

SUMMARY

Running out of gas is a strange kind of powerlessness. There is nothing you can do about it except go find gas. Something about running out forces you to admit you need help, and that is true of more than gasoline. Last week Jonah ran from God. This week the running catches up with him. The sea gets rougher, the sailors run out of options, and Jonah tells them to throw him overboard. God provides a huge fish, and Jonah spends three days and three nights in its belly.

Too often we treat surrender as a last resort, after the relationship has fractured, the diagnosis has come back, or every backup plan has failed. Jonah's first real prayer is not for Nineveh, it is for himself, and he prays it from inside the fish. The fish isn't just a consequence. It's mercy shaped like one; the thing that stops the freefall. God is relentlessly committed to his rescue mission: he is pursuing Nineveh, he is pursuing the sailors, and he is pursuing Jonah. Jesus later points back to this story, so when Jonah says "Salvation comes from the LORD," we know what he could not fully see yet: salvation has a name, and his name is Jesus.

MAIN TAKEAWAY

Prayer does not have to be your last move. Fill up every day and let God be the first place you go instead of the last.

ICE BREAKER

Have you ever run out of gas or broken down somewhere? Where were you, and how did you get out of it?

LOOK BACK

- Last week we asked “what is one thing God is asking of you that you have been running from?” Did you take a step towards it this past week? If so, how?
- How often do you find yourself reaching for help after you are already in the situation rather than before it? What do you think that says about us?

LOOK UP

- Read Jonah 1:11–17. Even while Jonah was running from God, God was still pursuing him. When have you experienced God pursuing you when you were far from Him?

- Read Jonah 2:1-2. Jonah didn't cry out to God until he had run out of options. Where are you most tempted to rely on yourself instead of admitting you need God?
- Read Jonah 2:9 and Matthew 12:40. Jonah says, "Salvation comes from the Lord," without knowing that salvation would have a name. Jesus points back to Jonah's three days to describe His own story. Where have you experienced God's mercy and rescue when you realized you couldn't save yourself?

LOOK AHEAD

- If you ignore the low fuel light, running out is inevitable. What would filling up every morning actually look like for you: when, where, and how?
- Where is God asking you to surrender something small right now, before it becomes a crisis? What would it take to name that surrender out loud and thank him for it?
- Which one of these will you implement this week? Fill up: start each morning in prayer before anything else. Name the surrenders: say out loud the thing you are handing to God. Surround yourself with community: find 2 or 3 people who will pray for you.

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Start every morning this week with prayer before anything else, and write down one thing to surrender each day. Then ask 2 or 3 people to pray for you this week.

CONVERSATION TIPS

- **Listen Well.** Give others your full attention, and listen to understand rather than to respond.
- **Share Honestly.** Be open about your thoughts and questions; none of us have all the answers.
- **End with prayer.** Share requests around the group, then close your time together in prayer.