

“Jonah: System Failure”

Growth Group Guide

November 2, 2025

WELCOME *(Connecting with each other)*

Did you ever hear (or tell) a good “fish story” or a REAL, true-life fishing story? Share it now. Let people guess if it’s true or fishy. Or, pick a personal story of experiencing God in some awe-inspiring way in creation.

WORSHIP THROUGH PRAYER *(Connecting with God)*

Read the verses below and praise God that He has and does work amazing things on earth and in our hearts.

Genesis 1:21, 31a (NLT) So God created great sea creatures and every living thing that scurries and swarms in the water, and every sort of bird—each producing offspring of the same kind. And God saw that it was good.

Deuteronomy 32:3-4 (NIV) I will proclaim the name of the LORD. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.

Romans 5:5 (AMP) Such hope [in God’s promises] never disappoints us, because God’s love has been abundantly poured out within our heart through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.

WORD *(Letting God speak to us)*

1. **Read Jonah 1:17 NIV and Matthew 12:39-41 NIV.** Did you know this link between Jonah and Jesus existed? How is this knowledge changing your approach to the book of Jonah? How is the picture of Jonah’s life helping you know Jesus better?
2. **Read Galatians 2:20.** Notice that Paul is describing something that happened to us past tense. **Now read Philippians 3:10 NIV.** Here Paul is describing a process. One that will enable us to experience what Galatians 2:20 is talking about, but in the present. What two things does he say will help us know Christ and His resurrection power in the here and now? What are your thoughts about those two things?
3. Like Jonah we can suffer because of our fleshly living. Suffering can actually reveal our flesh. Make a short list of some possible flesh patterns. Be purposeful to come up with ones that would look more positive. Things that the Pharisees may have exhibited for example. With the list, discuss how these patterns could be destructive to ourselves and others.
4. **Read Luke 9:23-24.** These verses are not telling us to reject how God made our personalities. It’s showing we have a choice between two ways of living, flesh or Spirit, and the results. How would you summarize what these verses are saying?

5. What would we be missing out on in our walk with God if we don’t make a decisive break from fleshly living?
6. **Read Jonah’s prayer in Jonah 2:1-4 NIV and Jesus’s prayer in Matthew 26:36-39.** What differences or similarities do you find between Jonah and Jesus’s prayer? What was Jesus most concerned with and what was Jonah most concerned with?
7. The start to becoming like Jesus in His death, is praying as He did in the garden. This begins a process where God moves us from a life dominated by the flesh to one overflowing with spiritual living. What are you most hopeful for as you consider the possibility that this path leads to knowing Christ’s power as your daily source for living?

WALK *(Living out God’s purposes)*

- ✓ **One Big Idea: When we fail by living independently of God, we realize our spiritual need and turn to Him.** This is a wonderful gift...experiencing the failure of our flesh so we can turn to God for His unlimited source of life and peace instead, His Spirit. His Spirit is the resource for living that we were made for. Just like for Jonah, experiencing the failure of our fleshly resources isn’t fun. It’s most often one of the hardest things we go through. Because of this, it doesn’t seem like a gift at the time, but when we surrender to Him, abandoning our whole being to Him once-and-for-all, we can get on with hope, restoration, and experiencing Christ as our very life. You may find this type of surrender even harder than experiencing the failure of your flesh. Jesus is your source even for this, dear Christian. Trust Him with it all and share your honest feelings with Him. No need to sugar-coat the hardship; He gets it. His surrender to Father was excruciating too. As you pray, the following verses may encourage your faith: Psalm 16, Philippians 3:7-10, 1 Peter 2:23, Luke 2:24, Jeremiah 29:11. It’s good to pray this kind of surrender prayer with someone else as you do this. It puts your flesh on notice and gives you a witness to the good work you are doing with God and Him with you.

WORLD *(Embracing God’s heart for others)*

Election Day will be held this Tuesday, November 4th. Pray for our country and the election process and all who will be voting. **“There can be lot of fear and anger around elections...[but we] can ask the Holy Spirit...to bring us into his perspective. Isaiah 41:13 (NIVUK) says, ‘For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.’”* You can find a wonderful Elections Prayer Guide here: <https://www.24-7prayer.com/resource/pray-for-elections/>. Some of the prayer points are as follows: *Pray for the polls and vote counting, pray for peace in all communities, pray for everyone voting to have God’s ‘wisdom from heaven,’ pray for candidates to have wisdom and grace, pray for God’s government to be established in America. *(24-7prayer.com).

[Copies of this Guide are available at <https://thurston.church/resources>]