

## Checking In

1. Take a few minutes to check in with everyone, see how they are doing, and open with prayer.
2. Church Life – Read Scripture App; Table and Towel dates; Trunk or Treat car decoration.

## Learning

### *Knowing God*

#### Key Doctrines

- *Christ* – Jesus is God’s saving word to lost people, a word that can be heard throughout the Bible.
- *Sin* – Sin ends in its unavoidable consequence, death.
- *Salvation* – God’s grace alone is what saves us, not our own efforts, goodness, or right living.

#### Key Observations

- *Read: Jonah 2:6-10; Matthew 5:17; Luke 24:25-27, 44-49; John 1:1, 14-18.*
  - How do you see these passages describe Jesus as the God’s saving word spoken throughout the Bible? *John tells us that Jesus is the “Word” that is both with God and is God, a Word of grace. Luke tells us that this word of grace can be found throughout the whole of Scripture from the Law (the first 5 books of the Old Testament), to the Psalms, to the prophets (the historical books and the prophetic books). And Jesus tells us in Matthew that he is the “fulfillment” of all Scripture, in other words the*

*whole Bible points us to God’s Word of Grace in Jesus.*

- How do these passages teach us to read the Bible? *They teach us that the primary way we are to read the Bible is with Jesus at the center, that in some way every story and word of the Bible points to Jesus, and it is our task to diligently seek out how Jesus is revealed in every passage. This task is called “interpretation.”*
- How do we see Jonah experience God’s saving word? *We see Jonah delivered from death (he calls it Sheol) by God’s sending of the fish. He himself proclaims the good news of God’s salvation at the end saying “salvation belongs to the LORD!”*
- *Read: Jonah 2:1-6; Romans 3:23; 6:23.*
  - How do you see the doctrine of sin expressed in these passages? *We see both that everyone is guilty of sin, so none of us can look down on another or “boast” about being better. We also see that expressed in the fact that we all die, no one is exempt, because “all have sinned.” No one can claim to be without sin, because death is the penalty that everyone must face. Lastly we see that death is the “wage” of sin, it is what we earn in seeking our own way.*

*Why is death the due penalty of sin? We are told that eternal life is found only “in” Christ Jesus, and when we turn from him we turn away from life itself. As long as we seek life in something other than Christ we will only find death, because there is no life apart from Jesus, he is life itself. Death is what is “earned” because it is the natural outcome of turning away from life.*

- In what way does Jonah “earn” death in this story? *Jonah “flees from the presence of the LORD” where life is found and the result is he finds himself at the bottom of the sea, in a “pit,” in what he calls “Sheol” or the place where the dead go. Death is the natural consequence of fleeing from God, and thus what Jonah earns.*
- *Read: Luke 18:9-14; 2 Timothy 1:9; Titus 3:4-7; Jonah 2:6-9*
  - How do you see the truth that we are saved by grace alone in these passages? *Jesus tells a parable warning those who “trusted in themselves that they were righteous” to not trust their own goodness. Paul tells both Timothy and Titus that God “saved us not because of our works” but because of his grace. Our action simply is insufficient to save us, it lacks the power. Ironically it is only by admitting this fact, accepting our own powerlessness, weakness, and failure that we can discover God’s grace.*
  - How does Jonah’s experience of God’s salvation teach us about how grace works? *The situation Jonah was in was his own fault, despite all of his own goodness (he was a prophet for goodness sake!), it wasn’t enough to save him. In fact it was his sin that led him to a place of death (the wages of sin). Death is a situation no human can save themselves from, not only can we not prevent it, but once it happens there is nothing we can do. But God alone, by his grace alone can bring life from the dead. That is what he does for Jonah who had his life “brought up from the pit” and who recognized that “salvation belongs to the LORD.”*

## **Listening**

### *Responding to God*

- In light of hearing this week’s sermon, our study together, and listening to God’s Word, how might God be inviting you to take a step of obedience?

## **Loving**

### *Obeying God*

- What is happening in my own life right now that I need to share and for which I need prayer?
- This week I am committed to praying for \_\_\_\_\_ about:

## **Checking Out**

- What was most meaningful about this group session for you (*Give each person 1-2 sentences to share*)?
- Close in Prayer and Read Titus 3:4-7.