



STUDY GUIDE

July 24, 2022

Message Series:
Message Title:
Teaching Pastor:

On the Water
Jonah
Elijah Schiarelli

Warm-up/Icebreaker:

Share your favorite memory of being on or near the water.

Pray:

Dear Lord, thank You for this time You've given us to open Your Word and discover who You are. We need Your wisdom as we study together. Help our hearts and minds to be open, not relying on our own understanding. Thank You for the clarity and life-changing power Your Word brings. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Get Started:

- Who are your personal enemies (please share only with discretion and wisdom)? For what reason(s) do you perceive them as your enemy? If God did not love His enemies would there be any Christians?

"Jonah saw the Ninevites as evil. They did evil things and evil people do evil things, right? That's the logic the world follows. And it seems to make sense. But God doesn't operate under the same logic our world does, thank goodness. For God, the Ninevites weren't evil people because they did evil things..they were *lost people*, and as a result, did evil things." -Pastor Elijah Schiarelli

Read Jonah 4.

- What stands out to you the most in this story? How was Pastor Elijah's insight into the Jonah narrative enlightening to you?
- What was it about Jonah that constantly made him say that it was better for him to die?

"Jonah finally reveals why he fled in the first place, why he asked to be thrown overboard in the storm, and why he gave such a lousy message to the Ninevites when he arrived: he wasn't afraid of them. He hated them. He hated the Ninevites so much that he was trying to deny them the opportunity to be forgiven by God. In fact, if there was any fear in Jonah, it was fear that God would continue to be the God He's always been: gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in love; a God who relents from sending calamity *even for Jonah's enemies*. Jonah was convinced that God would forgive them but he believed they didn't deserve it, so he tried to run." - Pastor Elijah Schiarelli

Read Matthew 5:43-48 & Luke 6:35-37.

- Has God ever led you to love your enemies or even yourself in a surprising way? How was it hard for you? How did it play out?
- How do we combat bitterness towards someone who has wronged us? How is forgiveness an ongoing process? What does God show us is on the other end of this choice?

Watch and Discuss Video: (Follow up videos paused for the summer)

Reflect and Commit:

“The real question God poses to Jonah is the same one He asks us so many years later: **“Is it okay that God loves my enemies?”** That’s how the book ends. God asks the question and then...nothing. We never get Jonah’s response. We never see Jonah consider another perspective. We don’t get the chance for any real resolution. It just...ends, leaving this critical question unanswered. When we dig into the questions about our faith and how it ought to inform our lives, it’s because of the journey towards the answers that we often learn and grow the most. So what will we do? What will you do? My challenge for you is to reflect on the person who hurt you, the people who hurt others, and yourself. Is it okay that God loves them? Wrestle with these hard questions. Spend time with God, with the Bible, and with a trusted friend. Take whatever time you need to address this in your life, and as you do, be open to God’s answer for you and put it into practice. Ask yourself the question: **Is it okay that God loves my enemies?”**

-Pastor Elijah Schiarelli

- Take 2 minutes of silence to reflect on this question. Share your initial response or thoughts.

Read Colossians 3:12-14 and 1 Peter 3:8-11.

- Do these verses change your perspective at all? Why does God command here?
- Is there a particular area where God is encouraging you to grow? What is one way you will work on loving your enemies/moving toward forgiveness this week?

Pray:

Dear Lord, help us to love not only those who love us first, but also those who treat us badly, which includes ourselves. We know that Jesus expressed his love by dying for us precisely at a time when we were rebelling. Help us to do the same sort of thing whenever we are presented with the chance. We need your Holy Spirit to work within us to make this kind of love and peace possible. May self-giving love be a mark of who we are as Your children and as followers of Jesus Christ. It is in His name that we pray. Amen.