



## Sermon Discussion Guide for Groups

# "Jonah" | The Story of Us series

**Preached by Pastor Brady Boyd  
23 March 2025**

"The Son of Man is the sign of the judgment to come. Just as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so the Son of Man will be a sign to this generation."

L U K E 1 1 : 3 0 M S G

### Summary

*Have someone from your group read the following summary aloud.*

At New Life Church, we believe that God calls us to places we may never expect—sometimes to the ends of the earth, sometimes right next door. Recently, Pastor Brady returned from a trip to Guatemala and Nicaragua, where he witnessed firsthand the power of obedience to God's call, even when it leads to difficult or dangerous places. In Guatemala, he visited a school that our church helps support—a place where children are not just receiving an education but encountering the love of Jesus in tangible ways. In Nicaragua, he stood in a community near a massive trash dump, where families scavenge daily to survive. It was there, in the most unlikely of places, that he saw the gospel at work, bringing hope to those the world often overlooks.

As Pastor Brady reflected on these experiences, he was reminded of the story of Jonah—a prophet who ran from God's call because it led him somewhere he didn't want to go. Jonah's story isn't just an ancient tale of disobedience and redemption; it's a mirror for our own hearts that challenges us to examine where we might be resisting God's voice and reminds us that Jesus, unlike Jonah, willingly went where the Father sent him—even to the cross.

Just as God pursued Jonah, he pursues us. Just as Jesus entered the hardest places to bring life, we too are called to follow him—even when it's uncomfortable, even when it's costly. The question is: Will we say yes?

## **Opening Prayer**

*Open your session in prayer, using the words below or your own.*

"Father, thank you for bringing us together today. As we dive into Jonah's story, help us see more than just a runaway prophet—help us see ourselves. Open our hearts to hear your voice, even when it calls us to places we'd rather avoid. Give us the courage to say yes, the faith to trust you, and the love to serve others the way Jesus did. Guide our conversation, challenge us, and change us.

"We're listening, Lord. In Jesus' name, Amen."

## **Getting Going**

What's the most challenging place you've ever visited, and what impact did the experience have on you?

## **Discussion Questions**

*Answer as many of the following questions as time and interest permit.*

1. What are some reasons people might run from God's calling like Jonah did?
2. How do you discern between fear-based hesitation and wisdom-based caution when serving God?
3. In what ways do you see parallels between Nineveh and challenging places in our world today?
4. How does the story of Jonah challenge our comfort-focused approach to faith?
5. What storms in your life might be related to disobedience to God's calling?

## **Making It Personal**

*Take the opportunity noted below to apply this week's sermon to your everyday life.*

This week, identify one area where God might be calling you out of your comfort zone. Take one specific step toward obedience in that area, whether it's serving locally, giving to support missions, or preparing for a mission trip yourself.

## **Key Takeaways**

*Commit to memory one point from the message before you dismiss.*

Which of these points will you carry with you this week?

- God still calls people to dangerous places for his purposes.
- Disobedience to God's calling often leads to storms in our lives.
- Our obedience can lead to transformation in unexpected places

## **Closing Prayer**

*Have someone from your group close your time in prayer.*

“Jesus, thank you for showing us what obedience looks like—even when it was hard, even when it cost you everything. Give us that same kind of courage to follow where you lead, no matter what.

“Help us see people the way you do, with eyes full of compassion and hearts ready to act. Strengthen those serving in the hardest places, and show us how we can be part of what you're doing around the world. We're ready to listen and follow. In your name, Amen.”

## **Key Passage | Jonah 1:1-12 NLT**

*These verses were highlighted during this week's sermon and appear here for your reference.*

The Lord gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai:

“Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are.”

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.

But the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart.

Fearing for their lives, the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help and threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship. But all this time Jonah was sound asleep down in the hold.

So the captain went down after him. “How can you sleep at a time like this?” he shouted. “Get up and pray to your god! Maybe he will pay attention to us and spare our lives.”

Then the crew cast lots to see which of them had offended the gods and caused the terrible storm. When they did this, the lots identified Jonah as the culprit.

“Why has this awful storm come down on us?” they demanded. “Who are you? What is your line of work? What country are you from? What is your nationality?”

Jonah answered, “I am a Hebrew, and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land.”

The sailors were terrified when they heard this, for he had already told them he was running away from the Lord. "Oh, why did you do it?" they groaned.

And since the storm was getting worse all the time, they asked him, "What should we do to you to stop this storm?"

"Throw me into the sea," Jonah said, "and it will become calm again. I know that this terrible storm is all my fault."

### **Passages for Further Study**

- Jonah 2:1-10
- Psalm 139:7-10
- Matthew 12:39-41

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