

Study Guide



Jonah: Salvation Belongs To The Lord—God’s Mercy for the Nations Exposes Our Hearts



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This Study Guide is intended to help you meaningfully participate in a preaching series and gain a better handle on God's Word. For maximum utility, don't skip parenthetical references—all of Scripture is God's interconnected special revelation. Some of the best insights are often found in wrestling through the references. Following an introduction to the book, series, or sermon, each week contains:

- Sermon Title, Passage, and space for Sermon Notes
- Passage's Main Points: Exegetical Focus, Theological Principles, Redemptive-Historical Significance
- Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary (i.e., Scott's "Dad's Daily Devos," available at fccgreene.org/ddd.)
- Daily Bible Readings accompanying sermon themes.
- Life Group Discussion Guide: Summary and Questions¹
- Parent Pages/Kids Lessons. The L-E-A-D framework helps parents LEAD their children through God's Word in a simple, repeatable way that forms understanding, engagement, reflection, and lasting faith.
 - *Learn the Lesson* – Introduces the main truth of God's Word so children can understand what God has said (Deuteronomy 6:6; Nehemiah 8:8).
 - *Engage your Child* – Helps children interact with God's truth through shared activities and everyday conversations (Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 22:6).
 - *Ask the Questions* – Encourages children to think carefully, respond personally, and grow in wisdom and discernment (Deuteronomy 6:20; Proverbs 2:1-5).
 - *Deposit the Word* – Focuses on storing God's Word in children's hearts through repetition and memory so it shapes their lives over time (Psalm 119:11; Proverbs 7:1-3; Colossians 3:16).

¹ We've done our best to plan sermon titles, passages, points, etc. but such synchronicity between plans and execution rarely happens perfectly. Main differences might be: (1) Passage's Main Points, which will at least be similar to eventual sermon points, and (2) Sermon Titles, which are planned thematically in the Series Guide but may be changed by the preacher, who chooses a representative phrase from the passage as the eventual title.

Additional Resources: Sermon Guide, Manuscript, Parents Pages (for Middle/High School), Podcast, Fridge Magnet

- Sun Sermon Guide/Manuscript are on the app under “Home” and at fccgreene.org/sermonguide. For additional study, Scott’s manuscripts typically have extensive footnotes.
- Parent Pages (for Kids and Middle/High School students) and the Worship Guide are on the app under “Study Guides” and at fccgreene.org/studyguides.
- The Weekly Bible Study Podcast, posted every Thursday, helps prepare for next Sun. Available on the app under “Watch” > “Media,” on YouTube (youtube.com/fccgreene), or fccgreene.org/wbsp.
- Don’t forget to pray with/for your church! 2026 Fridge Magnets available at The Hub and fccgreene.org/2026fridgemagnet.



Helping People Find and Follow Jesus

Praise God for His many blessings and pray He will move in power in our church in 2026!

SUN – Thank God for another great worship service! **Pray for opportunities** this week to preach the gospel, tell the story of God’s work in your life, and hand someone an Invite Card!

MON – Thank God for opportunities to grow! **Pray for our weekly ministries**—Life Groups, Re:gen, Marriage Ministry, Pillar YA, and 180 Students—that we will grow in grace. See you at Life Group!

TUE – Thank God for those who serve! **Pray for our elders, staff, missionaries, and for one another**—for God to strengthen and encourage us for Kingdom mission. Send a text of encouragement to someone today!

WED – Thank God for community partnerships and outreach opportunities! **Pray for our community and school outreaches** to create Kingdom fruit. Help out at your next campus-specific outreach!

THU – Thank God for His many blessings that sustain us even when life is hard! **Pray for generous hearts** that joyfully give to fuel gospel ministry and meet growing needs in every campus and ministry.

FRI – Thank God for His faithfulness in the past year! **Pray for God’s favor and guidance with emerging opportunities**—synced curriculum, Catalyst expansion, Colombian church plant, Residents preaching/serving, producing resources and training leaders, Admin/Ops Director, Jan 2027 Launch of 4th Campus

SAT – Thank God for a Perfect Savior! **Pray for God to use our singing, prayer, and preaching** to strengthen us for another week of gospel service. See ya there—don’t forget your Bible and Series Guide!

**Engage in Worship • Serve on the Team • Connect in a Small Group • Pray and Study the Bible
Pursue Generosity • Identify with Christ • Tell the Story**

Pillar Young Adults Breakouts

Pillar often syncs with Sunday mornings via this Study Guide. (Be done by 8:30p. When done, be respectful of groups still going.)

- (1) How is everyone doing?
- (2) What stuck out from the text? Thoughts or questions?
- (3) What is one next step or takeaway for your life?
- (4) Pray for one another.

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Introduction To The Book Of Jonah

Intro and Overview

Jonah is a short, punchy book that tells a simple story with unsettling force. A prophet runs from God, pagans pray, enemies repent, and God shows mercy where it is least expected. Yet beneath its simplicity lies a profound theological confrontation. Jonah is not merely about a reluctant missionary or an impressive revival. It is about the God who saves whom He wills and the human heart that struggles to accept the breadth of His mercy. The book exposes how easily we rejoice in grace for ourselves while resenting that same grace when it reaches others.

Author and Historical Setting

The book of Jonah is named after its central figure, Jonah, son of Amittai, a historical prophet who ministered during the reign of Jeroboam II of Israel (2 Kings 14:23-25). This was a time of political stability and territorial expansion for Israel, enjoyed not because of national faithfulness but because of God's compassion. Assyria, whose capital city, Nineveh, dominates the narrative, was temporarily weakened by famine, internal unrest, and foreign pressures. These conditions help explain the city's startling responsiveness to Jonah's message. Though the book is anonymous, its vivid detail and unflattering portrayal of the prophet suggest it preserves Jonah's own testimony, told for the instruction and correction of God's people.

