



Jonah – Chapter 1

You Can Roam But You Cannot Hide

Please watch the sermon video and read Jonah Chapter 1. Then use the questions below to begin your discussion of the message in your group. Pray and ask the Holy Spirit to give you an understanding of His Word.

Core Message:

God has a call on our lives. We often run to places we think are beyond his presence. That's nonsense. When we refuse to align our lives to his calling, it often brings rough waters into our lives. He tracks us down and invites us to reconsider. Sometimes he puts us in a place where we have a chance to really think about it. The great fish is not only a place of discipline, but also a place of grace.

Helpful Information:

- **Jonah** – a reluctant prophet of God who lived in Israel and prophesied around 790-760 B.C.
- **Nineveh** – a large city in the country of Assyria, about 500 miles **east** of Jonah's home in Israel. The Assyrians were Israel's most feared and hated oppressors.
- **Tarshish** – a place far to the **west** of Israel. We are not sure of its exact location – it was perhaps in the area of modern day Turkey or Cyprus, or even as far as Spain.
- **Cast lots** – Ancient people sought the will of their gods by placing individualized markers in a container, then shaking it up and down until one marker fell out – interpreted as their god choosing one. Yahweh God also used this method to make his will known in certain cases.

Ice Breaker Question:

- When you were a child playing hide and seek, where was your favorite hiding place?

Discussion Questions:

- Read Psalm 139:1-12. Where can you go to hide from God? Have you ever tried?
- Why did Jonah go to such great lengths to avoid preaching to the people of Nineveh? Tell about a time you (or someone you know) expended more energy to avoid a responsibility than it would have taken to do a task in the first place?
- Being swallowed by a fish does not exactly sound pleasant. But actually it was God's way of saving Jonah from drowning, and putting him in to a "time out". Has something unpleasant ever happened that you later realized was God's way of saving you from something worse? Did that experience get your attention? Did it bring you closer to God and his will for your life?
- As a prophet of God, wouldn't Jonah know that he could not run from the presence of the Lord? We often know better than we act. Read James 1:22-25. Can you think of ways we act in accordance with what we know about God's will, and ways that we do not?
- God has provided you with gifts, talents and opportunities to serve Him. What has He called upon you to do? How are you responding?"

Thought Question:

- What responsibilities tempt you to "run away" instead of "stand and deliver"? Are you hiding from responsibility to your spouse? Your family? Your job?