

LAPS WITH THE LEGENDS
Week 5: Not Your Average Joe
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



CENTREVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
SUNDAY, JUNE 30, 2019
WEEK 5: NOT YOUR AVERAGE JOE
JONAH 1-4

RECAP

In this fifth sermon looking back to the legendary lives of Old Testament heroes, Josh walked through the roller coaster life of the prophet Jonah and discussed five timeless truths we can glean from his life.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Jonah ran from God when God gave Jonah a difficult assignment. Have you ever gone through a period where you were actively running from God? What caused you to run?
2. Jonah soon discovered that you can't outrun God. When he stopped running he was thrown into the sea and swallowed by a large fish. What happened to you when you stopped running?
3. Read Jonah 3:1-2. After Jonah repented God caused the fish to vomit Jonah on dry ground and called to him a second time. Has God given you second chances in life? How have you responded?
4. When God called to Jonah the second time, He gave Jonah the same directive He gave him the first time. What is the last clear thing you remember God speaking to you? Did you obey?
5. Jonah grew angry when the hated people of Nineveh repented and God spared them in His mercy. He wanted to see the city burn. In your own life, how difficult is it for you to lean towards mercy and away from judgment? Against whom or what groups of people would you honestly say you'd rather see them burn than repent?

NEXT STEP

Take some time and walk through five timeless truths from the Message Notes. Find a specific takeaway for everyone in your group and figure out a way together to turn that into a tangible step of obedience for them.

For more information (training and support) on how to start a small group, contact abigail.parker@cbcva.org

5 TIMELESS TRUTHS WE CAN LEARN FROM JONAH

1. You can't _____ God.
2. If you're in the _____, make the most of it.
3. God is the God of _____.
4. Stop waiting for God to tell you _____.
5. Do you truly want the world to _____ or would you rather see it _____?

Bonus Content

Sunday (This Handout) - 7 Questions on Luke 15:20 and Discussion Questions for this message
Monday (Blog) - If You're in the Belly of the Whale, Make the Most of It
Tuesday (Blog) - Stop Waiting For God to Tell You Something Different
Wednesday (Blog) - Do You Truly Want the World to Repent or Would You Rather See it Burn?
Thursday (Blog) - 5 Timeless Truths From the Life of Jonah

For meaningful conversation on this content, join my Facebook Group (Josh Daffern Digital) at:
facebook.com/groups/joshdaffern

7 QUESTIONS FOR DEEPER SCRIPTURE UNDERSTANDING

Luke 15:20

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So he got up and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.
Luke 15:20

1. WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THE ORIGINAL READERS?

If you start with today you're twenty centuries too late.

Luke 15:20 is the key verse in one of the most famous parables Jesus ever told: the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). In this story the younger of two sons demands his inheritance from his father (basically telling his father he wished his father was dead) and proceeded to squander that wealth in wild living. At this point in the story the listeners would have felt collective sympathy for the grieved father and outrage against the rebellious son. The son soon comes to the end of himself and decides to go back and beg his father's forgiveness. Again, little to no sympathy would have been generated for the son at this point, which makes what the father does all that more scandalous.

When the father sees the son, instead of refusing him entry or forcing him to grovel, the father ran towards the son (something considered demeaning for an elderly man to do) and embraced his son, in the original language literally "falling around his neck." It was a show of compassion and forgiveness that would have literally shocked the original readers, but the message was powerfully clear: instead of judgment and disdain for the wayward sinner, the Heavenly Father has compassion and grace and is running towards the sinner with open arms, ready to embrace them and welcome them home. Alongside this powerful message of forgiveness came a strong rebuke against the religious leaders, who failed to extend God's forgiveness and grace to others.

GREEK WORD OF THE WEEK

σπλαγχνίζομαι (*splanchnizomai*) is the Greek word for "compassion" and is noteworthy because of its literal meaning: *to feel the bowels yearn*. It is similar to the phrase "gut punch," which is not a literal blow to the midsection, but something that happens that has such an emotional effect that it spills over into the physical world. This verb is used twelve times in the New Testament, all in the gospels, and all either describing Jesus' interaction with people or a story Jesus told that conveys the Father's love to us.

2. WHAT'S THE CONTEXT? *Scripture without context makes no sense.*

This climactic verse highlights not just the parable of the lost (or prodigal) son but the entire chapter of Luke 15, which itself is a watershed chapter in the entire gospel of Luke. At its essence this verse relays the attitude not just of a father towards his wayward son, but of the Heavenly Father towards the sinners that He sent Jesus to earth to save. It was a strong rebuke against the religious leaders (Luke 15:1-2) who were judging rather than embracing the lost and needy coming to Jesus. In the works-based religion of ancient Judaism, this verse is the capstone of the "new covenant" that Jesus came to initiate through his death and resurrection: a covenant between God and His people based on mercy, grace, compassion and love.

3. WHAT TIMELESS TRUTHS ARE THERE?

Since the Word doesn't change it still matters today.

- Our Heavenly Father looks at us (even His wayward children) with the same love and compassion that a father would naturally do to his child.
- God is a God of compassion and love.
- God doesn't wait for us to come to Him; He is actively seeking us.

5. HOW DOES IT APPLY TODAY? *Information without application becomes stagnation.*

- If you're running from God and you're afraid of what will happen when you finally stop, read Luke 15:11-32. The Father is actively searching for you, not to condemn you, but to wrap His loving arms around you and embrace you as a father would his child.
- God is our loving Heavenly Father. As much as a good parent loves their children as has compassion on them, God has infinitely more for you!

4. WHERE ELSE IN SCRIPTURE DOES IT SAY THIS? *The best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture.*

Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? *Romans 2:4*

I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent. *Luke 15:7*

6. HOW SHOULD THIS CHANGE THE WAY I LIVE IN COMMUNITY? *The Bible comes alive in me when I live it in community.*

- When was a time (as a child) when you were hurt? Did you instinctively run to a parent? Why? How did your parent respond when you were hurt?
- If you are a parent, or if you have ever cared for a child, how did you respond when that child was hurt? Did you wait for them to come to you or did you rush towards them? How does that mirror God's affection for you?

7. HOW CAN MY LIFE GET BETTER BECAUSE OF THESE VERSES? *If I trust God and step in faith, what kind of life will God create?*

Your life can become so much better if you embrace the heart of this verse. God is a perfect, loving, Heavenly Father who cares for you! Even if you've ran, even if you've stumbled, even if you've made mistake after mistake and legitimately deserve only judgment and wrath, know that your Heavenly Father, just like the father in this story, is desperately searching for you. He is not waiting for you to come to Him, He is coming to you, not to hurt you but to heal you. If you're ready to come home, come back to the Father. He is ready to embrace you, to throw His arms around you and show you His love and affection. Come home!