

Waves of Mercy

Week 2: Mercy in the Deep

Objective: To challenge us to respond to God's mercy by allowing Him to soften our hearts towards others .

ICEBREAKER: Have you ever had a close call, received a second chance, or gotten out of a difficult situation—and promised yourself, *"I'm never doing that again"*?

- Did the experience actually change you?
- How long did the change last?

1. Relief Without Change

The sermon made this observation:

"There is a difference between wanting God to change my circumstances and allowing God to change my heart."

- Why are we often more interested in having our circumstances changed than having our hearts changed?
- Can you think of a time when you were grateful for relief but quickly returned to old habits or attitudes?
- What might genuine transformation have looked like in that situation?

2. Jonah Finally Prays

Jonah 2 begins:

"From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God."

During the storm, the pagan sailors prayed while Jonah slept. Now Jonah finally cries out to God.

- What do you think finally moved Jonah to pray?
- What stands out to you about the phrase **"his God"**?
- What does this tell us about God's willingness to hear us even after we've resisted or run from Him?

3. Mercy Came Before the Prayer

God provided the fish in Jonah 1:17. Jonah doesn't pray until Jonah 2:1.

In other words, **God's mercy was already at work before Jonah cried out.**

- What does that reveal about God's character?
- How is responding to God's mercy different from trying to convince God to be merciful?
- Where have you recognized God's grace at work before you even knew enough to ask for it?

4. Mercy at the Lowest Point

Jonah describes sinking deeper and deeper until he says:

"But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit."

— Jonah 2:6

- What does Jonah finally recognize about his ability to rescue himself?
- Why do our lowest moments sometimes make us more receptive to God?
- How does Jonah's experience encourage someone who believes they have gone too far or failed too badly?

5. Something Is Missing

Jonah's prayer is sincere and full of gratitude, but he never explicitly says:

- "I sinned."
- "I was wrong."
- "Forgive me."
- "I'll go to Nineveh."

The sermon describes Jonah's transformation as **incomplete**.

- Why is it possible to be genuinely thankful for God's mercy without allowing Him to fully change us?
- What's the difference between gratitude and repentance?
- How can we tell whether God's mercy is actually reshaping our hearts?

6. Good Theology, Unchanged Heart

Jonah declares:

“Salvation comes from the Lord.”

His theology is right. But as the rest of Jonah will reveal, his heart still has some catching up to do.

- Why isn't knowing the right things about God enough?
- How can someone know Scripture, believe good theology, and still resist God's work in their heart?
- What helps move truth from our heads into our hearts and lives?

7. Another Chance

God commands the fish to release Jonah onto dry land.

The sermon described it this way:

“Mercy does not merely give Jonah his life back. Mercy gives Jonah another chance.”

- What does this tell us about God's mercy toward people who have failed?
- Why does God give Jonah another opportunity to obey?
- How should receiving another chance from God affect the way we treat people who have failed us?

8. Where Does Mercy Need to Soften Me?

The sermon concluded with three responses to God's mercy:

Cry out. Praise Him. Let Him soften you.

- Which of those three do you most need right now?
- Where might you be enjoying God's mercy while resisting the change He wants to produce?
- How might receiving God's mercy change the way you extend mercy to someone else?

FINAL THOUGHT

Jonah experienced genuine mercy.

God heard him.

God rescued him.

God gave him another chance.

But rescue wasn't the end of what God wanted to accomplish.

The fish could change Jonah's **location**. Only surrender could allow God's mercy to change Jonah's **heart**.

That's true for us as well. God's mercy doesn't simply rescue us from what we've done. He wants that mercy to penetrate our hearts, reshape our attitudes, redirect our lives, and eventually flow through us toward others.

The mercy that saves me is meant to soften me.

THIS WEEK – LET MERCY GO DEEPER

This week, don't simply remember where God has been merciful. Ask Him to use that mercy to change you.

REMEMBER

Identify one specific way God has shown you mercy. Spend time thanking Him for it.

EXAMINE

Ask:

“Lord, where does Your mercy still need to soften me?”

Pay particular attention to attitudes, relationships, resentments, prejudices, or areas of resistance.

RESPOND

Choose one concrete response to God's mercy.

Forgive someone. Apologize. Change an attitude. Serve someone. Take the step of obedience you've been postponing.

EXTEND

Look for one opportunity to give someone else the kind of mercy you have received from God.