



First Lutheran Church

Gospel of Matthew

Summer 2026 Reading Challenge



Devotion Time: Week 6: Matthew chapters 11 and 12
prayer Time

God of new life, you confront us in our sins and you lead us to righteousness in Jesus.
Help us to hear the call to return to you and lead us into right living. In Jesus' holy name we pray. Amen

Oh Jesus, they complain, give us a sign that you are who you say you are, and we will believe you. We promise.

Do you ever feel like you need Jesus to show you something? Drop a email in your in-box with tomorrow's lottery numbers? Text the medical advice for your doctor to make you whole again? Have a truck of signs driving in front of you telling you the road ahead is closed? (watch the movie Bruce Almighty for that amazing, deep-cut reference.)

Well, you are not alone. The Pharisees wanted one more sign, too. Despite Jesus going around feeding and healing people, despite Jesus' obvious wisdom about how God's Word is to be interpreted, these religious leaders need one more sign. And Jesus just doesn't have the bandwidth to respond with one more sampling of miraculous power. But, he does share the sign of Jonah - for three days, Jonah was in the belly of the sea monster (not a whale); so too for three days, the Son of Man will be in the bowels of the earth.

Now maybe you remember Jonah was called to go to Nineveh, and maybe you remember he didn't want to. So instead, Jonah booked passage to sail to the opposite end of the world, until a storm came up, and Jonah knew God was mad. So into the ocean he went, and yummy, yummy said the sea monster who swallowed him up. And maybe you remember three days later that sea monster with a belly ache spat Jonah out onto the beach, sending the wayward prophet off to his destination. But did you know that after he half-heartedly preached on a random street corner the whole city repented, causing God to change their mind about destroying the town. That wasn't good enough for Jonah, who sat up on a hill to watch God rain down on the town. But when it didn't happen, he was more upset at the shade tree falling over than the town being saved.

This is our sign. Jesus is the prophet who goes to warn everyone, but no one listens until after he has been in the earth for 3 days, and God's grace and mercy covers the world. The question is, is Jesus mad that God will cover us in grace and mercy? Or is Jesus telling the Pharisees they will be the Jonah on the hillside mad that God's grace and mercy ended the threat of eternal punishment?

Jonah, a Veggie-Tale Movie

"We are the Pirates who don't do anything ... we just stay at home and lie around."

This is the opening line of the theme song of the pirates in the Veggie Tale movie who cross paths with Jonah. This kids animated movie based on fruits and vegetables is quite possibly the best all-time adaptation of Jonah's story. It even ends with Jonah sitting on the hill with out trying to say whether Jonah was right or not right.

Yes, Veggie-Tales is a little bit older now, but if you find this one, maybe you might just find yourself singing along with those pirates, who despite their not doing anything, actually go on an adventure and keep on crossing paths with a certain wayward servant of God, a prophet Asparagus guy who rides a camel named Reginald.

Gathered by God, we live our faith with: Compassion, Grace, Gratitude, and Joy

First Lutheran Church * 116 South B Street * Monmouth, IL 61462
309-734-2106 * office@flcmonmouth.org * www.flcmonmouth.org
Pastor Jamie Gallagher * prjamie@flcmonmouth.org