

Community Group Discussion Questions

"A Whale of a Journey" Jonah Sept. 29, 2018

Getting Started

Jonah is considered by many as fable, but because we believe it's factual (Luke 11:30; Matthew 12:39-40) we are able to discover God's faithfulness.

Jesus spoke of Jonah and his experience as a historical reality. In fact, Jesus spoke of the entire Old Testament as a historical reality. If Jesus confirmed that the Bible of His day was true, what should that do for your view of the integrity of the Bible's message?

Going Deeper

1. **A Call to Go:** *"Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 'Arise, go...'"* (Jonah 1:1-2)
 - a. **To a Place:** *"to Nineveh"* (1:2) *Capital of Assyria *Mosul, Iraq
 - b. **To a People:** *"for their evil has come up before me"* (1:2)
 - c. **To a be a Preacher:** *"call out against it"* (1:2)

What has God called you to do? Is there a place or a people involved? What does that look like? (Beyond your personal answer, look at Matt 28:18-20, Mark 16:15, Luke 24:48-49, John 20:21, and Acts 1:8).

2. **A Place to Run:** *"But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish"* (1:3)
 - a. **Far from the Place:** *"He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish"* (1:3) *Tel Aviv
 - b. **Far from the People:** *"So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish"* (1:3) *Southern Spain
 - c. **Far from His Presence:** *"away from the presence of the LORD"* (1:3)

If you have ever run away from God's call on your life, what did that look like?

3. **A Storm that Blows:** *“But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea,”* (1:4)
 - a. **Causing Fear:** *“Then the mariners were afraid”* (1:5)
 - b. **Creating Faith:** *“each cried out to his god”* (1:5)

How do you think the almighty sovereign God of all creation responds when one of His own children chooses to do the exact opposite of what God tells them?

4. A Crew that Knows:

- a. **Roll of the Dice:** *“Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.”* (1:7)
- b. **Revelation of Defiance:** *“For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them.”* (1:10)

What do you think other people think about you when they know you're a Christian, but they see you purposely running away from God?

5. **A Fish to Catch:** *“And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah”* (1:17)
 - a. **Prayer of Distress:** *“I called out to the LORD, out of my distress”* (2:2)
 - b. **Purpose to Deliver:** *“And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.”* (2:10)

Throughout the Bible, God consistently does one thing when His people repent. What is it? Why do you think He responds this way?

6. **A City that Repents:** *“And the people of Nineveh believed God.”* (3:5)
- a. **A Second Chance:** *“Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time”* (3:1)
 - b. **A Sermon that’s Concise:** *“Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!”* (3:4)
 - c. **A Scene of Compassion:** *“God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.”* (3:10)

When we boldly lean in and live out our faith and calling, how do many respond to our message?

7. **A Preacher that Quits:**

- a. **His Complaint:** *“But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry”* (4:1)
- b. **God’s Comfort:** *“God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort”* (4:6)
- c. **His Criticism:** *“Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die”* (4:9)

Read verse 4:2. What was Jonah’s big complaint? How did God try to teach Jonah a lesson?

8. **A God who Cares:** *“And should not I pity Nineveh, ...more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle”* (4:11)
- a. **God’s Plan**
 - b. **God’s Pursuit**
 - c. **God’s Patience**
 - d. **God’s Provision**
 - e. **God’s Pleasure**

As you read the last few verses of Jonah, what does it leave you wondering? (Did Jonah ever ‘get it’? Did he ever develop a heart for the lost, or did he reject God’s heart for others?) What about you?

Take Away: Everything detail in the story of Jonah is obedient to God except for Jonah. However, He is a God of second chances that turns what we think are mistakes into miracles.

Prayer Requests