

Jonah 1:7; 4:6-8 (excerpts)

Preparation

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah... And the Lord God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah... the next day God prepared a worm... and God prepared a vehement east wind...

Imagine this: Your beautiful campsite was no accident. God knew you would enjoy something like that, so a long time ago He prepared it and all the natural beauty that went into your experience. He knew where you would pitch your tent, where you would look for a view, and even where you would sit down to enjoy your meals (and yes, He prepared the bugs to do what they do best and the weather to do what it does best!).

At some point in time known only to Him, God put into motion every minute detail of our outdoor experiences, from sightseeing in the city park to rock climbing in the wilderness. He prepared the first fish your daughter caught. He prepared the beautiful flowers your wife nurtures. He prepared the worms your son catches. And He prepared the cool breezes your family enjoys. Imagine that.

Jesus said, “For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth” (Matthew 12:40). Jonah was thrown overboard to die. He was swallowed by the great fish as a type of burial. And he was spit out alive on dry land as a type-and-shadow of Christ’s resurrection. Reflect on an outdoor experience that caused you to celebrate God as the Great Creator and Jesus as Lord of your life.

TIP: Prepare a collage of pictures that includes fishing, gardening, worms (!), and the wind. Use it as a conversation piece to talk about Jonah and Jesus. Do it as a project with your son, daughter, a child you mentor, or a children’s group you’re connected with in your church. Use photos or hand-drawn pictures.

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Preparation

HOOK

1. Of all the outdoor activities you enjoy, which one requires the most preparation?

2. You're taking a kid fishing for the first time. How will you make his experience memorable?

3. Explain how you keep or control: live fish, weeds, worms, wind damage at a campsite.

LINE

Imagine this: Your beautiful campsite was no accident. God knew you would enjoy something like that, so a long time ago He prepared it and all the natural beauty that went into your experience.

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Define omniscience. What do you wish that God doesn't know about you (don't write it down)? What are you glad He knows about you (write it down).

Tell how God prepared something in your past that has affected you presently, and will impact you in the future. This might seem difficult but give it your best effort.

SINKER

Take a few minutes to write your thoughts on this devotional. Reflect on your own experiences.

Key words: prepare omniscience Jesus is Lord
