

## Small Group Discussion Questions - Winter Semester // Week Eight

*Remember, these questions are just tools for discussion. You don't need to 'get through them all'. Use the questions that are helpful, skip the questions that are not. And let the conversation flow naturally.*

### Optional Ice Breaker(s)

- a) We are now two months into the New Year - how are your New Year's resolutions going? If you made resolutions, have you been able to keep them? If not, what are a few goals that you have set for yourself during 2021?
- b) If you had to participate in a talent show in one week from today, what would you do? What talent would you perform at this show? If you had to participate in a talent show in one year, what talent would you want to learn for this show?

### Passage and Discussion

#### Read Jonah 4:1-4

- a) What stands out to you upon first reading of this passage? What is a theme, verse, or word that you find encouraging? What do you find challenging in this passage?
- b) In verse 1, we are told that God's mercy towards Nineveh seemed "very wrong" to Jonah. When you read this passage, were you surprised by Jonah's reaction to God's mercy? What is wrong about his attitude towards God's actions?
- c) On Sunday, Cam reminded us that we are not always "pleased" with what God does. Have you ever struggled with trusting God when you don't understand what He's doing? How do we learn to grow in our ability to trust God?
- d) How would you describe the incorrect theological belief that Jonah had about God's mercy towards the Ninevites? What does this tell us about how he thinks about grace? What should have been Jonah's reaction, if he correctly understood God's mercy and grace?
- e) Though it may be hard to admit, have you ever struggled with someone else receiving God's mercy? Why was it difficult for you to accept? Have you ever made lists in your mind of who does and doesn't deserve God's grace?
- f) **Read Matthew 18:21-25.** What does this parable tell us about extending forgiveness to other people? To ask a question that Cam asked on Sunday, "has receiving grace made you a more gracious person"? How should God's grace change us to become more gracious towards others?

- g) **Read Exodus 34:5-7.** How did Jonah use Scripture to justify his selfishness and anger towards God? Have you ever struggled with mis-using part of Scripture to justify an attitude that you had?
- h) Jonah only quoted half of the statement God made about Himself in this Exodus passage. How would Jonah's attitude have been different, if he understood (or remembered) the rest of this text in **v7**.
- i) How can we avoid mis-using Scripture in the way that Jonah does in our passage? What are a few ways that we can grow in a true understanding of Scripture?
- j) On Sunday, Cam taught us that Jonah saw himself (and the Israelites) as the "good guys", and everyone else as the "bad guys". How is this worldview a misunderstanding of God's grace? What are a few Scripture passages that teach against this way of thinking?
- k) On Sunday, Cam taught about our sinfulness; how in need we are of God's grace in our lives. How should our sinfulness lead to humility in our own lives? How are we called to live our lives, in response to God's grace?
- l) What are a few ways that we can celebrate God's grace as a church community? What are a few ways that we can remind ourselves of this grace every day?
- m) Was there anything else in the message on Sunday that stood out to you as impactful or challenging?

### **Take it Home (Optional Ideas for Response this Week)**

- a) This week, ask God if there is anyone in your life that you believe doesn't deserve His mercy and grace. If anyone comes to mind, ask God to help you forgive that person and see that person as equally deserving of God's grace.
- b) This week, spend a few minutes praying that God would continue to help you trust Him, even when you don't understand what He's doing. If you are walking through a difficult season, ask God to help you walk with Him, even if you aren't "pleased" with how He is working.

### **Optional Ideas for Prayer Time**

- a) In this season, it is important for us to be intentionally praying for each other. This also means that we must each choose to be honest and vulnerable with our prayer requests. Take time to 'check-in' about how each person is doing, and pray for them.
- b) As a group, spend a few minutes thanking God for being "the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness". Praise Him for being gracious and merciful, even when we doubt Him.