



MORE
MERCIFUL
THAN ME

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FROM PASTOR MARK

Dear Church,

Most people—even those only slightly familiar with the Bible—have heard of Jonah. It's a story that captures the imagination: a runaway prophet, a raging storm, and a giant fish. But while the great fish gets the headlines, it's the work of our great God that takes centre stage.

This short book is rich in truth and overflowing with surprises. It's a comedy of sorts—satirical, sharp, and deeply searching. Jonah is a prophet who runs from God's call, fails in every assignment, and sulks when mercy wins. And yet, through every twist and turn, God shows himself to be merciful, patient, and sovereign. He pursues not only the lost people of Nineveh, but also his rebellious prophet.

Jonah is the only Old Testament prophet sent to a foreign nation. That fact alone tells us something staggering: God's mercy is not limited by borders, bloodlines, or behaviour. His compassion reaches further than ours often does. His heart is wider than ours naturally is. This little book of the Bible reveals a big truth: God is much more merciful than we are.

That's the theme of this series: *More Merciful Than Me*. As we walk through the book of Jonah together—both in these studies and on Sundays—I pray that we'll grow in our understanding of God's merciful heart. We'll see how he saves those who turn to him, how he shapes those who belong to him, and how he invites us to share his concern for a lost world.

Jonah points us forward to Jesus—the one who called himself the true and better Jonah. He was cast into the deep, not for his own rebellion, but for ours. He rose, not just from the belly of a fish, but from the grave itself, bringing mercy to all who will receive it.

My hope is that, through these four weeks, we'll come to echo Jonah's confession: "Salvation comes from the Lord" (Jonah 2:9). And by God's grace, our hearts will better reflect the mercy of our great God.

With you in Christ,
Mark

PARTNERING IN MERCY

As we journey through the book of Jonah, one of the clearest themes we encounter is that God's mercy is not just for us—it's for the world. From the sailors to the Ninevites, Jonah's story repeatedly shows that God's heart beats for the lost, even when ours doesn't.

One of the ways we grow in sharing God's heart is by supporting those who have been sent to proclaim his mercy in places we can't go ourselves. That's why we're inviting each home group to "adopt" one of our church's mission partners for the duration of this series—and beyond. This could involve writing letters or emails of encouragement, meeting over Zoom, and most importantly, praying regularly for their life and ministry. It's a simple but powerful way to connect with what God is doing globally and to align our hearts with his.

Let's not be like Jonah, reluctant and withdrawn. Let's be active participants in God's mission of mercy, partnering with those who are proclaiming that "salvation comes from the Lord."

**For contact details of our mission partners please email
admin@wollongongbaptist.org**

JAMES & SHILA ROY

HOUSE CHURCH OF BANGLADESH

James is Senior Pastor of the House Church of Bangladesh; a church planting network of over 30 churches with over 1000 members.



SCOTT ADAMSON

POWER TO CHANGE

Scott heads up Power to Change's digital ministry with the mission of "making disciples through digital strategies."

RICHARD & ESTHER AKOGUN

IYINFEST MISSIONS

Richard serves as the mission director of IYINFEST Missions, a ministry in Nigeria dedicated to evangelism and helping believers grow in their faith.



SAMAR MUSSON

WCCEB

Samar teaches scripture and runs lunchtime Christian groups at Smiths Hill High School here in Wollongong.

RICH & ALI MAEGRAITH

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION

Rich and Ali are church planting in Berlin, Germany whilst seeking to reach the music community for Christ.



ANDREW BEDDOE

VOCATIONAL BIBLE COLLEGE

Andrew is the Principal of VBC which seeks to equip everyday people by providing theological and ministry training in the vocational training sector.

JASMINE NG

PROJECT VIDEO

Jasmine leads the global team at Project Video, seeking to get the gospel to people in a language that they can understand using media.



JORDAN & RACHEL MILBURN

QUIZ WORX

Jordan and Rachel work with Quiz Worx, sharing Jesus with kids everywhere through puppet shows and other creative mediums.

JOSH & ALI REEVE

EUROPEAN CHRISTIAN MISSION

Josh and Ali are on staff at Torchbearers "Crossroads" Bible School in Erseka, Albania, where they teach and disciple students from around the world.



MATTHEW MEEK

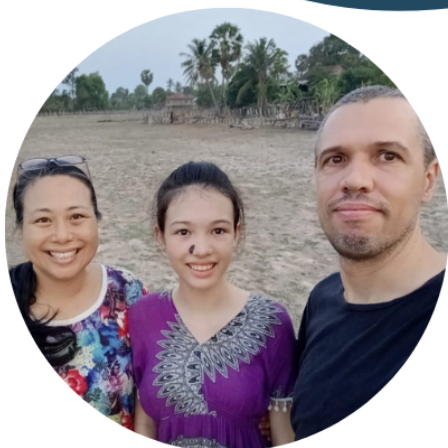
AFES

Matthew works at UOW, seeking to reach international students with the gospel, as well as leading the AFES FOCUS national strategy.

