

**WE**   
**BATHURST**

Term 1 2020

## **Talking to people about God**

The Lord of heaven and earth	Jonah 1
The Lord of salvation	Jonah 2
The Lord of mercy	Jonah 3
The Lord of compassion	Jonah 4

## **Talking to God about people**

Why pray?	Acts 4:23-33
What should we pray?	Col 4:2-4
What happens when we pray?	James 5:13-18

## JONAH 1 - The LORD of Heaven and Earth

Brainstorm: What do you think of when you think of the story of Jonah?

Read *Jonah 1:1-3*

What does God tell Jonah to do?

On the map compare where Jonah should have gone to where he actually went.



Why do you think Jonah ran from God?

Read *Jonah 1:4-10*

How does Jonah's attitude compare to that of the sailors?

In what ways does this show Jonah's failure as a prophet of the LORD?

What does this situation and the words of Jonah in verse 9 teach us about God and how we should treat him?

## Part 1 - Talking to people about God

How is that similar or different to your view of God?

*Read Jonah 1:11-17*

What are the similarities and differences between Jonah's sacrifice and the sacrifice of Jesus?  
(extra: you may also like to compare this story to Mark 4:35-41)

How do the sailors respond to being saved?

What does it mean for us to "fear the LORD"?

How will you do that this week?

Who could you tell about the LORD of heaven and earth?

**PRAY** to the LORD of heaven and earth.

## JONAH 2 - The LORD of Salvation

Draw or imagine what it would have been like for Jonah inside the giant fish.

*Read Jonah 2:1-6a*

What words does Jonah use to describe being thrown into the ocean?

What did it make him want to do?

Can you think of a time when, in your distress, you called to the LORD?

*Read Jonah 2:6b-10*

How does God respond to Jonah?

What does this teach us about God?

## Part 1 - Talking to people about God

What does Jonah commit to doing from this moment on?

*Read Ephesians 2:1-3*

What words does Paul use to describe what we were once like?

*Read Ephesians 2:4-10*

What has God done for us?

What should we commit to doing from here on?  
(You might like to make a group commitment for the term or year).

What are some of the “worthless idols” we are tempted to cling to?

How do you see that in yourself and in people around you?

Who could you tell about the LORD of Salvation?

**PRAY** to the LORD of Salvation.

## **JONAH 3 - The LORD of Mercy**

Discuss: What is more important justice or mercy?

*Read Jonah 3:1-4*

How does this compare with the start of chapter 1?

“Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it.”

As a group see what you can discover about the city of Ninevah and what the Assyrian Empire was like, especially in the 7th Century BC. It's ok to use google!

What was Jonah's message to the Ninevites?

*Read Jonah 3:5-9*

What is Ninevah's response to the message of judgment?

What are they hoping will happen?

Can you imagine this kind of thing happening in Bathurst? Why/Why not?

*Read Jonah 3:10*

What makes God relent from sending destruction? What does that teach us about God?

Assyria were known for their wicked ways, how do you feel about God choosing not to send judgement on them?

Verse 9 the Assyrian's say "Who knows? God may yet relent," why can we have more confidence in God's mercy than them?

Compare Jonah's message to that of Jesus in Mark 1:15

What is our message to share with the world? In pairs practice how you might explain it to a friend over your lunch break.

Who could you tell about the LORD of Mercy?

**PRAY** to the LORD of Mercy.



## JONAH 4 - The LORD of Compassion

“Evil people deserve to be punished.” Agree or Disagree? Discuss

Recap what happened in chapter 3

*Read Jonah 4:1-4*

How does Jonah feel about what happened? Why should he not have been surprised by God relenting?

Why do you think he felt like this?

How would you answer the LORD's question: Is it right for him to be angry?

*Read Jonah 4:5-11*

Draw or describe in your own words what happens to Jonah as he sits outside the city:

Part 1 - Talking to people about God

What does the plant and worm teach Jonah about God?

Why does God have such compassion for these people?

How does that compare with your compassion for people who don't know Jesus?

*Read Luke 15:11-32*

Can you spot the similarities between this parable with the story of Jonah

Younger Son / Jonah 1-2	Older Son / Jonah 3-4	Character of God

Who could you tell about the LORD of Compassion?

**PRAY** to the LORD of Compassion.

## WHY pray?

**Before we start** it's worth asking, *what is prayer?* The answer: talking to God. It's as *simple* and yet as *deeply profound* as that. Created humans, talking to our creator God. As we work through these studies we'll get a feel for what prayer consists of, and why it's such a precious part of the Christian life and mission.

Write down a list of words that describe how you feel about prayer. Do you find prayer easy or difficult?

Everything about prayer is shaped by how we understand God whom we're praying to. What would prayer be like if God was like:

- a police officer?
- Santa?
- an impersonal life force?

What is God really like? Work through these parts of the bible and note down what you discover about God.

- Jeremiah 32.17
- Psalm 145.14-21
- Proverbs 21.1
- Mark 1.40-41
- Matthew 10.29
- 1st John 3.1a

Read Hebrews 4.14-16. How do these verses (along with all we discovered in the previous question) stir your heart to pray?

