**Series: Unsinkable  
Scripture and Background Information for November 14-20.**

To prepare for your group discussion each week**,** group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD’S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scripture below.

This week we are finishing our series, “*Unsinkable.*” With the series, we looked at the book of Jonah. We learned that God’s mercy and His mission are unsinkable, even if his messengers stink. Today we look at the sequel of Jonah’s story found in **Matthew 12:38-41**.

**Background for Matthew 12:38-41**:

A fish swallowed Jonah after he flew in the opposite direction of Nineveh, where God told him to go and preach. In the belly of the fish, Jonah saw his doom. Thinking about the end of his life, Jonah realized that his doom had become his salvation. After God told the fish to spit Jonah back on dry land, Jonah went to Nineveh and fulfilled his mission. Although Jonah preached with a hope it would have no effect, the Ninevites recognized their position before God, chose discomfort, and repented.

Our text today builds the sequel to Jonah’s story. Here, we find that the spiritual leaders of Israel ask Jesus to perform a sign in order to believe him. Jesus refused to offer them a sign, except the sign of Jonah. Being swallowed by a fish, Jonah became a sign for the people of Nineveh. His “burial” in the fish was the sign the people of Nineveh saw. Jonah’s message was not driven by compassion from the preacher. Nevertheless, the people responded to the message, which was amplified by his sign. Jesus uses Jonah’s sign as the only sign to counter unbelief.

*Questions to engage with the text*:

1. Compare the characters of Jonah and Jesus? In what ways are they similar? What are all the ways Jesus is better or greater?
2. Jesus already performed many signs and wonders to His generation (Mt. 8:1-17; 9:1-38). While the people of Nineveh responded to a poor message, Jesus’ generation did not respond to His gracious message (Mt 7:28). What could be the real reason for the rejection of Jesus’ generation?
3. As the book of Jonah ends with a challenge of how we respond to God’s mission and compassion, so does the *sign of Jonah* challenge us for a response. How do you respond to Jonah’s sign given by Jesus?

***Note:*** *When Jonah found himself in the raging sea and the belly of the fish, he thought his life had come to an end (Jonah 2). Later, he realized that his “death” became his salvation. Although Jesus’ death could look like a failure at first, the second look shows His victory. As Jonah realized that God provided his salvation, Jesus provided salvation to His death. What meaning do death and salvation have for our life, ministry, and discipleship?*