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PREFACE

World news has become a flood threatening to engulf us: war, disease, terrorism, violence, spilling over from newspaper to TV to radio to Internet blog. Add billions of heated opinions and the tidal wave of conflict threatens to overwhelm us completely.

World weary, we start to fall into two camps: victim and survivor. We either suffer pain and loss or somehow struggle through it all, thanking God at the end of the day that nothing bad happened to us.

Consider Jonah, the man who wound up nearly drowning only to find himself in the belly of an exceptionally large fish. He lived in a world of war, disease, terrorism and violence. Jonah's job was to go to his most hated enemy – the Assyrians in Nineveh – forgive them for their cruelties and invite them to repent to the Lord God. Jonah was not the bravest of men, nor did he immediately rise above his hatred of Assyrians. Instead of confronting the enemy, he ran. Jonah, servant of God, did not want to share his God with his enemy; instead, he booked passage on a ship heading in the opposite direction.

God brought forth a storm, overwhelming the ship. Jonah knew his betrayal was the cause. Jonah told the crew to throw him overboard. Reluctantly, begging God's forgiveness, the men did so and the sea grew calm. A creature described in the Bible as a "large fish" then swallows Jonah whole. He is inside the fish for three days and three nights.

Consider this. He is lost in a sea. He sinks into desperate darkness. There is no light, no hope. What does Jonah do? Feel sorry for himself? Try to rationalize his decision to avoid the Assyrians? Complain?

He prays.

“In my distress, I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From the depths of my grave I called for help, and You listened to my cry” (Jonah 2:1). In his prayer, Jonah discovers the healing power of God’s forgiveness. God frees Jonah from the fish. Jonah abides in the Lord’s directive and speaks to the enemy, the people of Nineveh. They listen and repent.

You are about to read the stories of 12 modern men. Each undergoes a difficult trial in life. Like Jonah, each finds himself lost in a sea, overwhelmed. Like Jonah, each finds healing and transformation.

Do you have a desire to forgive, and to be forgiven? Trust in the Lord. Pray to God. Read the Bible. Follow the simple, profound invitation of Jesus and follow Him.

The road to forgiveness and healing begins with the first small step. Take it.