



The Main Point: Sometimes we are the cause of our own difficulties

[Teaching Point: I would use these icebreakers sometimes just to get the group familiar with each other.]

Possible Icebreakers:

- **Would you rather be the fastest person alive or be able to freeze time?**
- **Pick your top three letters of the alphabet.**
- **Would you rather never have any homework or get paid \$10 per hour to do your homework?**
- **Agree or disagree: life on other planets exists.**
- **What age is the best time to get married?**
- **What animal would you ride into battle on and why?**

[Teaching Point: Say something like this to kick off the series.]

If there is one thing we can all agree on, it is that we will encounter storms in life. 2020 felt like a big one, and we may still be feeling some of the effects from that storm. We may have had some really tough things come up in our lives recently. Things that put a dark cloud above our heads and make us feel like we are on uncertain waters. Over the next few (Weeks/Sessions), we are going to be talking about some storms of the Bible and what we can learn from them to better deal with the storms in our own lives.

Jonah 1:1-3 (ESV)

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 2 “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil[a] has come up before me.” 3 But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.

- **What did God command Jonah to do?**
 - Go to Nineveh and call out against it
- **What was Jonah’s response?**

- He fled
- **Why did Jonah not go where God commanded him to go?**
 - Several possible reasons
 - Nineveh was located 550 miles northeast of Samaria. This would have required Jonah to travel more than a month if he journeyed the usual 15-20 miles a day.
 - So not only was the city the second largest in the world at the time (second only to Babylon; probably with a population of ~600,000), but it was also known for violence.
 - Jonah choose to flee in the exact opposite direction from Nineveh to Tarshish

Application Questions:

Have you ever done the opposite of what someone wanted you to do? Maybe a parent or teacher? Why?

- Answers Vary

Have you ever done this with God? Why?

- Answers Vary

Jonah 1:4-6 (ESV)

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. 5 Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. 6 So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish."

What picture does this bring to your mind: "The Lord hurled a great wind..."?

- The sea had likely been totally calm, and seemingly out of nowhere, God hurls this wind.
 - This is the same word used to describe Saul when he twice hurled a spear at David. God winds up and hurls a great wind on the sea.

What were the sailors' three responses to the storm (Verse 5)?

- They were afraid
 - **What does that say about the severity of the storm?**
 - It was intense for professionals to be afraid

They cried out to their Gods

- **What was the result of them calling on their gods?**
 - Apparently, not too much as they continued on with their next step

They started to hurl things into the sea to lighten the boat

- **Why would that be a sign of complete desperation?**
 - This would have been a costly move for these merchants

Let's contrast... What was Jonah's initial response to the storm (Verse 5)?

- He is in the ship, not helping, not caring. He is asleep.

What does Jonah's initial response indicate about his character?

- Answers Vary
- Extreme apathy and lack of care for those around him

It appears that it was the Captain who had to remind Jonah to do something he should have known to do. What does this highlight about the way Jonah is treating God at the moment?

- He doesn't even want to ask God for help in this situation

Jonah's disobedience hurt those around him. Often when we choose the opposite of what God wants us to do, we can end up causing a lot of problems. When we choose sin over God's plan, it can leave a path of destruction.

- **Do you think our personal choices always affect those around us?**
 - (Answers Vary)
- **Are we not sometimes totally unaware of the destructive impact we have on others through our actions or words?**
 - (Answers Vary)
- **How can we avoid this in the future?**
 - (Answers Vary)
 -

Jonah 1:7-16 (ESV)

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

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