

# The Connection

## Messages of Hope



**HOPE**  
CHURCH | RALEIGH  
WORSHIP. GROW. SERVE.

A Weekly Online Newsletter: Edition 709

December 14, 2022

## “Release All to Him!”

**Jonah 1:17** And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

Most of you know the story of Jonah. You either learned it growing up in Sunday school class or you have certainly heard a sermon or two on Jonah and the Great Fish (Whale).

While I could focus on many of the different turns and twists of this story, and there are many, I want to focus today on Jonah spending three days and nights in the belly of the great fish. Yes, we can see the mirror of Jesus spending three days in the tomb before rising to life again, but that is not my focus today.

Jonah was in a fix. He did NOT want to do what the Lord wanted and was running. Running from the call! Running from sharing the gospel with a people he hated and did not want to see compassion, much less salvation come their way. He was running from the Lord. Interesting though, maybe you already knew this, but you cannot run from the Lord. Oh, you can turn your back on Him. You can put your hand up and say I'm done with You. You can be self-serving and seek your way, but the Lord is still there. He has gone nowhere. He sees all, knows all, watches all you do. You cannot run and hide from Him.

Once Jonah came to that understanding within himself, he knew he was the one that needed to change. Staying on the boat was not going to work. Throw me over and the seas will calm, Jonah told the crew. Guess what? They did! And God provided a place for Jonah to spend the next 3 days and nights to “soul search” and think. And he did just that. Chapter 2 of Jonah captures Jonah's prayer and acknowledgment that “Salvation is from the Lord”. With that acknowledgment, Jonah was released upon dry land by the great fish. Here is Jonah's prayer:

**Chapter 2: Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the stomach of the fish, and he said, “I called out of my distress to the Lord, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice. “For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me. “So I said, ‘I have been expelled from Your sight. Nevertheless I will**

**look again toward Your holy temple.’ “Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head. “I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, But You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God. “While I was fainting away, I remembered the Lord, And my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple. “Those who regard vain idols Forsake their faithfulness, But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the Lord.” Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land.**

Have you ever been in despair with what is ahead of you? Have you ever been weighed down with what seemed to be an unsolvable situation? Have you ever been a place where your wants, your desires, your preconceived truth trumps God's truth and God's desires? What do we do? We run! We hide! We allow Satan to fill us with the “ME” syndrome. And, as with Jonah, it becomes about us.

God placed Jonah in a place for three days and nights to help him understand his position. Water and weeds around his head. Certainly a tenuous situation that could end badly. But Jonah prayed and at least in that moment, released himself to the Lord. Yes he ultimately did what God wanted, but at the end was mad about it. Interestingly though, God was still present. God was still faithful. God's purpose was still carried out.

Here is my point. Have you released all that you are holding on to, to the LORD? Or are you still holding things tightly in your grip? If so, you may need to spend time in prayer with the LORD so that you might come to the end of yourself. In closing my sermon this past Sunday, I said, “We are His! We are those who have ceased to exist for ourselves, but who live only as Christ lives in us. With the joy of the expected One in us, we proclaim, We are nothing, and He is everything. We are, because He is.” I would encourage you to read that a few times. Releasing ALL to Him will help keep the weeds and water from engulfing us and will release us to do what He is calling us to do. Well, maybe something to think about.

Blessings friends,  
Pastor Marty - HOPE Church Raleigh

# HOPE Calendar

## Wednesday, December 14

Wednesday Night Devotion & Prayer  
@ 7:00 p.m. VIA ZOOM

## Thursday, December 15

Worship Team Practice @ 7 p.m.

## Saturday, December 17

The Computer Lab @ 9:00 a.m.  
Women of HOPE @ 1:00 p.m.

## Sunday, December 18

### Fourth Sunday of Advent

Worship Team Practice @ 8:00 a.m.  
Worship @ 9:30 a.m.  
Fellowship @ 11:00 a.m.  
Sunday school @ 11:15 a.m.  
Elders Christmas Dinner @ 6:00 p.m.

