

Sermon-Based Discussion Questions

March 31st, 2019

Ice Breaker Questions:

It has been said that “there are no atheists in foxholes”. Talk about a time in your past that you were overwhelmed with a life circumstance that it drove you to seek God and cry out to Him.

Where is an area of life where you feel overwhelmed right now?

JONAH: YOU want ME to do WHAT? – Overwhelmed:

This week we got to eavesdrop on Jonah’s prayer of desperation and surrender as he prayed from the gut of a fish as he had been running from God and what God was asking him to do.

READ: Jonah 1:19 -2:10

Thinking back at this week’s sermon on *Praying From The Gut*, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

Jonah 1-2 shows us the jam Jonah got himself into. Is there a time in your life that you got yourself into a similar belly-of-the-fish experience and reached out to God in the midst of it? What did you learn from that experience?

READ Hebrews 12:1-11 - Read the verses out loud and discuss what the passage might mean in regard to God’s pursuit of us, our surrender to Him, and how God might be at work in our life making any observations and applications that you can.

Doug shared a quote from Tim Keller: Tim Keller: “We are not competent to run our own lives until we realize that we are not competent to run our own lives.” What do you think about that quote and its relevance to your life.

Praying From The Gut – Psalms of Lament:

Jonah’s prayer is very similar to a number of prayers recorded in the Psalms. These prayers are called lament Psalms because they express concern over a difficult situation the author is facing. Read Psalm 28 for a good example of one of these Psalms.

Psalm 28:1-9

Of David.

To you I call, O Lord my Rock;
do not turn a deaf ear to me.

For if you remain silent,

I will be like those who have gone down to the pit.

[2] Hear my cry for mercy

as I call to you for help,

as I lift up my hands

toward your Most Holy Place.

[3] Do not drag me away with the wicked,

with those who do evil,
who speak cordially with their neighbors
but harbor malice in their hearts.

[4] Repay them for their deeds
and for their evil work;
repay them for what their hands have done
and bring back upon them what they deserve.

[5] Since they show no regard for the works of the Lord
and what his hands have done,
he will tear them down
and never build them up again.

[6] Praise be to the Lord,
for he has heard my cry for mercy.

[7] The Lord is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusts in him, and I am helped.
My heart leaps for joy
and I will give thanks to him in song.

[8] The Lord is the strength of his people,
a fortress of salvation for his anointed one.

[9] Save your people and bless your inheritance;
be their shepherd and carry them forever. [NIV]

Lament Psalms provide a great model for how to pray when we're in difficult circumstances. There are at least four elements to each one. Looking back at Jonah 2, write the verses which match each element next to that element below.

- Description of present need

- Prayer for help

- Commitment to offer praise

- Sincere thanks to God

Think of a situation in your life that you are concerned about. Jot down one or two thoughts regarding that situation under each of the elements above.

Now use those thoughts to express your own lament prayer to God.

TAKING IT HOME:

Doug stated that "God is looking for people with FAITH to trust God with obedience and action, not just knowing the facts about God. As you look at your own life, is there any area you see where the facts aren't being translated into faith?"

Looking back on the situation you used in your lament prayer, is there anything you'd like prayer for from this group?

CLOSING PRAYER: Spend some time praying for each other based on the requests shared in the previous question. Challenge everyone to pray for each other throughout the week.