Purpose and Central Message

The purpose of Jonah is to provoke theological and moral self-examination. God's compassion is not limited to Israel or earned by covenant status. He shows mercy to sailors, enemies, and even livestock, while patiently confronting the stubbornness of His own prophet. The theological center of the book is Jonah's confession from the depths: "Salvation belongs to the LORD" (Jonah 2:9). Salvation is God's work alone, grounded in His character, not human worthiness. This truth comforts repentant sinners but offends religious pride. Jonah's struggle is not ignorance of God's mercy but resistance to its reach.

Genre and Literary Design

Jonah is best read as historical prophetic narrative shaped with literary sophistication. The story unfolds in a carefully balanced structure that highlights contrast and irony. Jonah repeatedly descends—away from God’s presence, into the ship, into sleep, into the sea; while pagans ascend in fear, repentance, and worship. God appoints storms, lots, fish, plants, worms, and winds, underscoring His sovereign rule over creation and history despite His people’s apathy. The book ends not with resolution but with a question, pressing us to decide whether we will share God’s compassion or cling to self-centered righteousness.

Key Theological Themes

1. *Running from God’s command always runs you into danger (Jonah 1:1-6).* Disobedience descends (down to Joppa, down into the ship, down into sleep), and it is never private.
2. *God reveals Himself to bring sinners from idols to worship (Jonah 1:7-17).* The sailors move from fearing the storm to fearing Yahweh, “the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land” (1:9).
3. *Desperation that looks to God finds deliverance from God (Jonah 2:1-10).* Jonah hits the bottom so he can learn the top truth: “Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love” (2:8).
4. *The message of judgment carries the offer of mercy (Jonah 3:1-10).* “Yet forty days” means wrath is real, but not yet. The Ninevites “believed God” (3:5).
5. *God’s compassion for the lost exposes our lack of it (Jonah 4:1-11).* Jonah quotes Exodus 34:6-7 as a complaint, not worship, and God ends by asking if He should not pity Nineveh (4:11).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

Jonah plays a crucial role in the history of redemption. Jonah’s three days in the depths anticipate Christ’s death and resurrection (Matthew 12:40). The repentance of Nineveh foreshadows the turning of the nations to the Lord (Acts 10:34-35). Jonah’s anger anticipates the elder brother’s resentment in Jesus’ parable and the scandal of grace that

offends those who believe they deserve more (Luke 15:25-32). Jonah teaches that the God who saves Israel is the God who saves the world.

Outline

1. Running from God and the Storm-Making LORD (Jonah 1:1-6)
2. The Idol-Smashing God Who Saves Pagans (Jonah 1:7-17)
3. Salvation Belongs to the LORD Alone (Jonah 2:1-10)
4. Judgment Proclaimed, Mercy Received (Jonah 3:1-10)
5. God's Compassion and the Exposure of Our Hearts (Jonah 4:1-11)

In Short

Jonah teaches that God's mission of mercy cannot be controlled or domesticated—it refuses to stay inside our comfort zone. The Lord pursues rebels, saves outsiders, and extends the same grace that rescues His people to the nations. In so doing, He exposes hearts that want mercy for self but not for enemies. The book drives us toward the gospel of Christ, because Jonah is a sign: as Jonah came up from the depths, so Jesus rose from the grave (Matthew 12:40), and the mercy Jonah resisted is the mercy Christ purchased and now offers to the world. Salvation belongs to the Lord alone, and God's mercy not only saves sinners but reveals whether our hearts truly reflect His.

Apr 12, 2026 – Wk 1 – “A Rebel And The Storm-Making God: Away From The Presence Of The Lord”

Memory Verse(s): Jonah 2:8-9

8 Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. 9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!

Main Passage: Jonah 1:1-6

1 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil[a] has come up before me.” 3 But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord. 4 But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. 5 Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. 6 So the captain came and said to him, “What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.”

Exegetical Focus

- Jonah 1:1-2 begins with Yahweh’s initiating word and urgent imperatives—“Arise, go... call out”—showing that prophetic ministry starts with divine revelation and requires immediate obedience.
- Jonah 1:3 uses repeated downward movement and the doubled phrase “from the presence of the LORD” to portray rebellion as deliberate covenant evasion, not mere hesitation.
- Jonah 1:4-6 contrasts the sleeping prophet with the desperate pagan sailors, showing that Jonah’s disobedience is not private; it endangers others and silences the very messenger who should be calling on God.

Theological Principles

- God's word is authoritative and creates obligation, so true faith responds with obedience rather than selective submission (Deuteronomy 18:18-20; James 1:22).
- Sin is never merely personal; rebellion against God produces downward effects that trouble homes, communities, and witness (Joshua 7:1-13; Galatians 5:9).
- God's discipline is often severe mercy, for He pursues His servants not to destroy them but to expose, humble, and restore them (Psalm 139:7-10; Hebrews 12:5-11).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- Jonah's flight highlights the need for a better Prophet who would not run from the Father's mission but would come willingly to accomplish it (John 6:38; Hebrews 10:7).
- Yahweh's rule over storm and sea shows that the God of Israel is Lord over creation and nations, preparing for the gospel's worldwide reach (Psalm 29:3-10; Matthew 8:23-27).
- The runaway prophet anticipates the contrast fulfilled in Christ: where Jonah resisted bringing mercy to enemies, Jesus came to seek and save the undeserving (Luke 19:10; Romans 5:8-10).

