

VISION

2026

STUDY TOOLS

Sunday, January 11, 2026

Teaching Title: When Grace Gets Personal

Key Scripture: Jonah 1 & 2

CEDAR VALLEY

5-DAY READING PLAN WITH QUESTIONS:

Monday: Jonah 1

Tuesday: Jonah 2

Wednesday: Jonah 3

Thursday: Jonah 4

Friday: Romans 5

1. What does this passage tell you about God?
2. What does this passage tell you about people?
3. If this is God's Word (Scripture), what do I need to do?
4. What's your takeaway?
5. Who would you tell?

MEMORY VERSE: Jonah 2:6 NLT

I sank down to the very roots of the mountains. I was imprisoned in the earth, whose gates lock shut forever. But you, O Lord my God, snatched me from the jaws of death!

LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION:

Introduction:

Jonah was an Old Testament prophet (mentioned in 2 Kings 14:35) whose book has a unique feature. Every other prophetic book contains messages from God to Israel through the prophet. The book of Jonah is all about what happened to the prophet. The message is in the experiences and story of the prophet himself. In this book, God's grace is revealed to Jonah as well as the sinful people of Nineveh. Jonah ran from God's call because he despised the people God loved. Yet God, in relentless mercy, pursued Jonah through a storm, not to punish him, but to reveal His grace and mercy. In a beautiful psalm of praise in chapter 2, Jonah expresses his gratitude to God and repents of his disobedience. Just like Jonah, we forget the depths of God's grace and the forgetfulness shrinks our hearts for God's mission. When we remember the grace of God, our gratitude grows, and God's mission moves through us. The mission moves as gratitude grows.

Questions:

Ice Breaker: What is something you know is good for you, but you tend to avoid or put off anyway—and why do you think that is?

1. Read Jonah 1:1–6 together as a group. What is God's command to Jonah, and what does it tell us about God's concern for Nineveh? Why do you think God would send His prophet to such a violent and wicked city?
2. Why do you think Jonah chose to go in the *opposite* direction instead of simply saying no? What does Jonah's ability to sleep suggest about his heart toward God at this point?
3. Read Jonah 1:9–17 as a group. How does Jonah describe God, and why is this description significant given the situation?

4. What does Jonah's willingness to be thrown overboard reveal about his awareness of guilt and responsibility?
5. In Jonah 1:12, do you see his words as repentance, resignation, or something else? Why?
6. Read Jonah 2:1–4. How does recognizing God's involvement change Jonah's perspective?
7. When you remember who you were without God's grace and what He has saved you from, how does that shape the way you see difficult or undeserving people in your life? Who might God be calling you to care about because you've first received His mercy?

DIGGING DEEPER

Question 4—

If you continue in the book of Jonah to chapters 3 and 4, it appears that Jonah's repentance in chapter 2 is insincere. In 3–4, Jonah obeys God and goes to Ninevah, the Ninevites repent and Jonah is angry about it! Why? He is ok with receiving God's mercy for himself, but not for those who he sees as wicked.

Jonah knows the character of God and appears to be upset about God's character as well. He says in 4:2, *“Didn't I say before I left home that you would do this, Lord? That is why I ran away to Tarshish! I knew that you are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. You are eager to turn back from destroying people.”*

Jonah is upset with God's compassion and mercy for the wicked but accepts God's grace and mercy for himself. This raises a question for us—are we like Jonah? Are we upset when God is gracious and merciful toward the wicked?

The structure of the book demonstrates the theme of God's grace and mercy for Jonah and the Ninevites:

- I. 1:1-2:10 A Hebrew sinner saved
 - 1:1-3 Jonah's Disobedience
 - 1:4-16 Jonah's punishment & the pagan sailors' worship of Yahweh
 - 1:17-2:10 Jonah's rescue by Yahweh
 - 1:17 God's grace
 - 2:1-9 Jonah's Praise
 - 2:10 God's last word
- II. 3:1-4:11 Pagan sinners saved
 - 3:1-4 Jonah's obedience
 - 3:5-9 Ninevah's repentance
 - 3:10-4:11 Jonah's rebuke of Yahweh
 - 3:10 God's grace
 - 4:1-3 Jonah's complaint
 - 4:4-11 God's last word

“Key words and phrases run through the book. “Nineveh, that great city” opens both halves of the book (1:2, 3:2), and occurs in a surprising climax at the end (4:11)... Nineveh's badness (“wickedness,” 1:2) and bad (“evil”) ways (3:8, 10) should logically lead to a bad end (“calamity,” 3:10), but repentance averts it (3:8, 10), just as prayer averted the sailors' bad experience (“calamity,” 1:7, 8). Jonah, however, takes this illogical development badly (find it “displeasing,” 4:1).”

—paraphrased and quoted from: Lasor, Hubbard, and Bush, *Old Testament Survey*. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids: 1996. Pages 381-389.