

Don't Run From Responsibility

Additional praises/significant happenings this past week:

Ice Breaker: Share about a traveling experience that turned sour but you can laugh about it today.

- * Brief prayer seeking spiritual understanding
- * Read Jonah 1:1-16

Hear God's Call To Be Involved (vv. 1-3)

Jonah is a graphic example of a terrible missionary. He had so little concern for lost people that he wished God would destroy them! However, God had a purpose for Jonah in spite of his attitude.

1. Who are all the people involved in this passage? What is happening in this story? How are those people like people in our world today? What would you have done in this situation . . . how are you and Jonah alike – and different?

2. What are some responses Christians give for not responding to God's command to share His Gospel with the world in which they live?

3. God chose Jonah. (He chose Moses, a poor speaker. The Apostles, Peter and Paul – far from perfect people.) What would the Spirit want us to hear from this example? (see John 15:16, 2 Corinthians 4:7, 13-15)

Realize God Is Persistent In Calling (vv. 4-10)

Jonah's call was more specific than most. He was "called" by God to go to a different people group from his own (a cross-cultural missionary). However with our specific spiritual maturity in mind, God persists in calling us to be involved with His world-wide missions plan.

1. Discuss the multifaceted ways God pursues Jonah (physically, emotionally, spiritually). How could Jonah sleep at a time like this . . . do you think he was really at peace with God?

2. What does God's pursuit of Jonah reveal about:
 - A) The justice and mercy of God?
 - B) Human fear and faith?

3. Can we really "run away from the Lord"? (Psalm 139:7-12)

God Reveals . . . We Respond – Accept Responsibility (vv. 11-16)

1. In this "to be continued" chronicle of Jonah, how is admission of guilt a first step in coming into line with God's purpose of redeeming a lost world to Himself? How is this like what we read in Philippians 2:13? Discuss how agreement with God is important in discovering God's plan for our lives.

2. What does God do in the lives of the sailors when Jonah finally, yet reluctantly, shares his faith (v. 9) and they throw him overboard? (Notice that their plan was foiled, v. 13) Discuss what that reveals about the character of God.

Wrap up: Ponder and discuss: "Our disobedience jeopardizes the world."

Prayer:

For one another

Return to God

Additional praises/significant happenings this past week:

Ice Breaker: What's the biggest fish you ever caught?

- * Brief prayer seeking spiritual understanding
- * Read Jonah 1:17-2:10

God's Purpose Prevails (vv. 1:17; 2:10)

4. Could God intervene in the world in a miraculous way more often? Why doesn't He? What kind of Christians would that create?

5. Discuss what we learn about the character of God

A) Through His pursuit and rescue of Jonah

B) Leaving Jonah entombed in the fish 3 days & nights

C) As this compares to Jesus' entombment (see Matthew 12:38-41)

God's Mercy Runs Deep (vv. 2:1-7)

4. Identify words and phrases that:

- help us understand Jonah's fears and feelings
- express praise and thanksgiving
- convey repentance
- show faith of God's deliverance and a renewed relationship

5. Discuss the similarities of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32) and Jonah.

God's Grace Inspires Sacrificial Service (vv. 2:8-9)

TOUCH – TURN – TALK

God reached down to the depths of the sea and “**touched**” Jonah’s life. Jonah repented and “**turned**” from his rebellious ways. Now God was preparing Jonah to “**talk**” (get involved) and share His message of saving them from God’s wrath.

3. How do these three words relate to God’s calling us to missions involvement?

Wrap up:

Where are you in relation to God’s call to be involved with missions? Touching? Turning? Talking?

Prayer:

For needs of one another

Embrace God's Missionary Perspective

Praises/answered prayer

Ice Breaker: What part of the world outside your own country are you particularly concerned to see evangelized? Why?

Review: Jonah 3:3-10

Read: Jonah 4:1-11 (pray for God's guidance)

Love Lost People (vv. 1-3)

6. Describe in your own words what we discover about God's nature from these verses.
7. Discuss Jonah's attitude? How does his being a Jew affect his attitude? How would you have felt?
8. What are the results of the spiritual arrogance of the Jews when Jesus comes on the scene? Can we display spiritual arrogance? Explain.

Replace Self-Interest With Compassion (vv. 4-9)

6. Discuss how God ("The Wonderful Counselor" - Isaiah 9:6 and "the Loving Heavenly Father who disciplines for our good" - Hebrews 12:10) challenges Jonah to do some self-searching.
7. What are the results of God providing the vine?

8. Reflect and discuss: “If we do not find a greater joy in the salvation of lost people than in serving our own self-centered wishes, we are exhibiting Jonah’s attitude of putting comfort above being involved in missions.”

See People As God Sees Them (vv. 10-11)

Focus in on the word “concerned”. Used here it means to pity, share or grieve for.

4. How is the word “concerned” contrasted in these verses?

5. To help us see people as God sees them, take a moment to review:
 - a. Actions God took through history to redeem mankind
 - b. Verses that communicate God’s compassion for lost people.

Wrap Up: List 3 things you could do to develop God’s compassion for lost people. (then share them with the group)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Prayer:

For God to enlarge our missionary vision

For the needs of one another

Obey God And Experience Him

Additional praises/significant happenings this past week:

Ice Breaker: Which is more important to God, your ability or availability? Why?

* Brief prayer seeking spiritual understanding

* Read Jonah 3:1-10

God Sometimes Gives Second Chances (vv. 1-2)

9. Compare God's requests of Jonah in 3:2 and 1:2. How are they different? Similar?

10. Why do you think God gave Jonah a second chance? The Ninevites? Were they worthy of a "second chance"?

11. How did God grant a "second chance" to:

A) Mankind through Noah & his family

B) Moses and the Israelites in receiving the Ten Commandments

C) Peter after his denial of knowing Jesus

D) Paul

Even though God can sometimes give second chances, why must we not assume that He will? Discuss the consequences of passing up on second chances.

We Obey – Leave The Results to God (vv. 3-4)

9. What was the apparent message God gave Jonah to proclaim to the Ninevites (summed up in v. 4)? Was it negative or positive? Considering Jonah's fishin' experience, how do you think you would have responded to God's second chance?

10. Modern day media advisors would have told Jonah to soft-pedal the judgmental approach. What are the dangers in down playing or "sugar-coating" the consequences of sin?

Learning more effective ways of communication can be helpful. Discuss how you would talk to a non-believing friend or relative about sin so that they aren't repulsed and turn and walk away.

God Uses Obedient People (vv. 5-10)

6. Identify words and phrases that describe the response to Jonah's words:

A) by the Ninevites

B) their king

7. How do you account for their response to Jonah's message?

For God's change of heart (v. 10)?

What does this say about God's will?

Wrap up: What does this lesson say about God's use of us to achieve His will and carryout the mission of His church?

Prayer:

For the needs of one another

For our personal involvement in Missions

