

JONAH

the Prickly Prophet

OVERVIEW: Willing. Obedient. Prickly? That's not normally a word we use to describe a prophet. Jonah is one of the most unusual prophets. Instead of willing, he is reluctant. Instead of obedient, he is rebellious. Instead of gracious, he is unsympathetic. Still, God carries out his divine deliverance for a wayward people and meanwhile teaches Jonah hard lessons about the expansiveness of his grace.

Week 1 • Rebellion

The Word of the Lord came to Jonah directing him to go to Ninevah and cry out against the sin of the people. What did Jonah do? He got up and went— but went the opposite way! He didn't want to be a prophet. He set sail with a group of sailors to get as far away from Ninevah— and God— as possible. He was not aligned with God's plan. Yet, God didn't give up on Jonah completing this mission. When we are reluctant and rebellious, God doesn't give up on us that easily either.

Jonah 1:1-16

Week 2 • Time Out

In his rebellion, Jonah is thrown out of the boat and swallowed by a great big fish. For three days he stays in the deep, dark, belly of the fish to reconsider his initial response to God's direction. Finally, he remembers the LORD and God delivers him ashore. Time-outs can be good for us and give us the opportunity to reconsider our resistance to work and purpose we may resist in God's kingdom.

Jonah 1:17-2:10

Week 3 • Worst Sermon Ever

Jonah goes to Ninevah to deliver a message of salvation. However, it is the shortest, most uninvested, and lackluster message ever delivered. Still, he is obedient and delivers the message to Ninevah. The outcome? Complete repentance. The hardest working preachers can't even deliver such results, only the Word of God can accomplish such a feat. When we obey, even with our lack of enthusiasm or skill, God delivers.

Jonah 3:1-10

Week 4 • Fireworks

The people of Ninevah are saved! You might think the prophet would rejoice, but instead Jonah became angry. He wanted that city to go up in flames because of their sin. Yet, God's mercy was beyond Jonah's prickly heart and God shows him as God's compassion was for the people of Ninevah, it was also for him. God gives his mercy, even when we resist it. God gives and God takes away.

Jonah 4:1-8

Week 5 • Question

God questions Jonah about his anger. Was it right for him to be angry about the care he received from God? Was it not right for God to be concerned for a people lost and wayward? God reproves Jonah and poses a question that leaves Jonah speechless. In our own lives, we also are given this question to ponder about the expansiveness of God's mercy.

Jonah 4:9-11



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