



**SOUND CITY**  
BIBLE CHURCH

## JONAH | From Runaway to Reluctant

*For you cast me into the deep,  
into the heart of the seas,  
and the flood surrounded me;  
all your waves and your billows  
passed over me.  
Jonah 2:3*

Introduction | We are reluctant like Jonah

Cooking a ham like mom used to.

In a much deeper way, Jonah was reluctant to follow God even when confronted undeniably with God's power to correct Jonah's way.

Quick recap of the narrative.

God hounds Jonah's steps by sending the storm and then saving him by sending a great fish

**But God has mercy! He had mercy on Jonah and he offers mercy to us.**

Big Idea | God's Mercy

**God is committed to the slow process of teaching us the mystery of his mercy.**

### Mystery of God's Mercy

**He doesn't give us what we do deserve:** Judgment, condemnation, wrath.

**He does give us what we don't deserve:** Forgiveness, restoration, love.

**We can't earn it, so He pays for it himself.**

Quote

### Mystery of Mercy

"God loves people because of who God is, not because of who we are."

— Philip Yancey, *What's So Amazing About Grace?*

Sermon Body | The Slow Process

**Turn Runaway Rebels to Purposeful Partners.**

**Reluctance is a stop along the way of that transformation.**

**See the journey God takes Jonah on. See ourselves on some spot on the same journey.**



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This chapter is mostly the prayer that Jonah prayed from within the great fish. Many sailors have prayed to God from the top of the sea. This is the only time someone has prayed from within the sea! There is no place we cannot call out to our God! And there is nowhere you can go that God cannot hear your prayer! Even from within the belly of the fish in the deep of the ocean, God heard Jonah's prayer.

See it in this prayer Jonah recounts praying from inside the fish. Put in form later to make sense grab attention with beauty and capture what might have been jumble prayers over the three days. The following prayer contains ample reminiscences of the Psalms, which would be familiar to a devout Israelite.

Quote

### **The language of many of the Psalms**

In my distress I called upon the LORD;

to my God I cried for help.

From his temple he heard my voice,

and my cry to him reached his ears.

- Psalm 18:6

### **The Process of God's Mercy**

**Captured** - act of mercy to stop us from fleeing further, arrests our running, gives pause to our distracting activity, (football player running the wrong way?)

"Jonah acknowledges that he had been sinking down—a process that had begun before he even got to Joppa"

**Convicted** - draws our attention to him, look what you're doing, see my love and compassion, hear my voice calling you to join me, see your rebellion and resistance, feel the distance you've created, understand my anger and judgment, "The self-induced downward slide had brought him to the very gateway of death" a mystery why he is so patient with us

Quote

### **Jonah's True Fear**

"It was not the horror of drowning that terrified him, but the thought of being abandoned by the Lord in death. Despite his long and determined flight from the presence of God, the prospect of ending his life outside the presence of God, and then forever, are too terrifying for words. And so, as the final seconds of his fragile life approached, he cried out in immense distress to the Lord, his God."

**Compelled** - external, I'll do what you ask me to do, I'll pretend to be on board, not enough to do only, man looks on the outside, but God sees what's inside.

**Not Convinced!** - so we're still reluctant. The outward appearance of obedience, but the heart is not aligned with God's!



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### Our Reluctance Takes Many Forms

**Anxiety** - fear of man, might be hostile

**Apathy** - I don't really care about them like God does. Jonah's prayer is very self-focused.

**Angry** - they don't deserve God's love and grace (older brother)

**Analyzing** - the situation: the approach won't work, they're not open or won't listen or won't believe, Jonah will say this later in the book (paralysis of analysis) Indiana Jones and the Search for the Holy Grail

Conclusion | Jesus the better Jonah

God remains **Committed** to our change (10)

“And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.”

Miracle of salvation by being swallowed by the fish, alive brought back to land alive, deposited back on dry land.

Disgusting mode of the return of the runaway rebel is a picture of the hideousness of our rebellious nature in light of God's righteousness.

Reminded me of the classical painting by Botticelli, *The Birth of Venus*. Complete opposite.

Jonah reluctantly turns his steps toward Nineveh. Will proclaim a message of destruction.

Jesus, the true Jonah, was committed to our redemption and our transformation.

Turned his heart to the cross willingly and decidedly. To preach a message of salvation! After his death and burial Jesus would be in the heart of the earth for the same length of time as Jonah had been in the belly of the great fish—three days.

2:1-2 Sheol is the realm of the dead, often the grave. The fish's stomach is metaphorically like a tomb. Jonah thought he was dead, and perhaps he literally was at some point. If so, the parallel with Christ's resurrection (Mt 12:40) is even stronger.

Turn your eyes to God and Jesus the Savior he gives us.

One way to think of the end of Jonah's prayer is that Jonah expresses a hope of worshiping again in the temple; but the turn of expression in the text might suggest a higher desire.

Others refer the term to the heavenly temple, as they do in ver. 7; Ps. 11:4; 18:6.

Will you allow God to work on your heart to surrender to the work of

**God who is committed to the slow process of teaching us the mystery of his mercy?**