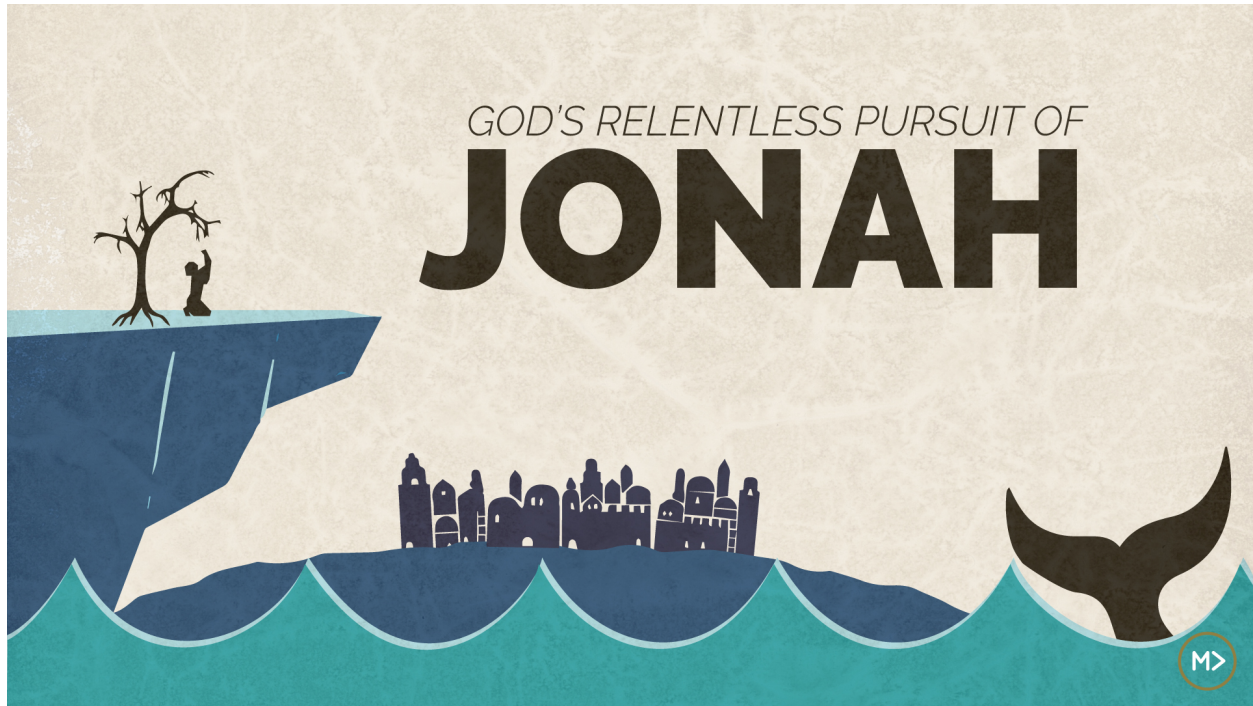


GOD'S RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF JONAH



Chapter Four

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

This fourth and final chapter is often the part of the story left out of the children's versions of retelling Jonah. However, it is an essential part of the story and the part that Israel needed to hear most. Perhaps it is also what we need to hear most.

- **Big Idea:** The whole world and everything in it belongs to God... and He cares for it all!

Starter

Evidences of Grace: Today's story shows how Jonah took God's salvation for granted and was angry rather than grateful for God's goodness. Take a few moments to let the kids share things they are grateful for. They can be simple or small, or big and surprising. For each one, thank God for His grace in the world.

Sing Together

He's Got the Whole World In His Hands - <https://youtu.be/-T1CLIMjiTw>

Story

God decided to not destroy Nineveh, because they stopped doing violent evil things and were sorry they had done them. They humbled themselves before God and asked for forgiveness - and He gave it!

That's what God does. This would seem like a happy ending to most, but there was one person who was not happy at all. Jonah was furious with God! He said, "This is exactly why I didn't want to come to Nineveh! I knew you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to get angry, full of faithful love, and don't want to bring disaster to anyone. But Nineveh doesn't deserve Your love! Just kill me now so I don't have to live with this!"

"Is it right for you to be so mad, Jonah?" asked the LORD. Jonah didn't answer. He walked out of the city, sat to the east of it, and waited for what would happen to Nineveh. Maybe they would mess up again and finally get the destruction they deserved. God saw Jonah and caused a plant to grow over him to save him from the sun. Jonah was happy for the plant.

The next day, though, God sent a worm to eat the plant and it withered and died. Then God sent a scorching hot wind to make Jonah uncomfortable. Jonah was so hot he almost fainted and asked to die again.

So God asked again, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

"Yes, it's right!" said Jonah. "I'm so mad I want to die!"

The LORD said, "You cared that much about a plant, which you didn't water or cause to grow and was only there a night. So shouldn't I care about the large city of Nineveh? There are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people there! And they don't know what they are doing, or what is right and wrong. Plus, there are so many animals there!"

We don't know what happened next. Did Jonah finally understand that God's grace wasn't just for him and people like him? Did he finally understand that God owns and cares for the whole world? After all, He is the God who caused the storm, controlled the waves, commanded the great big fish and the tiny worm, made the plant grow, sent the wind, and saved the city of Nineveh - just like He had saved Israel.

One day, the same LORD would come down in the flesh to save the whole world. And on the cross as he was dying, Jesus said something very similar to what God told Jonah, "Father forgive them, they do not know what they are doing." And through Jesus, the Father does forgive.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- Why do you think Jonah was so mad about Nineveh being saved?
- Are there any people in your life who you don't think deserve God's kindness and forgiveness?
- Who did Jesus come to save?

Breakout Time

- **Prayer:**

God, the whole world belongs to You! Thank You for caring for it and for saving us from our own destruction! Help us to trust You more. In Jesus' name, amen.

- **Craft:**

Use the coloring page attached from this series graphics. As the kids color, ask them to talk about the different elements they see in it and how they related to the overall story. Ask them how each element points forward to Jesus!

Have them draw in any elements that might be missing from the story.

- **BLESS Activity:**

For kids to do during the week

Because this Story is true, we want to be faithful to live in it. We ask the Spirit to help us to *Bless, Listen, Eat, Speak*, and *Sabbath* (rest & celebrate) in ways that tell the good news of God's Story.

This week, focus on the **Bless** rhythm. God cares for the whole world and He blesses so we can bring His blessing to others, so the whole world can know about His goodness. Talk with your family about how you can be a blessing to someone this week.

Other Resources

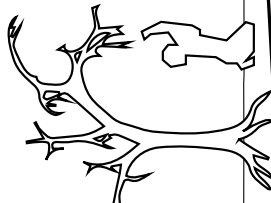
- **Bible Project:**

Watch this video overview of the book of Jonah: <https://youtu.be/dLlabZc0O4c>



GOD'S RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF

JONAH



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