

Jonah

Jonah || Bill Ingram || 21 June 2020

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What do you remember about hearing the story of Jonah as a child?

Worship: 1 Chronicles 29:10-11

Sermon Summary for The Book of Jonah

Jonah is unique among the prophetic books of the Old Testament. Whereas other prophetic works focus on a theme (*such as God's mercy, judgment, or His coming Grace*), Jonah is about the messenger rather than the message. And who is Jonah? Well, he certainly isn't a role model. He may be a prophet, but he is deeply flawed – self-centered, stubborn. And yet he is someone that God wants us to look at. Jonah believed he knew better than God, believing he knew who God's mercy should or shouldn't be given to. He felt God had cheapened Himself by extending mercy to the people of Nineveh. In short: he's an arrogant guy who isn't all that likeable.

The problem is that when we look closely at Jonah, we start to realize that he's not all that different from any of us. How many times have we been angry with God when things didn't go the way we wanted? How often have we lacked compassion for those who have mistreated us? When have we rejoiced when those who have harmed us had something bad happen to them? What about when we turned a blind eye, refusing to step in when our brothers or sisters were mistreated? How about when we've simply been indifferent – not participating in unjust or wrong acts, but not speaking out against them either?

When we look at Jonah, we have to look in a mirror; and as uncomfortable as it is, our faults and our shortcomings will come into focus. We'll see the giant divide between God and His grace and mercy and kindness... and ourselves (and our self-righteousness / self-centeredness). This is what God is trying to get across to us in this book: We need to develop hearts that are more and more like God's. How do we do that?

(1) Examine Our Hearts. We need to do this honestly – to recognize our brokenness and the things that fill our hearts which are not of Christ (2). Confession & Repentance. We may not be guilty of wrongdoing, but neither did we do what we could to stop it. We need God's grace, because we're never going to be perfect. But that doesn't mean we don't endeavor and strive and seek change in our lives – which is only possible through Jesus. (3) Pray. We need to pray for our city, our state, our nation and our world. That they might experience God's mercy and grace. That God would root out injustice and bring healing to all of His creation.

Discussion Questions *(It's better to wrestle deeply with a few good questions than to gloss over many.)*

- Read Jonah 1. Is it possible to run away from the presence of God? Where might God be calling you?
 - Read Jonah 2. How would you personalize Jonah's prayer to your current circumstances?
 - Read Jonah 3. What would happen if we never shared the gospel message?
 - Read Jonah 4. How do you see yourself in Jonah? How are you growing in love, empathy and compassion?
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Prayer: Pray for our city, our state, our nation and our world. That they might experience God's mercy and grace. That God would root out injustice and bring healing to all of His creation.

Engage & Experience: God's will in our lives is to spread His gospel, grace, and glory to all peoples. We have been asked by God to be on the front lines of this mission with compassion and love. Pray Colossians. 4:3 over this.