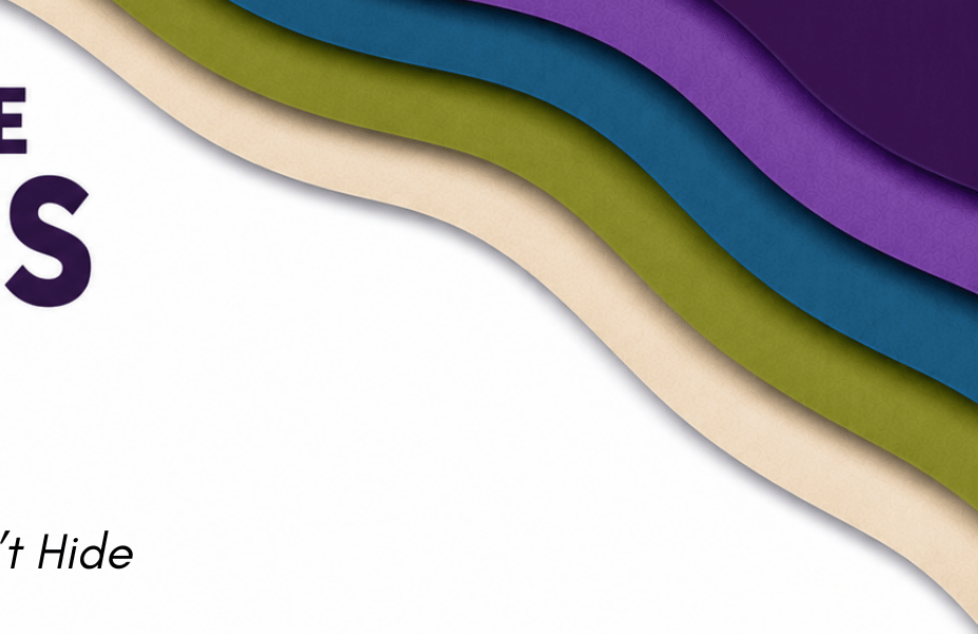


UNBELIEVABLE STORIES



Discussion Questions

August 30, 2026

You Can Run but You Can't Hide

The Story of Jonah

Before discussing these questions, read the story of Jonah in the Bible. It's divided into four short chapters and is easily read in one sitting. Even if you are very familiar with this book, try to read it as a story. Feel its intrigue, wit, plot twists, and challenges.

1. What impacted you most during our worship service together this past Sunday? How would you describe what you experienced? In what ways did you experience encouragement, and in what ways did you experience discomfort?
2. The speaker on Sunday suggested that many stories in the Bible are best interpreted "literarily" rather than "literally" because stories, whether based on fact or fiction, can convey deep truth that a recounting of the facts alone could never do. How do you feel about this "literary" approach? What are some of the downfalls of a literal approach to the Bible? What are some of the dangers of a non-literal approach?
3. In this story overall, how do you relate to Jonah? Where do you feel empathetic? Where do you feel critical of him?
4. In chapter 1, how are the sailors portrayed? How does their character evolve in just a few verses? How does this compare to Jonah? What do you think is the purpose of the author in this part of the narrative?
5. In chapter 2, the speaker on Sunday suggested the poetic lament is almost recited sarcastically and in criticism of Jonah's hypocrisy. Do you agree? When Jonah blames God in verses 3–4, do you feel this is justified?
6. How might this story address areas of our own lives where we might feel like victims rather than people with agency and responsibility? In what ways might we be ironically using our spirituality to hide from God?

7. In chapter 4, we see Jonah's true colors. He is angry because he feels wrongdoers who see the error of their ways and want to change should still get their comeuppance, whereas God is merciful and forgives. Take a moment to honestly reflect on ways in which you are judgmental of others. What might a more merciful approach look like for you?

Prayer Practice for the Week

Take some time this week to consciously open yourself to God's presence. This might be through a quiet moment of meditation, a walk in nature, or while carrying out a meditative task. Do whatever helps you personally connect with God.

Be conscious of God as love and mercy rather than as judgment. In this spirit, ask yourself where and how you might be hiding from God. What areas of your life feel most closed? Ask yourself why, and invite God into those spaces.