

WORSHIP

SUGGESTED WORSHIP SONGS:

In Jesus Name, King Jesus, Everlasting God, Broken Vessels, Way Maker

WELCOME

Did you throw tantrums when you were a child? How did your parents respond to that? What were the consequences or discipline that you had to experience from your parents when you willfully disobeyed?

WORD

THE BOOK OF JONAH

(Read the whole book of Jonah (chapter 1 to 4))

Jonah 2:2-10 — Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the stomach of the fish, ²and he said, “I called out of my distress to the Lord, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice. ³“For You had cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me. ⁴“So I said, ‘I have been expelled from Your sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.’ ⁵“Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head. ⁶“I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, but You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord my God. ⁷“While I was fainting away, I remembered the Lord, and my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple. ⁸“Those who regard vain idols forsake their faithfulness, ⁹but I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the Lord.” ¹⁰Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land.

Through our **EXTRAORDINARY: Ordinary People, Extraordinary God** message series, we've learned that broken people have surrendered personal agendas to the Lord. John the Baptist's story was about letting Him increase as we decrease. In Isaiah's, it was an encounter with God's holiness that led the prophet to confess his uncleanness and then be cleansed by God's transformative power. Stories of brokenness are often neglected but necessary to hear if we want to teach leaders to be BROKEN. Like seeds planted in soil (**John 12:24**), the hard shell “dies” and life will come out. It's a beautiful picture of how we are to allow the life of Christ to manifest in our lives as we die to self.

Isaiah writes about God's “two addresses”; He lives on high and holy places, but He also dwells and makes Himself very real in the lives of the contrite and lowly of spirit. As we now consider the prophet JONAH, we begin at **2 Kings 14:25** that reveals Jonah's respectable lineage, having the prophet Amittai as his father. And yet, Jonah had to go through moments of brokenness for him to learn his lesson — one we must all learn: that **brokenness is a lifetime process**. Moreover, God's extraordinary traits are showcased in Jonah's story.

1. GOD IS PROACTIVE.

God loves us, He takes the initiative to reveal Himself and His plans for us. He called Jonah to minister to Nineveh (modern-day Mosul), a great but wicked city in Assyria. God chose a reluctant prophet, Jonah, to warn the land of His coming judgment. But God knew that Jonah needed to experience brokenness before he can be greatly used by the Lord. We see that in just the first few verses of **Jonah 1** — Jonah **didn't like the command of God**. A deeper look will tell us he did not only disliked the command, but **he also did not understand God's heart**. Jonah questioned why will

a good God wants to save the brutal Ninevites? They were Israel's oppressors!

So Jonah decided to run away from what he was called to do. He fled to the opposite direction, Joppa, and took a boat to Tarshish (modern-day Spain). The events that surround this incident shows us that God was not just proactively seeking to warn the Ninevites, but was also seeking to reach the depths of Jonah's heart. Many of us run away from God's will because we have not surrendered our own will to Him — we think we know better how things in life should be. Broken people will say **“I don't understand what You want, but I trust You completely.”** This is the most proper response to who God is.

2. GOD PURSUES.

Jonah didn't choose to respond that way. In **Jonah 1:4-5**, we even see him sleeping amidst the storm that God sent to pursue his runaway prophet. When you run away from God, you become calloused but God will not stop going after you. Every disobedience will bring storms in our lives to bring us back on track. That is part of the painful process of brokenness. Disobedient people don't just bring storms to themselves, but they also endanger their loved ones. **Hebrews 12:9** tells us that whom the Lord loves, He disciplines! **Jonah 1:8-9** was a tough confrontation which led the prophet to eventually admit that he was the reason for the calamity they faced. Note, however, that he defined himself to be a **“Hebrew”** — a nationality, rather than his purpose and role as a **prophet of the Lord**. He lost his identity in the storm, much like most of us when we face storms in our lives. Jonah somehow confessed his wrongdoing. Even in that grim moment, God still accomplished His purpose — the sailors believed in the

WORD (cont'd)

LORD, as a result of Jonah's foolishness. **Romans 8:28** reminds us that God will always achieve his purpose for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purpose.

When the people in the ship finally agreed to throw Jonah overboard, Jonah was swallowed by a big fish.

3. GOD IS PATIENT.

In the belly of the fish, Jonah prayed confessing his regret over his rebellion, and his new willingness to obey God. He then accomplished the mission he was sent for and warned the people of Nineveh about God's coming wrath; but he did so without a heart for the people (**Jonah 3:3-4**). The Ninevites repented, as they fasted and called on the Lord for mercy. That was a happy ending, but the story did not end there. It continues on to reveal the heart of Jonah and how we all have the tendency to be like him. Deep in his heart, Jonah wanted the Ninevites to suffer, not be saved. The prophet prayed a second time, effectively saying "**Lord I know you are a GOOD GOD, that's why I didn't want to go!**" (4:1) His outburst was met by a quiet question from

God – "**Why are you angry?**" Even with Jonah's immature tantrums, God was so gracious to provide a plant to shield Jonah from the scorching heat! Yet to test the brokenness of this man, God allowed a worm to eat the plant, exposing Jonah to the harsh realities of his surroundings. Jonah once again resorted to anger, wishing to die. We see God's patience as He continually sought to restore Jonah and wake him up from his foolishness, much like what He does to most of us.

There are many of us like Jonah. We love our comfort more than we love people. Our agenda is often selfish. God wanted to teach Jonah to love the people! God is amazing: He used Jonah as a sign of Christ's death and resurrection (**Matthew 12:39-41**). People repented at the preaching of Jonah. Jesus fulfilled the same ministry of saving people facing God's judgment for our sins; God still reaches out to us today. Will we obey from the heart, God's mission for us? Will we choose His will over our comfort and convenience? May we do so in response to who God is and His will for us!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Were there moments in your life when you deliberately chose to run away from what God wanted you to do? How did it go for you?
2. What is your "big fish" moment? What event in your life (in the past or currently) can you consider as both God's wake-up call and saving grace for you? How have you been living your life after that?
3. What commitment do you need to make to the Lord today? He may be sending you to your family, workmate, classmate, to share about Jesus. Quit running away, and live out your life's greatest calling as you share the gospel to these people!

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for the "Ninevites" in your life—people that you may consider too wicked to save or someone who has been like an oppressor to you. Be part of the answer to your prayer and share Christ with them. Start this week!

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of Public Servants
- A God-centered Philippines
- Repentance and Salvation

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples
- Elders, Pastors, Leaders, and Families
- Ministries and Churches worldwide

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living
- Salvation of family and friends