Sermon Notes

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Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary²

Rebellion against God's clear command never leads to freedom but to increasing peril for ourselves and those around us. The chapter opens with stark simplicity: "Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me'" (vv 1-2). The command is unmistakable: go, preach, confront wickedness. Jonah's response is equally unmistakable: "But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord" (v 3). Notice the deliberate contrast: God says "arise, go"; but Jonah arises and goes in the opposite direction. Tarshish was likely in modern Spain, the westernmost edge of the known world, while Nineveh lay to the east. Jonah is not merely

² Adapted/Taken from “Dad’s Daily Devos,” available at fccgreene.org/ddd.

declining an assignment; he is attempting to escape God Himself. The phrase “from the presence of the Lord” appears twice in verse 3, a Hebrew idiom indicating full rejection of covenant relationship, temple worship, and divine authority. Jonah’s rebellion, however, does not go unnoticed or unopposed: “But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up” (v 4). The same God who commands prophets commands winds and waves. The pagan mariners “were afraid, and each cried out to his god” (v 5), hurling cargo overboard in desperate self-preservation. Meanwhile, the prophet of Yahweh has “gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep” (v 5). The irony is devastating: idol worshipers pray fervently while God’s servant sleeps in comfortable indifference. The captain’s rebuke carries unintended theological weight: “What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god!” (v 6). Here is the word “arise” again, echoing God’s original command. Jonah cannot escape the call, even if it comes from the mouth of a pagan captain! What began as simple disobedience has now endangered an entire ship of men, exposed the bankruptcy of false religion, and left perishing sinners without the one message that could save them. Jonah’s flight illustrates a sober principle: sin never stays private. His rebellion brought God’s storm upon others who had no part in his disobedience. Redemptive-historically, this episode prepares us to see both God’s fierce opposition to rebellion and His relentless pursuit of His servants for their good and His glory. Jesus would later sleep in a boat during a storm, but unlike Jonah, He calmed the tempest with a word because He was not fleeing from the Father’s will but fulfilling it (Mark 4:35-41). Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: when Scripture shows a servant running from God’s command, it teaches you that disobedience always descends and endangers. So today, if you sense the Spirit prompting you toward obedience you would rather avoid, remember that the path away from God’s presence leads only downward, and that your refusal to speak may leave perishing people without the hope you can offer them.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – 2 Kings 14:23-27
- Tue – Psalm 139:1-12
- Wed – Genesis 18:20-21; Nahum 1:1-8
- Thu – Isaiah 58:1; Jeremiah 23:28-29
- Fri – Matthew 8:23-27
- Sat – Jonah 1:7-17 (“Lot Casters and the Idol-Smashing God: Then The Men Feared The LORD...and They Offered A Sacrifice To The LORD”)

Life Group Summary (Esp For Leaders)

Jonah 1:1-6 shows God’s initiating word, Jonah’s deliberate flight from the presence of the LORD, and God’s sovereign pursuit through a violent storm. The prophetic-call formula (“the word of the LORD came”) appears over 100 times in the Old Testament and always demands response. Instead of obeying, Jonah flees in the opposite direction—to Tarshish, the farthest point west—and his rebellion triggers a terrifying storm from the hand of God. The passage exposes the downward trajectory of rebellion through repeated use of the verb “went down” (yarad): Jonah descends to Joppa, into the ship, into the hold, and into death-like sleep. Meanwhile, pagan sailors pray frantically while God’s prophet slumbers, and a pagan captain must rebuke the prophet and command him to pray. This opening scene establishes the book’s central tension: God’s sovereign pursuit of His rebellious servant and His determined purpose to bring salvation even to enemies. Jonah’s flight illustrates that disobedience always descends, endangers others, and silences the message perishing people desperately need.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What repeated words or downward movements stand out in Jonah 1:1-6, and how do they shape the narrative’s message?

- (2) Why does the narrator emphasize “from the presence of the LORD” twice in verse 3, and what does Jonah’s flight reveal about what he was actually trying to escape?

- (3) How does the contrast between the sailors’ desperate prayers and Jonah’s deep sleep highlight the seriousness of his rebellion?

- (4) What does God’s sovereign control of the storm teach us about both His discipline and His pursuit of wayward servants?

- (5) In what areas of your life are you tempted to “go down” into avoidance rather than “arise and go” in obedience, and who might be affected by your disobedience?

- (6) Share one area where you sense God pursuing you or one person who needs the message you have been hesitant to share, and pray for one another to arise and obey this week.

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: God told Jonah to go and speak His message, but Jonah ran away. We cannot hide from God, and God is right to tell us what to do.

Engage Your Child: Have your child walk in one direction when you say “Go,” then turn and run the other way when you say “Run.” Talk about how Jonah heard God’s “Go” but ran away.

Ask The Question: Can anyone run away from God?

Deposit The Word: Jonah 2:8-9 – “Those who pay regard [point to your eyes] to vain idols [hold one hand flat and use the other thumb and forefinger to show a tiny figurine sitting on it] forsake their hope [let your hands fall] of steadfast love [hug yourself]. But I [point to yourself] with the voice [point to your mouth] of thanksgiving [lift both hands with a smile] will sacrifice to you [open your hands upward]; what I have vowed [put your hand over your heart] I will pay [nod your head]. Salvation [stretch your arms wide] belongs to the LORD [point upward]!”

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: Jonah was a real prophet who received a real command from God, but he tried to escape the mission. The passage teaches that God’s word rules us, and disobedience always brings trouble.

Engage Your Child: Draw two arrows on paper—one labeled “Toward Obedience” and one labeled “Away From God.” Talk through how Jonah knew what God said but chose the wrong way.

Ask The Questions:

1. What did God tell Jonah to do?
2. Why was Jonah wrong to flee “from the presence of the LORD”?
3. How can one person’s sin affect other people?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Apr 19, 2026 – Wk 2 – “Lot Casters And The Idol-Smashing God: Then The Men Feared The Lord... And They Offered A Sacrifice To The Lord” (Jonah 1:7-17)

Memory Verse(s): Jonah 2:8-9

8 Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. 9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!

