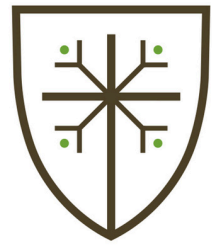


# GOD ON THE MARGINS

*A story of Jonah, Habakkuk, and Esther*

# SERMON NOTES



September 7, 2025

## SERMON INFO

**TITLE**  
"The Divine Reversal"

**PREACHER**  
Rev. Brent Baker

**TEXTS**  
Jonah 2:10-3:10  
Colossians 1:19-23  
Luke 22:32-43

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think of people or places in your life or in the world at large that you might consider irredeemable. How would it change the way we view those people and places to know that God's mercy extends even that far?
2. When we feel inadequate for the tasks to which God calls us, how can the story of Jonah give us hope?

## SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Brent continued our look at the story of Jonah, asking the questions, "Who or what can or should be redeemed? Are there things that are irredeemable?" By God's grace, all persons and all places are redeemable as we see with Nineveh and Jonah.

### Person

Jonah is the only one in the entire story of the book who resists God. The sailors obey God, the wind and the waves, the whale, even the Ninevites, but not Jonah. On top of that, he also lacks any qualifications to speak prophetic words. He is from a no-name town and a no-name family in Galilee. He is a rebellious, spiritual coward with an inadequate message. And yet, God chooses him. God delights to use perfectly wrong people for his work. He chooses the lowly and the broken things.

### Place

Nineveh was not formidable because of its size. It was feared and hated because the Assyrians were notoriously brutal and harsh, particularly with outsiders. Many of the atrocities they committed against their enemies were unspeakable. If any place was irredeemable, it was this one. And yet, God chose them, sending his unlikely prophet to an even unlikelier city. Nineveh was known for its trading in fish as it lay on the banks of the Tigris river. Their god was the "fish-god" Dagon. Jonah, the man who had been swallowed and spit out by a giant fish, comes to them with an incredible story that shows that even their fish-god can be overpowered by Jonah's God.

The message preached here appears to be a message of retribution, but the word translated "overthrown" can also mean "overturned" – in other words, transformed. In an undeserved act of mercy, God transforms this place.

### Reversal

The sincerity of the Ninevites transformation can be tested by the fruit of their repentance. True repentance consists of three things: sorrow over sin, turning from sin, and turning to God. We see all three of these things in Nineveh after Jonah preaches his message. God is effusively merciful and relents over sincere repentance.

We see this played out in the life of Jesus who, over and over again, exhibits mercy to those deserving something else. Ultimately, Jesus satisfied the cry of justice so that those who believe in him are overcome by the mercy of God.