



**LC STUDY GUIDE: DONE IN SYNC WITH  
THE SERMON SERIES "JONAH: CALLED TO GO"**

**The Passage – Jonah 1**

For LCs meeting 2.9.14 – 2.23.14

*These LC studies complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading and are not to be distributed to the entire group (it limits conversation). Not all of these questions need to be used in your LC meeting. Best to consider this a head-start to customize for your LC.*

**Note:** *You may notice this LC study does not have the O, I, & A questions. I'm experimenting with a different method; I welcome your feedback – Tim.*

**Big Idea: Even after we rebel against God's calling, He never gives up on us and still invites us to be a part of his plan.**

**Jonah 1**

1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me."

3 But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord.

4 Then the Lord sent a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship threatened to break up. 5 All the sailors were afraid and each cried out to his own god. And they threw the cargo into the sea to lighten the ship.

But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. 6 The captain went to him and said, "How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not perish."

7 Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"

9 He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

10 This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

11 The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?"

12 "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."

13 Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. 14 Then they cried out to the Lord, "Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased." 15 Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. 16 At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

17 Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah is not a random man that God calls to Nineveh; rather, he's an experienced prophet of God. What does God call him to do and what does he do instead?

*(Go and preach to Nineveh, but instead Jonah goes the opposite direction to Tarshish.)*

There is a difference between resistance and rebellion. What do you see happening in the story of Jonah and why does Jonah choose to take these actions?

*(This is clearly an intentional rebellion as Tarshish is as far away as one could get from Nineveh. Jonah wants nothing more to do with God's mission as he hates the Assyrians.)*

We often see this as a story of a fearful man's rebellion towards God, but Jonah loved being a prophet of God and he may not have really been that afraid. So why does Jonah run away from Nineveh, the capitol city of the wicked citizens of Assyria?

*(Among other possibilities is that Jonah runs away because of his hatred towards these evil, wicked people.)*

Remembering the difference between resistance and rebellion, describe a time you resisted God's leading and describe a time when you rebelled outright.

In the story of Jonah, God "sends the storm" but Jonah is in a deep sleep inside the boat. The frightened sailors praying to various gods try to wake him and soon discover the reason for the storm. Put yourself in the place of the frightened sailors. What do you think they would have thought and said to themselves as they heard Jonah admit to being the reason for the dangerous storm?

It's interesting that initially, Jonah's response was that he would rather die than repent. In fact, "deep sleep" can be understood as a time of vision, ecstasy, or death. Vision and ecstasy are clearly not themes in this story so when Jonah descends down to the inner parts of the boat, he is in a sense, giving up on his calling and his life. As we've said earlier, his hatred towards the Assyrians was a strong motivator. But what else do you think is happening in Jonah's heart?

*(We could consider that Jonah has a different hope for his life and God's plan interrupts that. Further, Jonah may be turning bitter towards God because he's not helping to go and do what he really wants to do.)*

Jonah 1 ends with him being thrown overboard and swallowed by a fish. Imagine you were Jonah. What would be going through your mind? How might your heart change towards God and His will in these next three days?

Today, is it possible that you are in a belly of a fish, metaphorically, of course? Is there a storm you are coming out of and is there something that God is calling you towards?

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- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your LIFE Community group. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
- b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- e. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- f. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.