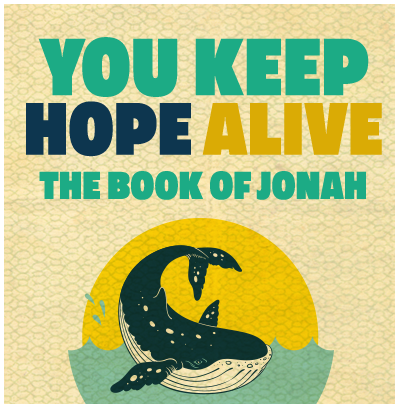




WEEKLY STUDY

Jonah - Week 1

We began a new series for the month of August on the book of Jonah. This week we'll read and pray through the story of the prophet Jonah's disobedience and God's willingness to pursue him...even through a storm. It's a hard story, but God is good and can be trusted.

For those of you continuing to pray through the Psalms daily, you will read Psalms 85-91 this week.

Please note our prayer focus for the week in the box below. Join us in seeing what God will do as we unite in prayer.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from your own daily reflections and consider the Group Discussion questions below. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Prayer Focus:

- Pray for someone whose heart seems to be turned away from God in disobedience. Pray that would continue to pursue them.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: Jonah 1.1-3 (NIV)

The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai:² "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."

³ But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

- The book of Jonah is short and it moves quickly. In three short verses, we read about the call and disobedience of Jonah. His reaction was not very prophet-like and so we can assume that Jonah had a strongly formed opinion of the Ninevites. World dynamics were very different than today, but you might consider what your impulse would be if you were sent to a city directly across from modern-day Mosul, Iraq. Or there may be other places in the world that would feel like no-go zones. In that way, we might have a bit of compassion for his situation. Have you ever felt called into a dangerous place? How did you react?
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- **Prayer Prompt: The prudent see danger and take refuge, but the simple keep going and pay the penalty. (Proverbs 22.3)**
- *God, I want to be faithful to go where you send me. I turn over my fears to you as a sign of trust. Amen.*

TUESDAY: JONAH 1.4-6 (NIV)

Then the LORD sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵ All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. ⁶ The captain went to him and said, “How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish.”

- As you read these verses, notice that God is actually the main character in this story. God is the primary actor creating a great wind that creates a storm that prevents Jonah from running farther away. That word for “wind” is the same word that, in other places, describes God’s Spirit or breath. God’s Spirit was chasing down Jonah and drove the ship’s captain to wake Jonah from his slumber. When God sends a wake-up call, it’s noticeable! The sailors knew enough about the God of Jonah that they begged him to cry out for help. Has God ever sent an obvious wake-up call your way? I sometimes refer to this as God “thumping me on the head”, but a storm-threatened ship works too! Is God so obviously present in your life that others seek your cry for intervention?
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- **Prayer Prompt: everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. ¹⁴ This is why it is said:**

**“Wake up, sleeper,
rise from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.” (Ephesians 5.13-14)**

- *God, Wake me from my slumber and extend your grace as I cry out to you today. Send your Spirit to guide my path. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: JONAH 1.7-8 (NIV)

Then the sailors said to each other, “Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity.” They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸ So they asked him, “Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?”

- The casting of lots to determine who (or whose god) was responsible for the dire circumstances was a common practice in those days. They didn’t just blame the deity, they blamed the deity’s follower. Jonah had an opportunity to be an unplanned witness to these sailors. Instead of witnessing to the people of Nineveh, he was now asked about his origin and the people he came from. Has God ever used your self imposed detour to create an opportunity to point to Him?
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- **Prayer Prompt: The LORD will fulfill his purpose for me;
your steadfast love, O LORD, endures forever.
Do not forsake the work of your hands. (Psalm 138.8, NRSV)**
- *God, you are a God who can work all things for your purpose. Make me bold to proclaim who you are, even through my mistakes and wanderings. Amen.*

THURSDAY: JONAH 1.9-12 (NIV)

He answered, “I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” ¹⁰ This terrified them and they asked, “What have you done?” (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.) ¹¹ The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?” ¹² “Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”

- Jonah claimed to be a worshipper of God even though he had not followed his direction. Our identity remains true even when our sin is exposed. Do you believe that this is true for you? How has sin in your own life been used to reveal God's goodness?
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- **Prayer Prompt: We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. (Romans 8.28)**
- *God, I am far from perfect, but I want to be more like Jesus. Make me more like Jesus, and remind me of who and Whose I am. Amen.*

FRIDAY: JONAH 1.13-16 (NIV)

Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. ¹⁴ Then they cried out to the LORD, "Please, LORD, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, LORD, have done as you pleased." ¹⁵ Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. ¹⁶ At this the men greatly feared the LORD, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him.

- The sailors actually showed a level of compassion towards Jonah (unlike his lack of compassion for the Ninevites). They didn't want to be responsible for his death. They were fearful of this God they knew so little about. So much so that they offered him a sacrifice. It seems possible that more than one of them continued to seek out God after this episode. In most tellings of a story like this one, the sailors would have been made out to be the enemies, yet it's not so black and white. Who are typically seen as enemies in your personal life or in the culture around you? Have you ever been surprised by the conversion of a "bad guy"?
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- **Prayer Prompt: Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. (Genesis 50.20)**
- *God, Help me to see my enemies the way you do. Surprise me today by how you are working in the lives of those I may have written off. Amen.*

SATURDAY: JONAH 1.17 (NIV)

Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

- God (the main character) is still providing for Jonah, even in this low moment in his life. God's provisions don't always feel great at first. But they are always what we need. The parallel between Jonah in the belly of the fish and the 3 days of Jesus in the tomb have been written about for generations. God does his best resurrecting work when we are surrounded by death. Have you spent an extended period of time in a seemingly irredeemable situation? How did God show up?
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- **Prayer Prompt: So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being! (2 Corinthians 5.17)**
- *God, you have shown up in times when it looked like sin and death would win out. Let me live a life resurrection today. Amen.*

GROUP DISCUSSION

As we heard in Pastor Jacob's sermon last weekend, Jonah needed (and got) a wake-up call. Over the years, the church has experienced and continues to pray for A Great Awakening. In the 18th century, John and Charles Wesley, George Whitfield and others were a part of a movement that swept through England, Europe and eventually America. They lived in a time where God's Word was not read, revered, or lived out. Some of the key tenants are listed below.

- We are all sinners and sin can lead to eternal separation from God.
- We can all be saved when we confess our sins and profess Jesus Christ as the Son of God, our Savior.
- We can all have a relationship with God through Christ Jesus and his resurrection.
- Our faith in Jesus is meant to be both personal and communal.

Jonah's was a personal awakening, brought on by God's actions while Jonah was running away from him.

- How can the ideas of the Great Awakening movement be seen in Jonah's story and (more importantly) in yours?