

JONAH

Grace for “Those People”

Jonah’s been saved from drowning, the sailors came to know God, the Ninevites repented and were saved as well, so all’s well that ends well, right? Well, not according to Jonah. This week, we’re taking a closer look at the end of this story of God’s grace for “those people” and why Jonah was so angry after all these miraculous displays of God’s goodness, justice and mercy.

Day 1: Read Jonah 3:10-4:11

In your own words, why is Jonah angry? Have you ever found yourself similarly angry, confused, or frustrated with God? Explain.

Day 2: Read Jonah 2:6-8, 4:1-3

Notice the stark irony in Jonah’s prayers. In chapter 2, we see Jonah grateful for God’s mercy and praising Him as the sole source of salvation (for all people, by the way). In chapter 4, though, we see Jonah angrily resenting God for this exact same righteous love He showed Jonah. Jonah, having fled God’s call, deserved death, but God showed mercy. The pagan sailors and Ninevites too deserved death, worshiping false idols and being far from God, yet God spoke, the people repented and were spared certain death. When have you found your expectations of God’s character to contradict your experience or what scripture affirms? More simply: how do you respond when people don’t get what we think they deserve – good or bad? Explain.

Day 3: Read Jonah 4:5-8

Jonah was grateful to be rescued by God with a fish, yet when he doesn’t see the judgment he thinks the Ninevites deserved, his attitude is resentful. Think of times in your life when you didn’t get what you thought you wanted or God seemed to not act in a way you expected, demanded or desired. How did your attitude change toward God? Did your attitude change later? What happened?



Day 4: Read Jonah 4:6-10

After every incredible thing to have transpired in Jonah's recent memory, he is so preoccupied with a plant providing him shade, when it withers away, Jonah is ready to die. In fact, he tells the Creator who breathed life in his body, he'd rather die than continue living. Have you ever caught yourself being fixated on something small and insignificant to the point that it gets in the way of recognizing God's character and the great things He is doing? Have you ever let it affect you to such an extreme like Jonah?

Day 5: Read Jonah 4:9-11

While being fixated on a plant and resenting life, Jonah is rightfully called out for his foolishness. In your own words, explain God's response to Jonah's bitterness. What does it mean? What insight does it offer you into God's big-picture perspective? How does this line up with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus later in scripture?

Day 6: Read Jonah 4:10-11

God saw the people of Nineveh as lost children, unable to determine right from left. Jonah saw them as godless targets for God's wrath. It's time to ask the hard question. Who are you writing off as "those people?" If no one comes to mind immediately, who do you behave differently around for fear of offending, making uncomfortable or being persecuted by because of your outward lifestyle of Christ? Now try to adapt to God's big-picture perspective like we see in verses 10-11.

Day 7: Read Revelation 5:8-14

Take some time to worship God and reflect on everything we've learned about Him in Jonah. Specifically, thank Him for sending Jesus to ransom us – all of us – from the disaster we deserve. Reflect on this passage; close your eyes and quietly try to imagine the scene John is describing. Think about all the people from all tribes, tongues and nations who shout praises to God with loud voices. What would that look like? Who is still missing? What would it sound like? Now, adopt their praises into your heart. Let it saturate your lifestyle, no matter how routine or extraordinary the situation. Jesus be glorified!