



mystery of mercy

*An Eight Week Study  
in the Book of Jonah*

# JONAH

## *Week One / Jonah 1:1-3*



### *Day One | Jonah 1:1-2*

What would have made this a difficult task for Jonah? Name some other times in the Bible where God acted in an unexpected way. Did you ever believe that God was calling you to speak out against evil that you were witnessing or participating in? Did you choose to speak or remain silent? Why? What did you learn?

---

---

---

### *Day Two | 2 Kings 14:23-27*

In your own words, how would you describe the situation in Israel at this time? What role did Jonah play in restoring Israel's borders? How might this affect the way that he felt about the nations that opposed Israel? Can God use bad people to accomplish good things? Does doing God's will make a bad person righteous?

---

---

---

### *Day Three | Jonah 1:3*

Are you surprised by Jonah's response to God's command? What is the presence of the Lord and how can we flee from it? Why do people typically flee from the presence of God? Have you ever felt the desire to flee? What was the end result? When have you felt most distant from God?

---

---

---

## *Day Four | Jonah 1:1-3*

How do you react to this quote from Tim Keller: “Jonah concluded that because he could not see any good reason for God’s command, there couldn’t be any. He doubted the goodness, wisdom & justice of God.”? When you disobey God, are you aware that is essentially what you are doing? How does this relate to Adam & Eve’s original sin?

---

---

---

## *Day Five | Luke 15:11-32*

What do you find most interesting or significant about this parable?

Early in the story of Jonah, do you see any parallels between his story and this parable? In what way is Jonah similar to the younger brother? Which brother do you relate to more? Why? What does God most want you to learn from this parable?

---

---

---

*Group Question:* Do you feel like God is calling you towards something in this season of your life? What are the biggest obstacles that you would face in obeying that call? Who can help or guide you as you seek to step forward in obedience?

---

## *Prayer: Reflection and Response*

Did this week’s passage lead you to a sense of Praise? Worship? Gratitude? Did it lead to conviction? A need to confess & ask for forgiveness? A request for God’s help? Write down a prayer, speaking to God simply & honestly in light of those reflections.

---

---

---

# JONAH

## *Week Two / Jonah 1:4-6*



### *Day One | Jonah 1:4*

Tim Keller says: “Every act of disobedience to God has a storm attached to it.” - do you agree or disagree? Are there any storms in your life now, or in the past, that have been tied to disobeying God? How did you experience God during and after the storm? Are these storms an act of judgment or an act of God’s pursuing & parental love?

---

---

---

### *Day Two | Jonah 1:5*

Can you describe a time when your sin had negative consequences for other people? Why do you think the sailors were calling out to their gods? Why do you think Jonah was sleeping & unaware of the storm? How quickly do you turn to God when you experience storms? Is it your first thought or more of a last resort?

---

---

---

### *Day Three | Jonah 1:6*

As a prophet, how do you think it made Jonah feel to have this pagan captain urge him to call upon the Lord? Has an unbelieving friend ever relied on your faith in God (or willingness to pray) to seek God’s power to affect a desperate situation? What impact does your personal sin have on your desire to pray & your intimacy with God?

---

---

---

## *Day Four | Mark 4:35-41*

In what way is this account similar to what is happening in Jonah's story? In what way is it different? How would you compare the reason that Jesus was asleep in the storm to the reason that Jonah was sleeping? When you have gone through difficult storms in your life, have you ever doubted whether God cared? How does this story answer or speak into that question?

---

---

---

## *Day Five | Luke 10:25-37*

In this parable, what is Jesus trying to teach us? What is most shocking or surprising to you about this story? Do you think that Jesus had neighborly concern for the sailors on the boat? What did it cost the Samaritan to love his neighbor? In this season, what is it costing you to love your neighbors? Who do you struggle the most to love?

---

---

---

*Group Question:* Are you in a season of experiencing an increase or decrease in your faith? What may be at the root of that experience?

