



Rock Bottom

Community Group Study Guide: Jonah 2 – Week of April 30, 2023

1. The Merciful Wrath of God's Discipline

A phrase used by Martin Luther, the merciful wrath of God reflects that God sometimes sends His fatherly discipline in a way that seems severe. Our natural impulse can be to scorn these trials as nothing more than hardship for the sake of hardship. However, God often uses these moments of distress to open our eyes, to illuminate our insufficiency and weakness. The Lord uses these moments, when we taste just a small portion of what it is like to be absent from the presence of God, to cultivate a love and appreciation for God Himself. Thankfully, God in His mercy, creates opportunities for us to hit rock bottom; to feel that wrath of His discipline so that we might repent and look to God for our salvation. When we turn to the Lord, that is when we avoid the shipwreck of our lives.

2. The Missing Words of Jonah's Prayer

Often, our growth and repentance come as a process. In our passage, we still see the tension of Jonah turning to the Lord in his moment of need, but doing so in a way that reflects he has not repented fully. Jonah acknowledges his current state, praises the Lord for His power, and notes the sins of others... but ultimately does not confess his own wrong doing. Jonah does see his own hypocrisy, in that he states that salvation belongs to the Lord, but Jonah misses that the salvation was required because of his own actions. Jonah displays the hypocrisy that is found in so many of our lives, in which we have a disconnection between what we believe and what we do.

3. The Mysterious Ways of Gods Salvation

While Jonah repented imperfectly, God still provides his deliverance. Likewise, even though we might not fully understand how deeply we have wrong God, we should turn to Him. God has provided of our salvation. Salvation

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

God uses trying circumstance to open our eyes to our need for Him. The hope is that we would turn to God in our moments of tribulation, and see that our salvation is and was always in God alone.

Heart

We often desire to look at the sin of others, and not the sin in our own hearts. We should humble our hearts to the Lord's kind discipline, and not be afraid. We rejoice because Jesus has paid the penalty for our sins, and we can freely acknowledge them before the Lord.

Hands

Pray that the Lord would reveal the sins of our hearts, that He would humble us, and that we would come before Him in repentance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members Meeting
5/7 @ 1pm

belongs to the Lord alone. We should then repent and believe.

Read Jonah 2

1. God often uses the storms of our lives as merciful discipline, letting us taste a small portion of His wrath. How does letting us experience trials discipline us? How is it merciful for God to allow us to face struggles?
2. When has the Lord used a storm in your life to call you to repentance? What did you learn from the process? How has the learning process taught you to love and fear the Lord?
3. Looking at the passage, what change(s) of heart happened in Jonah? Are there additional ways that Jonah needs to change/grow?
4. Pastor Jan mentioned that we run from God in ways that are not as obvious as Jonah. Searching your own heart, in what ways have you/are you running from the Lord? How do we stop our fleeing and return to the Lord?
5. One aspect of Jonah's prayer that illuminates his state of heart is that he doesn't acknowledge his own guilt, and he emphasizes the guilt of others. Where in your own life do you struggle with a similar hypocrisy? How do you address it? How do you balance Matthew 7:3-5?
6. How do we cultivate a deeper appreciation of God's grace? What practical ways can we express our gratitude for the grace of God?
7. Why is the confession that "salvation belongs to the Lord" so important? How does it impact the way we look at storms? At ourselves? At others?