

Greater than Jonah

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Then some of the Pharisees and teachers of the law said to him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from you." ³⁹ He answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here. Matthew 12:38-41

Jesus' message is greater than Jonah's.

- **Sunday**
- **Monday** – Matthew 21:12-13
- **Tuesday** – Luke 22:1-5
- **Thursday** – Luke 22:19-20; Luke 22:39-23:25
- **Friday** – Luke 23:26-49

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Luke 23:34

Before anything else, we need forgiveness of sins.

On the cross, Jesus gave us what we needed most, but deserved the least.

Christ suffered for our sins once for all time. He never sinned, but he died for sinners to bring you safely home to God. He suffered physical death, but he was raised to life in the Spirit. 1 Peter 3:18

Jonah reluctantly delivered a message; Jesus willingly gave up His life.

Connect

- What's your favorite game to play?

Word and Reflection

Jesus' opponents asked Him for a sign and Jesus responded by referring to the story of Jonah. Nineveh responded to Jonah's message with repentance – a turning away from their evil ways. Jesus' message is greater than Jonah's. He came to pay the price for our sins. On the cross, Jesus gave us what we needed the most, but deserved the least.

Matthew 12:38-41; Matthew 21:9-11; Matthew 21:12-13; Luke 22:1-5, 22:39-23:49; Jonah 4:2; Romans 3:23; 1 Peter 3:18

- Which part of the message made an impact, caught your attention or challenged you?
- Read Matthew 12:38-41. How was Jesus' message and life greater than Jonah's? Why do you think Jesus made a point to emphasize how the people of Nineveh responded to Jonah's message? How are you responding to Jesus' message and life?
- Read Luke 22:39-44. Discuss the final week of Jesus' life and all the pain He endured for you. Reflect on the betrayal, the accusations and suffering. How does this increase your gratitude for the enormous price Christ paid so you could be forgiven by God?
- Read Romans 3:23 and 1 Peter 3:18. Think about the price Jesus paid when He died on the cross for you and bore your sins. What does that mean to you? Have you turned to Jesus and experienced God's forgiveness in your life? If not, what's hindering you?

Action

- Forgiveness of sins is our greatest need. Take a step to surrender your heart to Jesus and receive the forgiveness of sins. Then, follow Him.
- Prepare your heart for Easter by reading the Easter devotional below:
Day 1: John 13-14; **Day 2:** John 15-16; **Day 3:** John 17-18; **Day 4:** John 19-21;
Day 5: Luke 22-24; **Day 6:** Mark 14-16; **Day 7:** Matthew 26-28

Prayer

- Pray for your group and for those whom you're inviting to Easter services.