---

## *Prayer: Reflection and Response*

Did this week's passage lead you to a sense of Praise? Worship? Gratitude? Did it lead to conviction? A need to confess & ask for forgiveness? A request for God's help? Write down a prayer, speaking to God simply & honestly in light of those reflections.

---

---

---

# JONAH

## *Week Three / Jonah 1:7-10*



### *Day One | Jonah 1:7*

Was casting lots an act of faith or an act of superstition? Can you think of other times in the Bible when lots were used to resolve a question? Would it make sense to cast lots to determine God's will today? Why or why not? What are some superstitious ways that our culture seeks to understand God's will apart from faith in Jesus?

---

---

---

### *Day Two | Jonah 1:8*

What do all of these questions show us about the sailors? How would you answer that same list of questions? How much does your occupation, nationality, and faith shape how people perceive you? How much does it shape your own internal perception of who you are? Can you describe a time when your perception of someone changed as you learned more about their history & background?

---

---

---

### *Day Three | Jonah 1:9*

Why is it significant that Jonah identifies himself first & primarily as a Hebrew? Are there people that you view as being beneath you due to religion, ethnicity or economic status? How quick are you to share your faith with people that you meet?

---

---

---

### *Day Four | Jonah 1:10*

Why were the sailors so afraid? What reputation do you think the God of the Hebrews would've had amongst those pagan sailors? Can you describe a time when you were exceedingly afraid? What was the final result? Why is it a good thing to have a fear of the Lord?

---

---

---

### *Day Five | Matthew 26:30-35*

Do you think Peter's statement reflects loyalty to Jesus or pride in his superiority over the other disciples? How does Jesus respond to his statement? Have you ever been humbled by God after being proud and thinking you were superior to others?

---

---

---

*Group Question:* What are the elements that make up your identity? Which one is functionally the most significant?

---

### *Prayer: Reflection and Response*

Did this week's passage lead you to a sense of Praise? Worship? Gratitude? Did it lead to conviction? A need to confess & ask for forgiveness? A request for God's help? Write down a prayer, speaking to God simply & honestly in light of those reflections.

---

---

---



# JONAH

## *Week Four / Jonah 1:11-17*



### *Day One | Jonah 1:11-12*

Was Jonah's command to throw him into the sea a continuation of his rebellion or the beginning of his submission to God? Tim Keller says "all life changing love involves some type of substitutionary sacrifice". Where do you see examples of this in the Bible and in your own life? Why do you think Jonah's heart towards the sailors changed?

---

---

---

### *Day Two | Jonah 1:13-15*

Why do you think the sailors tried to keep rowing instead of immediately throwing Jonah into the sea? What impresses you the most about their prayer to God? Can you describe a time that you accepted something difficult or challenging as God's will? What was the process like to get to that place of acceptance?

---

---

---

### *Day Three | Jonah 1:16*

Even though Jonah ran from the call to go to a pagan city, God still uses him to bring these pagan sailors to faith in God. What leads you to believe that their new faith in the true God was genuine? Can you describe a time when God brought a good result out of a trial or difficult time in your life? Was anyone else impacted by that as well?

---

---

---

## *Day Four | Jonah 1:17*

How do you think Jonah felt about being swallowed by the great fish? Can you describe a time when God cared for you in a way that may have felt like a punishment at the time? What lesson do you think God was teaching Jonah through his time in the fish? What does this show about God's control over all things?

---

---

---

## *Day Five | Matthew 12:38-41*

In what way is Jesus comparing himself to Jonah? Does the fact that Jesus speaks about Jonah as a historical figure increase your confidence that this account is history and not just a parable or legend? Are we more or less accountable today than the Pharisees were in Jesus' time & the people of Ninevah were in Jonah's time? Why?

---

---

---

*Group Question:* Do you have friends or neighbors who do not follow Jesus, but live in ways that are very honorable and admirable? How might their good character serve as a bridge to get into a Gospel conversation with them?

---

## *Prayer: Reflection and Response*

Did this week's passage lead you to a sense of Praise? Worship? Gratitude? Did it lead to conviction? A need to confess & ask for forgiveness? A request for God's help? Write down a prayer, speaking to God simply & honestly in light of those reflections.

