

GENESIS

begin. belong. believe.

Jonah... this is our God!

(part VI of the 'Jonah' series – 6/24/12)

Author and Pastor A.W. Tozer once said **“What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.”** This seems like a really big statement to make, but when you think about it, Tozer is spot on. Why? This single belief will shape and inform every aspect of our lives. What we believe about God – our testimony of God - will influence every decision we make or don't make. It will influence how we view, interact and relate with other people. Most importantly, what we believe about God will directly shape what our relationship with God looks like. So, if our testimony of God, what we believe about God, is not consistent with who God is, with what God is really like, then all aspects of our lives will be 'off.'

During the Jonah series, our aim was to see our testimony of 'This is our God' increase. Our goal was to have a right view of God that was consistent with our experience of God. In essence, we wanted what was in our heads to be married to what was transforming our hearts. For many, myself included, Jonah is thought to be a story about a runaway prophet who gets swallowed up by a large fish. Certainly, the story of Jonah includes those details, but the true hero of the book of Jonah is not Jonah, but God. In essence, Jonah is not about Jonah, it's about God – who He is, what He is like, and how we can relate with Him.

By no means is the following list exhaustive in nature, but here is what we learned about God through the story of Jonah!

- God initiates and speaks to us – **Jonah 1:1**
- God has a mission for you that only you can fulfill – **Jonah 1:2**
- God loves you too much to allow you to miss what He has for you – **Jonah 1:4**
- God is Sovereign over all things, namely our salvation – **Jonah 1:14-17**
- God is present everywhere at all times – **Jonah 2:1**
- God genuinely cares about you – **Jonah 2:2**
- God is in complete control of you – **Jonah 2:3-7**
- God is worthy to be worshiped – **Jonah 2:9**
- God's plans can not be thwarted – **Jonah 2:10**
- God does not hold grudges, He does not count our sins against us – **Jonah 3:1**
- God does not make deals with us to accommodate us – **Jonah 3:2**
- God will never give up on us – **Jonah 3:1-2**
- God is a just judge, but He is merciful – **Jonah 3:10**
- God's grace is for everybody, and not beyond reaching anybody – **Jonah 3:10**
- God is gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love – **Jonah 4:2**
- God is committed to teaching us all that He wants us to know so that we can live lives that are pleasing to Him – **Jonah 4:4-9**
- God demonstrates His love to all He created without prejudice – **Jonah 4:11**

In many ways, this list should conclude with the statement 'God is all this, and He is so much more!' It's so encouraging and inspiring to know that we learn this much about God in just four short chapters within the grand narrative of Scripture which includes 65 more books in the Bible – all stories in which God is the hero!

As you consider all that we've learned about God through the story of Jonah, the one question I'd want us all to consider is simply this – **'Is your testimony of who God is, what He is like, transforming how you relate with God and those around you? If yes, how? If no, why not?'**