

Not Just FOR Us – Part 2
Community Group Discussion Guide
May 9, 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.

Last week we learned a new word; GADOL; meaning great.

*Share a "GADOL" moment that you had this last week.

Jonah set out in Chapter 1 to flee from God's presence.

This is one of the scariest things in the BIBLE, Jonah ran away from God, and GOD let him GO. God doesn't force us into a relationship and doesn't stop us from running away. That is one of God's biggest struggles, he can't make us love him, he can make us obey.

*Have you ever ran-away from God? If so, explain.

*Have you witnessed someone run away from God? Explain.

Instead of going up, Jonah went down. And then he experienced going down one final time. This last trip down was actually an act of humility. It was FOR the sake of others.

This week we pick up where we left off.

*Read together Johan 1:17 – 2:10

Scripture Support:

The purpose of the book of Jonah is to show the extent of God's grace and that the message of salvation is for all people.

No one deserved God's favor less than the people of Nineveh and Johan knew it. He also knew that God would forgive them and bless them if they would turn from their sin and worship God. Jonah greatly disliked the Assyrians. Hate is a very strong word, but probably safe to say he hated them. He wanted vengeance for them, not mercy. So, when God chose Johan to be the one to go to Nineveh he initially ran the other way. In the end, God confronted Johan about his self-centered values and lack of compassion.

v. 17; Jonah was sent by God, but he ran from the task and was swallowed by a "gadol" great fish. Scripture tells us that he was "inside the fish for three days and three nights." Then he was delivered (vomited out) and went to Nineveh where the people responded to the message with repentance (a turning from their sin/wicked ways).

The religious people demanded that Jesus show them a sign to prove his authority. The only sign he said he would provide was through Jonah: They would see Jesus swallowed up by death and delivered after three days.

Jesus was making it very clear to the religious leaders that their stubbornness to believe him would be judged.

*Share an example of someone you've encountered that expressed that they "needed a sign" from God in order to believe that there is a God. Explain.

*Read together Johan 2:1-10 Johan's Prayer from inside the fish; at this time

Scripture support:

All of this language is used to describe that Jonah is as far away from God as he can possibly get.

v. 1; Johan offers a prayer of thanksgiving, not a prayer of deliverance. He was actually thanking God that he was not drowning. He had escaped death. God heard Jonah's prayer from inside the fish.

*Share an example of a time when you cried out to God and thanked God for saving you. Where were you in your personal journey at that time?

We can pray anywhere, anytime, and God hears us.

v. 1-7; When life is going well, the potential is for us to take things for granted; but when we lose hope, we cry out to him. Having this type of relationship with God can create an inconsistent, up-and-down spiritual life. We must look to God in the good and bad times of life thus developing a stronger spiritual life so that when God instructs us to go, we will go with

confidence that He is leading the way and equipped us with necessary tools to complete the task at hand.

v. 2; Jonah felt that being in the belly of the fish was like being buried alive.

v. 8; Anything that gets in the way of our devotion to God needs to be removed.

*Share an example of something that has or is getting in the way of your relationship with God?

v. 9; Johan was in no position to bargain with God. Instead, he thanked God for saving his life. Our fears and troubles should cause us to grow closer to God, not push us in the opposite direction.

v. 9; It took a miracle of God delivering Jonah from the belly of a fish in the depths of a lake for Johan to be obedient to God.

*How about you? Have you been trying to escape what God's been asking you to do? Explain.

Jonah's story began with him going in the opposite direction that God had asked him to go. It was a tragedy, but a greater tragedy it would have been if God had allowed Jonah to keep on running. Instead, God gave Jonah a three day "time-out." The judgement of God is to let you go where you want.

Every now and again, God is going to provide a "gadol" fish and you may not like it, but it's him showing you, his grace.

*Share an example of how you've experienced this grace of God work in your life.

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