

Small Group Guide: Jonah Chapter 3

"Preaching and Pouting: The God of Second Chances"

Opening Prayer & Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share a time when you had to do something you really didn't want to do, but it turned out better than expected. How did your attitude change (or not change) through the process?

Sermon Summary (5 minutes)

This week's message explored Jonah chapter 3, where God gives Jonah a second chance to obey. Despite Jonah's reluctant obedience—his feet moved before his heart did—God used him powerfully. With just eight words of warning, an entire city of nearly a million people repented. This demonstrates that God's power works through our obedience, even when our hearts aren't fully engaged yet.

Key Verse: *"So shall my word be that goes out of my mouth, it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."* (Isaiah 55:11)

Discussion Questions (30-40 minutes)

Understanding the Text

- 1. The Second Call:** God came to Jonah "a second time" with the same message. What does this reveal about God's character? How does this encourage you personally?
- 2. Minimal Obedience:** Jonah obeyed with his feet but not his heart. Why do you think God still used him? What does this teach us about how God works through imperfect people?
- 3. Eight Words:** Jonah's sermon was only eight words: "Yet 40 days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Why do you think this produced

the greatest revival in the Old Testament? Where was the real power?

Personal Reflection

4. **Your Tarshish:** Have you ever run from something you knew God was calling you to do? What made you reluctant? What brought you back?
5. **Reluctant Obedience:** The pastor said, "Go with your feet first and let your heart catch up." Have you experienced this? Share a time when you obeyed before you felt ready.
6. **Second Chances:** In what area of your life might God be giving you a "second chance" right now? What would it look like to respond in obedience?

Deeper Application

7. **Nineveh's Repentance:** The Gentile king of Nineveh showed genuine repentance and faith, saying "Who knows? God may relent." What made their repentance authentic? How does this challenge our own approach to repentance?
8. **Inadequacy as a Messenger:** The pastor said, "Don't let your inadequacy as a messenger keep you from delivering the message." What fears or feelings of inadequacy keep you from sharing your faith or serving?
9. **Prayer and Service:** The sermon emphasized becoming a church of prayer and stepping up to serve. What specific opportunity is God placing before you right now—in prayer, service, or sharing your faith?

Key Takeaways (10 minutes)

Discuss which of these truths resonates most with your group:

- **God is the God of second chances** — His call doesn't change because of our disobedience
- **Reluctant obedience is still obedience** — God can work through us even when our hearts lag behind our feet
- **The power is in the Word, not the messenger** — We don't need eloquence or perfection; we need availability
- **True repentance moves God's heart** — The Ninevites demonstrated genuine turning from sin

- **No one can outrun God** — He pursues us with relentless love
- **We're all Jonah** — We receive mercy gladly but sometimes resent when God extends it to others

Practical Applications (15 minutes)

This Week's Challenge:

Choose one action step to complete before your next meeting:

Option 1: Take One Step

- Identify one area where God has been calling you to obedience but you've been hesitant
- Take one concrete step forward this week (sign up to serve, have a difficult conversation, reach out to someone, etc.)
- Journal about how your heart changes (or doesn't) as you obey

Option 2: Prayer Wall Participation

- Write out a specific prayer request and place it on the church prayer wall
- Commit to praying through the requests on the wall at least once this week
- Consider attending or helping organize the upcoming monthly prayer night

Option 3: Share Your Story

- Identify one person in your life who needs to hear about God's grace
- Pray daily for an opportunity to share
- When the opportunity comes, don't let inadequacy stop you—remember Jonah's eight words

Option 4: Practice Repentance

- Following the Ninevites' example, identify one area of sin or disobedience in your life
- Don't just confess it—demonstrate genuine repentance through changed action
- Share your commitment with one trusted person for accountability

Group Prayer Time (10-15 minutes)

Prayer Focus Areas:

1. **For Second Chances:** Pray for group members who feel they've missed their opportunity or failed God
2. **For Obedience:** Ask God to help hearts catch up with feet—for courage to obey even when reluctant
3. **For Revival:** Pray for God to do "Nineveh-level" work in your community, church, and personal lives
4. **For Availability:** Pray that each person would be available for God's service, regardless of how inadequate they feel
5. **For Specific Needs:** Share and pray for the specific step each person committed to take this week

Closing Reflection

"The message is His. The power is His. The results are His. Your only job is to go."

Take a moment of silence. Invite the Holy Spirit to show each person what their "one step forward" should be this week.

For Next Week

- Read Jonah Chapter 4
- Reflect on this question: How do I respond when God shows mercy to people I think don't deserve it?
- Come prepared to share how your "one step" went this week

Leader Notes

- Be prepared for honest sharing about reluctance and failure—create a safe, grace-filled environment
- Have extra Bibles available for those who want to read Jonah 3 together
- Consider starting or ending with a worship song about God's faithfulness or second chances

- If your group is large, break into smaller groups of 3-4 for the personal reflection questions
- Follow up during the week with group members about their action steps