---

---

---

# JONAH

## *Week Five / Jonah 2:1-10*



### *Day One | Jonah 2:1-2*

Why do you think it took this long for us to hear Jonah speak to the Lord? Why do you think Jonah now feels like the Lord has heard his cries? What is your prayer life like when you find yourself in difficult times? Do you tend to depend more on God when things are going well or when things are challenging?

---

---

---

### *Day Two | Jonah 2:3-4*

Why does he say that God cast him into the deep when it was the sailors who actually threw him in? Why is the fear of losing control such a common fear for most people? Why is he confident that he will look again upon the Lord's holy temple? Can you relate to how Jonah is feeling in this part of his prayer?

---

---

---

### *Day Three | Jonah 2:5-6*

Have you had a time or season in your life where you felt the way Jonah is describing here? If so, how did you get out of it? What was your relationship with God like at that time? Looking back with hindsight, what did you learn during that time? If you feel that way now, who can walk through it with you? Will you share this with your group?

---

---

---

## *Day Four | Jonah 2:7-10*

In what ways does “Salvation belongs to the Lord!” serve as a summary of the entire Bible? Is there anything in verses 8 or 9 that indicate that Jonah is still holding on to some feelings of pride & superiority? If you didn’t have a perfect understanding of the Gospel when you first put your faith in the Lord, why was He still merciful to you?

---

---

---

## *Day Five | Ephesians 2:1-10*

Jonah is praising God because He brought him back when he was essentially dead. Is this how you view your salvation experience? In what ways does this parallel or match the description of salvation in Ephesians 2:1-9? How does this understanding change the way that we think about our salvation & how we live in light of that?

---

---

---

*Group Question:* Who do you know that is going through a really difficult time or season? How can you love them and point them towards Jesus this week?

---

## *Prayer: Reflection and Response*

Did this week’s passage lead you to a sense of Praise? Worship? Gratitude? Did it lead to conviction? A need to confess & ask for forgiveness? A request for God’s help? Write down a prayer, speaking to God simply & honestly in light of those reflections.

---

---

---

# JONAH

## *Week Six / Jonah 3:1-10*



### *Day One | Jonah 3:1-3*

What are some of the fears or concerns that Jonah might have had about proclaiming this message to Ninevah? How would his time in the great fish have impacted his confidence and willingness to do as God commanded? What are some of the fears or obstacles that keep you from sharing your faith more often?

---

---

---

### *Day Two | Jonah 3:4-5*

What is surprising about the response of the people to Jonah's message? How do you think Jonah expected them to respond? Have you ever been pleasantly surprised by someone's unexpected response to the Gospel? Why would the people have declared a fast and put on sackcloth? What would this symbolize?

---

---

---

### *Day Three | Jonah 3:6*

The king acts in a very humble and repentant way. Can you describe a time when you felt convicted and were repentant for something that you said, did, or thought? What sort of actions did you take to demonstrate that repentance? If there is anything that you need to repent of now, will you take a moment to confess it to the Lord & pray?

---

---

---

### *Day Four | Jonah 3:7-9*

According to verse 8, what was the main cause of their guilt before God? What signs of humility and genuine repentance do you see in their words and actions? How do you know when someone is truly repentant, not just sorry they got caught? What gives you confidence that God will forgive you if you confess your sin & repent?

---

---

---

### *Day Five | Jonah 3:10*

Why do you think that God sent Jonah to preach to Ninevah? Who are the people that need to repent in this same way today? When you think of those people, do you pray for their repentance or pray for God's judgment against them? How does God feel about people who do not believe in Him?

---

---

---

*Group Question:* Will you commit to pray for a person or group of people that you do not like this week, and ask God to bring them to repentance & forgive them?

---

### *Prayer: Reflection and Response*

Did this week's passage lead you to a sense of Praise? Worship? Gratitude? Did it lead to conviction? A need to confess & ask for forgiveness? A request for God's help? Write down a prayer, speaking to God simply & honestly in light of those reflections.

