

Jonah as Vomit

Dave Cover | Jonah 2

Sermon Discussion Participant's Guide

Purpose of Discussion: To repent of our half-heartedness.

Icebreaker: What are you looking forward to doing outside with the weather warming up?

Discussion:

By way of reminder, last week, Jonah was called to go preach to the capital city (Nineveh) of a nearby violent and aggressive nation (Assyria) who had already sent plundering raids in Israel. Instead of going, Jonah fled in the opposite direction to go to an exotic place (Tarshish). God sent a supernatural storm that stopped the boat's progress. When the cause of the storm is shown to be Jonah, he asks the sailors to throw him into the ocean. Jonah wants to die rather than repent. But, God won't let him!

Read:

[Jonah 1:17](#)

¹⁷ Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

1. Is being swallowed by the fish a good thing or bad?

Read:

[Jonah 2:1-7](#)

¹ From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God. ² He said:

"In my distress I called to the Lord,
and he answered me.

From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help,
and you listened to my cry.

³ You hurled me into the depths,
into the very heart of the seas,
and the currents swirled about me;

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all your waves and breakers
swept over me.

⁴ I said, 'I have been banished
from your sight;
yet I will look again
toward your holy temple.'

⁵ The engulfing waters threatened me,
the deep surrounded me;
seaweed was wrapped around my head.

⁶ To the roots of the mountains I sank down;
the earth beneath barred me in forever.

But you, Lord my God,
brought my life up from the pit.

⁷ "When my life was ebbing away,
I remembered you, Lord,
and my prayer rose to you,
to your holy temple.

2. Jonah is praying the psalms when he is suffering his worst. Have you had a "bottoming out" experience that woke you up to come back to God?

Jonah 2:8-9

⁸ "Those who cling to worthless idols
turn away from God's love for them.

⁹ But I, with shouts of grateful praise,
will sacrifice to you.

What I have vowed I will make good.

I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'"

Comment: Even in Jonah's repentance, something seems off. Jonah seems to be holding on to some presumption and pride while looking down on others. He has come to terms that he can't run from God, but he doesn't love God's will or mission for his life. He is a half-hearted repenter.

3. What are some ways that our repentance can be half-hearted?

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Jonah 2:10

And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

4. Is the vomit good or bad?
5. Why not just let Jonah go? Why not just let him go to Tarshish or drown in the sea? Why does God not let us go?

Read:

Matthew 12:39-41

³⁹ He (Jesus) answered, "A wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign! But none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here."

6. Why do you think Jesus compares his death, burial, and resurrection to Jonah being in the whale?
7. God is patient with us in our half-heartedness, but is also persisting in shaping us more and more like him. What are ways that we can lean into that?

Sharing and Prayer:

Read:

James 4:8

⁸ Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Even in our half-heartedness, God invites us to come to him to be washed, to be purified.

Allow the group to share quick prayers of confessions for our half-heartedness and asking God to purify us.