Main Passage: Jonah 1:7-17

7 And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 Then they said to him, “Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?” 9 And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” 10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, “What is this that you have done!” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them. 11 Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?” For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. 12 He said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.” 13 Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. 14 Therefore they called out to the Lord, “O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you.” 15 So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. 16 Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows. 17 And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Exegetical Focus

- Jonah 1:7-10 shows God exposing hidden guilt through the casting of lots, then forcing Jonah to confess both who he is and how he has rebelled against the LORD.
- Jonah 1:11-16 presents Jonah as the appointed cause of the storm and his being thrown into the sea as the divinely appointed means by which others are spared.
- Jonah 1:16-17 climaxes with pagan sailors fearing the LORD, offering sacrifice, and making vows, while Jonah is preserved by God's appointed fish—showing both judgment and mercy operating together.

Theological Principles

- God knows how to uncover hidden sin and bring proud sinners into the light; no refuge of silence, religion, or self-protection can withstand His providence (Proverbs 16:33; Numbers 32:23).
- The wages of sin are deadly, yet God often saves through appointed substitutionary patterns in which one is given over so others may live (Isaiah 53:4-6; Romans 5:6-8).
- The fear of the LORD is the right response to His sovereign holiness and saving power, and true fear moves toward worship, sacrifice, and vowed obedience (Psalm 111:10; Hebrews 12:28-29).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- Jonah's being cast into the sea so others may be spared points forward, though imperfectly, to Christ giving Himself up to bear judgment for His people (Mark 10:45; 1 Peter 3:18).
- The pagan sailors turning to Yahweh anticipates the wider ingathering of the nations through the saving acts of Israel's God (Psalm 67:1-7; Acts 13:47-48).
- God's appointed fish preserves Jonah through judgment, foreshadowing the Jonah-sign Jesus later applies to His own death, burial, and resurrection (Matthew 12:39-41; Luke 11:29-30).

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The background is a clean, solid white color.

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

God sovereignly orchestrates circumstances to expose our helplessness and reveal Himself as the only Savior worth fearing. With the storm raging and their gods silent, the desperate mariners cast lots “to know on whose account this evil has come upon us” (v 7). The lot falls on Jonah, not by chance but by divine providence, for the God who hurls winds also governs the fall of stones. Their barrage of questions reveals their terror and confusion: “Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from?” (v 8). Jonah’s answer is the theological hinge of the chapter: “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land” (v 9). This confession identifies Yahweh as no localized deity but the Creator of everything, including the very waters threatening their lives. The sailors’ response is telling: “Then the men were exceedingly afraid” (v 10). They had been afraid of the storm; now they fear the God who commands it. Jonah’s instruction seems simple: “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you” (v 12). Yet the sailors resist, rowing desperately toward land, unwilling to take innocent blood on their hands (v 13). Only when the sea grows “more and more tempestuous” do they relent, crying out to Yahweh, not their former gods: “O Lord, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you” (v 14). This is real conversion: they acknowledge Yahweh’s sovereignty, appeal to His justice, and submit to His will. When they hurl Jonah overboard, “the sea ceased from its raging” (v 15), and they respond with worship: “Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows” (v 16). Their idols are smashed; Yahweh alone receives their devotion. But God is not finished: “And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights” (v 17). The fish is not judgment but mercy, rescuing the prophet from drowning so that God’s purposes might continue. Jesus would later point to this sign as prefiguring His own death and resurrection (Matthew 12:40). Redemptive-historically, this episode demonstrates that salvation comes not through human effort, whether rowing harder or calling on false gods, but through God’s appointed substitute and sovereign deliverance.

Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: when Scripture shows pagans turning from worthless idols to fear the living God, it teaches you that genuine conversion requires revelation of who God truly is, Creator, Judge, and merciful Savior. So today, do not shrink from declaring the whole truth about God, His holiness that condemns and His grace that saves, for only that message has power to turn hearts from idols to worship.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Proverbs 16:33; Joshua 7:10-21
- Tue – Psalm 107:23-32
- Wed – Isaiah 53:4-12
- Thu – Mark 4:35-41
- Fri – Hebrews 12:18-29
- Sat – Jonah 2:1-10 (“A Thankful Man and the Fish-Saving God: Salvation Belongs To The LORD”)

Life Group Summary (Esp For Leaders)

Jonah 1:7-17 is the turning point where God openly exposes His runaway prophet, shows that sin cannot remain hidden, and reveals Himself as the sovereign Lord over storm, sea, guilt, judgment, and mercy. The sailors move from fearing the storm to fearing the LORD, while Jonah is forced to confess true theology that his life has not yet matched. The passage highlights that God judges sin justly, yet also saves through an appointed substitute and even uses rebellion to bring pagans to reverent worship. Help your group see both the severity and mercy of God here: He will not be escaped, He exposes what is hidden, and He redirects His servants through discipline rather than abandoning them. For your Life Group, the key emphasis should be that God’s sovereign mercy often meets us through painful exposure and necessary surrender in order to rescue both us and others.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What details in Jonah 1:7-10 show that God is the one exposing Jonah’s guilt, not merely the sailors discovering it?

- (2) Why is it significant that Jonah can confess, “I fear the LORD, the God of heaven,” while still living in disobedience? What warning does that give us?

- (3) What does the sailors’ reluctance to throw Jonah overboard reveal about them, and how does that deepen the irony of the passage?

- (4) How does this passage show both righteous judgment and surprising mercy operating at the same time?

- (5) In what ways can one believer’s disobedience affect other people—family, church, witness, or mission?

