**Thanks as an act of faith**

* Jonah 2:1-9
* Revisit the references for #1
* Psalm 69

In some situations, an attitude of gratitude takes great faith. Maybe you can clearly see the situation you would like to be in and yet the opposite seems to be happening. Maybe it’s your fault. Maybe it isn’t. Either way, it’s easy to sink into despair. The alternative is to stay thankful.

The Bible give us an excellent example in Jonah: trapped inside the whale he is in dire circumstances. He knows it’s his own fault. He is desperate to get out. You know the story! Yet Jonah produces a beautiful prayer of thanksgiving. He tells his story of woe, crying out to God to hear his distress. He goes on to note God’s love and to thank God anyway. I wonder if it was his ‘shouts of grateful praise’ in verse 9 that caused the whale to spew him out! It’s interesting that in the contemporary journalling community gratitude journalling is often seen as a precursor to good things happening. You give thanks anyway and then things start to get better. Jonah provides an ancient example of this.

Create a page that represents Jonah in the whale. You may want to colour-wash a background using simple watercolour and write out the prayer over the top or use washi round the edges and sticky notes for key verses. Think about situations where you have felt ‘trapped in the depths’. Imagine using Jonah 2:9 as a prayer. Use your journal to explore how that might feel. Look back at the verses from #1 and the extent to which Jonah fulfilled them. You could write them out again.

You could also look at Psalm 69 which begins with pain and despair. Yet the Psalmist decides to give thanks anyway and the whole Psalm turns into verse 30 into a song of hope and praise. This is a great Psalm to journal with as it’s full of images. Choose one to work with. What does it teach us about thanksgiving?