

Jonah – Jonah 1:1-6

*“We pursue being a disciple making family: *surrendered to Jesus, transformed by the gospel, and **saturated in His word.***”*

As we begin to study this amazing book in the Bible it is important to prepare our hearts for the message. This is a very common and well-known story in the Scripture. It can raise a lot of questions as to whether this is a parable or a real account. We will talk more about this in detail as the book unfolds, but regardless this Word from the Lord has a great deal to say to us. Jesus referred to this account specifically in his time on earth (Matthew 12:40). It would have been hard for Jesus to refer to Jonah if this was a myth and not real. This leads to the belief that this account was an actual event and not just a parable. There is so much in this text that we can learn and grow from so let's dig in.

Discussion Questions* – *do not feel the pressure to cover them all

1. We can learn so much about the character of God and also the character of man through the book of Jonah. What stands out to you about God in verses 1-6? What stands out to you about man (as seen through Jonah) in verses 1-6?
2. God called Jonah to go to Nineveh and call them out for their evil. Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire. We realize from history that the Assyrians were extremely cruel people. They not only conquered but really tortured and destroyed people. They were known for burning people alive, gouging eyes out, dismembering and burying alive. So, the “word of the Lord” came to Jonah to “arise,” “go,” and “call out” not the people of Israel but the pagan gentiles. This would be a first for a prophet to go outside of Israel. We see that God has a love for all the nations, not just Israel. This may have been difficult for Jonah. He could not go to them and fled. They were enemies to Israel. How would you have seen this if you were Jonah? What about today? We are commanded to share the gospel and make disciples, not only to those we like? What are some reasons that believers do not share the gospel regularly? Which reason(s) would describe your hesitancy in sharing the good news with unbelievers you know?
3. Jonah clearly and deliberately ignored the word of the Lord and His command to go. He worked very hard and paid a great price to get as “far away from the Lord’s presence” as he could. He found a boat going to Tarshish. The farthest Western point on the Mediterranean to a people who did not know God. How and when have you wanted to get away from God? Be honest, are there commands he has given us that you try to avoid? Why do you think the Lord’s

command to proclaim the gospel is so much easier to ignore than other commands that He has given us?

4. Jonah continues to “go down” in geographical location and also spiritually. To the point where he is sleeping in the inside of the ship after God “hurls” a great storm on the boat and the mariners. The pagan mariners and captain come to Jonah to have him cry out to his God. What is the significance that the mariners were crying out for help and Jonah was sleeping with, seemingly, an indifference to the storm? What might be the significance of our casual attitude in regard to lost people around us? How are we missing the opportunities to tell a non-Christian friend, co-worker, or family member about the rescue of Jesus?
5. We see in this text that God is a very merciful, gracious, and patient God. God could have sent anyone to save the Ninevites. He could have sent someone else after Jonah rebels. In this passage we see that God is not only working on the Ninevites but working on the heart of Jonah. Jonah cries out in pride to the captain first that, “I am a Hebrew.” There was a sense of spiritual pride and identity. In this encounter of rebellion God will continue to pursue Jonah to transform him. How do you see God’s mercy, grace, and patience play out in this text? How do you see God’s mercy, grace, and patience play out in your rebellion?