

Distress Call

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God is thorough in His discipline because he loves you.

Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Jonah 1:17

▪ God listens to the desperate cry for help.

From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. ² He said: "In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry." Jonah 2:1-2

▪ Brokenness opens the door for clarity.

"You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. ... ⁶ But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit. ⁷ When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple." Jon 2:3-7

When you run from God, you end up trading the experience of God's love for worthless idols.

"Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them." Jon 2:8

▪ Salvation belongs to the LORD, *alone*.

"But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the LORD.'" Jonah 2:9

▪ How will you respond to God's generous grace?

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ² "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." Jonah 3:1-2

Connect

Were you disciplined as a child? What was your most "memorable" experience of being disciplined?

Word and Reflection

God will often ask us to do things we don't want to do, and sometimes we respond a lot like Jonah and run away. God lovingly pursues us and disciplines us, not to pay us back for our sin, but because He loves us. Being disciplined is never fun, but a season of brokenness can lead us to see life more clearly and experience God's love more fully.

Jonah 1:17, 2:1-10, 3:1-2; Proverbs 6:23; Bonus read: Hebrews 12:4-13

- Which part of the message made an impact, caught your attention or challenged you?
- Read Jonah 1:17-2:10. God is generous with His grace. And He is thorough with His discipline because He loves you. Is it possible to be gracious and loving without ever having to discipline? How are God's love and grace shown through His thorough discipline?
- Describe a time in your life when things seemed pretty bleak and you felt like surrendering, giving up. What happened? What did you do?
- Jonah realized that his "running" would mean that he would miss good things God had for him. Looking back, when have you "run" and missed something God might have had for you?
- How would you paraphrase Jonah's prayer? Go ahead. Take a shot at it.
- Read Proverbs 6:23. Are there recent events in your life where you felt like God was trying to grab your attention? What's keeping you from calling out to Him for help?

Action

- Are you tired of running? Resisting? Are you ready to surrender to God's will? Here's the promise: If in your distress you call for help, God will answer you.

Prayer

- Pray a prayer of surrender to God.
- Pray for your group and for those to whom you're reaching out.