

GROUP DISCUSSION

Questions for facilitating dynamic discussion

Jonah & The Lost Cause
Week 2: God's Salvation
Jonah 2

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Jonah turned his back on Nineveh, certain they were beyond hope, but God saw differently. God's vision for saving people went beyond the chosen nation of Israel. Jonah's reluctance revealed his lack of understanding concerning the urgency of Nineveh's need for rescue. But we see this week that Jonah's rebellion put urgent rescue front and center in his life.

Kicking It Off:

Do you know the origin story of your name – why your parents gave it to you? Does your name have a particular meaning?

Discussion:

1. There's the common joke that as long as there are exams, there will be prayer in school. Yet bad times can indeed make us reach out to God. When was the last time you prayed out of distress?
2. Read Jonah 1:17-2:6. Look carefully at this passage. When did Jonah *first* pray? What are the words of that first prayer as revealed here (2:4)?
3. How did God answer that first prayer (1:17)? Do you think that was the answer Jonah was hoping for? What words in his second prayer from inside the fish (2:1-9) show that he accepted the answer? Describe his attitude, particularly at the close of the prayer. Why would he have been so thankful to be stuck inside the belly of a great fish?

"But you, LORD my God, brought my life up from the pit." (Jonah 2:6b, NIV)

4. Jeff emphasized in his sermon that "we need to see life through the lens of salvation." Reflect for a moment on the 5 views that should be changed: **God** as rescuer, **ourselves** as rescued, our **life** as an expression of gratitude for the rescue, the **future** as completion of our rescue, and **others** as having potential for rescue. In what area might you have a disconnect from this vision? How could that be impacting your ability (or agreeability) to share the message of rescue with others?
5. Look again at Jonah 2:9. What does Jonah promise to do in response to being rescued? How does that differ from his original reaction to God's call? We too should be saying "salvation comes from the LORD," but in our case salvation has a name: *Jesus*, which means "God saves." Consider how often you speak the name of Jesus to others. How can you speak it more?

Wrapping Up:

God is a rescue specialist – not us. Pray for a greater vision of God's saving activity – in your life and in the lives of those around you who have not yet been rescued through saving faith.

"But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Philippians 3:20, NIV)