

# STUDY NOTES

## JONAH

a series at New City Church

[www.newcityphx.com/sermons](http://www.newcityphx.com/sermons)

The following content is based on the message “God Overflows With Mercy” on 11/25/18 at New City Church in Phoenix, AZ. The following is not meant to be a full synopsis but rather a brief look at the main ideas. To use this Study Guide effectively you must listen to the message found at <http://newcityphx.com/sermons/>.

Leaders using these study notes for group study and reflection should read the Biblical text thoroughly before beginning, using this resource as assistance and not relying solely on this material for insight. We encourage all leaders to pray and ask the Spirit for revelation as they lead their respective community groups.

## PRAYER

Pray and ask God to lead the discussion as everyone gets to share.

SCRIPTURE: JONAH 3 and 4 (READ THROUGHOUT)

## A SECOND TIME

The last time God asked Jonah to go preach to the Ninevites, Jonah ran away because He viewed himself as ethnically elite. Jonah was racist against Ninevah. God didn't overlook Jonah's sin, but he showed Jonah mercy, even in the middle of Jonah's sin. It shouldn't surprise us that Jonah 3 starts out with “the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time”.

**No matter how far you run from God, when you turn around, he is there overflowing with mercy for you.**

- *What is your experience with God giving second chances?*

## BOTH JUSTICE AND MERCY

**Read Jonah 3:1-9.** This time Jonah listened to God. He went to Ninevah and announced God's impending judgment. Sadly, he didn't preach the full message of God. Jonah only focused on God's justice—his inability to overlook sin. However, despite Jonah's mercy-less message, God was merciful to Ninevah. The whole city believed God and completely turned from their evil ways.

**Jonah's version of God's message lacked mercy, but God's impending judgment was actually merciful.**

- *Jonah focused on one aspect of God's character. What has been your experience with focusing on one aspect of God's character?*
- *What are some ways that focusing on one aspect of God's character has been good for you? How has it been dangerous?*

God is both fully just and fully loving. God's justice means that he is grieved by wrong-doing. He is grieved by sin. Sin is anything that is against the created order. God, as the creator of all things, as the designer of you and of me, God is grieved when his image-bearers step outside this created order. This is where God's love comes in. As God's image bearers, God cares for us. He truly wants what is best for you, and what's best for you is to be like God. What's best for you is God's holiness. God's just-ness and God's kind-ness go hand in hand.

**It would be extremely unloving for God to just overlook behavior that isn't what's best for you.**

- *Why is it important to see that God has your best interest in mind when we talk about God being just?*

## “DO YOU DO WELL TO BE ANGRY?”

**Read Jonah 3:10-4:11.** Ninevah repented and turned to God despite Jonah's mercy-less version of God's message. When Jonah saw that God relented of the coming judgement, he became exceedingly angry. Jonah even built a booth to watch the destruction of Ninevah. Despite the mercy that God gave to him, Jonah didn't want God to be merciful toward his enemies. We are just like Jonah. While you probably don't have anyone that you would classify as your enemy, you do treat people like an enemy.

**Your enemy is anyone whom you tear down in your heart.**

- *How is tearing someone down in your heart treating that person like an enemy?*
- *If God shows mercy to someone (which he does), but you withhold mercy from that person, how are you treating your mercy as more valuable than God's mercy?*
- *How would you rephrase for yourself the question that God asks Jonah at the end of the book?*
- *How does the ending of Jonah leave you as the reader to answer the question that God asks Jonah at the end of the book?*
- *Pray with each other that we'd all remember the mercy that God has given to us.*