

Easter 2021 – Jim Burgen April 3/4, 2021

Group Creed

We come together as a Group with the goal of Spiritual Formation; encouraging one another to become the same kind of person that Jesus is, so that we can live out every part of our lives inside of His Kingdom.

// Bible References

John 12:21-24; Matthew 12:38-40; Jonah; Romans 6:23; John 3:5

// Message Summary

This week, Jim Burgen teaches what the message of Easter means for us. He talks through the idea that, *“In order for something to live, something has to die.”* Jim uses the story of Jonah to help us understand what Jesus has done for us. Jonah was a man who knew God was calling him to something but decided to go the opposite direction. Then he was infamously caught up in a storm and swallowed by a fish. Three days later the fish spits him up on the land right where God had originally called Jonah to go. Even after God saves Jonah, he still reluctantly goes into the city to do what God has asked of him. The people in the city of Nineveh repent and turn to God. The story ends with Jonah being unhappy and angry at God because God saved the people Jonah did not want to help. During Jesus’ time on earth, (Matthew 12:38-40) he references the story of Jonah to show what He came to Earth to do.

// Biblical Context

The book of Jonah is short; you could read the whole book in less than an hour. We recommend reading it before your group meets, or as a group. The main concept of the book takes place when God calls Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh, which was a part of the Assyrian Empire. This Empire was constantly at war with Israel, God’s chosen people. This was not a mission that Jonah was excited about because he knew God was going to be merciful to his countries enemy. He decided to get on a boat and go in the opposite direction of Nineveh to a town called Tarshish. On his way to Tarshish, a storm hits, and Jonah knows this storm is from God, and thinks this is God’s judgment on him. He tells the men to throw him overboard and he is swallowed by a huge fish! If you don’t think that can happen [click this!](#)

In chapter 1:17 It says, “...the LORD arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah...” Jonah doesn’t know what the outcome of this will be, but he probably assumes this is where his story ends.

Then in 2:2-9, he prays to God and his prayer is essential to understanding why Jesus compares the story of Jonah to Jesus’ work on the cross. We see Jonah cry out for God’s help. He doesn’t deserve for God to save him, but God does it anyway. The irony of this story is that Jonah still doesn’t feel happy or excited about God saving Nineveh because he doesn’t think they deserve to be saved by God.

In Matthew 12:38-40, Pharisees, self-righteous religious people, ask Jesus to show them a sign to prove he is the son of God. Jesus uses the story of Jonah to illustrate what He came to do for humanity.

// Community Questions

1. Do you have any Easter traditions that you celebrate with your family, if so, can you share those with the group?
2. Did you or someone you know get baptized this weekend? If so, what was that like?

//Core Questions

1. Have you had a time in your life where you knew God was calling you to do something or stop doing something, and your response was to run the other way or say “no?” What was the result of that or are you still running from that now?
2. In Jonah 1, the storm hit the ship because Jonah ran away from God. Ultimately, the people with him on the ship suffered and decided to throw him out to sea. Describe a time where you found yourself caught in a storm that was the result of your own choices or mistakes? Did that fall out on anyone around you?
3. Read Jonah 4:1-3. Jonah is upset with God because of his decision to help the people of Nineveh. Have you ever experienced a time where you didn’t understand God’s plan, or you didn’t think someone deserved the grace that God gave them?
4. Easter and baptism are celebrations of what Jesus did for us 2,000 years ago so that we could have new life. How does that truth impact your life right now? Does that encourage you? Does it make you want to share that truth with others in your life?

//Challenge

Jim says, “that in order for something to live, something has to die.” We not only see this in the story of Jonah, but in the death and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus had to die to pay the price for our sin for us to have new life with Him. Is there something that God revealed to you this weekend that needs to “die” in your life? Pray and ask God to show you what it is that you need to give up or “let die” so that He can bring new life. Spend 5 minutes each day this week asking God to help you surrender this to Him.