



Losing Living Links and Legislators' Lives • Jonah 2:3 & 4

TO: NEBRASKA STATE SENATORS

FROM: REV. PERRY M. GAUTHIER

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“There is no more reason for a two-house legislature in any of our states than there is for a bank to have two boards of directors...Indeed there is not more use for a two-branch legislature than there is for two governors.”

George W. Norris spoke these words in the early 1930's. The “New Deal Republican” who settled in McCook, wore out two sets of automobile tires while he drove throughout the state campaigning for the measure.¹

Because of the Great Depression there were budgetary considerations surrounding the Nebraska bicameral legislature, as it had existed for 68 years. Eventually, in 1934, the House (Assembly) was abandoned. Budgetary issues aside, Senator Norris must have had an underlying belief that politicians and legislators are capable of working well together.

All people have struggles working together and getting along. While accomplished, mature and well-respected, even legislators are not immune to the pressures of strained relationships.

Today in our study in the book of Jonah we will see Biblical principles surrounding the pressures and problems of lost relationships. We will see how Jonah lost his link to the Lord and the pain it caused them both. We will see the distance it put between them and how that link was restored. We will see the application for our lives, since all of the living links of our relationships are affected in just the same way.

I. LOSING A LIVING LINK—PAIN PRODUCED

Jonah 2:3 *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.²*

In this verse we see God's chastisement of Jonah, His prodigal prophet. Humanly speaking it is the sailors, not the Lord, who hurled Jonah into the Mediterranean Sea. Ultimately, it was the Lord, and not the sailors, who threw Jonah into the cold salt water of that sea. In these words of his prayer

we see his acknowledgement of God's chastisement upon him. He not only says God threw him into the sea, Jonah also says God used the billows and the breakers of the sea He created to punish Jonah. Though the painful punishment is severe, the Lord is lovingly in careful control of the prophet's life. Motivated by love, the Lord wants to teach Jonah a lesson in this near drowning experience. As we saw in the last three studies,³ Jonah was to be saved by a sea-savior, an organic submarine, the world famous “great fish”.

But Jonah's saving is after his sinking. The breakers were the waves produced from the perfect storm that God miraculously generated on the Mediterranean. When a wave “breaks” and crashes into foam, it's called a breaker. God allowed these final breakers⁴ of the calming sea to break upon Jonah's face, causing him to sink into the sea.

The principle here is this: Jonah's living link to his loving Lord has been broken. When we sin against the Lord or against other loved ones in our lives, we break a link and pain is produced. When we violate relationships and do wrong in them it always produces pain. That pain can be in many forms—lost communication, financial stress, lost sleep, loneliness, tears, separation, heartache, slander, physical consequences, manipulation, disrespect, retaliation and revenge. There are many types of pain produced when we break the living links of relationships. We would all do well to soberly reflect upon the truth of Romans 12:18:

IF POSSIBLE, SO FAR AS IT DEPENDS ON YOU, BE AT PEACE WITH ALL MEN.

In our relationships with people (“horizontal relationships”), we must always consider the ramifications of our actions and how it affects others' lives, liberties and their pursuits of happiness. But like Jonah here in verse 3, we must also take heed to our relationship with the Lord Himself (our “vertical relationship”). He's a loving Lord, but we must realize that sin will cause us to lose the link to His love. Sin will send us into the sea of His chastisement & plunge us into the pain produced by His necessary correction in our lives.

Someone said “Unless you and your sins come apart, you and your God can not come together.” There is pressure and pain in lost relationships.

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SENATORS WEDNESDAY STUDY: 7:30, ROOM 1022

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PHONE: 402.770.6270 REV. PERRY M. GAUTHIER, V.D.M.

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II. LOSING A LIVING LINK—DISTANCE AND DESPAIR

Another component to losing the relational links in our lives is the resultant distance & despair. We see Jonah recalling how he felt as he sank into the sea.