- (6) Where might God be exposing something in your life not to destroy you, but to redirect you into obedience and usefulness?

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: God showed that Jonah was the guilty one, but God also saved the sailors and kept Jonah alive. God is holy, and God is merciful.

Engage Your Child: Put several slips of paper in a cup with one marked slip. Let your child draw one and talk about how nothing is hidden from God.

Ask The Question: Can anyone hide their sin from God?

Deposit The Word: Jonah 2:8-9 – “Those who pay regard [point to your eyes] to vain idols [hold one hand flat and use the other thumb and forefinger to show a tiny figurine sitting on it] forsake their hope [let your hands fall] of steadfast love [hug yourself]. But I [point to yourself] with the voice [point to your mouth] of thanksgiving [lift both hands with a smile] will sacrifice to you [open your hands upward]; what I have vowed [put your hand over your heart] I will pay [nod your head]. Salvation [stretch your arms wide] belongs to the LORD [point upward]!”

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: The sailors started out fearing the storm, but by the end they feared the LORD. God exposed Jonah's guilt, calmed the sea, and turned pagans into worshipers.

Engage Your Child: Draw a before-and-after chart labeled “Fear Of The Storm” and “Fear Of The LORD.” Fill in what changed in the sailors.

Ask The Questions:

1. Why did the sailors cast lots?
2. What did Jonah finally admit about himself?
3. How did the sailors respond after the sea grew calm?

Deposit The Word: See above.

Apr 26, 2026 – Wk 3 – “A Thankful Man And The Fish-Saving God: Salvation Belongs To The Lord” (Jonah 2:1-10)

Memory Verse(s): Jonah 2:8-9

8 Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. 9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!

Main Passage: Jonah 2:1-10

1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, 2 saying, “I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. 3 For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your breakers and your waves passed over me. 4 Then I said, ‘I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.’ 5 The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head 6 To the roots of the mountains I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever. Yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. 7 When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. 8 Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. 9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!” 10 And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.

Exegetical Focus

- Jonah 2:1-2 shows Jonah praying from inside discipline, not after escaping it, and describing his condition with death-language—“out of the belly of Sheol I cried.”
- Jonah 2:3-8 recounts Jonah’s descent beneath the waters in vivid poetic imagery, yet the turning point comes when he remembers the LORD and looks again toward God’s holy temple.
- Jonah 2:9-10 climaxes with vowed thanksgiving and the confession “Salvation belongs to the LORD,” followed by God’s sovereign command to the fish.

Theological Principles

- God hears the cry of His people even from places of discipline, darkness, and self-caused misery, showing that covenant mercy is deeper than our failure (Psalm 130:1-4; Lamentations 3:55-58).
- True repentance begins when a sinner stops blaming circumstances and acknowledges God's hand in both discipline and deliverance (Job 42:1-6; Hebrews 12:10-11).
- Salvation belongs to the LORD from beginning to end; rescue is not produced by human strength, merit, or religious effort, but by divine grace alone (Psalm 3:8; Ephesians 2:8-9).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- Jonah's descent into the deep and return from near death becomes a typological pattern later taken up by Jesus as a sign of His burial and resurrection (Matthew 12:39-41).
- Looking toward the temple reflects the old covenant hope of forgiveness through God's appointed dwelling place, which finds fulfillment in Christ as the true temple and mediator (1 Kings 8:38-39; John 2:19-21).
- Jonah's confession that salvation belongs to the LORD sums up a biblical theme fulfilled climactically in the gospel, where God alone saves through Christ (Isaiah 43:11; Revelation 7:10).

Sermon Notes

When all human hope is exhausted, the one who cries to Yahweh discovers that salvation belongs to Him alone. From inside the fish, Jonah prays a psalm of thanksgiving, recounting his ordeal in the depths: “I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice” (v 2). Notice the past tense: Jonah speaks of answered prayer while still inside the fish because the fish itself was God’s rescue from drowning. His recollection is vivid and terrifying: “You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me” (v 3). Jonah rightly attributes his peril to God, not merely to the sailors who threw him overboard. Yet even in banishment, faith persists: “Then I said, ‘I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple’” (v 4). He knows the covenant promise: if God’s people turn toward His

dwelling place in repentance, He will hear from heaven (cf 1 Kings 8:30-34). The imagery intensifies: "The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head at the roots of the mountains" (vv 5-6). Jonah descends to the very foundations of creation, where "the bars" of death close behind him "forever." Yet here comes the gospel reversal: "But you brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God" (v 6). God's mercy reaches the deepest grave. The theological climax arrives in verses 8-9: "Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the Lord!" This declaration, the very center of the book, proclaims what the sailors learned and what Nineveh will soon discover: no idol saves, only Yahweh. The chapter closes with sovereign simplicity: "And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land" (v 10). God commands sea creatures as easily as He commands prophets. Redemptive-historically, Jonah's three days in the belly of death and his emergence onto dry land prefigure Christ's descent into the grave and glorious resurrection (Matthew 12:40). What Jonah experienced as mercy for himself, Jesus accomplished as substitutionary salvation for all who believe. Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: when Scripture shows a sinner sinking to the depths and crying out to God, it teaches you that no pit is too deep for divine rescue and no rebel is beyond covenant mercy. So today, if you feel the waters closing over your head, whether through consequences of your own rebellion or circumstances beyond your control, remember that the God who appoints fish to swallow also commands them to release, and that salvation, from first to last, belongs to the Lord.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Psalm 18:4-6; 30:1-5
- Tue – 1 Kings 8:38-40; 46-50
- Wed – Psalm 130:1-8
- Thu – Matthew 12:38-41
- Fri – Ephesians 2:1-10
- Sat – Jonah 3:1-10 ("The Preacher of Doom and the Merciful God: The People of Nineveh Believed God")

