the things we pride ourselves in are as filthy rags before God as a substitute for blood of Christ.
3. How often people boast about their own goodness, decency and church going. I don't have to repent and receive Christ because I am a good person.
4. I think I am as good as anyone else, maybe a little better.

B. I commend your good works but if you present them to God as a substitute for the blood of Christ, they are filthy rags.

1. By far the hardest people to reach are those who think they are fine, decent and upright people. They feel they have no need to be saved other than by their own way.
2. Remember it was to a moral, decent, and devoutly religious man that Jesus said, You must be born again (John 3:1-3)
3. Have you been hiding behind your goodness as an excuse for not having to receive Christ.
4. God wants you to face the fact that you are helpless and that your goodness will not save you.