

Reflecting on the book of Jonah

October 22, 2023

DISCUSS

1) **Read Jonah 1:1-3.** Several of the prophetic books of the Old Testament begin with a word from the Lord; however, this book is unique because of Jonah's response to God's command. While it's easy to judge this prophet, it probably isn't hard to relate to him either.

- What are some hard things that God asks us to do?

- What do these commands say about God's character?

(As an example, God's command to Jonah revealed his heart for the sinful people of Nineveh. As we'll discuss in this series, that was a difficult reality for Jonah to accept.)

2) Read Jonah 1:4-16 and Matthew 8:23-27. These passages give us a “tale of two boat rides.” Identify some similarities and differences between these two stories. In particular, contrast Jonah and Jesus’s attitudes toward others, including their fellow sailors.

3) Read Jonah 2:1-10. Tim Keller identifies the great fish who swallows Jonah as an example of God’s, “severe mercies.” He explains this term as, “events that were too difficult or even excruciating at the time but later came to yield more good in our lives than we could have foreseen.” Discuss how the great fish fits Keller’s description. What “severe mercies” has God orchestrated in your life? What good has come from these circumstances?

4) **Read Jonah 3:1-10.** Jonah's "sermon" to the people of Nineveh was simple; only five words long in the Hebrew text. What is the simplest way you can share the gospel message without omitting its necessary aspects?
(Question from Eric C. Redmond in "Christ-Centered Exposition" series)

5) **Read Jonah 4:1-4.** According to these verses, what seems to be the cause of Jonah's anger? What gospel truth is Jonah (ironically) failing to acknowledge in his prayer?

6) Read Jonah 2:1-10 and 4:1-11. Scholars have suggested that Jesus's parable of the two sons is based on the true story of Jonah. How does Jonah's prayer in chapter 2 emulate the heart of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-24? How does his attitude later resemble that of the son described in Luke 15:25-32? What do the stories of Jonah and the two sons teach us as we seek to reach our community with the gospel?

LIVE & PRAY

Over the next several weeks, we plan to use our Life Group time to specifically prepare for and pray over an evangelistic "Christmas Party" outreach. As you seek the Lord's will for your role in this effort, please consider whom you could invite to our church and possibly to your home during the Christmas season. Take some time to pray for these individuals with your Life Group. Please also pray for good participation from our church family.