

## **GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES** (FOR MAY 16, 2021) For Community Groups or Personal Study

On this third Sunday in May we continue focusing our attention on the prophet Jonah. For five weeks we are “diving in” to this 2500+ year old fish story; trusting God to provide insights and instruction that will help us individually, and collectively, here at Grace of Christ.

Jonah was a prophet of God. He received clear directions from God ... and turned and ran in the opposite direction. He fooled himself into thinking he could run from God's presence. But wherever Jonah went God was right there with him. Whyever, and wherever, we run, God is with us. Wherever, and whatever, we try to hide, God knows all about it, and all about us.

The book of Jonah is a fascinating story of God's call to go, our responsibility for how we respond to that call, and God's kindness along the way ... sometimes His kindness involves a BIG fish!

Jonah is a story of redemption and second chances, not only for prophets but for individuals, and even nations, far from God.

Dive in ... swim around ... and get to know Jonah, some sailors, a giant fish, a foreign king, a plant, and the intent and heart of God. In this third installment of our Sunday sermon series Jonah reached his lowest point (the bottom of the sea and the belly of the fish). It was there, as all hope seemed lost, as weeds wrapped around his head, as Jonah sensed death approaching, as he reflected on his life, that this prophet rediscovered his faith in God and his calling from God. And God spoke to the fish ... exit Jonah.

### **LESSONS FROM JONAH** SERMON PASSAGE: JONAH 2:1-10

<sup>17</sup> 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.

<sup>2:1</sup> Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish, <sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>3</sup> For 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.' <sup>4</sup> Then I said, 'I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.'

<sup>5</sup> The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head <sup>6</sup> at 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. <sup>7</sup> When my life was fainting away, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple.

<sup>8</sup> Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love.

<sup>9</sup> But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the Lord!

<sup>10</sup> And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land."

Jonah was a prophet of God during the reign of King Jeroboam II (700's BC). In the New Testament Jesus referred to Jonah several times. He is a fascinating prophet: wrestling with God, disobedient, headstrong, and then encountering the mercy of God for the citizens of Nineveh, and for himself too.

### **WHAT DOES IT SAY?**

1. What does this passage tell us about the fish? Why did the fish swallow Jonah? Why did the fish expel (vomit) him out?
2. How did Jonah respond to being swallowed by the fish?
3. How would you describe Jonah's prayer? Angry, humble, contrite, bargaining, full of excuses?

### **WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

4. What was Jonah's understanding of why he was in the crisis he was in? (verse 3 and verse 6)
5. What can we learn about Jonah, and about God, from Jonah's prayer?

### **WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?**

6. When you find yourself in great distress who do you call out to for help? Do they actually help? How do they help?
7. Do you believe God hears your prayers? When do you pray? Why do you pray? What do you pray?
8. Do you, like the prophet Jonah, believe that God is able to use any aspect of creation to accomplish His purposes? Explain your answer. Give examples.
9. When was the last time you were making choices contrary to God and yet God was still gracious to, and patient with, you?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

Spend time in silence, praying (even if just for a minute or two). Prayer is simply a conversation with God. Be honest. If you don't know how or what to pray admit that and ask God to help you pray. Ask God to give you confidence that He loves you and He will never leave you, regardless of the circumstances around you. Give thanks to God for answering your prayers, even those offered in desperation. He will help you (us) because He loves you (us).