

Discussion Questions

“Jonah’s *Auslanderausweis*: Jonah and the Journey Outward (Part 2)”

Psalm 47; Jonah 1:1-10

1. Samuel Johnson said that “patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel.” What do you suppose he meant? Is it always dangerous to be proud of your home country? Why or why not?
2. What was Jonah saying by boarding a ship for Tarshish? How is what Jonah did different than the typical “expatriate” experience of many of us here at IPC? What was he fleeing?
3. If Jonah had definitively left home, why does he nevertheless declare himself to be a Hebrew and servant of Yahweh?
4. Do you ever find yourself in Jonah’s position? Can you relate to him? Have you ever been in a church where the environment and atmosphere of the congregation feels a little like the contradictions of Jonah’s heart and behavior?
5. When your heart is like Jonah’s, how do you escape this strange mix of fear, anger, and pride? How did the Apostle Paul manage to escape? What needs to happen in your life, or in the life of a community, to escape?
6. If you didn’t get the hint in the previous question, let’s make it explicit: how does God himself, in Jesus Christ, overcome our fears and pride, making it possible for us to believe that God actually is good, and that our neighbor actually is the one to whom we should be a loving neighbor?
7. If you have time, study the parable of the Good Samaritan. How is that parable the opposite of the story of Jonah?
8. Does all of this provoke and unsettle your heart at all? How so? What is God saying to you? What are you going to do about it? Who is going to help you?