

DISCIPLESHIP GROUPS

Our Mission: Reaching out to leaders who can change the world.

JONAH - OBSTINATE OBEDIENCE

April 2017

LESSON 2 –LIFE'S STORMS

INTRODUCTION

What's the biggest fish you've caught or seen?

OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION

Read Jonah 1:4-6

*Note: Out of fellowship, Jonah was God's agent to bring knowledge of God to a boatload of sinners. Later we'll see that, **back in fellowship**, Jonah was God's agent of deliverance for a great city!¹*

1. How do we know this was a particularly violent storm?
2. To whom were the sailors praying? Why?

Note: Lots of prayers went up and much fervor was expended. But all of it was in the direction of stone-deaf, lifeless, impotent idols. Only Jonah had a route into the presence of the living God who had sent the storm and who alone could still it, but he was not on speaking terms with Him. The question is therefore: will God step in when nobody has sought his help? The answer is 'yes'. Jonah has failed the sailors miserably, but the Lord will not. What a low view we have of Him if we think he will only be stirred into action if we hit on the right formula. Answers to prayer depend on the character and purposes of the one at the answering end.²

3. How could Jonah sleep during all the commotion?

Read Jonah 1:7-16

4. Why were the sailors terrified about Jonah's past? Why didn't they throw him over right away?
5. What was Jonah thinking as they tossed him over the side?
6. How would you describe the sea just before and after they threw Jonah over? What effect did this change in sea state have on the other sailors?
7. Jonah demonstrated his faith in a negative way (selfish withdrawal). What might positive, courageous faith in action have looked like? (i.e. Paul in Acts 27?)
8. How was Jonah "saved"? In what sense were the sailors "saved"?
9. How was God's sovereignty shown?
10. Why doesn't God intervene in a miraculous way more often? What effect might more miracles have on Christians?
11. The ship with its struggling pagan sailors can be compared to the world as it fights for survival among conflicting (but futile) ideas. What does this say to us if we consider the sleeping Jonah to be a picture of the modern church?

APPLICATION

- What storm are you weathering? Is it making you better or bitter? What do you want God to do?
- Are you in fellowship with God? What might He have to do to motivate you to obey Him?

Jonah didn't like the assignments God gave him. He was hoping for a word from God that was more to his liking. Instead, God was determined that His word would be obeyed (Isa 55:11). When he spoke to him a second time, his message was the same as the first but he had been buffeted by storms and spent 3 days in a fish. This time he was prepared to hear God and do His will. Is the Lord still waiting for your obedience? Seek to properly respond the first time.

Henry Blackaby, Experiencing God Day by Day

¹ Richards, L. O. (1991). *The Bible readers companion* (electronic ed.) (548). Wheaton: Victor Books.