Life Group Summary (Esp For Leaders)

Jonah 2:1-10 slows the narrative down so we can hear Jonah interpret his experience from inside the fish and, more importantly, from inside God's severe mercy. His prayer is full of death-and-deliverance imagery, showing that he now recognizes God's hand not only in rescue but also in the discipline that brought him low. The theological center of the chapter is Jonah's confession that "Salvation belongs to the LORD," which means rescue is God's work from start to finish, not man's. At the same time, the chapter also presses deeper than mere crisis relief, exposing the emptiness of idols and showing that thanksgiving, vows, and renewed obedience must flow from rightly seeing God as Savior. Help your group keep the main weight on God's sovereign saving mercy rather than on Jonah as a model of spirituality. For your Life Group, the key emphasis should be that God often brings people to the end of themselves so they will abandon false refuges, call on Him alone, and learn that salvation truly belongs to the LORD.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What phrases in Jonah's prayer show that he sees himself as being under God's discipline and near death, not merely in an unpleasant circumstance?

- (2) Why is it important that Jonah prays from inside the fish rather than after he is already out of danger?

- (3) What does Jonah mean when he says that those who “pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love”? How does that expose the real issue beneath rebellion?
- (4) How does “Salvation belongs to the LORD” summarize the theology of this chapter—and really of the whole book?
- (5) What kinds of false refuges or idols do people often trust instead of surrendering fully to God’s mercy and mission?
- (6) How can seasons of hardship, discipline, or desperation become occasions for God to reorient our hearts toward gratitude, obedience, and mission?

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: Jonah prayed to God from inside the fish, and God heard him. Even when we are in trouble because of our sin, we should cry out to God.

Engage Your Child: Sit with your child under a blanket or table to imitate a dark, tight place, then talk about Jonah praying from inside the fish.

Ask The Question: Who should we call on when we are in trouble?

Deposit The Word: Jonah 2:8-9 – “Those who pay regard [point to your eyes] to vain idols [hold one hand flat and use the other thumb and forefinger to show a tiny figurine sitting on it] forsake their hope [let your hands fall] of steadfast love [hug yourself]. But I [point to yourself] with the voice [point to your mouth] of thanksgiving [lift both hands with a smile] will sacrifice to you [open your hands upward]; what I have vowed [put your hand over your heart] I will pay [nod your head]. Salvation [stretch your arms wide] belongs to the LORD [point upward]!”

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: Jonah had gone down under God’s discipline, but from the depths he remembered the LORD. His prayer teaches that God alone rescues sinners and deserves all the thanks.

Engage Your Child: Make a simple chart with the words “Down” and “Up.” List Jonah’s descent into the deep, then God’s bringing him up from the pit.

Ask The Questions:

1. Why does Jonah talk like he is near death?
2. What changed when Jonah remembered the LORD?
3. What does it mean that “Salvation belongs to the LORD”?

Deposit The Word: See above.

May 3, 2026 – Wk 4 – “The Preacher Of Doom And The Merciful God: The People Of Nineveh Believed God” (Jonah 3:1-10)

Memory Verse(s): Jonah 2:8-9

8 Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. 9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!

Main Passage: Jonah 3:1-10

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.” 3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. 4 Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, “Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!” 5 And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. 6 The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, 8 but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. 9 Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.” 10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

Exegetical Focus

- Jonah 3:1-3 emphasizes Yahweh's recommissioning grace, as the word of the LORD comes to Jonah “a second time” and the prophet now goes “according to the word of the LORD.”
- Jonah 3:4 presents a strikingly brief sermon of certain judgment—“Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be

overthrown”—showing that the power lies in God’s word, not in prophetic eloquence.

- Jonah 3:5-10 records an astonishing citywide response: the people believe God, humble themselves in fasting and sackcloth, and cry out for mercy, while God relents from the announced disaster.

Theological Principles

- God often restores failed servants and reuses them for fruitful ministry, proving that usefulness in His kingdom depends on grace, not on a spotless past (John 21:15-19; 2 Corinthians 2:6-8).
- The word of God is powerful enough to pierce even hard and hostile hearts, because repentance is produced by divine truth attended by divine power (Isaiah 55:10-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5).
- Genuine repentance involves believing God, humbling oneself, turning from evil, and pleading for mercy rather than presuming upon it (Joel 2:12-14; Acts 17:30-31).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- Nineveh’s repentance anticipates the inclusion of the nations and stands as a rebuke to covenant insiders who hear God’s word without responding in faith (Matthew 12:41; Luke 11:32).
- The forty-day warning pattern echoes broader biblical themes of probation, testing, and impending judgment, all of which press toward the need for decisive response to God’s word (Genesis 7:4; Ezekiel 18:30-32).
- The relenting of God from temporal disaster upon repentance helps prepare readers for the fuller revelation of divine mercy in Christ, where judgment is not ignored but satisfied and mercy is freely extended (Romans 3:25-26; Titus 3:4-7).

Sermon Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

God's warning of destruction is itself an act of grace, giving sinners opportunity to repent before wrath falls. The chapter opens with divine persistence: "Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you'" (vv 1-2).

