



Help for the Journey: Sermon Resources and References

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God of the Depths: Jonah's Flight and God's Faithful Pursuit
Steve Hawkins, speaker

Jonah flees the mission God has called him to, yet God ironically and graciously uses him in spite of his stubborn refusal and in His mercy, saves Jonah's life as well. We have a greater Jonah in Christ.

Central Text:

¹¹ Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?" For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. ¹² He said to them, "Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you." ¹³ Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. ¹⁴ Therefore they called out to the LORD, "O LORD, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you." ¹⁵ So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. ¹⁶ Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows. ¹⁷ 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.

Jonah 1:11-17 (ESV)

Further Reading:

["Counterfeit Gods" by Tim Keller \(Book\)](#)

["How Could Jonah Survive Three Days in the Belly of the Whale?" - ChristianAnswers.com](#)

[Word Study & Answers - Ra McLaughlin / Third Millenium Ministries](#)

[Sermon: "What Meanest Thou, O Sleeper?" \(Spurgeon\)](#)

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. What do you believe about the historical nature of this story? Do you think it's intended to be a literal history or more of an allegory or parable? Does a person's position on that issue determine his biblical faithfulness?
2. Do you believe in / have you experienced miracles or supernatural intervention in your own life?
3. Where in this passage do you find God's sovereignty emphasized? What are the implications of God's sovereign nature for Jonah's attempts at flight? How do you see this reflected in your own walk with God?
4. Do you believe you can outrun God? How does your answer affect your spiritual life and your obedience to God?
5. Has God ever used you in spite of yourself?

6. Are the storm and the huge fish punishment for Jonah or gracious salvation? Might some of the things we count as trouble and curses really be God's grace at work in our lives, drawing us to Himself?
7. While in the belly of the fish, Jonah finds himself in God's classroom. Have you ever experienced God's teaching in moments of crisis or hardship? Are we perhaps more open to God's teaching at those moments?
8. Do you think Jonah's actions in saying, "throw me overboard" represent a desperate and defiant attempt at suicide or a heroic attempt to save the sailors' lives? Could there be elements of both?
9. In the story, Jonah offers himself as a sacrifice to appease the wrath of God. How is Jesus a greater Jonah? What would it mean for your life if you believe and take hold of Jesus' sacrifice in a personal way today? How would that impact your relationships with God and others?

Gospel Practice:

Consider your own life at this moment. Are you in a storm of any kind? Pray for eyes to see God's sovereignty and love. Ask God to give you a new heart toward Him and toward others.



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