



# JONAH

---

IT'S NOT ABOUT A FISH!  
POSSESSING GOD'S HEART AS MY OWN





# LIVINGHOPE

baptist church

*Blessed be the God and Father  
of our Lord Jesus Christ,  
who according to  
His abundant mercy  
has begotten us again to a  
Living Hope  
through the resurrection of  
Jesus Christ from the dead.*

*1 Peter 1:3*



## **Community Group Purpose Statement**

We, as smaller gatherings of one family, will practice with our lives the gospel truths that we confess with our mouths. Together, we will allow our lives to be challenged by the gospel and one another; we will live lives of boldness and purpose. As we walk in the light of the gospel, we will point to the grace of God and its power to set lives free from sin and death. We will continue praying, teaching, making disciples, and bearing one another's burdens. Following the pattern set before us by Jesus, we will bring joy to our family (the church) and glory to his name.

## **What is a Community Group?**

Community groups are small gatherings of people that meet regularly for friendship, accountability, study and prayer, laughter, and occasionally tears. Community groups are an essential expression of the mission of Living Hope Baptist Church. They're a place where we learn more about Jesus and life together. They're the place where we wrestle with the truths of the Bible and encourage one another toward the life that God intends for us.

Each community group is unique, shaped by its neighborhood and the people who attend. However, you can expect a weekly gathering in a residence that involves food, conversation, prayer, discussion for applying the Bible to practical living, and service in the neighborhood. At the heart of each community group is the desire to see an authentic community marked by love for Jesus, one another, and the neighborhood.

## **Why Should I Join a Community Group?**

The God of the Bible is a Trinitarian God who is one and three persons: Father, Son, and Spirit. God has made us in his image, which means we are made for community and friendship. And when we are not living in community we suffer because life in a sinful world is too complex and tempting to journey alone. Therefore, community groups are a place where we can live in relationship with one another through the ups and downs of life.



# JONAH

IT'S NOT ABOUT A FISH!  
POSSESSING GOD'S HEART AS MY OWN

## **Introduction**

pg i

### **Chapter:**

1. The Heart of God in the Times of Jonah pg 1
2. Three Hearts Revealed pg 7
3. God Preaches His Heart through a Storm pg 13
4. God Delivers Imperfect & Undeserving Hearts pg 19
5. The Mercy of God Reveals the Messenger's Heart pg 25
6. A Heart that Believes, but Doesn't Care pg 31

### **Prayer Needs**

pg 36





# *Jonah*

## INTRODUCTION

For many people, when they recall Sunday School lessons in times past of the character, Jonah, they immediately think about the large fish that swallowed him. There is nothing wrong, perhaps, with knowing the facts about the Biblical account of Jonah, but often the true message of the book gets overlooked. That message, in short, is knowing God's heart towards those that need Him most and aligning our heart with His. In this study, you will journey through the book of Jonah, all the while seeing the contrasts between the prophet's heart and God's heart.

Jonah's day and time would certainly pass as our own. Man's heart had drifted from knowing and worshiping God, to worshipping self and self ascribed idols of wealth and other luxuries. The oppression of the poor and needy, murders, strifes, lying and cheating were not lacking in any way. A true concern for the spiritually needy was absent.

Now, as you study through this material, you will see how God used his reluctant prophet, Jonah, to send the message God had in store for the people of Nineveh and how God reveals His heart of mercy, grace and compassion for those we often despise and reject.

Jonah; it's not about a fish!



## *Chapter 1*

# The Heart of God in the Times of Jonah

## **INTRODUCTION SURVEY**

**1. Read the book of Jonah.**

**2. Hosea and Amos ministered in the same time period as Jonah. In what way do the following statements made about their time sound very similar to our time in which we live?**

**a. They used their finances and wealth to worship idols (Hosea 2:8)**

**Our time:**

**b. Their lifestyle was full of murders, lying, stealing, committing adultery, and other sins. (Hosea 4:2)**

**Our time:**

**c. They were worshippers of idols (Hosea 4:12)**

**Our time:**

**d. They loved pleasure and the luxuries life gave them but they did not grieve over sin (Amos 6:4-6)**

**Our time:**

**e. They were religious but spiritually empty (Amos 5:21-24)**

**Our time:**

**3. Why is it so easy to grow cold in your relationship with God in times of prosperity?**

**4. For those walking with God, a severe trial and time of testing will only strengthen their faith. How do trials accomplish that and can you think of a time in your life when this happened?**

**5. We gather on Sunday’s to serve, fellowship, encourage, give, and worship. Do you ever worship God on Sunday and God responds the same way that He did In Amos 5:21-23? If yes, why is that?**

**6. What would it take from God's people if God started filling Living Hope with converted sinners with the characteristics that were mentioned in Hosea, Amos, and Jonah?** (What would that look like and what would it require. Remember, they haven't been in "church" for years like most of us.

