

Monday, February 13 – Whenever we read the book of Jonah, we always think of the “fish story.” But let’s take time this week to explore other themes and elements in this story. In fact, we will be on a three-week journey through Jonah. **Read Jonah 1:1-2.** Nineveh was a powerful and wicked city. Jonah had grown up hating the Assyrians and was fearful of all the evil they were capable of doing. Nahum gives us more insight into this terrible place. He says that Nineveh was guilty of (1) evil plots against God (Nahum 1:9), (2) exploitation of the helpless (Nahum 2:12), (3) cruelty in war (Nahum 2:12-13), (4) idolatry, prostitution, and witchcraft (Nahum 3:4). There are a number of parallels in history that many of us can think about. The Nazis in WWII comes to mind with their treatment of the Jews. If you knew about all they had been doing, would you have wanted to give them a second chance? Would you have been telling them there is hope for them and they could make a comeback? Closer to home, when someone is ‘evil’ to you, do you pray for them?

Tuesday, February 14 – **Read Jonah 1:3.** Jonah knew God had a specific job for him, but he didn’t want to do it. Jonah went as far as he could from Nineveh. When God gives us directions through his Word, sometimes we run in fear or in stubbornness, claiming that God is asking too much. I may have been fear, or anger at the wideness of God’s mercy, that made Jonah run. But running got him into worse trouble. **Jeremiah 23:23-24. Am I only a God nearby, and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?** Jonah didn’t understand this about God. Do we? Are you running from God? Maybe not literally, but perhaps you been feeling the urge to facilitate a small group, to be a part of one, or to help in children’s or student ministry, but because of fear, selfishness or stubbornness you ‘run.’ That could be God. Stop running.

Wednesday, February 15 – **Read Jonah 1:4-5.** Jonah wasn’t the only one in the boat at risk. By running from God, he endangered his fellow sailors as well. When we ignore God it doesn’t just impact us, it impacts those around us. Particularly our family. When we aren’t following God and when we aren’t loving him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, we do not have it within ourselves to love others completely. Because it takes all of OUR strength to make it through each day and the troubles that come. When are on the same page with God, we also have the power of His Spirit that enables and empowers us to do things we can’t do in our own strength. Is it possible that your ignoring God is having a negative impact on other people around you? Could it be you aren’t able to give your ALL because you use your energy to run from God?

Thursday, February 16 – Read Jonah 1:11-15. Jonah knows that he is the cause of the storm that they were all facing, and he's willing to sacrifice himself to protect the people around him. Whether or not we're the cause of a storm in someone's life, God calls us to be there for each other through difficult seasons. What storm are you facing in life right now? Jonah had strangers trying to rally around him to save him. Learn from Jonah and make sure you have godly people around you to help you through the difficulties. And, who can you reach out to this week? Who is going through a tough time and needs someone to encourage them, come alongside them and to hold them up?

Friday, February 17 – “At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.” Jonah 1:16.

God wants to have a relationship to each and every person on Earth, and His plan to get to know them is that His people would introduce others to who He is. God wanted Jonah to preach to the Ninevites, calling them to turn from their evil ways, but instead Jonah ran. In spite of that, God used Jonah to reveal Himself to the other people on the boat. Who in your life might God want you to introduce to Him? How has God worked out missteps and mistakes in your own life for good?