

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, June 21, 2009

Passage: Jonah 3

Memory Passage: Jonah 3:9

TODAY: *From your study this past week, what is one thing that impressed you that can be of help in your life?*

DAY 1 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Jonah 3:1-4.** What has changed Jonah's mind about going to Nineveh? How big is Nineveh said to be? How big would this make Nineveh and its outlying area? What are the people of Nineveh?
- (b) What does Jonah preach against Nineveh? What would be a modern day example of this? Are we to preach a gospel like Jonah preaches to Nineveh? How would you respond to a person like Jonah?
- (c) What are we to proclaim (Acts 2:38; 1Cor 1:23; Eph 3:8)?
- (d) *Think about it:* What would it be like to go to Nineveh even preaching the good news of the gospel to them? What keeps you from sharing the gospel with your neighbors? How faithful has God shown Himself to protect Jonah who disobeyed a direct command? Do you believe God will be faithful to protect you?
- (e) *Family:* Read Jonah 3:1-4. What would it have been like to be in Jonah's shoes? Would you have liked to go to the Ninevites? Read Acts 2:38; 1Cor 1:23. What is supposed to be the message that we preach? What kept Jonah from preaching his message before? What keeps you from sharing now? What so far in this book has shown you that you have nothing to fear? Pray that God would give you the courage and the words to preach the gospel.

DAY 2 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Jonah 3:5.** What happened when Jonah preached his message? Why is this astonishing to us as the reader? Would this happen today? Why or Why not? Who was it that the people of Nineveh believed? Why is this important?
- (b) Read Romans 4. What role does believing play in receiving God's grace? What role does the Law play? What role did circumcision play in relation to Abraham's faith?
- (c) *Think about it:* The Ninevites just heard a really disturbing message about judgment. How does the message of judgment from Jonah correlate to the passage in Romans 4? What about their reaction, how does it exemplify Romans 4?
- (d) *Family:* Read Jonah 3:5 and Romans 4. How did the people of Nineveh react to Jonah's preaching? How long did it take them to react? What kind of example do they set for us in this? How does what Romans 4 say about Abraham relate to the people of Nineveh's reaction to Jonah's message? What is the importance of faith? Pray that the Lord would give you faith like the people of Nineveh which was quick to respond to His message.

DAY 3 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Jonah 3:6-9.** What is the purpose behind removing the robe and covering oneself in sackcloth and ashes (Gen 37:34; 2 Sam. 3:31; Is. 22:12)? Can you think of a way in which we might do something similar to this? Why did we do it?
- (b) What is the next thing the king calls the people to do? What is the purpose of fasting according to this passage? Read Isaiah 58. How does Isaiah describe what is an improper fast? What is the purpose of a proper fast?
- (c) *Think about it:* Does the king expect that his actions will force God into showing them mercy? What does this say about how he sees God? Do you see God like this? Or do you think that by doing certain things that you can make God do anything?
- (d) *Family:* Read Jonah 3:6-9. Talk about what the King is doing by covering himself with sackcloth and ashes. What does it mean? Do we do anything like this? What else does he call the people to do? Read Is. 58. What does this passage say about how we are supposed to fast and how we are not to? Have you ever fasted as a family? Think and pray about doing that together for a day.

DAY 4 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Jonah 3:10.** Why is this a surprising turn of events in the story? What description is used to describe why God changed their mind? Did the Ninevites repent knowing that God would forgive them?
- (b) Read Isaiah 55:6-7, Proverbs 28:13. How is repentance described in these passages? What is God most concerned about in these passages? Does this change in the new testament (Luke 24:47-48; Acts 2:38)?
- (c) *Think about it:* What is it that people must always do to receive God's mercy? What does repentance entail? Is there anything that you have not turned from? What does it teach us about God's mercy that even the Ninevites can receive it?

(d) *Family*: Read Jonah 3:10. What happens when the Ninevites turn from their evil ways? Did they know that this was going to happen? What does this teach us about God's mercy? Read Proverbs 28:13. Is this an encouraging verse? Is there anything that you need to repent of and turn from today? Take some time and let God know that you are repenting and turning from your sin back to Him.

DAY 5 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

(a) **Jonah 3:9-10**. Does God change His mind (Numbers 23:19)? Does God change His mind in Jonah? Why or why not?

(b) What are some of the explanations of why Jonah was able to prophesy judgment but yet be “wrong”? What is the purpose behind a judgment prophesy?

(c) Read 2 Samuel 12:22. What prophesy is David referring to? Is there any hope in that prophesy that it could be overturned? Why would David pray this way then?

(d) *What do you think*: Is there a distinction between prophecies of judgment and covenants that God makes? What does it say about God's character that there is grace for those who repent even when faced with threats?

(e) *Family*: Read Jonah 3:9-10. What happened in this passage as it is related to prophesy? What does this passage teach us about prophesy? Why is this important for us to know? What can we learn about God from this? Read Joel 2:12-14. How does God want us to respond when faced with the consequences of our sin?

DAY 6 – PRAY FOR INSIGHT

READ THE WHOLE PASSAGE

(e) *Think back through what you have learned each day this week*. What is the major lesson of the passage? What have you learned this week about the nature of God's mercy? What about the nature of judgment prophesy? Who is someone that you could share the gospel with? Pray for those who don't know the Lord that they might turn to God like the Ninevites.

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A Repentant Nineveh

“Who knows? God may turn and relent..”