

# Speaking to the soul



## Coming back to God

Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from inside the fish. He said, “I cried out to the LORD in my great trouble, and he answered me. I called to you from the land of the dead, and LORD, you heard me!” Jonah 2:1-2

The thought of spending three days and nights inside a large fish is well beyond my imagination. And the book of

Jonah doesn't do anything to satisfy my curiosity! This is no newspaper account of exactly what it looks and feels like to be swallowed by an enormous fish. Rather, it is the story of a man meeting with God at a time of extreme need. Jonah's words echo many of the Psalms and reveal his sense of despair and abandonment. Life seemed to have come to a shuddering conclusion but, amid his confusion, he cried to God and God heard him. Jonah had walked the path of disobedience and now, in the belly of the fish, he needed to set off in a new direction. God had not abandoned him, but was ready to hear his cries.

Jonah's situation reminds me of the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). Just like Jonah, the son headed off deliberately in the wrong direction. He had the cheek to ask for his inheritance while his father was still alive, and then quickly lost all the money by living recklessly. He was so poor that all he could do was to find a job feeding pigs. It was there in that moment of abject failure that he came to his senses, and it was just the same for Jonah.

The lesson we learn is that however far and fast we run, God will always be loving us and inviting us to turn around and come back to him. He won't force us, but if and when we do return we can be sure that his arms will be wide open to welcome us back.

## QUESTION

What have you learned from Jonah's attempt to run away from God?

## PRAYER

Lord God, thank you that you never give up on us. Amen

*Photograph - St David's Cathedral, Wales*