



GOD'S MERCY

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF JONAH

CURRENT THEME:

God's Mercy

MEMORY VERSE

"The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."

• **Exodus 34:6 (ESV)**

JUNE 8 - LIFE APPLICATION

God is the giver of second chances.

Today's Scripture: **Jonah 2**

Note to Parents:

For the next few weeks, we will be learning about God's mercy for all people through the true story of **Jonah, the disobedient prophet**. Your children may have heard about Jonah before, in children's books or even in the Veggie Tales videos. But, in truth, Jonah was not just a funny character but a prophet called by God, and he was disobedient when God sent word for him to go preach against the evil ways of the Ninevites. Jonah disobeyed God, but **God in His mercy** would not give up on Jonah, or on the Ninevites!

Review: (Parents, review is important for your kids. They will remember and learn better whenever you review what they learned previously.)

1. **In Chapter 1 of the Book of Jonah, what did God command Jonah to do?** *(He commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach to the evil Ninevites.)*

Why do you think God wanted Jonah to preach to the Ninevites?

(Because He loved them and wanted them to repent of their sins and turn to Him.) God is a giver of second chances. He doesn't give up on us, even when we have turned away from Him and we have sinned!

2. **What did Jonah do when God commanded him to go to Nineveh?** *(He went in the opposite direction, on a boat headed to Tarshish, 2500 miles away!)* **Why did Jonah disobey God?** *(He hated the Ninevites because they were so cruel and evil, and he didn't want to help them.)*
3. **What did God do when Jonah ran away?** *(He sent a storm, and Jonah was eventually thrown into the sea because he told the sailors the storm was his fault.)* **What happened to Jonah when he was thrown into the sea?** *(God sent a big fish to swallow him!)* **Did God give up on Jonah?** *(No!)* God is giving Jonah another chance to obey him! Let's see what happens next!

Discussion

1. **What would have happened to Jonah if he had not been swallowed by the great fish?** *(He would have drowned.)* **How long was Jonah in the belly of the big fish?** *(3 days and 3 nights.)* **What do you think it was like for Jonah in the belly of the fish?** *(Discuss.)*
2. The situation probably felt hopeless to Jonah. **But what did Jonah do instead of giving up?** *(Verse 1 - Jonah "called out to the Lord.")* **And, what did God do?** *(He answered Jonah!)*

3. Read **verses 2-9** together. Jonah is reviewing all of the terrible things that have happened to him as a result of disobeying and running from the Lord, but there are also words of faith and hope! List the **words of hopelessness** and then the **words of hope and faithfulness** in each section of **Jonah 2**.

Words of hopelessness (verses 2-4): "For you cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; Into the heart of the seas, all your waves and your billows passed over me. Then I said, 'I am driven away from your sight;'" *(He thought the Lord had thrown him away from His presence.)*

Words of hope and faithfulness (verse 4): "yet I shall again look upon your holy temple." *(Jonah knew that he would still be with the Lord one day.)*

Words of hopelessness (verses 5-6): "The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever." *(He was drowning and near death.)*

Words of hope and faithfulness (verses 6-7): "yet you brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God. When my life was fainting away, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. *(He remembered the temple of God, and to pray to the Lord.)*

Words of hopelessness (verse 8): "Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love." *(Those who put their faith in things other than the Lord turn away from His steadfast love.)*

Words of hope and faithfulness (verse 9): "But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the Lord!" *(Jonah repented and decided to follow what the Lord told him to do.)*

4. **And, after Jonah repented, what happened?** (See **verse 10**: "And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.")

A word from our pastor, David Chadwick:

Jonah's faith journey had to do with his heart. The heart of the matter is a matter of the heart. Grace and mercy are our only hope to shatter our prideful hearts.

Jonah says salvation belongs to the Lord. He realizes that everything he has in life, his call from God as a prophet, his national heritage, even his salvation from this terrible situation, will only come by grace. Only God can give these good gifts. They are not earned, only received by faith. Grace is the opposite of pride. It's the opposite of self-righteousness. Jonah finally realizes his pride and self-righteousness.

Jonah repents. Then, and only then, does **verse 10** occur where the great fish vomits Jonah onto the dry land. In other words, **God gives Jonah a second chance.**

Aren't we all glad for God's grace and mercy where he gives us a second and even third and fourth chances when we fail him? It's the best news I can give any of you today or forever. God's grace is stronger than our sin. He will restore our hard hearts. He will give us hope.

Family challenge:

Have you ever had a time when you felt hopeless? Maybe you knew you had messed up, made a big mistake, broken the trust of someone you loved? Have you ever felt that there was no way to solve a problem that you were in the middle of? Think about what Jonah remembered and decided to do:

- He remembered God's faithfulness.
- He prayed to the Lord, and the Lord answered him!
- He reminded himself that salvation comes from the Lord.
- He returned to a voice of thanksgiving.
- He repented and decided to follow all God had told him to do.
- Remember, God is a giver of second chances, and third and 4th and 100th chances! His faithful love and grace never gives up on us!

Prayer:

Lord, we thank You for giving us another chance when we need Your grace and forgiveness. Help us to realize when we are not living as we should, and to turn back to You. Sometimes we run away from Your will, like Jonah, but we know that we can do all things with Your help. In Jesus' Name, Amen.