God does not abandon His rebellious prophet but recommissions him. This time Jonah obeys: "So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord" (v 3). The city's vastness is emphasized: "an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth" (v 3). Into this capital of Israel's most brutal enemy walks one man with five Hebrew words: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (v 4). No explanation, no appeal, no altar call, just a declaration of coming doom. Yet embedded in every warning of judgment is an implied opportunity: forty days means the destruction has not yet fallen. The Ninevites grasp what Jonah perhaps hoped they would miss: "And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them" (v 5). The response sweeps through every social stratum, reaching even the king, who "rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes" (v 6). The most powerful man in the world's most powerful empire humbles himself before the God of a foreign prophet. His decree reveals genuine repentance: "Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish" (vv 8-9). The king does not presume upon mercy but hopes in the character of a God he barely knows. And God responds: "When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it" (v 10). This is not divine change of mind but divine consistency: God always responds to genuine repentance with mercy, for He is "gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love" (Jonah 4:2). Redemptive-historically, Nineveh's mass conversion foreshadows the day when the gospel would go to all nations, and Gentiles who once lived in darkness would believe and be saved (cf Acts 10:34-35; Romans 15:9-12). Jesus Himself pointed to the Ninevites as witnesses against unbelieving Israel (Matthew 12:41). Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: when Scripture shows wicked people believing God's word and repenting, it is teaching that no sinner is too far gone and no message of judgment is without hope. So today, do not shrink from warning others of coming wrath, for the very warning is grace, and the God who threatens disaster delights to relent when sinners turn.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Jeremiah 18:7-10
- Tue – Joel 2:12-14
- Wed – Isaiah 55:6-11
- Thu – Matthew 12:38-41
- Fri – Acts 11:18; 17:24-31
- Sat – Jonah 4:1-11 (“The Angry Shade-Lover and the Cattle-Saving God: Should I Not Pity Nineveh?”)

Life Group Summary (Esp For Leaders)

Jonah 3 shows God’s mercy in both the recommissioned messenger and the warning message itself. God sends Jonah a second time, Jonah finally goes according to the word of the LORD, and the brief proclamation of judgment becomes the means God uses to bring a whole city low before Him. The Ninevites do not merely feel bad; from the greatest to the least they believe God, humble themselves, turn from evil, and cry out for mercy. God then withholds the threatened disaster, showing that His warnings are not empty threats but gracious summonses to repent before judgment falls. For your Life Group, help people see that repentance is visible, urgent, and Godward—not mere regret, but a real turning because God’s word has been believed. Ensure your group focuses on the connection between God’s warning, Nineveh’s humble response, and God’s merciful relenting in order to press home that divine warnings are themselves a means of grace.

Life Group Questions

- (1) What repeated phrases or actions in vv 1-3 show that God is driving the mission more than Jonah is?
- (2) Why might God use such a short, severe sermon in v 4, and what does “forty days” imply?

- (3) In vv 5-6, what details show the breadth and seriousness of Nineveh's response?

- (4) In vv 8-9, how does the king define repentance, and what does "who knows?" reveal about his posture?

- (5) In v 10, what does God "see," and how does this shape our view of repentance versus mere remorse?

- (6) What is one area to "turn" this week, and how can we pray specifically for repentance, obedience, and mercy for each other?

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: Jonah preached God's warning, and the people of Nineveh believed God. When God warns us about sin, we should listen and turn to Him.

Engage Your Child: Say a simple warning like "Stop—hot!" or "Stop—danger!" and explain that warnings are kind when they keep us from harm. God's warning to Nineveh was a mercy.

Ask The Question: What should we do when God warns us?

Deposit The Word: Jonah 2:8-9 – "Those who pay regard [point to your eyes] to vain idols [hold one hand flat and use the other thumb and forefinger to show a tiny figurine sitting on it] forsake their hope [let your hands fall] of steadfast love [hug yourself]. But I [point to yourself] with the voice [point to your mouth] of thanksgiving [lift both hands with a smile] will sacrifice to you [open your hands upward]; what I have vowed [put your hand over your heart] I will pay [nod your head]. Salvation [stretch your arms wide] belongs to the LORD [point upward]!"

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: Jonah's sermon was short, but God used it mightily. The people of Nineveh believed God, humbled themselves, and turned from their evil ways.

Engage Your Child: Write Jonah's sermon in large letters on paper, then talk about how a very short message can still be powerful when it is God's word.

Ask The Questions:

1. What did Jonah preach to Nineveh?
2. How did the people show repentance?
3. Why is repentance more than just feeling bad?

Deposit The Word: See above.

May 10, 2026 – Jonah Wk 5 – “The Angry Shade-Lover And The Cattle-Saving God: Should I Not Pity Nineveh?” (Jonah 4:1-11)

Memory Verse(s): Jonah 2:8-9

8 Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. 9 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!

Main Passage: Jonah 4:1-11

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. 2 And he prayed to the Lord and said, “O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. 3 Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” 4 And the Lord said, “Do you do well to be angry?” 5 Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. 6 Now the Lord God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. 7 But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, “It is better for me to die than to live.” 9 But God said to Jonah, “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?” And he said, “Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.” 10 And the Lord said, “You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. 11 And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?”

Exegetical Focus

- Jonah 4:1-4 exposes the shocking irony that Jonah is angry at the very mercy he once received, even quoting God's gracious character as part of his complaint.
- Jonah 4:5-8 uses the appointed plant, worm, and east wind to reveal Jonah's distorted loves: he grieves over lost comfort more than over lost people.
- Jonah 4:9-11 ends with God's searching question, contrasting Jonah's pity for a plant with God's pity for a vast city full of image-bearers—and even their cattle.

Theological Principles

- A person may know true theology and still wield it selfishly if his heart has not been shaped by the mercy he confesses (Luke 15:28-32; 1 Corinthians 13:1-3).
- Sinful anger often reveals disordered loves, exposing that we care too much about personal comfort, control, and reputation and too little about God's compassion and mission (James 4:1-2; Philippians 2:3-5).
- God's mercy is sovereign and scandalously free, and His people must learn to rejoice when grace reaches the undeserving, because that is the only kind of grace that could save us (Exodus 34:6-7; Romans 9:14-16).

