

# Learning from the reluctant prophet Jonah 1-4 June 29, 2025

## I. The STAGES of Jonah's STORY. (Jonah 1-4)

- A. RELUCTANT and RUNNING away. (1:1-3)
- B. STUCK and supposedly SURRENDERED. (1:4-2:10)
- C. OBEDIENT on the OUTSIDE. (3:1-10)
- D. In CONFLICT with his CREATOR. (4:1-9)
- E. A final QUESTION that leaves us HANGING. (4:10-11)

Jonah is a short book, and one that we think we know fairly well from time spent in Sunday School. But as we follow the life of this prophet who didn't want to be a prophet there are some things that stand out along the way.

1. Kid's Question: If you could ask Jonah any one question what would it be and why?
2. Where do you most identify with Jonah's story? Why?

## II. LETTING Jonah's story SOAK in. (Jonah 1-4)

- A. God CARES about us AND our ENEMIES... (1:1-2; 4:1-2,4,9-11; Mt. 5:43-48)
- B. ...and isn't DEPENDENT on our EFFORT. (3:1-10; Acts 17:24-25)
- C. A CRISIS can get us HALF-WAY... (2:7-9; Jn 6:26)
- D. ...but our HEARTS must be EXPOSED. (4:1-9; Ps 139:23-24)

Two of the key lessons that we see in Jonah are first, God loves the whole world - even our enemies. Second, as He works to draw our enemies to Himself, He is shaping us to be more like Him. Jonah's story challenges us on multiple levels.

3. Do you find it hard to believe that God loves your enemies? What makes that challenging to accept and to live with?
4. When have you weathered a crisis in your own life? What happened to you spiritually through that time?
5. What scares you (or excites you) about God working to expose what is in your own heart? How can you tell if you are working with Him or against Him in that process?

## III. RESPONDING fully to God's WORK in and AROUND us. (4:10-11)

- A. God WORKS on MULTIPLE levels all the TIME. (4:4,9; Gen. 50:20; Jn 5:17)
- B. We OFTEN miss what is OBVIOUS. (Jonah 4; 2 Sam. 12:1-7)
- C. God uses the OUTSIDE to expose the INSIDE. (4:10-11; Deut. 8:2)
- D. LETTING go in order to make SPACE. (2:8; Lk. 10:41-42)
- E. Embracing QUESTIONS as INVITATIONS. (4:10-11; Jn 7:17)

While we may not be running the opposite direction, or be swallowed by a great fish, often we push against God's call. And while we may do it for external reasons, often God is trying to work on things inside of us. Fighting against Him is actually counter-productive, as He is trying to renew and restore us into what He has created us to be.

6. When have you missed something obvious that God was doing (or asking you to do) and only realized it later?
7. When have your outside circumstances revealed something about the inside of your own life? What was that like?
8. What do you struggle to let go? What questions do you have that might be better understood as invitations from God?