Why pray for others—and in particular, why pray for non-believers? Read each of the following passages and note down what they have to say about this question.

- Matthew 28.18-20
- Romans 10.12-15
- Matthew 9.35-38
- Colossians 1.3-6
- Matthew 25.41-46

Read 2nd Peter 3.9-14.

- What is the fate of those who are not made righteous by Christ?

- What is Jesus' desire for these people?

## Implications

Jesus is on a mission to save people, to proclaim forgiveness, and to bring people into God's family. He is using all his authority to make disciples (Matthew 28), as the gospel spreads and saves people all around the world (Colossians 1).

## Part 2 - Talking to God about people



As we pray to our loving God, in the name of his all-powerful Son, for the people of Bathurst, what kinds of prayers should we be praying? (You might like to write out a prayer for the people of Bathurst with your Small Group in the space below.)

What inconveniences might it cause our church if this prayer is answered the way we hope?  
Would it be worth it?

In Matthew 9 Jesus says to his followers, “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.” In what way are we part of the answer to our own prayer?

If you haven’t done it already, write down the names of four people who don’t yet know Jesus on your prayer bookmark.

**PRAY** that the people of Bathurst would know God’s extraordinary love shown in Christ Jesus.

## WHAT should we pray?

Sometimes when we start to pray our mind seems to go blank, no words come, and it's hard to know what to pray for. Other times there seems so much to pray for it seems impossible to know where to start! Which of these scenarios is most common for you?

Read 1st John 5.14-15. What should we pray for?

Let's take a look at some examples of prayer according to God's will and according to God's intentions and plans for the world.

- Read John 17.20-26. How does Jesus pray for those who will hear the gospel message when it's proclaimed by his disciples?
  
- Read Ephesians 3.14-21. How does Paul pray for the people of the church in Ephesus?
  
- Read Philippians 1.9-11. How does Paul pray for the people of the church in Philippi?

Are these prayers very different to the way you usually pray? How might these prayers shape the way you pray?

Read Job 42:7-9.

- How does Job's prayer fit into God's plans?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- How does this encourage us to pray for non-believers?

Read Ephesians 6.19-20. How does Paul encourage the Ephesians to pray? How might this prayer shape the way we pray for each other as we look to share Jesus with non-believers this year?

## Implications

Read 2nd Peter 3.9. Think about the friends, family, neighbours, workmates, or classmates you have listed on your prayer bookmark. What is it that God wants for them? Write out a prayer asking for God's will in their lives.

Make a plan to have a conversation with the people you're praying for, to talk to each of them about Jesus. Jot down the important steps so you don't forget.

Make a plan to invite the people you're praying for to church, or to a church event that you think will help them discover more about Jesus.

**PRAY** for each other in your Small Group (you could do this in pairs), that you will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel.

## WHAT happens when we pray?

If you surveyed your neighbours or colleagues and asked them what happens when we pray, what kinds of answers do you think you would get? Why do you think they would give those answers?

What we expect to happen when we pray hinges on what we know about the God we're praying to. Work through the following parts of the bible and discuss how God responds to his people when they call on him.

- 2nd Chronicles 7.14
- Psalm 34.15
- Psalm 66.17-20
- Jeremiah 29.11-13
- Romans 8.32
- Matthew 7.7-11

In Matthew 7.7-11, what picture does Jesus use to illustrate for us the way that God answers prayer? How does this reality encourage us to pray?

Already we can see two things happen when we pray. God listens and God acts out of love. But what if he doesn't? Read Romans 8.28 and James 1.5 & 16-17. Why is prayer sometimes 'unanswered'?



How does God answer prayer in the following passages?

- Acts 2.42-47
- Acts 9.11-15
- Acts 4.24-31
- Acts 9.40-42
- Acts 6.1-7 (you can probably guess what the twelve were so keen to pray for by the results!)

All through Acts Jesus is taking his kingdom to the ends of the earth. The gospel grows, and spreads, and bears fruit everywhere it goes. Yet it seems that God uses his church, and uses the prayer of his people, in truly amazing ways in his plans for saving people!

Read Colossians 4.2-6. What is the relationship between prayer for gospel growth, and sharing the gospel with outsiders?

How does prayer help the Colossians church partner with Paul as all of them do the work of proclaiming Jesus?

Read Colossians 1.6-7 and Colossians 4.12. How is Epaphras a great example of a prayerful partner in gospel work?

## Implications

We not only partner with one another, but God graciously includes us in his plans to proclaim salvation to the world. How might this truth affect your prayers?

## Part 2 - Talking to God about people

Is your love and concern for the salvation of the lost evident in the way you pray?

How might prayer for the people of Bathurst help you to share Jesus more boldly, and invite people to discover Jesus more joyfully?

**ASK** God that he would add many thousands to the number of those saved in Bathurst.

**PRAY** for opportunities at Autumn Mission to have conversations with outsiders about Jesus.

**PRAY** for opportunities over the course of this year to invite friends, family, neighbours, classmates, and colleagues to find out more about Jesus.