Jonah 2:4a *So I said, "I have been expelled from Your sight...*

Whenever you have stress with someone, realize that it will always manifest itself by a loss of their presence or, at the very least, a loss of eye contact. The eyes are the window of the soul. When we are angry with someone, if we cannot leave their physical presence, we will refuse to look them in the eye. In [Revelation 3:20](#), Jesus speaks of His being shut out of relationships and His desire to enter back into warm and real relationships. He says:

Revelation 3:20 *Behold, I stand at the door & knock; if anyone bears My voice & opens the door, I will come in to him & will dine with him, & he with Me.*

Jesus here wants to restore the relationship lost, and is at the door knocking like a gentleman. He dislikes the distance and despair and initiates a mending of the relationship. Breaking the bonds of relationships brings distance and despair into our lives.

This is true “horizontally” and “vertically.” Is there someone whose face is turned away from you right now? Is there someone you’re not able to look in the eye because of shame or guilt or the loss of relationship? If so, I’d encourage you to take the initiative to reconcile just like Jesus did.

Jonah knows he alone has put the distance between himself and the Lord. God cannot look Jonah in the eye at this time and is waiting for Jonah to be willing to (finally) restore the relationship. That leads us to our final point.

III. LOSING A LIVING LINK—RESTORABLE RELATIONSHIPS

While relationships can be lost permanently through death and certain types of irreparable damage, most relationships are restorable. Some relationships are harder to repair than others. Proverbs talks of extreme damage below:

A BROTHER OFFENDED (IS HARDER TO BE WON) THAN A STRONG CITY; AND (SUCH) CONTENTIONS ARE LIKE THE BARS OF A CASTLE. (PROVERBS 18:19, ASV)

Fortunately most relationships are restorable and not irreparably damaged. So what is the key to the restoration of relationship? We see it in verse 4.

Jonah 2:4b *...Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.*

Jonah has lost a living link to his Lord. He’s felt the accompanying distance and despair. God wants to look to Jonah in a loving relationship. Like a loving father to an estranged son, the Lord looks and longs for reconnection. Jonah knows he’s expelled from the Lord’s sight by his own sins; now the fear of drowning has caused him to realize that he is the one who has caused the lack of connection between himself and his God.

God is a “stand at the door knocking” kind of God. God makes peace with all men as far as it is possible with Him. Jonah is the one who had refused to seek God’s face to try to look God in the eye. But there’s good news.

For what might be the first time in the book of Jonah, we see the prophet doing something right! He repents. He says in his heart and expresses in his prayer that he is finally willing to “look again” to the Lord in His “holy (heavenly) temple.” Jonah goes to the Lord in prayer.

IV. LIVING LINKS AND LEGISLATORS' LIVES

In conclusion, we must realize that we all struggle to work well together. But as Rodney King said in 1992, “Please, we can get along here. We all can get along. I mean, we’re all stuck here for a while. Let’s try to work it out.”

Vertically speaking, how is your relationship with the Lord? Is it distant? Of all relationships, it *is* the most vital. No matter how far you may have gone, or how long you may have run, the Lord is always looking to restore relationships. I encourage you today to consider how close you are to Him. Look to the Lord and live. He loves you and says to you what He says to all, “...the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out ([John 6:37](#)).”

Horizontally, are there lost links that have caused you pain, pressure and produced distance and despair in your life? It may be at home, at church, or even within the walls of the George W. Norris Legislative Chamber. I pray, with the Lord’s help, that you will repair any lost links in your life.

¹ [A Look at Your Unicameral](#), Published January 2010, Clerk of the Legislature.

² All Scripture quotations are taken from the New American Standard Version 1995 Update unless otherwise noted.

³ Studies are available at <http://www.capmin.org/Ministries/Nebraska/Studies.aspx>

⁴ The waves calmed immediately, just as they did in Jesus’ day in [Mark 6:51](#).