

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (FOR MAY 23, 2021)

For Community Groups or Personal Study

On this fourth Sunday in May we continue focusing our attention on the prophet Jonah. We are “diving in” to this 2500+ year old fish story; trusting God to provide insights and instruction that will help us individually, and collectively, here at Grace.

Jonah was a prophet of God. He received clear directions from God ... and turned and ran in the opposite direction. He fooled himself into thinking he could run from God's presence. But wherever Jonah went God was right there with him.

The book of Jonah is a fascinating story of God's call to go, our responsibility for how we respond to that call, and God's kindness along the way ... sometimes His kindness involves a BIG fish!

Jonah is a story of redemption and second chances, not only for prophets but for nations too, even those far from God.

In this fourth installment of our Sunday sermon series Jonah is given a second chance, he obeys God, his message is simple, the response incredible, repentance real, judgment averted. But there's more ... one more chapter next week, one more soul to save.

LESSONS FROM JONAH SERMON PASSAGE: JONAH 3:1-10

¹ Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, ² ‘Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.’ ³ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. ⁴ Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, ‘Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!’ ⁵ And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them.

⁶ The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. ⁷ And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, ‘By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, ⁸ but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. ⁹ Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.’

¹⁰ When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.”

Jonah was a prophet of God during the reign of King Jeroboam II (700's BC). In the New Testament Jesus referred to Jonah several times. He is a fascinating prophet: wrestling with God, disobedient, headstrong, and then encountering the mercy of God for the citizens of Nineveh, and for himself too.

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. From this chapter how would you describe God's response to Jonah's disobedience?
2. How would you describe Jonah's response to his God-given second chance?
3. How did the people of Nineveh, and the King of Nineveh, respond to Jonah's message about God's judgment?
4. How did God respond to the change in the Ninevites?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

5. Did Jonah deserve a second chance from God? Discuss
6. What does this chapter teach us about God's compassion for all people, all nations, not just His chosen people?
7. What evidence was there that the repentance (change) in the Ninevites, and their king, was genuine?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

8. Have you ever needed a second chance from God? How many chances do you think God will give you? Discuss
9. How do you respond to the generous "second" chances God gives you? (Humility, gratitude, entitled, owed, careless ...)
10. How does God's kindness affect how we treat others? Read Luke 17:3-4

Notes: _____

Spend time in silence, praying (even if just for a minute or two). Prayer is simply a conversation with God. Be honest. If you don't know how or what to pray admit that and ask God to help you pray. Ask God to make you aware of your failures and His kind second chances. Ask Him to create in you a humble gratitude for His kindness so that you can offer love and second chances to others in your life. He will help you (us) because He loves you (us).