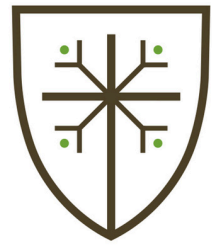


GOD ON THE MARGINS

A story of Jonah, Habakkuk, and Esther

SERMON NOTES



September 14, 2025

SERMON INFO

TITLE

"The Two-Souled Man"

PREACHER

Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt

TEXTS

Jonah 4
James 1:5-8, 12
Matthew 11:25-30

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Take a moment to think of what things in your own life split your soul. What is it that you must have in order to be happy?
2. What makes it difficult for us to rest in God's love and to believe that he loves us simply because he loves us?

SERMON IN SUMMARY

This week, we looked at the fourth and final chapter in Jonah. In it, we find the prophet Jonah in much the same condition as we found him in chapter one and it begs the question, "Why hasn't Jonah's experience transformed him more?"

Description

Jonah is not just unhappy in chapter four; he is seething with anger, so much so that he says he is "so angry he could die." And the reason for this anger seems to be God's mercy in bringing about a shocking change of heart and redemption for the Ninevites. God's work through Jonah in Nineveh, proclaiming a better way than the gods they were worshipping, is similar to a transformation we see in our own culture today. Christianity offers beauty over mere utility, something historic and permanent over the transient, incarnation as opposed to disembodied distraction. God appears to be, yet again, turning over the world. To Jonah, this was evil. The unspeakable cruelty of the Ninevites did not deserve this redemptive work. Jonah's good passion for resisting evil has been taken and twisted into self-righteous resentment and a desire for revenge. This was not the way things were supposed to be going and Jonah blames God. He blames God and no longer sees the meaning left in life.

Diagnosis

So, what is wrong with Jonah that makes him despair of life itself? Our epistle reading from the book of James speaks about a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. He is like a wave pushed about by any wind that blows. Double-minded can also mean "double-souled." Jonah serves the one true God but he also serves something else. His worship is divided. Worship is simply ascribing worth, giving your heart over wholeheartedly, and none of us, including Jonah, are able to do that.

Jonah has gone through sin, God's grace in forgiveness, repentance, baptism, and successful service, and now that things aren't going as planned, he wants out. His soul is split between devotion to God and devotion to how he thinks things should be. We all have split souls. We all have something in our life that we simply must have in order to be happy.

Confrontation

God's healing of our souls begins in confrontation, but he still does it gently, with grace and mercy, asking questions like he does with Jonah. He finally tells Jonah, "You care more about your gifts - the plant in Jonah's case - than me. You are using me."

God doesn't intend to be used to help us with our life. God intends to BE our life. At some point, God talks to us all like he talks to Jonah. He has given us everything, not so that we might use him like a genie in a bottle, but so that we might know him personally, that we might love him for him. This is how God loves us. He loves us because he loves us. He doesn't need us. He will employ us, but he doesn't need us. He simply loves us. If we love him for him, we will truly be changed.