



# Jonah: The Circus of Life

## SESSION 1 - AUTUMN

TALK NOTES

Ups & Downs

Escaping from God

The Inescapable God

Application

## STUDY QUESTIONS: Chapter 1

We all have ups and downs in life. Faith can be rattled in these times if we are not careful. When we get to Autumn, leaves fall and sometimes so do we. Who is in control when downs come along and we want to run away?

1. Have you had any ups turn to downs or downs turn to ups in your life experiences? How did you respond? Did you sense God was in that situation?

2. Fight or flight? What would you have done in Jonah's situation? Do you think what he did was reasonable?

3. What are Tarshish [ahhh] type places you would like to escape to? Have you ever felt like you wanted to escape from God?

4. What are Ninevah [grrr] type places/situations in your life? Discuss how they make you feel.

5. What do you make of the sailor's response to God? Have you ever found yourself out of your depth in an area of life you usually are on top of?

6. What do you think it looks like to hand over control to God? To take the plunge?

### Your Turn

Take some time today to reflect on your own life and ask yourself what were pivotal moments on your faith journey? Were they in the ups or the downs? How does looking back on a situation change your understanding of its importance?

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### Xtra Qs

7. Is Tarshish all that bad? Is there anything wrong in going after those beautiful places or dreams? How do you discern when to take the easy road or to do the hard thing?

8. Jesus calms the storm in Mark 4:35-41. What do Jesus & Jonah have in common/what is different? What do the disciples and the sailors have in common/what is different?

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## SESSION 2 - WINTER

### TALK NOTES

#### The Belly of the Beast

Knowing

Trusting

Praising

Application

## STUDY QUESTIONS: Chapter 2

Bad things happen. Not fun but definitely true. Winter arrives, it gets colder and the world slows to a halt. At least there is marshmallows, but how do you navigate these times in the deep, dark belly of the beast?

1. Trouble. It's out there. What has given you strength in hard times? Have you ever found yourself blaming God for tough seasons of your life?

2. Has the Bible been helpful for you in times of trouble? Why or why not?

3. When Jonah prays, what stands out to you in what he says to God? Does any of it seem strange and out of place?

4. Could you say what Jonah said if you were in his situation? Have you ever said something you didn't mean or said something because you wished it was true?

5. What is your definition of worship? Why do you think it is important?

6. Winter is only one season but it can seem an eternity. How does being a follower of Jesus (salvaged) change hard times?

### Your Turn

Two helpful books to head to if you are in times of trouble! The book of James & the Psalms. Check out Pss 8, 27, 42, 51, 73, 100, 103 (some of these are songs of praise and some of sorrow). Don't just read them but try yelling them, screaming them or even whispering them & check if what you say, you really mean.

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### Xtra Qs

7. It's always helpful to know what you believe would be your threshold or breaking point. If you were in a winter of faith, what would it take for you to quit on God?

8. Some of Peter's darkest hours were in the final hours before Jesus' Crucifixion [Mk 14:66-72]. He quit. Have you ever made promises in good times which you fell short of in the bad times? What can we learn from Peter's mistake? What can we learn from Jonah's prayer?

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## SESSION 3 - SPRING

TALK NOTES

The City

Full 180

Mercy, Mercy, Mercy

Application



## STUDY QUESTIONS: Chapter 3

New life, new purpose, no holding back. Spring time is fresh and so are we. With life in our hands and something to share how do we take what we have and make it real for someone else?

1. Jonah is given the exact same command from God as he had in Ch1 and this time he obeys. When have you made a mistake and been given a second chance? How did you feel about being given a second chance and what did you do with it?

2. Jonah brings to Ninevah a very grueling message of destruction. How would you react to someone proclaiming destruction for the way you live your life? Do you think with our "message of hope" people today would react as the Ninevites did? Repent or ignore?

3. What does this teach us about how we share our message of hope? How do we go about sharing a relationship with Jesus? Do you think it's important? Why/why not?

4. The city of Ninevah repented (turned around). How did you tell if they were sincere or not? Can you think of examples of repentance you have seen?

5. What does the King grasp about God and his character? Do you have as much assurance as the King in your God?

6. God relents. What is mercy? Why does God change his mind? Didn't he say he would destroy the city in forty days? What do you think is going on here?

### Your Turn

Jonah is sent on a mission and so are we. Take some time to think through why is your faith important? If it is so life-changing for you, do you have the desire to share this amazing change with others? Does the message of hope look the same to you as it does for others? What would you share with a friend? Mtt 28:19-20 call us to go make disciples. Who are you sharing Jesus with in your life? Do you think he is worth sharing? If you aren't sharing, what is stopping you?

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### Xtra Qs

7. God first seeks out Justice against the people of Ninevah yet shows Mercy when they repent. How do Justice (enacting judgement for wrong) & Mercy (not getting the punishment that is rightfully due) both fit into God's character and into his mission?

8. Peter preaches the first evangelical sermon in Acts 2. Read the end of his sermon [v36-41] or all of it! What do we learn of the message of hope from Peter? What is similar and what is different to Jonah's message? Why is what we share hope?

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## SESSION 4 - SUMMER

TALK NOTES

Leaving the City

J & the Beanstalk

Our Agenda

Application

## STUDY QUESTIONS: Chapter 4

Summmmmmmmer!!!! Hot & bothered beach chills with long days & warm nights. Time to relax and refresh, though relax can't be spelt without lax and that is what can happen. How do we keep cool and carry on following Jesus when things get easy or we get lazy?

1. Jonah leaves the city! In a time where people are turning to the God who he has shared with them, he leaves! Why did Jonah leave? What causes us to walk out and lose perspective on what is important?

2. Jonah recognises God's love and compassion yet he doesn't want others to have it to the point that he would rather die! Who do you find hard to show love to? Does God's love for all people ever frustrate you or your friends?

3. Does anger have a place in the lives of God's people? When have you been angry & why?

4. What do you make of the plant story? What do you think of Jonah with the way he reacts?

5. How does the plant story illustrate why God did not destroy Ninevah?

6. Who are you most concerned for in your life? Who is most precious to you? How do you show those around you that you value them?

### Your Turn

Camp is almost over! Camp blues is a common symptom after awesome time away with other brothers and sisters. What season do you feel you are in at the moment? How can this help prepare you for the next weeks? What will you change in your life as a result of Camp?

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### Xtra Qs

7. We can often lose perspective on what is important. God's response to Jonah challenges what his agenda is. What is big on your agenda? What were the most important parts of camp for you? What were the biggest challenges? Will these things make your agenda in your life?

8. Peter begins ministering to people outside of the Jewish community from the same port that Jonah fled from God [Acts 10]. Where Jonah runs from God's work, Peter fully realises how great the adventure is. Do you see your faith and life as an adventure? We get lazy in summer because life gets easy and life gets boring. How can you make faith more than ordinary?

