

FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Jonah Gets Angry at God

THE BIG YEAR SEASON 2 WEEK 8

1

WHAT YOU NEED

- Paper
- Pens/pencils/crayons

LET'S READ THE BIBLE

Take turns reading the following passages:

- Jonah 3:1-6
- Jonah 3:10-Jonah 4:5
- Jonah 4:6-11

2

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Nineveh was a wicked city. God saw everything that the Ninevites had done. He saw the times they were cruel to His own children, the Israelites. Because He is holy, God can not allow sin. God is also loving, patient and kind. Sin must be punished. God is merciful and wants sinners to turn from their sin and turn to Him. He gives them opportunities to turn away from their wrongdoing and back to Him.

God sent Jonah to Nineveh. But Jonah didn't want to go and tried to run away from God. This didn't work and it ended with Jonah being swallowed by a great fish. Inside the fish's belly, Jonah prayed and called out to God and God responded by commanding the fish to spit Jonah out. When Jonah was back on dry land, he obeyed God and went to Nineveh.

If anyone had received undeserved kindness, it was Jonah. Jonah deliberately disobeyed God and went in the opposite direction he was supposed to go. God could have allowed Jonah to go to Tarshish and live the rest of his life there. That would not have been a good thing for Jonah, because no one who is a child of God can live in rebellion against God and have peace and joy in his heart. Jonah would have been miserable all the days he lived his life away from God.

God could have allowed Jonah to drown when the sailors threw him overboard. But God showed Jonah mercy. Jonah did nothing to deserve God's kindness. Jonah was loved by God and God was patient and kind with him. When Jonah cried out to God, God continued to show mercy by allowing him to have a second chance to serve as His prophet.

Now, again God sent Jonah to Nineveh with a message that He was going to punish them because of their wickedness. When the Ninevites heard God's message, they believed God and turned from their wickedness. God showed them mercy and did not destroy them as He said He would. Jonah was not happy. He really did not like the Ninevites because they did wicked and horrible things to Jonah's people, the Israelites.

Jonah had been forgiven and given a second chance but then he is furious when God forgives the Ninevites and turns away from punishing them. Jonah did not fully understand God's mercy and kindness to him. He was selfish and did not want the same for his enemies.

And now we get to what we read today. Jonah went up onto a hill that looked over Nineveh. He made himself a shelter. He hoped that he would get to have a front row seat to watch the Ninevites destroyed by God. As he sat in his shelter, the heat from the sun made him very uncomfortable, but he was not going to miss out on this event of watching his enemies be destroyed from the earth.

3

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

God loves Jonah. He sees the selfish man with unforgiveness and no mercy in his heart towards the Ninevites. He shows love and compassion for Jonah as he creates a vine that grows large leaves to shade Jonah from the hot sun. Does Jonah deserve God's loving kindness? God then sent a worm to eat through the vine causing this plant that made Jonah very happy to die. After the vine dies, God sent a scorching east wind to cause the sun to be so hot on Jonah's head that he feels like he is going to pass out. He began to whine and say, "It would be better for me to die than have to live."

God asks Jonah if he has any right to be angry about a vine and he believes he has every right to be angry over the loss of a plant that does not have a soul and will not spend eternity separated from God. Jonah is blinded by his unforgiving heart. His behaviour seems silly as we read about it but we are all capable of behaving this way if we choose to not forgive and show mercy to others like God has done for us.

God explains to Jonah that he was concerned over a plant that he had not to do with its existence. God created men and woman as His most special creation. Sin came into the world and caused all of us to be separated from God. God wants all people to be rescued from the destruction that sin brings into a person's life. He saw the Ninevites and had compassion on them and showed them mercy when they repented.

And just like the Ninevites, we also deserve punishment, but God wants to rescue us. God sent His Son, Jesus, who lived a perfect life and was innocent, yet He took our punishment and died in our place. God has forgiven us and shown us mercy that we didn't deserve, and He asks us to do the same for others. He asks us to freely forgive those who wrong us, even when they don't deserve it.

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

- Why was Jonah angry?
- What did Jonah do after giving God's message to the Ninevites? *(He climbed onto a hill and built himself a shelter so he could have a front row seat when God destroyed the Ninevites)*
- How did God show Jonah kindness when he sat in anger in the hot sun?
- What happened to the vine?
- Who was Jonah more concerned about? *(The vine and himself instead of the Ninevites)*
- Who is God concerned about?

LET'S GO A BIT DEEPER

- Have you ever felt like Jonah? Has someone hurt you so many times that you want them to suffer?
- How has today's story changed how you feel?
- What did God do for us? *(He forgave us and showed us mercy when we didn't deserve it)*
- What does God ask us to do for others? *(Forgive them, even when they don't deserve it)*
- Is it easy to forgive others who have hurt us? Do you think it was easy for Jesus to take our punishment and die in our place on the cross?
- Do you sometimes feel like you want to forgive someone, but you don't know how to do that or how to start?

5

LET'S GO A BIT DEEPER

Parents, here are some helpful tips to help your child start on the journey of forgiveness:

1. Sometimes it's easy to forgive someone but other times it takes time/it's a process.
2. Forgiveness starts with making a decision in your mind to forgive a person and then giving your heart time to feel the same.
3. After you decide to forgive someone, you choose to let go of all of the hurt, anger and wanting to get revenge.
4. Forgiving someone and letting go helps your heart to heal.

6

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

Pray together:

- Thank Jesus for taking your punishment and dying in your place.
- Thank God for forgiving us and showing us mercy, even when we don't deserve it.
- Pray that God would help you to forgive the person who has hurt you.

7

LET'S HAVE SOME FUN

- Give a small piece of paper to each family member.
- Ask each person to think if there is anyone in their lives that they feel they need to forgive for something they did to them.
- Write that person's name on your piece of paper (no one else is going to look at your piece of paper).
- After what we've learned today, are you willing to forgive that person and to let it go? If you are, write over that person's name "I FORGIVE YOU BECAUSE JESUS FORGIVES ME").
- As a sign that you are letting it go, you can crumple up the piece of paper and throw it in the bin.

Parents, if you want to go a step further, you can make a fire and allow each family member to throw their piece of paper into the fire - please do this safely).