

OVERBOARD

Sermon-Based Study Guide
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church
Jonah 1.11-17 | January 26, 2020
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I. Introduction to this Study

This week we continue our study of Jonah the “prodigal prophet” who ran from God because he didn’t want to do what God wanted him to do. Have you sympathized with him yet? I know I have!

Jonah has gone from Jerusalem *down* to Joppa, *down* into the ship, and, in the verses before us, will go *down* even further. Before engaging the story, pause to ask: What *could* Jonah have done instead, at each of these points along the way?

II. Connecting with One Another

When have you felt “swallowed up” by the peril and problems of the world?

III. Study the Text

a. Reread **Jonah 1.1-10**.

What do you notice in the story that you hadn’t noticed before?

What questions do you still have?

b. Read **Jonah 1.11** aloud. How do you think their question sounded?

They don’t ask, “What should we do?” or “What could you do?” Only “What should we do to *you*?” The sailors have turned from object to subject, while Jonah has gone from subject to object. What options do you think the sailors had in mind?

Remember the impression that Jonah had chartered the boat. How would that change the possibilities of the sailor’s action?

When have you wanted, like the sailors, to *do something* to correct a situation?

c. Read **Jonah 1.12** aloud.

Jonah moves from resistance to resignation. What do you think of his response?

Is he self-sacrificial or still stubborn as a mule? *Why*?

Who is Jonah concerned about? Who is he ignoring?

Have you ever acted like Jonah is acting here? When? *Why*? How did it resolve?

d. Read **Jonah 1.13**.

The sailors have previously thrown their possessions and profit into the open ocean. Now their caution and care keeps them from thoughtlessly tossing Jonah over in the same way. What do you think is their motivation for returning to land?



What do you imagine Jonah is doing as these sailors dig their oars into the water?

- e. C.S. Lewis once wrote, "I had always wanted, above all things, not to be 'interfered with.' I had wanted (mad wish) 'to call my soul my own'... You must picture me alone in that room... night after night, feeling, whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work, the steady, unrelenting approach of Him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet."

Have you ever felt this way? Did you feel God's "steady, unrelenting approach"? How?

- f. Read **Jonah 1.14**.

These pagan sailors have previously prayed to all kinds of gods. Who do they pray to now? What *did* they fear? What do they begin to fear?

Who shows a more proper fear of God, Jonah or the sailors?

Can you imagine Christians behaving like Jonah? Why or why not?

- g. Read **Jonah 1.15-16**.

The sailors lift Jonah up, then drop into the sea, discarded like garbage. Have they scapegoated him? Or has he sacrificed himself?

How does this scene point forward to Jesus? Think of as many connections as you can.

- h. Read **Jonah 1.17**.

The LORD "provided" a fish!? Like it was a *gift* to Jonah to be swallowed up!?

As we will discuss in the coming weeks, the first readers of this story would have immediately gotten the connection between Jonah's story and their experience of being swallowed up in the Assyrian exile.

When have you felt swallowed up by life? Could God have "provided" or used that experience for your benefit? (see **Romans 8.28**)

- i. Read **Matthew 12.38-42**.

What do the Pharisees want? What does Jesus offer them?

What is the "sign of the prophet Jonah"?

IV. Pray

- a. Thank God for Jesus who offered himself, once for all, to be lifted up and cast aside into the belly of the earth for you, (see **Hebrews 10**)
- b. Pray that God would keep your eyes fixed on Jesus and that, by doing so, God would equip and encourage you to point others to the true Jonah,
- c. Ask God to lead you in offering yourself in sacrificial love to others around you (see **Phillipians 2.5-11**).

