

#4 "When You're In A Dark Place!"

Jonah 1:3 (NIV) 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.

Jonah 1:15 (NIV) Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm.

Jonah 1:17 (NIV) Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

1. Dark places are _____.

Mark 14:34 (NIV) "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," he said to them. "Stay here and keep watch."

Psalms 23:4 (NIV) Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

1 Kings 19:3, 4 (NIV) Elijah was afraid and ran for his life. When he came to Beersheba in Judah, he left his servant there, while he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness. He came to a broom bush, sat down under it and prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors."

Luke 22:62 (NIV) And he went outside and wept bitterly.

John 21:3 (NIV) "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Hebrews 12:7 (TLB) "Let God train you, for He is doing what any loving father does for his children ... "

2. Dark places require _____.

Jonah 2:1-9 (NIV) From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. 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. 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. I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. 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. When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them. 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.'"

Here's an important lesson for us:

The FASTEST WAY OUT of your dark place is by becoming spiritually active.

Acts 16:22-26 (NIV) The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose.

3. _____ in our dark places.

Matthew 4:13-16 (NIV) Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali – to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah: "Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles – the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned."

Jonah 2:10 (NIV) And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

Psalms 139:7-12 (NIV) Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the

wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me," even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you.

4. Dark places are _____.

Isaiah 43:2 (NIV) When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.

1 Peter 1:6 (NLT) So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while.

1 Peter 5:10 (NIV) And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.

Here's a word of wisdom:

Never make a PERMANENT DECISION in a TEMPORARY set of CIRCUMSTANCES.

Whatever dark moment you're in:

1. WAIT.
2. PRAY.
3. PRAISE.
4. PREPARE.

Isaiah 25:8, 9 (NLT) He will swallow up death forever! The Sovereign LORD will wipe away all tears. He will remove forever all insults and mockery against his land and people. The LORD has spoken! In that day the people will proclaim, "This is our God! We trusted in him, and he saved us! This is the LORD, in whom we trusted. Let us rejoice in the salvation he brings!"

Revelation 7:13-17 (NLT) Then one of the twenty-four elders asked me, "Who are these who are clothed in white? Where did they come from?" And I said to him, "Sir, you are the one who

knows." Then he said to me, "These are the ones who died in the great tribulation. They have washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb and made them white. That is why they stand in front of God's throne and serve him day and night in his Temple. And he who sits on the throne will give them shelter. They will never again be hungry or thirsty; they will never be scorched by the heat of the sun. For the Lamb on the throne will be their Shepherd. He will lead them to springs of life-giving water. And God will wipe every tear from their eyes."