



I. **Ice breaker.** *Getting to know each other questions.* (10 minutes)

- Describe your dream vacation... if money was no object.

II. **Read today's scriptures** out loud, slowly, either in unison or using a designated reader and move into scripture quiet reflection. (3 minutes)

<sup>17</sup> Now the LORD provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. <sup>1</sup> From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. <sup>2</sup> He said:

"In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. <sup>3</sup> You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. <sup>4</sup> I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' <sup>5</sup> The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. <sup>6</sup> To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, LORD my God, brought my life up from the pit.

<sup>7</sup> "When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, LORD, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.

<sup>8</sup> "Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them. <sup>9</sup> But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the LORD.'"

<sup>10</sup> And the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land. (Jonah 1:17 - 2:10)

**Scripture quiet reflection:** (5-10 minutes)

This is a time to personally reflect on this week's scripture. Have a paper and pen available.

**1. Read.** Read through the passage silently.

**2. Reflect.** Notice any words or phrases that particularly draw your attention and stand out to you. How do these words/phrases speak directly to you and your present situation? Write your insights.

**3. Respond.** As God has spoken to you in the Scripture, respond back to God in prayer. What do you want to say to God? What else does God want to say to you?

III. **Sermon and Scripture Application Discussion.** (20-30 minutes)

- A. As you reflectively engaged the Scriptures, what stood out to you from these passages?
- B. How is Jonah's prayer a "foxhole" prayer? How does God teach us about Himself through His response to Jonah, a wayward prophet's prayer?
- C. God's grace sometimes comes as a severe mercy. God appoints/provides a huge fish to save Jonah from drowning. Jonah may seem to hit rock bottom.
- How have you experienced a failure as an opportunity to turn things around in your life?
  - How has God used a failure to help shape God-dependency in you instead of self-dependency?



- D. Jonah's story ends with chapter 4 and shows us his continual bad attitude rather than a contrite and repentant spirit. His prayer is uttered in self-righteousness, not in repentance. There is no admission of guilt by Jonah.
- Prayer in itself is not a sign of piety. Jonah's prayer looks right...it sounds right... it has all the right elements. In verses 3-6, we read from the perspective of an unrepentant prophet making a foxhole prayer. You can hear the blame that Jonah lifts to YHWH.
  - How can your prayers be orthodox in words, but far from God in heart?
  - How have you prayed like Jonah in this regard...correct in words.. but with a hard heart?
- E. Have you ever done something wrong and then blamed God for consequences that came your way?
- F. Verse 8 seems to be an indictment against the Ninevites that Jonah hates. Jonah does not want his enemies to experience God's mysterious-outrageous mercy. Notice in verse 9 how he arrogantly compares himself to the Ninevites.
- G. Notice that God still hears Jonah despite his hard heart. God hears you even if he does not answer your prayer the way you would like. He hears you. He pursues you. How does the reality that God continues to pursue you and hear you, bring you comfort increasing your desire for more honesty with Him?