

THE BOOK *of* JONAH

Good Shepherd
Sermon-Based Study Guide
Jonah 1:17-2:10 | May 3, 2026

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I. Introduction to this Study

Jonah has been running from God. He went down to Joppa, down into the ship, down into the inner part of the ship, and then down into the sea. Now, in Jonah 1:17–2:10, he goes down even further, into the belly of the fish. But the lowest place in Jonah’s story becomes the place where he finally prays.

This passage is not mainly about the fish. It is about what God is doing in Jonah’s heart. Jonah describes himself as sinking into the deep, surrounded by death, and cut off from God’s presence. He cannot rescue himself. Yet even there, God hears him.

Jonah’s prayer teaches us about grace. Grace becomes clearer when we see our need, our helplessness, and God’s mercy. Jonah’s rescue from the fish matters, but the deeper rescue is that he begins to understand, “Salvation belongs to the Lord.”

At the same time, Jonah’s heart is still not fully changed. He has received mercy, but he still has more to learn about God’s mercy for others.

II. Connecting with One Another

Have you ever resisted asking for help until you had no other choice? Why do you think that happens?

III. Study the Text

Read Jonah 1:17–2:10

Jonah in the Depths

- What words or images does Jonah use to describe his situation?
- Why do you think Jonah finally prays after reaching this point?
- Jonah 1:17 says the Lord “appointed” the fish. What does that reveal about God’s involvement in this story?

Cast Into the Deep



- In Jonah 2:3, Jonah says, “You cast me into the deep.” Why is that an important thing for Jonah to recognize?
- Why is it difficult for people to admit their guilt or need before God?

Unable to Save Himself

- What does Jonah describe in verses 5–6?
- Where do you see Jonah’s helplessness in this prayer?

Remembering the Lord

- In verse 7, Jonah says, “When my life was fainting away, I remembered the Lord.” What does it mean to remember the Lord in a moment like this?
- Jonah also says his prayer came to God in His holy temple. Why would the temple matter to Jonah?
- Jonah ends his prayer by saying, “Salvation belongs to the Lord.” What does this mean?
- Why is this a fitting summary of Jonah’s prayer?
- How is Jonah’s deeper rescue more than simply being released from the fish?

Grace Received, But Not Yet Fully Understood

- In verse 8, Jonah refers to those who “pay regard to vain idols.” Why is that statement interesting coming from Jonah?
- What hints do you see that Jonah’s heart may still need further transformation?
- How can someone receive God’s mercy and still struggle to extend mercy to others?

IV. Prayer

Spend time in prayer together:

- Thank God that He hears us even from the depths.
- Confess any ways you have minimized your need for grace.
- Ask God to help you stop trying to save yourself.
- Pray for a heart that is grateful for mercy and willing to extend mercy.
- Ask God to keep forming your heart through His grace.

VI. Digging Deeper

- Read Matthew 12:38–41. Jesus connects His own death and resurrection to Jonah. How does Jonah’s time in the fish point forward to Jesus?
- Read Hebrews 10:4–10. What does this passage teach about the limits of Old Testament sacrifices and the sufficiency of Jesus’ sacrifice?
- Jonah looks toward God’s holy temple in his prayer. In the Old Testament, the temple was the place where sacrifice was offered and mercy was sought. How does this deepen your understanding of Jonah’s hope?

