

THE GRACE OF GOD

Jonah 2

Individuals or groups of people may enjoy working through this content while having fellowship in a home, while away on summer vacation, or in a Connect Group. We'll provide updated content from week-to-week across this summer.

Scripture: Jonah 2

SUMMARY

Jonah 2 provides a powerful account of Jonah's prayer from the belly of the great fish. After attempting to flee from God's command and being thrown into the sea, Jonah finds himself in a place of utter desperation. It is here, in the depths, that he cries out to God. Jonah's prayer is a heartfelt plea for deliverance and a profound acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and grace. God hears Jonah's cry and commands the fish to vomit Jonah onto dry land, demonstrating His incredible mercy and power to save.

We exist to help connect **Jesus to people, people to community, and community to God's mission**. Here are a few insights about how Jonah 2 connects to our mission as a church.

JESUS TO PEOPLE...

Jonah 2 foreshadows Jesus' own death, burial, and resurrection. Just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights, so Jesus was in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. Jonah's descent into the depths and his subsequent deliverance illustrate the gospel's core message: Jesus willingly went down into the depths of death to save us from our sins. The salvation that Jesus provides is **substitutionary** (Jesus in our place), **sacrificial** (at immense cost), and **satisfactory** (deals with our sin). Jonah's cry for salvation from within the fish symbolizes our own cry for rescue from sin and death, and God's response to Jonah mirrors His response to us in Christ. We exist to help connect Jesus to people, emphasizing that Jesus is our ultimate Savior who rescues us from the depths of sin.

...PEOPLE TO COMMUNITY...

Jonah's prayer highlights the importance of community and the mutual support of others. Though Jonah was alone in the fish, his experience and subsequent deliverance remind us of the importance of being part of a community that prays for and supports one another. Jonah's reference to the holy temple signifies the importance of a communal place of worship where believers gather to seek God together. Similarly, our church community is a place where we support one another in prayer, share our struggles, and celebrate God's deliverance. We exist to help connect people to the community, fostering relationships that reflect God's love and support in times of need.

...COMMUNITY TO MISSION

Jonah's experience in the fish and his prayer for deliverance ultimately propel him back into God's mission. God's response to Jonah's prayer is not just for Jonah's benefit but also for the sake of the people of Nineveh. Jonah's deliverance is a reminder that God's grace and salvation are meant to be shared with others. As a community, we are called to participate in God's mission, sharing the message of His grace and salvation with those who are far from Him. This aligns with our mission to connect community to mission, emphasizing that we are to be active participants in God's work of spreading His glory and grace to all corners of the earth.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What do Jonah's prayers and descriptions of his distress tell us about his relationship with God?
2. How does Jonah 2:2-6 reflect our own experiences of feeling overwhelmed and in need of God's deliverance?
3. How does Jonah's acknowledgment of God's sovereignty in verses 3 and 6 challenge our own perceptions of God's control over our lives?
4. What does it mean to remember the Lord and turn to Him in times of crisis, as Jonah did in verse 7?
5. How does Jonah's realization that "Salvation belongs to the Lord" in verse 9 shape our understanding of grace and mercy?
6. How can we, as a community, support one another in times of distress and help each other remember God's faithfulness?
7. How is God's deliverance of Jonah ultimately not about Jonah but about God's bigger program for what he wants to accomplish in the world?

THEMES TO PRAY

- Pray for individuals in our church who are overwhelmed and in need of God's deliverance (Jonah 2:2-3).
- Pray for our community to recognize and remember God's sovereignty, even in the depths of despair (Jonah 2:4-6).
- Pray for a deeper understanding and appreciation of God's grace and mercy in our lives (Jonah 2:7-9).
- Pray for our church to be a place of support and encouragement, helping each other look towards God in times of crisis (Jonah 2:7).
- Pray for our mission to share the message of God's salvation with those who are close to us but far from God (Jonah 2:10).
- Pray for hearts to be softened to the gospel, recognizing that "Salvation belongs to the Lord" (Jonah 2:9).
- Pray for a spirit of thankfulness and worship in response to God's deliverance and grace (Jonah 2:9-10).