

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

PRAY TOGETHER

Father, thank You for Your grace and compassion toward us, even when we run from You or think we know better than You. As we discuss Jonah's story, help us be honest about where we may need to repent, receive Your mercy, or stop begrudging the grace You show to others. Holy Spirit, open our hearts to hear what You are saying, convict us with love, and lead each of us to a clear next step of obedience. Amen.

ICE BREAKER

What's a childhood story, song, or movie (like Pastor Aaron remembers VeggieTales Jonah) that you still remember vividly today?

SERMON OVERVIEW



SCAN FOR
SERMON CLIP



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In this week's message, our Family Minister Pastor Aaron Crull joins us as we study the book of Jonah. He challenges us to consider: what if the story of Jonah is not simply about a man who ran from God and was swallowed by a fish, but about the struggle each of us faces when God's grace extends further than we think it should? We walk through the entire book of Jonah and discover that this ancient story is packed with timeless truths about grace, repentance, second chances, and the nature of God's forgiveness and compassion. We see how Jonah's rebellion was not simply disobedience but a deep-seated belief that he knew better than God about who deserved His grace, mercy and forgiveness. The parallels to our own lives are striking. How often do we celebrate God's grace when it comes to us, yet quietly resist it when it flows toward someone we feel has not "earned" it, or may not "deserve" it? The book of Jonah challenges us to examine our hearts honestly and ask whether we have fallen into the trap of believing God's generosity is something that can be deserved, earned or withheld based on our own judgments. We are ultimately invited to fix our eyes on the cross, and the author and perfecter of our faith and let that reality reshape how we see everyone around us.

READ SCRIPTURE

JONAH CHAPTERS 1-4, MATTHEW 20:1-6

CONNECT RELATIONALLY

1) The fish was not God's punishment for Jonah, but His rescue plan. Share with the group a season of life that felt like punishment but, in hindsight, was actually deliverance. What part of your past or present might God be redeeming in this way that you need to consider?

2) The sermon suggests that we can subtly shift from understanding grace as a free gift to believing we have earned God's favor through obedience or good works. How have you experienced that shift in your own thinking or behavior?

3) Jonah was grateful when God's grace benefited him, but angry when it benefited his enemies. Can you identify a person or group of people in your life toward whom you find it genuinely difficult to want to see God's grace and forgiveness extended? What do you think lies at the root of that resistance?

GROW SPIRITUALLY

4) Pastor Aaron drew a parallel between the parable of the workers in the vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16) and the story of Jonah. How do you think these stories related to one another? What was Jesus trying to teach us about grace and generosity?

5) God gave Jonah the exact same calling after his rebellion as he did before it, suggesting that failure often does not disqualify us from our calling and purpose. What does this reveal about God's mercy and patience? How do second chances shape the way you think about your own past failures or the failures of others?

6) Jonah completed the mission God gave him but still had a heart that was far from God's, prompting God to say, in essence, that He wanted Jonah to be who he was called to be, not just do what he was called to do. What is the difference between obedient behavior and genuine heart transformation? How can Christ followers ensure we are pursuing the right posture?

LIVE GENEROUSLY

7) Pastor Aaron describes repentance as terrifying, like being thrown off a ship into a stormy sea. Is there something in your life right now that you know God is calling you to turn from? What makes that feel dangerous or costly? What steps can you take this week to seek God's forgiveness and grace in this matter?

8) Pastor Aaron identifies pride, envy, and unforgiveness as the three primary causes of begrudging God's generosity. He suggests fixing your eyes on the cross is the antidote to begrudging God's generosity toward others. Which of these three do you feel you need to seek healing for in your own heart? This week how can you return to the reality of what Christ did on your behalf? What practical ways could that become a more central rhythm in your daily life?

TAKE ACTION

Based on our conversation today, how do you sense the Holy Spirit inviting you to take a next step in practical application? Please complete this statement, I am feeling convicted to take the following action (keep it simple):

Please invite each group member to share their next step, if they have one.

PRAY TOGETHER

Take a few minutes for each person to share a recent joy or praise, as well as something that's weighing on their heart and in need of intercession. Invite someone to pray over these requests. Be sure to share them with everyone in the group so you can continue praying for one another throughout the week.

ENGAGE TOGETHER



Valor One-Night Kickoff Event - The world needs men who are unapologetic in their faith. The world needs men who stand up for what's right and don't shrink back. The world needs men who walk in honor and stand for the truth. The world needs you, mighty man of Valor. **Join us on August 13th** for a night of equipping and encouragement as we lean into the fight and learn to be the men God created us to be. Registration Cost: \$35 Northview Kokomo Campus