



## Don't Judge A Book By Its Title

*Pastor Peter LaRuffa*

*June 6, 2021*

I. **Don't be fooled by the title. Remembering God is the main character will change the way you interpret Jonah!**

A. **Read Jonah through a God-focused lens, and you'll see it as the historical narrative that it truly is.**

**Jonah 1:4** "But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up."

**Jonah 1:7** "And they said to one another, 'Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.' So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah."

**cf. Prov. 16:33**

**Jonah 1:17** "And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights."

**Jonah 2:10** "And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land."

**Jonah 3:10** "When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, **God relented of the disaster that He had said He would do to them**, and He did not do it."

**Jonah 4:6** "Now the Lord God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant."

**Jonah 4:7** "But when dawn came up the next day, **God appointed a worm** that attacked the plant, so that it withered."

**Jonah 4:8** "When the sun rose, **God appointed a scorching east wind**, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, 'It is better for me to die than to live.'"

This isn't a story of "what happened" to Jonah  
This is a record of *what God did* in and through a man named JONAH.

B. **Read Jonah through a God-focused lens, and when your expectations are defied, your explanations are defined.**

At least 10 times, the book of Jonah takes an unexpected twist that makes little to no sense whatsoever. But, when you remember God is the main character, the explanation comes together even though the expectations fell apart.

**Isaiah 55:8-9**“ For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

**II. Don't be fooled by the mirror. Remembering God is the main character will change the way you interpret your life!**

**A. View your life through a God-focused lens, and you'll see it as the redemptive narrative it truly is.**

**Proverbs 3:5-6**“ Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. **In all your ways acknowledge Him**, and He will make straight your paths.”

Your life story isn't an account of “what happened” to you.  
Your life story is an account of *what God did* in and through you.

**B. View your life through a God-focused lens, and when your expectations are defied, your explanations are defined.**

**Job 11:7**“ Can you find out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limit of the Almighty?”

**Ecclesiastes 11:5**“ As you do not know the way the spirit comes to the bones in the womb of a woman with child, so you do not know the work of God who makes everything.”

*“I know not the way God leads me, but well do I know my Guide.”*  
~ Martin Luther ~

**Questions for Personal Reflection and/or Community Group Discussion:**

1. When you learned we were taking a break from Luke and spending most of the Summer in Jonah, how did you feel?
2. What questions come to mind as you read through Jonah?
3. Try reading through it trying to anticipate what would come next if you were unfamiliar with the narrative. Pastor Peter said when he did that, he came across 10 twists that defy your expectations. How many can you find?
4. Does God usually come to mind as you're going about the fairly ordinary things in your life? How cognizant are you of the centrality of God in the events of your everyday life?
5. Pastor Peter said “God is the main character in your life's story, too.” How does that inform your interpretation of the best times in your life? How does it impact your understanding of the most difficult events in your life?