

GOING DEEPER STUDY NOTES (FOR MAY 30, 2021)

For Community Groups or Personal Study

On Memorial Day weekend we pause to say THANK YOU to all who have served and sacrificed for the blessings we enjoy as a nation.

Here at Grace we believe that God is active among us and in us, and that His love for us is real. God has promised both.

Last week we heard that our pastor (Bill Williamson) and his wife are seeking a divorce. With the weight of that news we pray, and we remember that God will not abandon us. We have a future. Bill and Debbie have a future. The elders (elected leaders) here at Grace are praying for God's direction.

What is clear is that everyone is broken. And Grace is a safe place for broken people to meet the restoring, redeeming power of God. Divorce has touched all of us. It is painful. We affirm that God can heal, forgive, and rebuild where there has been divorce.

When divorce touches a pastor there are additional complications and pains. We grieve for Bill and his family. We grieve for each other and our church. And still we trust that God will sustain us.

The prophet Jonah received clear directions from God ... and then he turned and ran in the opposite direction. He thought he could run from God's presence. But wherever Jonah went God was right there with him. Wherever we go God is with us too.

LESSONS FROM JONAH SERMON PASSAGE: JONAH 3:10-4:11

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.

^{4:1} But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. ² And he prayed to the Lord and said, 'O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

³ Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.' ⁴ And the Lord said, 'Do you do well to be angry?'

⁵ Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. ⁶ Now the Lord God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. ⁷ But when dawn came up

the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, 'It is better for me to die than to live.' ⁹ But God said to Jonah, 'Do you do well to be angry for the plant?' And he said, 'Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.' ¹⁰ And the Lord said, 'You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹ And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?'"

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What did God do when the people of Nineveh repented?
2. How did Jonah respond when God showed mercy?
3. How did God respond to Jonah's complaints?
4. How does the book of Jonah end? Is the ending satisfying?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

5. What does it mean when we read that "God relented"?
6. Why was Jonah upset and depressed?
7. What does the plant and the worm teach us?

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

8. Why would God choose to use a complaining sour prophet like Jonah? Why has God chosen to use you?
9. Have you ever been upset or jealous at God's patience or forgiveness offered to someone "undeserving?" Read about the thief on the cross (Luke 23). Also Matthew 20.
10. Have you ever had more compassion for a plant, or someone you didn't know, than for someone you do know?

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 help you do what you know He wants you to do. Ask Him for greater compassion for others. Ask him to remind you how much grace and kindness He has offered you when you are tempted to complain about His kindness to others. He will help you (us) because He loves you (us).