

A Storm of Grace

May 5, 2019



Open: What are some situations in life from which you prefer to run?

Read: Jonah 1:4-16

Discuss:

1. Jonah is attempting to flee “from the presence of the Lord” (1:3), but as verse 4 shows us, this is impossible. **Read Psalm 139:1-12.** How does this psalm describe God’s knowledge of our actions and attitudes? Do you find that comforting or intimidating? Why?
2. As a storm comes upon Jonah’s ship, what are the two responses of the crew in verse 5-6? Share about a time when you observed unbelievers turn to God in times of desperation. How would you describe the appropriate response of a believer to such an opportunity?
3. How does God show the sailors that Jonah is the reason for the storm (v. 7)? Why do you think the crew were so frightened by Jonah’s choice to flee from God (v. 10)? Share about a time when you have seen someone’s sin (perhaps your own) affect others.
4. How do Jonah’s comments in verse 9 seem to contradict what he is doing? Jonah’s attempt to escape God when God is everywhere was foolish. Think back to a situation in which you acted in a spiritually foolish way. Why did you act that way? How can you respond differently to similar situations in the future?
5. How does Jonah’s character and behavior compare with that of these pagan sailors? What might explain why unbelievers can sometimes seem more virtuous than Christians?
6. Why do you think the crew was hesitant to throw Jonah overboard? What might have been the motive for their response to God (v. 16b)? How are you affected when you learn of others’ sin?
7. In addition to being a form of judgment, in what sense is this great storm also an act of God’s grace in Jonah’s life? Are there times when God brought something difficult into your life that felt like a storm but turned out to be a manifestation of grace? Explain.

Apply: Identify one area of your life that, if you brought it into greater alignment with the instruction and character of God would lead to blessing for you and for others.

Pray: Pray that we would live in ways that are consistent with the character of our God.

Jonah 1:4-16

⁴ But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵ Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. ⁶ So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish."

⁷ And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸ Then they said to him, "Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?" ⁹ And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." ¹⁰ Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, "What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

¹¹ Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?" For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. ¹² He said to them, "Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you." ¹³ Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. ¹⁴ Therefore they called out to the Lord, "O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you." ¹⁵ So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. ¹⁶ Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows. (ESV)