



JONAH



ST. FAITH'S

The Book of Jonah

I say Jonah, you say...



Fish?

I know, right?

Jonah is famous for the fish. And it is a ripping story. One of the best known in the bible. But here's the thing - it's not about the fish!

We are going to do something a little different to begin. Rather than have a series of questions - we are going to read the whole book. (Don't panic - its only 4 chapters.) You can read the whole book by yourself or as a group.

As we read think of the questions you have - what things strike you? what don't you understand? what is the book about? who is the hero? are there ways you are encouraged by Jonah? You could jot those down as we go. After reading we will try and list the main questions that people have. Over the coming weeks we will return to some of those questions...



The prophet



Read Jonah 1.1-3

- What is shocking in the first 3 verses?
- How does Jonah react to God sending him to Ninevah?
- What do you notice about Tarshish on this map?



Look ahead to Jonah 3.10-4.3

- Why does Jonah disobey God? What is he worried might happen?
- Why doesn't Jonah want Ninevites forgiven? (see Nahum 3.1-6 for a description of Ninevah)
- Read Psalm 139.7-10 - do you think Jonah's plan to avoid God's calling will work?

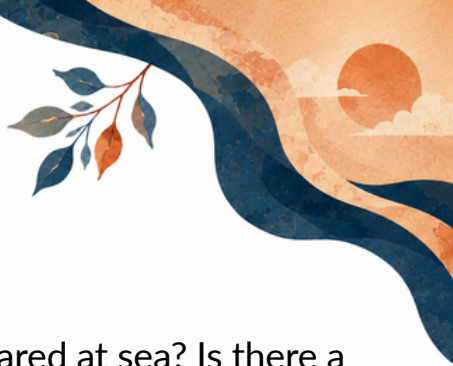
Being angry at God's mercy

- Are there other bible passages where people are angry at God's mercy to sinners?
- How can we be a church that prays for God's mercy to people who don't deserve it?



The sailors

Jonah 1.4-17



Read Jonah 1.4-17

- Have you got a story of being scared at sea? Is there a sailor, or kayaker, or cruise ship passenger in your group that can paint a picture of what that is like?
- What are the details in vv4-6 that show how wild the sea is?
- What desperate steps do the captain and sailors take to save the ship?
- How is the storm (ironically) stopping Jonah from running away from God's plan to show mercy to non-Israelites? (see especially the captain's request in verse 6)
- Is God in control of storms, and lots, and calamity? What other control does God show in the book of Jonah? How does God's control of all things comfort the believer?

Read Jonah 1.8-17

- What happens when Jonah tells pagans about God?
- Jonah looks down on those outside Israel and doesn't want mercy to be shown to them. But what is the surprising attitude the sailors have to God and Jonah?
- How have the sailors changed? Do you think Jonah has changed?
- Before we meet the fish (!) - what would you say is the main point of the book of Jonah so far?



The fish

Jonah 2 – A prayer from the deep

Read Jonah 2

The main question in Jonah 2 is whether Jonah's time inside the fish is a true turning point, where he realizes he has disobeyed God and genuinely repents. If it is, then why is he so angry in Chapter 4 when God shows mercy to Nineveh after they repent?

A better way to understand Chapter 2 is that Jonah is still self-righteous. He thinks he deserves God's mercy, but he does not yet understand that God also showed mercy to the pagan sailors. His attitude to Nineveh and God's plan to be merciful to them has not changed.

- Who or what does Jonah say is responsible for his situation ? (v3, 4, 5)
- In his prayer how does Jonah describe his own actions? (v2, 7)
- Jonah says that unlike the pagans who worship vain idols he will sacrifice to the Lord (v8-9). But who actually sacrifices to the Lord? (1.16)
- Does Jonah need & receive God's mercy in Ch 2?
- Is anyone beyond God's mercy?



Ninevah

Jonah 3



In Jonah Chapter 3, the prophet is recommissioned and goes to Nineveh with God's message. Remarkably, the violent, pagan city responds with repentance. The spotlight shifts from Jonah to the people of Nineveh—and their response stands in contrast to Jonah's earlier disobedience.

- What's different about how God speaks to Jonah in 3:1–2 compared to 1:1–2?
- What does Jonah do this time? (v3) How does this compare to his earlier response in Chapter 1?
- How is Nineveh described in v3? Why might this matter?
- What is the content of Jonah's message in v4? What's missing that you might expect in a prophetic message?
- How do the people of Nineveh respond? (v5) What surprising response do we see from the king in v6–9?
- What do their actions show about their understanding of God and judgment?
- How does God respond in v10? What does this tell us about his character?
- Jesus says the people of Nineveh repented at Jonah's preaching, but someone "greater than Jonah is here" (Matthew 12:41). What does that teach us about the seriousness of responding to Jesus' message?

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Ninevah

(Continued)



- What does Chapter 3 teach us about repentance—what it looks like and who it's for?
- What contrasts do you notice between Jonah and the Ninevites in this chapter?
- Why do you think Jonah gave such a minimal message? What might his attitude have been?
- How might we be tempted to limit who we think God will reach or forgive?
- Are there places or people we think are "too far gone" to repent or be shown mercy?
- How can this chapter reshape our prayers and hopes for our city, our enemies, or those far from God?

Ninevah's repentance may be the biggest 'pagan revival' in the entire Old Testament - yet it comes from such a reluctant prophet. And Ninevah was known as 'a city of bloodshed' (Nahum 3) that is very much opposed to God and his people. Yet God calls it a 'great city'.



Hating God's mercy

Jonah 4

Jonah has preached, Nineveh has repented, and God has relented—and Jonah is not happy. This final chapter exposes Jonah's heart: he wants judgment for others, mercy for himself, and comfort above all. In contrast, we see the heart of God: gracious, compassionate, and deeply concerned for a great city full of people—and even animals!

- What is Jonah's reaction to Nineveh's repentance? (v1)
- What does Jonah reveal about why he fled in the first place? (v2)
- How does Jonah describe God's character in v2? Why is this both ironic and revealing?
- What does Jonah ask for in v3? What does this show us about his attitude?
- How does God respond to Jonah's anger in v4?
- What happens with the plant in v5–6? How does Jonah feel about it?
- What happens next in v7–8? How does Jonah respond this time?
- In v9–11, how does God contrast Jonah's concern for the plant with His own concern for Nineveh?
- What do we learn about God's priorities from this chapter?



Hating God's mercy

(Continued)

- Why do you think Jonah cared so deeply about the plant but not the people of Nineveh?
- How might we, like Jonah, become more concerned with our comfort than with God's compassion for the lost?
- What does this chapter reveal about how we view God's mercy—especially when it's shown to people we hate?
- Are there groups or individuals you find hard to imagine God showing grace to? Why?
- How is God inviting us to share in His heart for people—even those far from Him?
- How could our prayers, priorities, and emotions be reshaped by the question God asks in v11?
- What is the Book of Jonah about?
- What have you learned about God in this book?
- Should we think of Sydney as 'that great city?'