**7. As you read Jonah and heard the introduction in this series, why is Jonah not about a fish?**

**† How do these truths impact my life and how should they transform my life?**







## *Chapter 2*

# Three Hearts Revealed

## **SUMMARY**

Read Jonah 1:1-5a. We will see in this lesson that the heart which is our control center determines our actions. We will see the heart of God, the heart of Jonah, and the heart of the heathen sailors. God is the giver of grace. Jonah was a denier of grace, and the heathen sailors were in need of grace. God's heart is that we possess His heart of grace toward those who are in need.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. Have you ever responded in a similar way as Jonah did?
  - When challenged with a specific truth or principle in God's Word?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - When you sensed God's leading you in any area in your life?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Why do you think that sometimes we tend to view God's leading in our life as not being good for us?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. How did "self" get in the way of Jonah's obedience?

4. How does “self” get in the way of our obedience?

5. What other “voices” in our world competes with God’s? Are there any you struggle with?

6. How does our response to God’s Word reflect what is really going on in our heart?

7. Is there anything in your life that you struggle with but you can honestly say that you have never really sought to see what was in your heart driving that behavior? If yes, what should you do about it?

**8.** Why does God ask us to do difficult things? Answer the question from these three points of view:

For God:

For Others:

For Yourself:

**9.** How could Jonah say all those truthful things in Chapter 4 verse 2, and yet at the same time not desire that for others?  
How are we the same?

**† How do these truths impact my life and how should they transform my life?**





## *Chapter 3*

# God Preaches His Heart Through a Storm

## **SUMMARY**

Read Jonah 1:4-17. Allowing His prophet to run, God preaches a message of judgment and grace in the storm, which reaches the hearts of the heathen sailors, and continues His plan to reach into the heart of His wayward prophet.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. How can you view God's chastening hand upon you as also an act of grace from His hand?
2. What reason or reasons can you think of as to why God allows His children to run as Jonah did?
3. According to Hebrews 12:8, what is true if a person lives a life of running from God and God does not discipline them by His grace?



4. What characteristics do you see in Hebrews 12:3-8 concerning the Lord’s relationship with His children?

5. As a believer, what must God do to your heart first before He can change it to be more like His own heart?

6. How do you generally react when God has exposed your heart?

- From God’s Word?

- From another believer?

- From an unsaved person?

- From a circumstance or event?

7. What is the reaction that pleases God when He has exposed our heart whether it is from His Word, from another believer, or even from an unsaved person, or circumstance?

8. What is the difference between believing God's grace is big enough to save the worst of the worst, and ourselves being willing to go to the worst of the worst?

(Note: all lost are the worst of the worst, but we tend to see people on different levels because not all act out their sin to the fullest)

**9. Group Share:** Can you remember a time as a believer that you were running from God and what God used to grab your attention and show you His grace?

Would you be willing to share this with your group when you meet?

Maybe you are running now and you would seek prayer and encouragement from your group.





## *Chapter 4*

# **God Delivers Imperfect and Undeserving Hearts**

## **SUMMARY**

Read Jonah 2. In the process of pursuing His prophet's wayward heart, God brings Jonah to a place of severe distress, hears Jonah's cry for help, and grants Jonah and undeserved deliverance

## **QUESTIONS**

1. How could Jonah 2:1 state that God was still Jonah's God, even after Jonah had willfully disobeyed Him?
2. What does the phrase "his God", written in this situation, tell you about the person of God?
3. Do you ever struggle with God's love for you when you fail Him? Do you tend to be a person that tries to earn God's love? Do you see any difference between pleasing God and earning His love?
4. When difficulties and troubles enter our life, instead of saying its "Murphy's Law", or "chance", what should we be examining?

**5.** Is it possible to pray and cry out to God even though He knows our hearts are imperfect and we have other heart struggles to deal with? If yes, what does that tell you about the person of God?

**6.** It may be difficult to share this with your group, but ponder this question in your own life. Is there an area in your life, like Jonah, that you struggle with and maybe have struggled with for years, yet you have prayed, confessed, and even thought you had repented?

(Note: If this is true you will experience conviction and grief in your soul because of this. A person who lives in sin with no conviction or grief is showing they are not God’s child. See 1 John 3:6-10)

If you answered yes, what are some things you can do to grow in this area to gain more of God’s heart?

7. God delivered Jonah by saving him from drowning by sending the fish, and saving him from dying in the fish by spitting him out on dry ground. Jonah stated at the end of this prayer that “salvation is of the LORD.”