JAN YAWAN

BAPTIST MISSION AUSTRALIA

Jan serves through Lanternlight Ministries, bringing light and hope to those with disabilities in the community as she seeks to share Christ.



PHILIP & KIM LAMBRECHT

WYCLIFFE BIBLE TRANSLATORS

Philip and Kim live among an unreached ethnic minority group in South East Asia where Philip works to translate the Bible to the local dialect.

1. RUNNING FROM MERCY

Home Group Study on Jonah 1:1–16

1. Can you think of a time when you were asked to do something you really didn't want to do? What made it hard to accept?

Read Jonah 1:1–16

2. What does God ask Jonah to do, and why?
3. Pick two of the following passages and compare the response of other prophets to that of Jonah:
 - 1 Kings 18:1–2
 - Amos 7:12–16
 - Exodus 3:10–15, 4:10–20
 - Isaiah 6:8–9
 - Jeremiah 1:4–8
4. Based only on what we are told in Jonah 1:1–16, what are some possible reasons for Jonah taking this drastic action?

5. How do the sailors respond to the storm and to Jonah (v5-8)?
6. Consider what Jonah says in v 9: how do his actions up to this point compare with his words?
7. What does Jonah's conclusion in v12 show us about his mindset?
8. What glimpses does this chapter give us of the boundless mercy of God?
9. While we're not prophets like Jonah, we have still been given a clear mission—to make Jesus known to all nations (Matt 28:18–20). In what ways can our response to that calling resemble Jonah's reluctance?

Prayer Prompt:

Confess ways in which you have been less merciful than God. Ask God to soften your heart towards others.

1. RUNNING FROM MERCY

Sermon on Jonah 1:1–16

2. RESCUED BY MERCY

Home Group Study on Jonah 1:17–2:10

1. Have you ever had a moment where you thought, “I don’t know how I got out of that”? What do you remember about it?

Read Jonah 1:17–2:10

2. What do you think about God’s choice of rescue method (1:17)? How is this an act of mercy?
3. How does Jonah describe his situation in the fish (2:2–6)?
4. Which parts of Jonah’s prayer show genuine repentance or gratitude? Are there parts that seem lacking?
5. Why do you think Jonah refers to God’s temple (2:4, 7)?

6. What does Jonah mean by “Salvation comes from the LORD” (2:9)?
7. Why do you think God would bother rescuing such a rebellious and stubborn prophet?
8. How is our salvation like Jonah’s? (cf. 1 Tim 1:13–16)
9. In what ways do we sometimes receive mercy from God without fully acknowledging our need for it?

Prayer Prompt:

Thank God for the ways he has rescued you in the past. Ask for a deeper awareness of your dependence on his mercy.

2. RESCUED BY MERCY

Sermon on Jonah 1:17–2:10

3. AWAKENED BY MERCY

Home Group Study on Jonah 3:1–10

1. What do you think leads someone to genuine repentance or transformation? Can you think of a real-life example?

Read Jonah 3

2. How does this second call to Jonah compare with the first? (v1–2) What does this say about God's character?
3. What is Jonah's message to Nineveh? (v4) What do you notice about its tone or content?
4. Think of a time when your heart has been deeply convicted by God's word. What was your response?
5. How do the Ninevites respond? (v5–9) What signs of true repentance do you see?

6. What is God's response? (v10) What does this tell us about God's character? (cf. Jer 18:7–10)
7. Consider 2 Peter 3:9. How should this shape our view of people who seem far from God?
8. How should God's character inform the way we engage with our community and the wider world?

Read Matthew 12:38–41

9. What comparisons does Jesus make between Jonah and himself, and between the Ninevites and the leaders of Jesus' day?

Prayer Prompt:

Pray for people or groups you find hard to imagine turning to God. Ask for a heart that rejoices in repentance—wherever it happens.

3. AWAKENED BY MERCY

Sermon on Jonah 3:1-10

4. WRESTLING WITH MERCY

Home Group Study on Jonah 4:1–11

1. What makes you very happy? What makes you very angry?

Read Jonah 4

1. What is Jonah's reaction to Nineveh's repentance? (v1–3)
Why is he angry? What does this reveal about his heart?
2. Is there any individual or any group of people that would cause you to be angry at God if he showed them mercy?
Why?
3. How does God engage with Jonah? (v4–11) What lessons is God trying to teach him through the plant and worm?
4. Jonah's statements in v3 and v8 can seem overly dramatic. What do you do when you are angry at God?

5. What is the implied answer to God's question in v4 and v9? How is Jonah's attitude different to God's attitude in Jonah 1:1?
6. What is the tone of God's final question in v11? How does it challenge Jonah—and us?
7. How does God feel about the nations of the world? Consider the following passages:
- Gen 12:3
 - Isa 49:1–6
 - Jer 3:14–18
 - Gal 3:7–9
 - Rev 7:9–10
8. Are there ways in which you want to align yourself and your concerns more closely with God's concerns? What might that look like?

Prayer Prompt:

Ask God to align your heart with His—especially toward people you find difficult or undeserving.

4. WRESTLING WITH MERCY

Sermon on Jonah 4:1-11



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