---

---

---

# JONAH

## *Week Seven / Jonah 4:1-4*



### *Day One | Jonah 4:1*

What is surprising about Jonah's reaction to their repentance & God's forgiveness? What makes you really angry? Is there any idolatry at the root of that anger? Are there any clues about the source of his anger in Jonah's prayer back in 2:8-9?

---

---

---

### *Day Two | Jonah 4:2*

What do we learn about the ultimate reason that Jonah is angry with God? Why would he view God's grace and mercy as a negative? Can you describe a time when you thought that you knew better than God? Fill in the blank: I will follow God unless \_\_\_\_\_. What does that reveal about potential idols in your heart?

---

---

---

### *Day Three | Exodus 34:6-7*

What stands out the most to you in this description of God. What questions does it raise for you? What part of this passage did Jonah omit in his prayer to God? How is it possible for God to be gracious and merciful while also judging sin? In our world today, who would you choose to show mercy to and who would you judge & punish? Could God simply be merciful and loving and not have judgment or wrath towards sin?

---

---

---

## *Day Four | Jonah 4:3-4*

Does this passage change the way that you view Jonah's call for the sailors to throw him overboard? Why is he so angry that he would want to die? What do you find surprising about God's response to Jonah? When you are confused or angry, do you continue to pray and talk to God?

---

---

---

## *Day Five | Luke 15:11-32*

In what way is Jonah acting like the older brother in this parable? How is God's response to Jonah similar to the Father's response? Describe which brother you could relate to more in various seasons of your journey with Jesus. Did you enter in a relationship with God as a restored younger brother or as a restored older brother?

---

---

---

*Group Question:* There are two ways to try to control God. One is to rebel. The other is to be fully obedient so that God has to give you what you really want. Which one is a greater temptation for you?

---

## *Prayer: Reflection and Response*

Did this week's passage lead you to a sense of Praise? Worship? Gratitude? Did it lead to conviction? A need to confess & ask for forgiveness? A request for God's help? Write down a prayer, speaking to God simply & honestly in light of those reflections.

---

---

---



# JONAH

## *Week Eight / Jonah 4:5-11*



### *Day One | Jonah 4:5-7*

Why did Jonah remain outside of the city? Why do you think God provided the plant for Jonah, and then took it away? How has God been patient and merciful to you? Are you currently hoping to see anyone fall under God's judgment? How does this passage challenge that way of thinking?

---

---

---

### *Day Two | Matthew 18:21-35*

What is the main idea that Jesus was trying to convey in this parable? In what way is Jonah acting like the unforgiving servant? Can you describe a situation where you have struggled to forgive someone? What do you think God wants you to do in that situation? What is the debt that God has forgiven for you?

---

---

---

### *Day Three | Jonah 4:8-9*

Was God being loving or judgmental when he caused the plant to die and the scorching wind to come upon Jonah? How has God used hard seasons and challenges to shape you? How do you view those events in hindsight? Did Jonah have a right to be angry? Do we have a right to be angry with God when bad things happen?

---

---

---

## *Day Four | Jonah 4:10-11*

What is the ultimate point God is making here? What does it mean that they “did not know their right hand from their left”? If Jonah was acting with the heart of God, what would he have done? What is God calling you to do right now? Who do you think wrote this account of Jonah, and what might that mean about Jonah’s final response?

---

---

---

## *Day Five | Luke 19:41-44*

Jesus sat outside another city that was headed for God’s judgment. How was His response different from Jonah’s? What would it look like for you to have the heart of Jesus for the lost? What is one simple step you could take to begin to obey God in this area? What have you found to be most convicting or challenging in this study?

---

---

---

*Group Question:* What have you learned about the mystery of God’s mercy from this study? How is God able to be both merciful and just?

---

## *Prayer: Reflection and Response*

Did this week’s passage lead you to a sense of Praise? Worship? Gratitude? Did it lead to conviction? A need to confess & ask for forgiveness? A request for God’s help? Write down a prayer, speaking to God simply & honestly in light of those reflections.

---

---

---