Redemptive-Historical Significance

- Jonah's resentment toward mercy for the nations stands in contrast to the global compassion of God that unfolds through the prophets and reaches fulfillment in the Great Commission (Isaiah 49:6; Matthew 28:18-20).
- God's concern for Nineveh anticipates the broad scope of redemptive history, where His saving purpose reaches beyond Israel to people from every tribe and tongue (Genesis 12:3; Revelation 7:9-10).
- The book ends with a question that presses the reader toward the heart of God, ultimately answered in Christ, who embodies the compassion Jonah resisted and lays down His life for enemies (Luke 23:34; Romans 5:10).

[illegible]

Hermeneutical-Devotional Commentary

The same mercy that saved you is the mercy God extends to our enemies, and our anger at His grace reveals our heart. The chapter opens with shocking words: "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry" (v 1). The prophet who praised God for personal deliverance now rages that God delivered others. His prayer reveals his deepest objection: "O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster" (v 2). Jonah quotes the great self-revelation of God's character from Exodus 34:6-7, but he quotes it as complaint, not worship. He knew God would show mercy to Nineveh if they repented, and he wanted them destroyed, not saved. His death wish follows: "Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live" (v 3). God's gentle question cuts to the heart: "Do you do well to be angry?" (v 4). Jonah does not answer but sulks outside the city, hoping perhaps God will still destroy it (v 5). God then teaches through object lesson: "The Lord God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant" (v 6). The same verb "appointed" describes God's sovereign arrangement of fish, plant, worm, and wind throughout this book. When God appoints a worm to destroy the plant and a scorching wind to beat on Jonah's head, the prophet again wishes for death (vv 7-8). God's final question exposes Jonah's, and our, distorted values: "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?" (vv 10-11). Jonah grieved over a plant he did not create and could not preserve; God grieves over people He created and longs to save. The book ends with a question, not an answer, pressing every reader to examine whether we share God's compassion for the lost or resent His mercy toward our enemies. Redemptive-historically, Jonah's anger anticipates the elder brother's resentment in Jesus' parable (Luke 15:28-32) and the grumbling of those who begrudge grace to

latecomers (Matthew 20:1-16). Hermeneutical nugget for Scripture and life: when Scripture exposes a believer angry at God's mercy toward others, it teaches you that the gospel you received is the same gospel God offers your enemies. So today, examine your heart: do you rejoice when notorious sinners repent, or do you secretly wish they would get what they deserve? Remember that you, too, deserved wrath, and let God's compassion for the lost reshape your own.

Daily Bible Readings:

- Mon – Exodus 34:6-7
- Tue – Luke 15:11-32
- Wed – Matthew 20:1-16
- Thu – James 4:1-10
- Fri – Isaiah 49:1-6
- Sat – Jonah 1:1-4:11 (“Review: The Merciful God Who Pursues Rebels, Humbles Sinners, And Shows Compassion To The Nations”)

Life Group Summary (Esp For Leaders)

Jonah 4:1-11 exposes a shocking contrast: Jonah hates the very mercy he himself needs, while God pities the people Jonah wants destroyed. Through repeated questions and a divinely appointed object lesson—the plant, the worm, and the scorching east wind—God uncovers Jonah's disordered loves and shows how quickly his heart burns for personal comfort while remaining cold toward perishing people. Jonah is angry not merely because Nineveh was spared, but because God's sovereign compassion has crossed Jonah's own boundaries of deservingness. So the Lord argues with piercing mercy: if Jonah can pity a plant he neither made nor sustained, how much more can God pity a great city full of lost image-bearers who do not know their right hand from their left, and even its cattle? The book ends with a question that does not merely expose Jonah—it confronts us: will we resent sovereign grace when it reaches the undeserving, or will we learn to share God's compassionate heart for sinners, enemies, and the nations?

Life Group Questions

- (1) What words or phrases in vv 1-2 show Jonah knows God's character yet resents God's mercy?
- (2) How does the repeated question "Do you do well to be angry?" function as loving confrontation?
- (3) What does Jonah's joy over the plant and despair over its loss reveal about his deepest loves?
- (4) How does God's contrast in vv 10-11 expose the inconsistency of Jonah's compassion?
- (5) Where are you most tempted to be an "elder brother" toward certain sinners or groups today?
- (6) Close in prayer: name one person you struggle to pity, then pray for each other to reflect God's mercy in action.

Kids Lessons

Early Childhood

Learn The Lesson: Jonah was happy about a plant that gave him shade, but he was angry when God showed mercy to people. God wants us to care about people more than our own comfort.

Engage Your Child: Place one small object like a leaf beside several toy people. Ask which matters more, then talk about how God cares deeply for people.

Ask The Question: What should matter more to us—our comfort or people who need God’s mercy?

Deposit The Word: Jonah 2:8-9 – “Those who pay regard [point to your eyes] to vain idols [hold one hand flat and use the other thumb and forefinger to show a tiny figurine sitting on it] forsake their hope [let your hands fall] of steadfast love [hug yourself]. But I [point to yourself] with the voice [point to your mouth] of thanksgiving [lift both hands with a smile] will sacrifice to you [open your hands upward]; what I have vowed [put your hand over your heart] I will pay [nod your head]. Salvation [stretch your arms wide] belongs to the LORD [point upward]!”

Elementary

Learn The Lesson: Jonah knew right things about God, but his heart was still crooked. He cared more about shade for himself than mercy for a city full of people.

Engage Your Child: Make two columns labeled “Jonah Cared About” and “God Cares About.” Compare the plant, Jonah’s comfort, and the people of Nineveh.

Ask The Questions:

1. Why was Jonah angry when God spared Nineveh?
2. What did the plant teach Jonah about his heart?
3. How does this chapter show the difference between selfishness and compassion?

Deposit The Word: See above.



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