



## **Message Series – JONAH**

Week of January 11, 2009

Jonah: No More Running

### **BREAKING THE ICE:**

1. Are you a fisherman? Describe a time that was particularly memorable where you went fishing. You loved, you hated it, you got sick, you got a giant fish, etc. Tell about that. What is your “fishing” experience? Be honest - No fish stories.
2. Describe a time where you had a brush with death. What’s the closest you’ve come? What thoughts went through your mind?

### **CONNECTING:**

1. Read Jonah’s prayer in Jonah 2:1-10. What elements do you see in his prayer? (example: Thanksgiving, repentance, cry for help, etc.) Why is prayer often our last resort? Share one or two words that would best describe how you view prayer? **On a scale of 1-10, rate your prayer life. What would make your prayer life more meaningful?**
2. On a scale of 1-10, what level of distress do you have to reach before you cry out to God? **God can deliver people of anything, in any way, and at any time. But He often does it in phases. Which phase of deliverance are you currently in? Describe what God is doing in this phase of your life?** Why do you think God often waits till the last minute to deliver us? What do you think Jonah learned about God through his experience?
3. What are some worthless idols we can cling to instead of putting our hope in God? Describe some ways we forfeit the grace of God when we trust in idols? What idols do you need to give up? How is God currently pursuing you with His loving kindness (*hesed*)?
4. “Salvation comes from the Lord!” In what ways do you think Jonah’s deliverance by God changed him? How has God brought your life “up from the pit”? How did this change you and was the change permanent? Why do we often return to our old ways once the danger is past? Would you rather God save you from an outward circumstance or from an inward struggle with sin? At salvation, how does God permanently change us on the inside?
5. Prayer should not be about getting God to do what we want. Instead, effective prayer is our coming into agreement with what He wants. How can we keep the focus of our prayers on God’s will? **What is your biggest prayer need? Take plenty of time to pray for each other.**

**TAKE IT HOME:**

1. What will you do this week to intentionally connect more with God? Suggestions:  
a) write your prayers and God's response b) choose a verse or passage to personalize and pray (Ephesians 1:17-19, 3:15-20; Psalm 139, 142, 145, 147; Colossians 1:9-11) and/or c) give God thanks throughout the day.
  
2. What are you currently going through that causes you to feel helpless, hopeless or powerless? Seek the Lord in the midst of this and ask Him to bring you to a deeper surrender, trust and dependence on Him. Thank Him in advance for *saving you*, in His way and in His time.
  
3. What worthless idols have you depended on to *save you* (keep you feeling secure, satisfied, significant)? What vows (commitments) have you made to God that you haven't kept? Surrender your idols and receive God's grace to make good on your vows.

**DISCOVERY QUESTIONS:****Read the second chapter of Jonah.**

- If you were Jonah, in the belly of the fish, what thoughts would flash through your mind? What was Jonah thinking and feeling? When have you felt this way? What do you see in Jonah's prayer? In verses 1-6, what does Jonah say God did for him? Why do you think Jonah said that it was God who "hurled him into the deep"?
  
- Where does Jonah show hope in God's deliverance in spite of his situation? (vv 4, 6-7, 9) Compare verse 3 with 1:15. How do you think Jonah is viewing his circumstances? God's control? God's purposes?
  
- Before this incident, do you think Jonah was trusting in any worthless idols? What grace had he forfeited? When does Jonah remember the Lord? What else does he remember? (vv. 8-9) What aspects of this prayer sound like confession or repentance? What vow do you think Jonah was remembering? (v9b) What vows have you made to the Lord that you haven't kept? What idols have robbed you of experiencing God's grace?
  
- What does God use to deliver Jonah from the belly of the fish? God used something that usually seems worthless and disgusting to save him from certain death. In what ways do you think this deliverance by God changed Jonah? How has God done something similar in your life?
  
- What can you learn from Jonah's experience? What is revealed about God in this chapter? How will you apply this to your life?

**VERSES FOR FURTHER STUDY:**

Psalm 86:13,15, 106, 138, 142, 146; Romans 2:4, 8:35-39; Ephesians 2:5-8; Hebrews 4:16, 5:7-9,12:5-11