



**Jonah – Hide and Seek**  
**Sermon Discussion Questions – February 5, 2023**

***Scripture Passages:***

**Jonah 1:1–5 (NLT)** The Lord gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: <sup>2</sup> “Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are.”

<sup>3</sup> But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the Lord. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the Lord by sailing to Tarshish.

<sup>4</sup> But the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. <sup>5</sup> Fearing for their lives, the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help and threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship.

**Psalm 139:7–12 (NLT)** <sup>7</sup> I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! <sup>8</sup> If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. <sup>9</sup> If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, <sup>10</sup> even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me. <sup>11</sup> I could ask the darkness to hide me and the light around me to become night— <sup>12</sup> but even in darkness I cannot hide from you.

**Jonah 1:9–17 (NLT)** <sup>9</sup> Jonah answered, “I am a Hebrew, and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land.”

<sup>11</sup> And since the storm was getting worse all the time, they asked him, “What should we do to you to stop this storm?” <sup>12</sup> “Throw me into the sea,” Jonah said, “and it will become calm again. I know that this terrible storm is all my fault.” ...

<sup>14</sup> Then they cried out to the Lord, Jonah's God. "O Lord," they pleaded, "don't make us die for this man's sin. And don't hold us responsible for his death. O Lord, you have sent this storm upon him for your own good reasons."

<sup>15</sup> Then the sailors picked Jonah up and threw him into the raging sea, and the storm stopped at once!

<sup>16</sup> The sailors were awestruck by the Lord's great power, and they offered him a sacrifice and vowed to serve him. <sup>17</sup> Now the Lord had arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

**Romans 8:37–39 (NIV84)** <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**Romans 8:28 (NIV84)** <sup>28</sup> And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

### *Warm Up:*

This week Pastor Tom started a new series on the story of Jonah.

What were some of your favorite bible stories growing up? If you can't think of any bible stories, what other stories were some of your favorites?

### *Discussion:*

1. This week, we are beginning a new series called Jonah. What areas in your life do you feel like you could use more of God in? Could you benefit from having more faith in God?
2. Pastor Tom opened this week's message with a thought provoking poem called Three Dollars Worth of God. How did that poem make you feel? Did it resonate with you? If so, how?
3. As we begin to look into Jonah's story, Pastor Tom points out that Jonah wanted to create his own version of God.  
How might you know if you are doing this, as well? Are you going to God and telling him what you want out of him, or are you allowing scripture and your experiences of God shape how you relate to him?
4. Read Jonah 1:3 "But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the Lord. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape by sailing to Tarshish." How do you react when things don't go your way? Do you walk away from God when what he's asking you to do isn't what you had in mind?
5. Tom talks about how we all know what it's like to run. Sometimes when we know what is right we still run in the other direction simply because we don't like the way it looks or maybe we think it's too hard.

What might lead you to run from God? What struggles might be happening under the surface when we run from God? If you know in your heart that He is good, why run?

6. Jonah went to great extremes to avoid God. Pastor Tom points out just how far in the wrong direction he was willing to go – he ran to the known end of the world at that time. Jonah was basically playing hide and seek with God even though he knew deep down that it's impossible. Are there any areas in your life where you are hiding from God? How might your life look different if you stopped hiding?

7. In verse 4 we see that God sent a storm while Jonah was sailing to Tarshish. This wasn't God's way of being mean – it was actually his way of getting Jonah's attention. What storms could God have sent, or is he sending into your life to get your attention? What are some steps you can take to increase your awareness of God?

8. The storm didn't go away until Jonah was thrown into the sea, and he was then swallowed by the fish. Verse 17 says that God arranged a great fish to swallow him. Pastor Tom points out that the word "arranged" means prepared ahead of time – which we know is provision. This shows us that even though God was trying to teach Jonah a lesson, he also had a plan of provision and redemption for him.

How has God put you into situations where he allowed you a shot at redemption? Where have you seen God's provision in your life?

#### **Next Steps:**

Romans 8:37–39 (NIV84) <sup>37</sup> No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup> For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup> neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

*Those moments, those seasons of running, were not meant to conquer you, you were meant to conquer them. Those moments were meant to serve you. Your circumstances are at your feet and serving you. That is redemption. Do not be held by those things anymore. God takes something bad and makes it something good.*

Are there any areas in your life where you have been running from God? What might it look like for you to surrender and follow God in those areas?

Are there seasons of running in your past or present that you are hoping God will redeem? Take a few minutes to pray about those areas and invite God to show you how he is working to bring redemption there.