

Heart Disease

How God's mercy to Jonah was missed on others because of a spiritual heart condition

Opening Prayer & Introduction:

As you begin your group meeting this week, ask the Lord for help to be obedient to your calling. We learned from Jonah that selective obedience isn't at all what God desires from His people. Pray for obedience in all things, even when our obedience costs us something.

Ice Breaker Question: Share about a time when you received a second chance. How did it change your perspective or behavior?

Main Theme: God's mercy is abundant, but we often struggle to extend that same mercy to others, especially those we consider enemies or undeserving.

Discussion Questions:

1. We all thank God for second chances. Jonah received a second chance from God after his personal disobedience and ministry failure. Has there been a time when you have experienced God's mercy after disobedience or failure? How did you respond?
2. Read Jonah 1:1-3, and Jonah 3:1-3. Compare and contrast the differences in Jonah's response between these two callings of God. What changed, what stayed the same, and what can we learn from observing these differences?
3. When Jonah preached judgment in Nineveh, they "believed God" (3:5) and responded with immediate repentance. What were the signs of their repentance, and what does genuine repentance look like today? How can we tell the difference between short term sorrow and lasting repentance?
4. Pastor Joel mentioned that "people do what they believe." The Ninevites acted on their beliefs with repentance and change. What role did the Holy Spirit play in their dramatic turn around, and what role does He play today when preaching is met with a response?
5. Read Jonah 4:1-3. Jonah was angry that God showed mercy to Nineveh. Have you ever been upset when God blessed someone you thought didn't deserve it? Be honest—what was happening in your heart? Remember, Pastor Joel said, "Don't assume that God hates someone just because you do."

6. Read Jonah 4:6-11. What was God trying to teach Jonah through the plant, the worm, and the scorching wind (Hint: mercy and judgment)? Did Jonah get it? Was Jonah right to be angry, and did he understand the lesson?

Practical Application:

1. Is there someone I need to show mercy to rather than demanding justice?
2. Am I serving God with a reluctant heart in any area?
3. What "second chance" from God do I need to stop taking for granted?
4. Am I sitting on a "hillside" waiting for God to punish someone who hurt me?

Closing Discussion:

The book of Jonah ends without telling us if Jonah ever changed his heart. If you were writing the next chapter of Jonah's story, what would you want it to say? What do you want the next chapter of YOUR story to say?

Closing Prayer:

Pray that God would give us a heart after His own heart. Pray that we would rejoice when sinners turn to Jesus. Pray that our prejudices would be removed. Pray that we would cast off selective obedience. Pray that we would rejoice whenever God shows mercy and kindness to our enemies.

Remember this quote from Pastor Joel "God loves you so much that He cares more about your holiness than He does your comfort—even unto your correction."