

## The With-God Journey

Date: July 30th

Title: Jonah and the Problem of Shrinking God Down to Our Size

Text: Jonah 1-4

**Description:** What immediately comes to mind when you hear the name, Jonah? A whale or big fish, right? But this story is about so much more than that. This week, Pastor Dave Ripper will challenge us to not only read the book of Jonah, but to let the book of Jonah read us. This story reveals the startling tendency we have of shrinking God down to our size—making God who we want him to be, instead of discovering who he truly is.

1. What immediately comes to mind when you think of the story of Jonah? Beyond this, what are the most important themes of this book?
2. Read Jonah 1. The beginning of the story reads our hearts and thoughts in an important way. It asks us: Does God know what's best or do we? Like Adam and Eve, Jonah concludes that if he could not see a good reason for God's command, then there must not be one. Tim Keller writes in *The Prodigal Prophet*: "Sin always begins with the character assassination of God. We believe that God has put us in a world of delights but has determined that he will not give them to us if we obey him." Reflect on those statements. How does our disobedience reflect a distrust in the goodness and character of God?
3. Read Jonah 2. How does Jonah connect with God from a "low" place? How have you connected with God in low places?
4. Read Jonah 3. God gives Jonah a second chance. How does he respond? What is God inviting you to say "yes" to in this season of your life and faith? When has God given you second chances?
5. Read Jonah 4. What is Jonah's response to the people of Ninevah's repentance? What does this text reflect about Jonah's heart? Might his hope be for God to eliminate the Ninevites rather than save them?
6. The story of Jonah ends without a resolved conclusion. How do you think Jonah responds to God? Compare Jonah's story to the parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15. How is Jonah like the younger *and* older brother?
7. Think about the message of Jonah as a whole. What is God's invitation to you through this book? Is there something you need to do more of or less of? How might God desire to see your heart changed towards people who are different than you, or who you gravitate towards disliking?
8. Close by praying for one another and for those who are spiritually lost in our world. Ask God to give us opportunities to share our faith with others.