## Monday, December 19

Staff Meeting @ 11:15 a.m.

## Helping Hands Ministries

### Fellowship Food - December 18

*Church Will Provide*

### Soundboard - December 18

*Benjamin Pierce*

### Communion Steward - Dec.

*Sandra Pierce*

### Greeter - December 18

*Joan Rollinson*

### Volunteer for the Nursery - Dec. 18

*Terry Duffell*

This Sunday  
Scripture Text and Sermon

Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Matthew 1:18 - 25  
"A Given Peace!"



## Outreach Ministries

### November "Food of the Month"

for the Raleigh Dream Center Food Pantry  
**Instant Pasta Meals**  
We have a collection bin in the foyer

### HOPE Meal Ministry

Take a meal from the freezer if needed  
for you or someone else.

### TLC Devotion

December 19 @ 11:00 a.m.

### The Computer Lab

December 17 @ 9:00 a.m.

### Christmas Toy Drive

### Raleigh Dream Center

We were able to gift 156 Toys to  
the Raleigh Dream Center Toy  
Drive. Thanks to everyone for  
giving.

## Spiritual Growth Ministries

### Sunday School for All Ages

This Sunday

### WOMEN of HOPE

Saturday, December 17  
@ 1:00 p.m. meeting at the church

### MEN of HOPE

Tuesday, December 20 at 7 p.m.  
A ZOOM link for the meeting will  
be sent out beforehand.

Join us!

### Wednesday Night Devotion

### & Prayer Tonight

@ 7 p.m.

VIA ZOOM LINK

## Quote of the Week

"Oh! How ashamed you would  
be if men could see your  
thoughts! Is not the eye of God  
ten thousand times more to  
be regarded?"  
Richard Baxter

## Prayer Requests:

Covid -19, Mark Drylie, Chandi Haswell & family, Revill & Mary Lane Mallory, Evelyn Doby, Jamie Baldwin, Donna Williams, Diane Williams, Renee Logan, Loretta (Sandi Underwood's daughter), Joan Summers, Jordan & Cinnamon (son and daughter of Lynn Joyner's family members), Tommy Lanphere (Lynn Joyner's brother), Becky Hale's mom, Gene & Becky Hale, Dave & Dot Geil, Joy Forrest's daughter Haley and son Jude, Carlyle and Cynthia Franklin (Sandra Pierce's dad and stepmom), Brian Adam's dad, our Military, our Missionaries, our Nation, and the world. If you have those you would like added to our prayer concerns, please email me those names.

## Dates to Remember

### Saturday, Dec. 24

Christmas Eve Worship  
@ 5:00 p.m.

### Sunday, Dec. 25

Christmas Day Worship  
@ 9:30 a.m.  
(No Sunday school on  
Christmas Day)

### Sunday, January 1

Worship @ 9:30 a.m.  
Extended Fellowship /  
No Sunday School

### Sunday, January 8

Anniversary Sunday of HOPE  
(Covered Dish Meal)

## HOPE4Kids

Join us for a movie night on  
**Wednesday, December 21**  
At  
**6:30 PM**

### HOPE Church Raleigh

An Evangelical Presbyterian Church

4911 Green Rd

Raleigh, NC 27616

919-508-6827

Worship Time: 9:30 AM

[www.HopeChurchRaleigh.org](http://www.HopeChurchRaleigh.org)

[www.facebook.com/HOPEChurchRaleigh](https://www.facebook.com/HOPEChurchRaleigh)

Twitter: @HopeChRaleigh

YouTube.com (type "HOPE Church Raleigh"  
in the search box)

## Daily Devotions

### For This Coming Week

Dec 18	Ezra	3
Dec 19	Ezra	4
Dec 20	Ezra	5
Dec 21	Ezra	6
Dec 22	Ezra	7
Dec 23	Ezra	8
Dec 24	Ezra	9

**If you have not turned in a Stewardship Card and wish to do so, it is not too late. There are Cards on the entry table in the Sanctuary if you need one. Thank you to you all for your faithfulness to the Lord and to HOPE Church Raleigh.**