

God is Worthy of our Trust & Obedience Jonah 1:1-16

Lesson Objective

- **Big Idea:** We obey God because we trust Him. Disobeying God reveals a deficient fear of God.
- **Problem:** We actively and/or passively disobey God because our view of WHO He is and WHAT He has done is too low. We don't revere Him as we should. In other words, we do not fear God.
- **Redemptive Solution:** God is worthy of our trust and obedience because He made a way for us to be forgiven for our sins and reconciled to God through His Son, Jesus.
- **Response:** Evaluate the connection between your fear of God (do you view Him as holy & trustworthy?), and your limits to obeying the Great Commission (or if not yet a believer, your limits to trusting Jesus for salvation—the first step).
- **Outreach Emphasis: Heart Motivation**

Launch

- Would you be willing to go to anyone, anywhere, and at any time for God? Why?
 - Where would be the hardest place for you to go right now?

Tonight, we are going to look at someone who was unwilling to go where God wanted him to go.

Explore

Read Jonah 1:1-16

- **Who are the characters in this passage?** God, Jonah, Captain, Sailors. *Jonah was a historical figure mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25 and by Jesus in Matthew 12 and Luke 11. Tradition holds him as the author of this book or at least the source of information for it.*
- **What initiates the events in this passage to happen?** The Lord commissions Jonah to preach to Nineveh. *Nineveh was the capital of one of the cruelest and most idolatrous empires of all time—Assyria. It was located more than 500 miles east of Israel in present-day Iraq.*
- **Where do the events take place?** Aboard the ship that is on its way to Tarshish from Joppa during a storm. *Tarshish was a city most likely located on a mineral trade routh on the Mediterranean Sea, possibly in Spain.*
- **Why did God cause the storm?**
What does this tell us about God?
God sends the storm as a result of Jonah disobeying his command to preach to Nineveh. Our sin has consequences. God's desire is for us to trust Him & obey His lead in our lives.



The book of Jonah demonstrates God's compassion on Gentiles (non-Jews) in light of Israel's failure to be a light to the nations (Deuteronomy 28:1, 9, 10). Jonah is similar to the people of Israel who

were called to disseminate the knowledge of God in the world. The original readers hated the people of Nineveh as much as Jonah did. God places Jonah the prophet in a sticky situation. God commands him to go to the capital of Assyria-Nineveh, to confront its citizens of their sin before God, and give them an opportunity to experience reconciliation with God. Assyria was the bully of the Ancient Near East, committing heinous war crimes against the people within that region.

- **What stood out as significant to you? (possible points of significance)**
 - An interesting note on the word Fear: The same Hebrew word for fear is used for the sailors' response to the storm (v.5), Jonah's statement of worship (v.9), and their fear of God (v.16) this word has a range of meaning from psychological reaction of fear to reverential awe.
 - "Get up" or "Arise": The original Hebrew of this passage uses the same phrase in God's commission to go to Nineveh (v.2), Jonah's running away (v.3), and the captain's command (v.6).
 - The sailors seem to be familiar with Jonah's God due to their response after Jonah identifies who he is.
- **What questions do you have about the passage? (possible questions)**
 - Lots: Small stones or pieces of wood used for settling disputed questions or determining a course of action.

Let's explore further the contrasting responses to God by Jonah and the sailors.

If you were Jonah or in his shoes...

- **What might you have known about God?** *Omnipresent; creator; sovereign, faithful, gracious, holy, only true God*
- **What might you have felt in response to God's commission and during the storm?** *Dread; fear; hate toward Nineveh; caught; anger at God; guilt*

How did Jonah respond to God? Why? *Disobeyed; he did not truly fear God*

If you were the sailors or in their shoes...

- **What might you have known about God?** *Little; believed in many deities*
- **What would you be feeling during the storm and after the storm?** *Fear for my life; relief; awe of God*
- **How did the sailors respond to God? Why?** *Feared for their life; offered Him sacrifices and made vows; convinced that God was worthy to be feared (make connection between obedience and fear of the Lord)*
- **What does this reveal about genuine fear of the Lord?** *It is demonstrated by obedience to the Lord*

Apply

- Reflect: **When what I want conflicts with what God wants, who wins?**
- **Jonah's commission was to go to Nineveh and preach, what is our commission as believers?** *Go & make disciples. See Matthew 28:18-20.*
- **If you're not yet a Christ-follower, what questions do you have about God that you would like to better understand so that you could trust in God?**

Give group members a few minutes to think then discuss in small groups.

- **How am I saying yes to God's commission for me?**
- **Where have I drawn the line, saying no to God's commission for me? What does this reveal about my fear of the Lord?**
- **What is one step you can take to move toward following God's Commission?**

Practical Steps this Week: *Leaders bring everyone back together in one group. (give out handout)*

Based on the Bible, our heart in life group and in Cru is for everyone to hear and have the opportunity to respond to the Gospel, or good news, about Jesus. Our heart for all believers is "that they would grow as a disciple by growing in their heart motivations, abilities, & experiences in sharing the Gospel with the people around them."

- **Possible step for believer:** Take time to reflect and write out your answer to the following two questions & begin to pray daily that God will work in your heart to more fully trust and obey Jesus' great commission.
 1. *What makes the Gospel good news?*
 2. *Do I believe that people are lost apart from Christ?*(Perhaps you could set an alarm on your phone as a reminder to pray once a day, and/or plan a time in the coming week to gather as a life group to pray).
- **Possible step for non believer:** *If you are not a Christian, I/we would love to talk to you more about this so that you could decide for yourself what you believe. We have a short booklet (hold up if possible) that gives a helpful 4-point outline on what the Bible says about how you can know God personally. It is a great jumping off point for further exploration and I'd be honored to go through it with you and get your opinion on it. Let me know after study if this is something you'd like to discuss.*

Close in prayer

- Thanking God that He is the Holy, Sovereign, Creator of all who has made a way for us to be forgiven for our sins and reconciled to him through faith in Christ.
- Pray that God will work in our hearts, helping us see Him rightly and empowering us to trust and obey Him.
- Pray that we will see others with compassion and take steps to share the hope of Christ with others.

Next Week, we'll explore Jonah Chapter 2 with the big fish, Jonah's repentance & God's merciful rescue. Jesus himself speaks about Jonah in Matthew 12 and says "something greater than Jonah is here." Join us as we go deeper into the mercy of God.