

Can We Outrun God?

Comfortably Indifferent

Scripture References — Jonah 1:1–6

Introduction

Jonah 1:1–6 (CSB)

The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: “Get up! Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it because their evil has come up before me.” Jonah got up to flee to Tarshish from the Lord’s presence. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the Lord’s presence.

But the Lord threw a great wind onto the sea, and such a great storm arose on the sea that the ship threatened to break apart. The sailors were afraid, and each cried out to his god. They threw the ship’s cargo into the sea to lighten the load. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone down to the lowest part of the vessel and had stretched out and fallen into a deep sleep.

The captain approached him and said, “What are you doing sound asleep? Get up! Call to your god. Maybe this god will consider us, and we won’t perish.”

The Word of the Lord Came

Nahum 3:1–4 (CSB)

Woe to the city of blood,
totally deceitful,
full of plunder,
never without prey.

The crack of the whip
and rumble of the wheel,
galloping horse
and jolting chariot!

Charging horseman,
flashing sword,
shining spear;

heaps of slain,
mounds of corpses,
dead bodies without end—
they stumble over their dead.

Because of the continual prostitution of the prostitute,
the attractive mistress of sorcery,
who treats nations and clans like merchandise
by her prostitution and sorcery,

Jonah’s Response: Running the Other Way

Psalm 139:7–10 (CSB)

Where can I go to escape your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?
If I go up to heaven, you are there;
if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
If I live at the eastern horizon
or settle at the western limits,
even there your hand will lead me;
your right hand will hold on to me.

Going Down: The Path of Disobedience

James 1:13–14 (CSB)

No one undergoing a trial should say, “I am being tempted by God,” since God is not tempted by evil, and he himself doesn’t tempt anyone. But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire.

The Heart of the Issue: Fear, Hatred, and Disobedience

Ephesians 5:13–14 (CSB)

Everything exposed by the light is made visible, for what makes everything visible is light. Therefore it is said:

Get up, sleeper, and rise up from the dead,
and Christ will shine on you.

Jonah’s Story Points Us to Jesus

Psalm 139:7–10 (CSB) —

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Small Group Discussion

1. What did God say through his word during our gathering to you today?
2. Jonah ran toward what felt safe and comfortable instead of toward God's calling. Where in your own life are you most tempted to choose comfort or control over what God might be asking of you?

3. The sermon talked about “off-ramps” — those moments where we can still turn back before going further down. Looking back, can you recall a time God gave you a chance to turn around? What made it hard to take that exit?
4. Jonah was “comfortably indifferent” — asleep in the storm while everyone around him was in crisis. What does spiritual numbness or being “checked out” look like in everyday life, and how do we recognize it in ourselves?
5. The sermon ends with the reminder that no matter how far we run, we can’t outrun God’s love — and that Jesus pays the fare we never could. How does seeing Jesus as the “better Jonah” change the way you read this story or think about your own running?
6. How can my small group help me apply today’s sermon?