

Jonah: 2 of 6
“Developing a Heart for the Lost”
Cornerstone Church of Poway
Pastor Rich Sherwood
March 1, 2026

Series Big Idea: If we have received the mercy of God, we are called to reflect it — by sharing His message of hope and forgiveness with others.

Jonah 1:1-3

The LORD gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: ² “Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. ² “Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.”³ But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

Jonah 1;4-10

⁴ Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵ All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶ The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

⁷ Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸ So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

⁹ He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.”

¹⁰ This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

Notes:



Jonah: The God Of Second Chances
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Welcome & Opening Prayer (2–3 minutes)

Ask someone to open in prayer, inviting God to speak through His Word and shape our hearts for people who don't yet know Him.

Icebreaker – “When God’s Call to Love Collides with Our Excuses”

Think of a time you knew you should show kindness or help someone (perhaps someone difficult or "undeserving"), but you chose not to. What excuse felt reasonable to you at the moment?

1. Read the Scripture (Jonah 1:1–3)

Have someone read the passage out loud.

What specific command does God give Jonah?

Why might Jonah have found this command particularly hard?

What does Jonah actually do instead, and where does he try to go?

2. Read Jonah 1:4-10.

Describe the storm and the sailors' reaction.

What is Jonah doing while everyone else is in panic?

When the lot falls on him and the sailors ask, “What have you done?” (v.10), what does this question reveal about the consequences of Jonah's disobedience?

Jonah knew God as “the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land” (Jonah 1:9), yet he still tried to flee.

What does Jonah's attempt to run to Tarshish show about his understanding of God's presence and power?

How do we sometimes act as if we can escape God's call?

Jonah's refusal wasn't just about avoiding a difficult preaching task—it was about withholding God's mercy from Nineveh, a wicked enemy city.

How did his disobedience end up bringing danger and fear to innocent sailors who had no connection to Nineveh?

What does this illustrate about the broader impact of refusing to align with God's compassionate heart?

3. Read Luke 6:27-31. List four specific actions Jesus commands toward enemies or those who mistreat us.

Which of these feels most counter-cultural or personally challenging today, and why?

4. Read: In Luke 6:32-34, Jesus points out that loving only those who love us back is normal—even “sinners” do that.

How does Jonah's attitude toward the Ninevites reflect this same limited kind of love?

In what ways do we limit mercy to “our people” or those we deem worthy?

5. Read Luke 6:35-36 sums up the teaching: “Love your enemies... be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.” How does God's character as merciful to the “ungrateful and wicked” contrast with Jonah's desire to keep mercy away from Nineveh? How does this challenge our own instincts?

Connecting both passages: Jonah ran from a call to extend mercy to enemies; Jesus commands us to actively love and show mercy to ours. What is one specific person or group in your life right now that feels like a “Nineveh” to you (someone hard to love or forgive)?

What excuse might you be tempted to use to avoid showing mercy, and how can truth from Jonah 1 and Luke 6:27-36 help you respond in obedience this week?