

Channeling Anger
Jonah 3:10-4:4
Small Group Discussion Guide

Opening Questions (get everyone involved in discussion):

- What would you say is your default way of expressing anger? Do you tend to hold it in, suppressing it, or do you let it out unfiltered? Or something else?
- What is the result of anger that is held in, and never expressed in a healthy way?
- How would you define “righteous anger?” (On Sunday, Andy Boutcher defined it as anger that attacks the sin, not the sinner, and seeks to repair injustice or mistreatment.)

Read the following passages. What light does each of them shed on the experience of anger?

- Matt. 5:21-22
- Eph. 4:26-27
- James 1:19-20

This week’s focal passage is **Jonah 3:10-4:4**. Review the basic plot of Jonah, from your own memories, or by skimming the book (it’s only 4 chapters long). Then **read and discuss** this focal passage.

- What seemed wrong to Jonah (v. 1)? Why did it seem so wrong?
- What do you think about Jonah’s reaction to God’s mercy on Nineveh? Is it justified? Why or why not?
- Did Jonah have reason to be angry at the Assyrians (whose capital was Nineveh)?
- What is the difference between his understandable anger at the Assyrians, and his over-reaction to God’s mercy?
- About Jonah’s reaction, Tim Keller writes in *Prodigal Prophet*, “Of course, anyone who cared for his own country would have been anxious about Assyria’s survival. It was a terrorist state. Jonah, however, did not turn to God with his anxiety, trusting in him as so many of the psalm writers had done. If he had to choose between the security of Israel and loyalty to God, well, he was ready to push God away. That is not just concern and love for one’s country; that is a kind of deification of it.”
 - Do you agree that Jonah’s love for Israel has become a sort of deification of his nation? Why or why not?
- In v. 3, Jonah expresses a desire to die. What does this fact reveal about his source of meaning in life?
 - What bearing does this fact have on Jonah’s angry response to God’s mercy?
- Jonah is quoting a famous passage of Scripture in his rant, in v. 2. What is that passage, and what is significant about the way that Jonah references it? (Exodus 34:5-7).
- What is significant about the question that God asks Jonah, in v. 4?
- How do you see God dealing with his anger against sin in this story?
 - Has God had reason to be angry with Jonah, earlier in the story? If Jonah were to recall God’s mercy to him, how might it impact his dealings with the Ninevites?
- The gospel shows us that God poured out his anger against sin on his son, Jesus, so that we could be forgiven. How does this reality impact the anger that we feel?
- If you are comfortable doing so, share with your group one thing that has been a source of anger for you lately.
- Andy suggested in this week’s sermon that we would do well to channel our anger—not suppress it, but channel it into a proper response—especially one that restores relationship. What might that look like in your current situation?

PRAYER

- Share with one another any needs for which you need prayer.
- Pray in response to what God has revealed to you about your anger, through his word and your discussion.