- What does that tell you about the person of God?

- What should have impacted Jonah’s heart from this gracious act of God toward himself?

8. In all of the events recorded in Jonah 2, what do you think was God’s main purpose for His prophet? What was God trying to accomplish?

- What should we ask ourselves when we face distressing times – whether they are a result of our own sin, or the result of living in a fallen world?

- Would you say you are consistent in your answer above, or do you struggle and act and think in other ways?







## *Chapter 5*

# **The Mercy of God Reveals the Messenger's Heart**

## **SUMMARY**

Read Jonah 3. In chapter 3 we see God continuing His work in His prophet's heart by resending him to Nineveh and by granting mercy to a people that Jonah cared nothing for. Jonah reveals his ongoing need for a heart change by his response of displeasure and anger.

### **Read the following story and then answer the questions that follow.**

Shannon's son and his girlfriend were getting ready for the big end of the year dance to finish out their senior year of high school. They had been dating throughout high school and had even planed on getting married in the future. Shannon is a believer in Jesus and has raised her son alone since her husband was killed 7 years earlier by a drunk driver.

Shannon told her son and his girlfriend goodbye as they headed out to the fancy restaurant to eat with some of their friends before the dance began.

Meanwhile, Shannon proceeded with her normal routine for a Saturday evening. After a few hours she saw the lights of a police car in front of her house. Soon there was a knock at her front door. Fearful thoughts entered her mind as she had been through this once before.

Shannon opened the door and the officer asked her if her son was Jacob Smith. With her voice trembling she said, "Yes". The officer proceeded to tell her that her son had been killed by a drunk driver and the passenger with him was severely injured and was taken to the ER by ambulance. Shannon fell into the officer's arms weeping uncontrollably. This was the second time in her life that someone she loved dearly had been taken by a drunk driver and in both cases the drunk driver survived.

About seven years had passed when Shannon received a letter from the driver who had killed her son. In the letter he told her that he served his sentence and was now married with two children and had a good job. He also informed her that he would like to meet with her to talk.

Shannon sat there quiet and speechless as she finished reading the letter. It was like she was re-living the whole situation over again. Thoughts were entering her mind that she knew were wrong but she seemed to have no control over. Her main thought was, “How can I forgive this man, if he desires forgiveness, and how can I show mercy for what he did to me?”

## **QUESTIONS**

1. Over the past 7 years, what are some things Shannon has probably been struggling with?
2. When Shannon discovered that he was out of jail, married with children, and having a good job, what thoughts more than likely entered her mind?
3. What questions do you think Shannon had towards God and about God?
4. What tensions would Shannon struggle with as she pondered this meeting?

5. What do you think the young man wanted to talk with Shannon about?

6. Let's assume the young man wanted to ask Shannon for mercy and forgiveness. How does what we have seen in Jonah 3 apply to her situation?

(How could she be like Jonah?)

(How could she be like Jesus?)

7. What is the only way she can be like Jesus? How can she do that?

8. How will her choice expose what is in her heart?







## *Chapter 6*

# **A Heart that Believes, but Doesn't Care**

## **SUMMARY**

Read Jonah 4. Having seen the response of the Ninevites, an angry Jonah expresses his disagreement with God's sovereign decision to spare them. Jonah then faces a series of questions and object lessons from God that reveals Jonah's self-centered and uncaring heart toward those in need of the mercy he himself had received.

## **QUESTIONS**

1. God asks Jonah three questions in chapter four. Why do you think God asked Jonah questions rather than just telling Jonah what God already knew about Jonah's heart?
2. How can teachers, parents, counselors, and friends use questions to help others see their heart? How can questions sometimes be better than accusations?
3. Read Matthew 18:21-35. What similarities do you see between the servant in these verses and Jonah?

4. As you read Matthew 18:34,35, would you say that giving mercy and forgiveness to others is important to God? Why is this important to God?

5. Are there any groups of people, individuals, or people who practice certain things in their lives that you would say are a struggle for you to love and show mercy?

**6.** Can you identify any “Jonah Plants” in your life where you show more love, concern, and burden for rather than what God loves?

7. Let us close this study on Jonah, spending some time in prayer as a group:

Suggestions for prayer:

- Our own heart to be more like God's heart.
- People we are burdened about who need Christ.
- Confession of sin and our lack of love for people who need mercy.
- Confession of sin for loving "things" more than those who need mercy.
- Thanksgiving for God's mercy in our lives.



**PRAYER NEEDS**

## **PRAYER NEEDS**



**LIVINGHOPE**  
baptist church

***For a digital copy of this booklet, please visit:***  
[www.lhbcevv.org](http://www.lhbcevv.org)