



PLEASANT HILLS
COMMUNITY PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

Week of Sunday, September 20

*Questions with asterisks are meant to be answered by everyone in the group.
(typically, the icebreaker question and the final question of the evening)*

*Do not feel pressure to answer every question. Be aware of the group's momentum.
Leave enough time for prayer at the end of your time together.*

Icebreaker

****What is your favorite destination that includes a body of water?***

Questions for the Sermon Series, *Deep Grace: The Book of Jonah (Part 2)*

Read this passage from Jonah to provide the context for the discussion questions that follow.

Then the sailors said to each other, "Come, let us cast lots to find out who is responsible for this calamity." They cast lots and the lot fell on Jonah. So they asked him, "Tell us, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?"

He answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

This terrified them and they asked, "What have you done?" (They knew he was running away from the Lord, because he had already told them so.)

The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?"

"Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."

Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. Then they cried out to the Lord, "Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased." Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.¹

¹ Jonah 1:7-16, NIV

1. If you were able to listen to this week's sermon, did any specific part catch your attention, encourage you, or challenge you in an unexpected way?
2. The sailors felt the consequences of Jonah's sin. How does this still happen in our lives? How does one individual's sin and its consequences impact the lives of others around them?
3. Scripture says, "the LORD disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in."² Consider these questions about God's discipline:
 - a. How is God's discipline an act of love?
 - b. Why must God's discipline make his children uncomfortable (sometimes extremely so)?
 - c. Have you ever felt as if you've experienced God's discipline?
How so, and what was that like?
4. When the sailors ask Jonah what they must do to make the sea calm, Jonah gives them a very clear answer. However, in vain, the sailors attempt to solve their problem by some other means.
 - a. What are some helpful ways for us to wisely discern God's will for overcoming problems in our lives?
 - b. Often, we can be quick to attempt our own solutions to major problems in our lives rather than following the steps we just discussed. Why does this happen?
5. This part of Jonah's story compares Jonah (the prophet of God) with the sailors (foreigners who worship false gods). Scan the passage again and note the use of irony. As a group, discuss a few ways this part of the story is actually *elevating* the sailors' faithful response to the Lord over Jonah's unfaithful response to the Lord?

6. Read the following passage from Mark 4:35-41.

That day when evening came, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" Jesus got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

This passage is written as an obvious parallel to the Jonah story. Based on what you've learned and discussed so far, what might the Gospel writer be communicating about Jesus?

7. ****What part of our small group discussion today stands out to you the most?***
Challenge: reflect on this topic further during the week. Find ways to faithfully, actively respond.

Take prayer requests and close in prayer. Allow time for small group members to pray aloud.

² Proverbs 3:12; See also Hebrews 12:6