

**Not Just FOR Us – Part 4**  
Community Group Discussion Guide  
May 23, 2021

God's love and grace is for everyone. Jonah pitched a fit about going to Nineveh because he couldn't stand the people. Jonah kept going to the bottom instead of the top. The grace that God shows Johan isn't just for him but for all the people who were following God. Like Jonah, we all have our ups and downs. All along, God is trying to tell us to "go up."

This series is taking us on journey into the world of the prophet Jonah. Most of us haven't given the story of Jonah and the great fish a second thought. Afterall, what can we possibly learn from the story about a man getting swallowed by a fish? Throughout this series we will see a full picture develop of God's love, compassion, and realize that no one is beyond redemption. That the gospel is for all who repent and believe. We will learn from this reluctant prophet Jonah and be determined to obey God doing whatever he asks and going wherever he leads.

Jonah learns some extremely valuable lessons about his leadership, his faith, and about God's activity in the world around him. God was asking Jonah to do something he didn't want to do. This created great conflict for him. He wasn't so interested in being a vessel of God's message to Nineveh, he just wanted to live his life his way.

This week we are reminded that our culture tells stories a certain way.

It's called a plot and we all know how it works:

- The world is normal
- Trouble shows up
- Problem is solved
- Everyone lives happily ever after; or at least we are led to believe so.

From Cinderella, Toy Story, Sleepless in Seattle, Hoosiers, they are all the same.

Generally, the trouble is identified, the problem is solved, and the credits roll.

\*Take a moment to share with the group one of your favorite movies and explain the "plot."

So, why study the story of Jonah for four weeks? Because the story isn't over.

**\*Review:**

Chapter 1 - Normal – God speaks to a prophet Jonah; Message "GET UP, Go to that GADOL(great) city Nineveh." Jonah goes in the opposite direction that God told him.

Chapter 2 – Problem, Jonah gets swallowed up. He gets a 3day timeout to think about the direction of his life. He does that, and then gets SPIT back into life.

Chapter 3 – Jonah goes to Nineveh to preach his message. Gets out his mega phone and the people of Nineveh repent (turn from their sin/wickedness)

The story continues...

**\*Read together Jonah chapter 4** Jonah's Anger at the Lord's Compassion (**Note: This is not how a story should end**)

Remember, when the people of Judah went DOWN, disobeyed God, the level of chaos went UP! Instead of happily ever after, we go right back to drama and honestly this looks more like real life than a good story.

Jonah gets angry, reminds God of why he fled to Tarshish in the first place.

\*Share an example of a time when you confessed or changed and instead of happily ever after, you experienced more challenges or drama.

### **Scripture Support:**

**v. 1;** Jonah got angry when God spared Nineveh. The Jews didn't want to share God's story with the Gentile nation. They were supposed to be a blessing to the rest of the world by sharing God's message with other nations.

**v. 1-2;** Jonah reveals his reluctance to go to Nineveh. He didn't want "those" people to be forgiven, he wanted them destroyed. He didn't understand that the God of Israel was the God of the entire world.

\*Have you ever had a view as narrow as Johan's?

\*Share an example of an unlikely person that you know who turned to God. What was your response? Surprised?

**v. 3;** Jonah quickly forgot God's mercy for him when he was in the fish. He was happy that God saved him, but just couldn't get there when it came to the reality that the people of Nineveh got saved.

**v. 5-11;** God ministered gently to Johan, again showing him care, kindness, and mercy. God gently taught Jonah a lesson. This should remind us that God feels compassion for sinners we want judged.

\*What is your attitude toward those who are far from God? Do you want them to remain far from God or do you hope that they too would experience the love, grace, and forgiveness of God?

**v. 11;** God saved Jonah from inside the belly of the fish. God saved the people of Nineveh when they responded to Jonah's preaching. God answers the prayers of anyone who calls upon him.

God says to Jonah, "I am doing a GADOL thing over there in the city, and you are all bent out of shape about a shrub?" A SHRUB? Jonah responds, "yes, I'm mad enough to die!"

God is being who he is and doing what he does. Redeeming, forgiving, transforming, and having mercy. The very essence of our God.

God says, "but shouldn't you be concerned about Nineveh the GADOL City?"

We too, have a "gadol" community and each one of us is a part of it.

God is doing His thing, and how are WE a part of it?

\*Are you upset about it or are you for helping people who are far from God move closer to God?

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