



Message Series – JONAH

Week of February 8, 2009
Jonah: Missing the Point

Tailor the following questions to fit the needs of your group. Start with a BREAKING THE ICE question, then get real with two or three CONNECTING questions and end by challenging one another to TAKE IT HOME. For those who want to explore God's Word further, use the DISCOVERY QUESTIONS.

BREAKING THE ICE:

- When you were a kid, how did you usually express your anger or react when you didn't get your way?
- When it is really hot out, what is your favorite way to beat the heat?

CONNECTING:

1. How has God been challenging you through the study of Jonah? Which week's message has made the biggest impact and why? Which do you think was Jonah's biggest problem: anger, pride, selfishness, depression, prejudice, or something else? Which of these issues do you struggle with personally? About what situations do you sometimes find yourself angry at God? What does this story reveal about God? His ways?
2. Share a time when you, like Jonah, became angry at God and depressed over what seemed like an unjust situation? How did you get over these feelings and how long did it take? How do you resolve your angry with God? Is there anything currently going on in your life that you are angry or depressed about? (Pray for those in your group who are struggling with anger.)
3. What percentage of your anger comes from not getting what you want? How do you generally express your anger? (pout, yell, punish, withdraw, stuff it, take it out on others, become irritable, silent, etc.) How comfortable are you telling God when you are angry? Why is this important? What can happen when we deny or stuff our anger? What is God's cure for our anger?
4. Life is *not* about us. Only God has the right to judge others (or a nation) and the power to control outcomes. How was Jonah's anger related to his *trying to be* God, concerning Nineveh? How was he judging and trying to control the outcome? Why do you think Jonah was angry and depressed about the Ninevites repenting and turning to God? How would you have felt in Jonah's situation?
5. Like Jonah, we all want to receive God's forgiveness, but we are not always willing to *give* forgiveness. To whom are you unwilling to extend God's grace and forgiveness? What can result when we hold on to anger, even when it seems justified? Why do we struggle with *giving* forgiveness more than *receiving* forgiveness? What are some reasons (or excuses) we use for not forgiving? How do we benefit from forgiving?

TAKE IT HOME:

1. Unresolved anger leads to a host of problems, like bitterness and depression. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you any unresolved anger. Make a list of each situation, who you are blaming and what expectations were blocked. Honestly acknowledge your anger to God and choose to forgive all parties

involved (cancel the debt they owe you). Ask the Lord to give you His perspective of the situations about which you are angry. Surrender your right to stay angry and be willing to extend His mercy and grace to those whom you have forgiven.

2. Now that we belong to Christ, we are to be about our Father's business (Matthew 6:33). To whom is God wanting you to show his love and mercy? In what ways is your life centered on what you want instead of what God wants? What will you do this week to focus more on God's will? What expectations or rights do you need to surrender in order to put God first? Each morning, before you start your day, surrender your life, your expectations and your rights to God. (Romans 12:1).

3. To which country or people group is God calling you; to pray for them or possibly, to personally deliver the good news to? What steps will you take to become more involved in reaching others with the message of Christ?

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS:

Read the fourth chapter of Jonah.

- What was the main reason for Jonah's anger? With whom was he angry? How did Jonah handle his anger? Why did he run from God the first time he was told to go to Nineveh? What does Jonah believe about God? (v3) Do you think Jonah really wanted to die? Why or why not? How would you describe Jonah's behavior?
- What three things did God provide Jonah? (vv 6-8) Did Jonah have a right to be angry about God sparing Nineveh? When have you experienced anger towards God? How did this affect your outlook? How can we resolve our anger towards God?
- What do the vine, worm and hot sun reveal about God? About Jonah? Did Jonah have a right to be angry about the vine? What lesson was God trying to teach Jonah, through the vine? What do you think God meant when He said the Ninevites couldn't tell their left hand from their right?
- How does Jonah's response compare with Elijah's after he confronted the prophets of Baal? (1 Kings 19:1-7) What can we learn from their experiences? How will you apply this to your life?
- If you were Jonah, what ending would you like to give this story?

VERSES FOR FURTHER STUDY:

1 Kings 17-19; Matthew 5:43-48, 6:14-15,33, 7:1-5; John 3:16-18; Ephesians 4:26-27, 31-32