

SHOULD I NOT LOVE THAT GREAT CITY?

Jonah 4

Individuals or groups may enjoy working through this content while having fellowship at home, while away on summer vacation, or in a Connect Group. We'll provide updated content from week to week this summer.

Scripture: Jonah 3

SUMMARY

Jonah 4 concludes the story of Jonah with a profound lesson on God's compassion and our struggle with God's mercy and grace. After Nineveh's massive revival and repentance, Jonah becomes exceedingly angry. He expresses his displeasure to God, revealing his frustration with God's mercy towards Nineveh. God uses a plant, a worm, and a scorching wind to teach Jonah about compassion and priorities. The book ends with God questioning Jonah, "Should I not pity Nineveh, that great city?" This chapter challenges us to examine our hearts and attitudes towards those we consider "undeserving" of God's grace.

We exist to help connect **Jesus to people, people to community, and community to God's mission**. Here are a few insights about how Jonah 3 connects to our mission as a church.

JESUS TO PEOPLE...

Jonah's anger at God's mercy toward Nineveh contrasts sharply with Jesus' willingness to extend grace to all. Jesus' mission was to seek and save the lost, demonstrating God's boundless love. Jonah's reluctance highlights our struggles with self-righteousness and prejudice. Jesus, on the other hand, willingly embraced the cross to offer salvation to all, including His enemies. As a church, we exist to help connect Jesus to people, showing that His grace is available to everyone, regardless of their past or background.

...PEOPLE TO COMMUNITY...

Jonah isolates himself, distancing himself from the people he despises. In contrast, Jesus immersed Himself in the lives of sinners and outcasts. This chapter reminds us of the importance of community and the barriers that often separate us from one another. The gospel is the only force that can destroy the walls of prejudice and judgment that separate us from one another. Our church community should be a place where everyone can experience God's love and find a sense of belonging, no matter their background. We are called to love and support each other, reflecting God's compassion and grace in our relationships.

...COMMUNITY TO MISSION

God's call to Jonah to go to Nineveh underscores His desire for all nations to know Him. Jonah's resistance contrasts with God's heart for the lost. The mission of our church is to

connect community to mission, spreading the gospel to every corner of the earth. God's mission is to fill the world with the knowledge of his glory like water covers the bottom of the sea. This means we can participate in God's mission as we take God's knowledge to every nation on earth and every sphere of work and reality. We must embrace God's call to reach beyond our comfort zones and share His love with those who may seem undeserving. The story of Jonah challenges us to align our hearts with God's mission and extend His grace to all people.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. What should Jonah have done after Nineveh repented?
2. What does Jonah's reaction to Nineveh's repentance reveal about his understanding of God's grace?
3. Do you have your own Nineveh to whom you believe God's love should not be extended? Who are they? Why?
4. How do you respond when God shows mercy to people you think deserve judgment?
5. How can we, as a church, reflect God's compassion towards those different from us?
6. How did Jonah use the Bible to justify his resentment, anger, and bitterness?
7. How does the story of Jonah challenge our views on forgiveness and mercy?
8. Read Exodus 34:6-7. How can God be both compassionate and committed to punishing evil?
9. How can we better align ourselves with God's mission to reach all nations?
10. While God weeps and grieves over the city of Nineveh, Jonah does not. How is Jesus the prophet Jonah should have been?

THEMES TO PRAY

- Pray for our church to have hearts full of compassion and be willing to extend God's grace to all people (Jonah 4:2-4).
- Pray for humility and repentance, recognizing our own need for God's mercy (Jonah 4:5-6).
- Pray for the courage to step out of our comfort zones and reach those who feel far from God (Jonah 4:11).
- Pray for God's love to break down any prejudices and barriers within our hearts (Jonah 4:9-10).
- Pray for our community to embrace God's mission and share the gospel with those around us (Jonah 4:11).

