



ENTER God's presence

Psalm 139:7-12

**7 Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?**
**8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there;
if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.**
**9 If I rise on the wings of the dawn,
if I settle on the far side of the sea,
10 even there your hand will guide me,
your right hand will hold me fast.**
**11 If I say, "Surely the darkness will hide me
and the light become night around me,"**
**12 even the darkness will not be dark to you;
the night will shine like the day,
for darkness is as light to you.**

Pray: Heavenly Father, Thank you that wherever we are, you are already there. There is nowhere we can go where your presence cannot find us, nowhere we can run where your love cannot reach us.

As we gather around your Word tonight, quiet the distractions of our minds and the busyness of our lives. Help us to set aside our assumptions, our worries, and our need to have all the answers. Give us open ears to hear your voice and willing hearts to follow where you lead. Amen.



SHARE life together

1. **What are your highs and lows since you last met?**
2. **Have you ever tried to avoid a difficult conversation or responsibility? What happened?**
3. **Can you recall a time in the last week when you have seen God at work in an unexpected way or through unexpected people? What happened?**

Week beginning:
Monday 22nd June 2026

Worship series:
The Sign
#1 Running from the Cross



VERSE for the week

**The word of the Lord came to
Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to
the great city of Nineveh and
preach against it, because its
wickedness has come up
before me."**

Jonah 1:1-2



REMEMBER this week

**Running from God
leads deeper into
the storm. Running
for God leads
deeper into grace.**

Most Christians know the broad outline of Jonah's story. We know about the storm, the fish, and Jonah's visit to Nineveh. But the book of Jonah is about much more than a reluctant prophet and a giant fish.

Throughout this series, we will explore why Jesus referred to "the sign of Jonah" (Matt 12:39, Matt 16:4, Luke 11:29-30) and discover how Jonah's story points us toward the cross. Along the way, we'll see both our own tendency to run from God's purposes and God's determination to pursue people with his grace.

This week we begin with Jonah chapter 1 and Jonah's attempt to run away from God's call and consider what it means to run from the cross.

Read **Jonah chapter 1** and **Matthew 12:38-42** [HERE](#) or in your own Bible.

4. **What verse/concept/teaching in these readings caught your attention and what was challenging/confronting/comforting about them for you?**
5. **What do Jonah's actions and responses throughout chapter 1 reveal about his attitude toward God's command?**
6. **As the story unfolds, how do you see Jonah and the sailors responding differently to God and the storm? What do you notice about their actions and attitudes?**
7. **In Matthew 12, Jesus says that no sign will be given except "the sign of Jonah." Based on what you know of the story of Jonah and Jesus what do you see as some of the similarities and differences between the two?**



As we've explored Jonah's actions in chapter 1, one thing becomes clear: Jonah's problem wasn't that he didn't understand God's command. He knew exactly what God was asking him to do and he wilfully elected to take a different course of action. Later in the story, we're even told that Jonah had a pretty good idea of what God intended to do in Nineveh. The problem was that Jonah didn't want the same outcome that God did. As we move into a deeper reflection on this passage, consider what Jonah's story might reveal about our own response to God's purposes and God's grace.

8. **Jonah knew what God was asking him to do, yet he chose to run away. Why do you think people sometimes resist or avoid things that they know are right?**
9. **Throughout Chapter 1, God continues to pursue Jonah even as Jonah runs from Him. What does this tell us about God's character?**
10. **Despite Jonah's attempts to flee, God continues to work through the situation and reveal himself to the sailors. What does this teach us about God's purposes and plans?**
11. **In Matthew 12, Jesus identifies himself with "the sign of Jonah." What stands out to you when you compare Jonah's response to God's mission with Jesus' response to his mission?**



Jonah's story reveals both the reality of human resistance and the persistence of God's grace. While Jonah ran from God's call, God continued to pursue him and work through him. In Jesus, we see the faithful Son who did not run, but willingly embraced his mission and carried the cross for us. As you reflect on these passages, consider how God might be inviting you to trust his purposes and respond to his grace.

MAKE IT REAL:

12. Can you think of a time when God's plan turned out differently from what you wanted or expected? Looking back, what did you learn from that experience?
13. Jonah's story reminds us that God does not give up on people who wander from him. When have you experienced God's patience, grace, or persistence in your own life?
14. Jonah ran from God's mission, but Jesus willingly embraced his. How does Christ's faithfulness encourage you when you struggle with your own faithfulness?
15. Is there an area of your life right now where God may be inviting you to trust him more fully or follow him more closely?

Plan your weekly devotions or [download the Church Central app](#) for the daily [LifeWay Devotions](#)



PRAY intentionally

You might like to pray together the following prayer, or spend time sharing together your prayer needs and praying for one another.

Heavenly Father,

Thank you for speaking to us through the story of Jonah and reminding us that your purposes are greater than our own. Thank you that even when we struggle, wander, or resist your leading, you do not give up on us. Your grace continues to pursue us, and your love remains faithful.

Thank you for Jesus, who did not run from his mission, but willingly carried the cross for our sake. Help us to trust your plans, rely on your grace, and follow where you lead.

As we go into the week ahead, fill us with your Holy Spirit. Strengthen our faith, guide our steps, and help us to reflect the love and mercy you have shown to us.

In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.



BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross on their forehead or on the palm of their hand as you say...

[Name], God's love for you is relentlessly persistent, even when you choose to ignore it. Amen.