

Life Application Notes: Jonah Week 1 – Jonah Overview

“The Lost Prophet”

Introduction

This week Dave kicked off our new series with a big picture overview of the book of Jonah. He introduced us to the story of Jonah and unpacked for us some themes that run throughout it.

To start – discuss in your group: **Have you ever been asked to do something that you really, really do not want to do?** (Household jobs?, going to the dentist?, a difficult work conversation? These can be both funny or serious!)

If so, did you attempt to get out of doing it? The book of Jonah starts out just like this!

Digging In

The story of Jonah comes in two main parts, two instances where Jonah is called by God. There are many different things we can learn through the book of Jonah (which we will be digging into over the next couple of months) however this week we will be looking at two ways in which Jonah was disobedient to God’s call.

In your group (if you’re meeting over Zoom you may find it helps to share a whiteboard to try do this): Go round and try to recall the stages of the story of Jonah – either note these down or draw a simple diagram of the key stages (whichever you prefer!) LEADERS - If it helps use the diagram below from Dave’s talk and match the series of events to the words below:

Through the two parts of the story of Jonah, he can be described as having been ‘lost’ in two ways:

JONAH	
The Call	The Call
Flee	Follow
Storm	City
Sailors	King
Captain	Storm
Jonah’s Fate	Jonah’s Fate
Jonah’s Reaction	Jonah’s Reaction

Lost in disobedience (Ch1-2):

- What were some of the reasons that Jonah didn’t want to follow God’s call?
- What was the consequence of Jonah’s disobedience? (Ch 1v4)

Reflect: Can you think of a time when you have rejected the call of God? (Call to: holiness – chosen sin, love – embracing anger/hatred, as some examples Dave gave) – Sometimes we experience the storms/consequences of our disobedience, just as Jonah did.

Lost in obedience (Ch3-4):

- Why was Jonah angry at God? (Tip: unfulfilled expectations of God’s actions that he didn’t agree with!) (Ch 4v1)
- Why was Jonah angry about the plant? (Ch 4v7)

Reflect: Have we said yes to the call of God, but on our own terms? In other words, have you tried to ‘bargain’ with God to somehow ‘gain credit’? Do we become angry when God doesn’t do things the way we want him to?

Dave reminded us on Sunday that just like Jonah, individually we have experienced both these ways of being spiritually lost...

Discuss: In what ways does Jesus’s sacrifice release us from these ‘lost’ attitudes and behaviours?

- We no longer have the eternal consequences of our sin and are forgiven for when we have been disobedient. We don’t need to flee!
- We can know that we don’t need to obey legalistically, earning our worth – we can obey in love and thankfulness for a prophet (Jesus) who has sacrificed himself for us!

There is hope! Whilst it can be very challenging and sobering to reflect on our past decisions/attitudes, there hope! Just like the Ninevites, we have a way to be rescued from our sin. Jesus’s sacrifice on the cross and his resurrection make it possible for us to approach God without having to be afraid of God’s judgement for our sin!

Rounding Off

When we look at the story of Jonah as a whole we can see many parallels with the life of Jesus – as Dave said on Sunday – Jesus, just like Jonah, was called to reach the lost however, unlike Jonah, Jesus was never lost. Jesus frees us from both of Jonah’s failings – we do not need to flee like Jonah did. As believers in Jesus’s sacrifice and resurrection we do not need to fear God’s judgement, and can trust in God’s plan even when we do not fully understand.

Spend some time to pray together:

- **Thanking God for the sacrifice of Jesus, that while we were once lost, we can now be found! Thanking God for his love for those who do not yet know him, that there is a way for everyone to be saved.**
- **Asking God for forgiveness for when we haven’t obeyed his call, or have approached his call with a selfish attitude. Pray for us (individually, as a group, as a church), that we would joyfully embrace the call of God for our lives – to share the transforming message of Jesus.**
- **Praying for those in our community/city/country/world that are still lost and do not know Jesus – that they would come to know the love of Jesus.**