

JONAH: RUNNING AWAY FROM GOD

Jonah 1

Awareness

Before listening, reflect:

- What do you know about the story of Jonah?
- Have you ever wished you could run away or hide from God? What circumstances prompted this feeling?

Have you ever *not* wanted to do something so badly that you went to great lengths to orchestrate circumstances just so that you couldn't do that thing? What if it was God telling you to do something that you really didn't want to do—something countercultural to everything you knew or had previously experienced? Do you think that would make it any easier? There are so many reasons we might neglect, ignore, or even run away from God's call in our lives. The story of Jonah invites us into self-reflection, to consider how we might be like Jonah so that we might consider our biases and see others as God sees them. Studying the story of Jonah encourages us to discover important truths about ourselves and our obedience to God as well as about God's character and his relentless love for his people.

Listen: [*Jonah: Running Away from God*](#)

Reflection

After listening, consider:

- In segment 1, host Scott Hoezee lists 3 types of messages God's prophets often delivered to his people. God would either tell a prophet to challenge Israel, comfort Israel, or rebuke Israel. Which of these comes to mind first when you think of Old Testament prophets? Why do you think that is?
- Do you think the church today is like or unlike Israel and Jonah in their tendency to exclude non-Israelites because they had forgotten God's promise to Abram in Genesis 12? Why?
- In segment 2, Scott observes that in the moment, the sailors had more respect for God than Jonah did. Why do you think God's people sometimes forget to respect him? Have you ever witnessed or experienced this?
- Are there groups of people you struggle to accept or to see as God's image-bearers? Why do they seem unlovable to you? Do you think there are groups of people in society that our churches struggle to accept or that our churches see as unlovable?

Related Passages

- **Deuteronomy 18:14-22**
- **Isaiah 49:6**
- **Genesis 12:1-3**

- Psalm 139:1-16
- Acts 10

Conclusion

As you close your time of reflection, consider Scott's statement in segment 3.

"I think all of us have a little Jonah in us, right? We all sometimes don't really want to do what we know God really wants us to do; and often it is exactly Jonah's conundrum. We are called to love people that we don't want to love. We don't even like them, right? We are called to love people who behave in unlovable ways, but we know that God has called us, but sometimes, like Jonah, we think: If I just ignore it, God's call will go away. If I just head to a different part of town, then, you know, I am not obligated to help the people in that other part of town; but it is not going to work."

Do you agree or disagree that we all have a little Jonah in us? Have you ever experienced a conundrum like Jonah, where God called you to do something that was uncomfortable for you? Who is he calling you to love as he loves? Pray your thoughts about these questions to God. Tell him the feelings that stirred in you as you studied Jonah chapter 1. If you feel convicted, offer a prayer of confession. If you feel helpless, seek his help. You might also give thanks for the opportunity for self-reflection he provides through the story of Jonah.

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