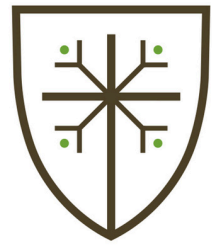


# GOD ON THE MARGINS

*A story of Jonah, Habakkuk, and Esther*

## SERMON NOTES



September 21, 2025

### SERMON INFO

#### TITLE

"Healing the Divided Heart"

#### PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

#### TEXTS

Jonah 4  
1 Peter 1:3-7  
Luke 15:25-32

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Think of a time in your life, perhaps even the present, that God has been clearly at work "closing the gap" between your spiritual state and relational state with him. What or who did he use in order to turn your heart towards him?
2. At the end of the sermon, Tim exhorted us to "relentlessly resist sin." What practices help us to do this both individually and in community?

### SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, Tim finished the book of Jonah continuing in chapter four with the question "how does God heal our divided hearts?"

#### The Path

Jonah sits in chapter four in the shade of the plant God has provided and he sulks, simmering over the circumstances in his life. But he is really in the midst of a transformative process that is playing out in him. To be human is to never be static, even and especially in our souls. Like Jonah, each of us is always changing. The question is "into who or what are we changing?"

Anger such as we see in Jonah takes good desires to resist evil and changes them into twisted selfish impulses. Tim noted the connection between the words wreath, wrath, and wraith which all have the same root meaning "twisted." People who live like wraiths can't get past their past and have an anxious energy that bursts out unexpectedly. This is Jonah, but God does not sidestep him as we often do with such people. He is patient with him.

There is a difference between our relational status with God and our spiritual state. At our baptism, everything that was poured out on Jesus at his baptism is bestowed on us by grace. But our spiritual state is different. The presence and power of sin remains, creating a gap. We are always very different from the one whose status we share. God is always at work closing this gap, and this is what we see him doing with Jonah.

#### The Appointments

So, how does God close this gap? In Jonah's story, God appoints four different created things - a fish, a plant, a worm, and a wind - to impact Jonah in ways that God's Word doesn't. He has to do something to and with Jonah rather than just say something in order for his word to penetrate. He both provides and then takes away Jonah's comfort. God brings troubles and calamities into his people's lives that the testing may result in a life different from what it is right now, like gold purified by fire. God has to do things in our life to crack open the hardness of our hearts.

God is seeking to win us back to himself and uses everything in this world to do so. Only we, as Christians, can say we have a God who took on the malformities of this world and was struck for us. He has defeated death and it must now serve him. With him, there is no chance or luck, only providence. He provides everything you need in order to be his. He refines us in love. Until we understand this, we'll never live well in this life. We'll be stuck like Jonah, angry, unwilling to give up the wrongs done to them.

If you would come into the banquet, like the older brother in our Gospel reading, two things must change - your gaze and your attack. Fix your gaze on Jesus instead of your own suffering or comparison on Jesus. Only by gazing upon Christ's life and death that his sufferings, not ours will define our life.