

# Jonah: The Lord Came to Jonah

Discussion Guide for Jonah 1:1–6 on Sep. 20th & 21st, 2025

## Summary

The book of Jonah begins with a startling command: God tells Jonah to go to Nineveh, a wicked and violent city, and call them to repent. Instead of obeying, Jonah runs in the opposite direction, boarding a ship to Tarshish to flee “from the presence of the Lord.” But God’s mercy is already at work: He raises up a storm to stop Jonah’s disobedience. The sailors pray desperately, while Jonah hides in the cargo hold, exhausted from running. The story highlights the mercy of God—He doesn’t let Jonah go, He gives Nineveh a chance to repent, and He still hears desperate prayers. Jonah’s rebellion reminds us of our own tendency to resist God’s call, while God’s relentless mercy points us to Jesus, the One who saves sinners.

## Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You that Your mercy is greater than our disobedience. As we study Jonah’s story, show us where we may be running from You. Give us Your eyes to see others as You see them, and give us courage to obey Your call. Lead us into repentance and trust in Your mercy through Jesus. Amen.

## Ice Breaker

When you’ve been asked to do something really hard—at work, at school, or in life—did you ever try to avoid it? What happened?

## Key Verses

1. Jonah 1:1–3
2. Jonah 1:4–5
3. Jonah 1:6

## Questions

1. Jonah tried to run “from the presence of the Lord.” Where are areas in your life where you might be resisting or avoiding God’s call?
2. Why do you think Jonah would rather go 2,500 miles to Tarshish than 500 miles to Nineveh? What does that reveal about his heart—and about ours?
3. The Ninevites were violent enemies of Israel. Who are the “Ninevites” in your life—people you struggle to see as in need of God’s mercy?
4. The storm was an act of mercy because it stopped Jonah from fully disobeying. Can you think of a time when God lovingly blocked you from going deeper into sin?
5. The sailors, though pagans, immediately prayed when the storm came. What does this teach us about prayer—even when it comes from desperation?
6. God’s heart was not just for Jonah, but for Nineveh. How does this challenge us to see the lost people around us with God’s eyes?

### Life Application

This week, practice viewing others and yourself through God's mercy:

- Reflect: Write down one area where you may be resisting God's call. Pray honestly about it.
- Repent: Ask God to forgive and redirect you, just as He did for Jonah.
- Relate: Identify one person or group you find hard to love. Pray daily for God to give you His heart toward them.
- Respond: Take one step of obedience you've been avoiding.

### Key Takeaways

1. Running from God only leads to exhaustion; God's mercy calls us back.
2. God's mercy is greater than our disobedience.
3. God views people—even enemies—as in need of hearing His message.
4. Desperate prayers are still heard by a merciful God.
5. Our calling is to speak truth in love and to see others through God's eyes.

### Ending Prayer

Lord, thank You for being rich in mercy. Forgive us for the times we've resisted Your call or judged others unworthy of Your love. Help us to run toward You, not away from You. Teach us to see people as You see them, and to walk in obedience to Your will. In Jesus' name, amen.