

Jonah 2

Community Group Discussion Questions

Opening Question: *What is one promise you wish you would've kept?*

Tell them: This week we looked at Jonah 2. Pastor Andy said that this chapter takes the idea of God's grace further than chapter 1. He noted that when Jonah prays in chapter 2, he is still inside the fish and praying in the past tense. Did you notice that? That's because God rescued him from drowning thru the fish.

Pastor Andy said that all of these circumstances in Jonah are acts of God's grace.

- The storm redirected Jonah. God doesn't just let him walk away from Him and abandon Him, but He keeps Jonah.
- The near drowning is also God's grace because Jonah needed to be humbled. Did you notice that Jonah is the only one in chapter 1 who believes in the true God, but he also is the only one who never calls out to his God. The storm wasn't enough to get him to call out to his God. So, the drowning is what humbles him. He isn't humble enough to call out to God until he's at the bottom of the ocean and down to his last breath.

Ask them: *Has God every brought you to humbling and harrowing experiences in order to offer you His grace? What do you think of this idea?*

Ask them: *Is there pain in your life that God might be using to draw you to him?*

Observations on Grace

1. **God graciously rescues you when you cry out to Him.** **Ask them:** *Do you believe that God helps those who help themselves or who can't help themselves?* **Tell them:** Pastor Andy said that God is gracious to respond to our cries even when we have nothing to offer in return. It's not when we've earned it or deserve it that He rescues us. He rescues us when we need it and ask for it. **Ask them:** *How does that change your way of thinking about your own weakness or bankruptcy?*
Ask them: *What are some things that might keep us from crying out to God in the circumstances in which we live? (other comforts, distractions, pride, guilt, etc.)*

Tell them: Pastor Andy asked the question: "Why doesn't Jonah cry out after the first few experiences?" ie. Storm, drowning. And also, why don't you? His answers were this:

1. **You think you are too bad.** **Ask them:** *Can you relate to this fear of being too bad to cry out to God? (Nothing is beyond redemption because it's not about you, but about who He is.)*

2. **You are too proud.** **Ask them:** *How hard is it for you to admit things are as bad off as they really are?*

Tell them: Jonah was angry with what God was asking him to do, so he ran the other way. God wanted him to love the unlovable.

Ask them: *Have you ever been too angry to do something that God wants you to do?*

Ask them: *Are the people in your life that make you so angry that you won't soften your heart to them?*

2. **God graciously rescues you even when you are guilty. Tell them:** Sin doesn't disqualify you from grace, it's the requirement for grace. **Ask them:** *How do you feel about that idea?* (God knows we are guilty, that's why he sent Jesus.)
Tell them: Pastor Andy gave us 3 things to remember when we feel too guilty to receive God's forgiveness and grace:
- God does not abandon you when you abandon Him. Ask them:** *Have you ever abandoned God?*
 - God answers the pray of those who run.** You can't outrun the grace of God. You can choose to not acknowledge Him, but if you ever do He is always there. **Ask them:** *What do you think about this idea?*
 - God rescues you from self-inflicted wounds. Ask them:** *How do you feel about receiving God's grace from self-inflicted wounds?* **Tell them:** Pastor Andy said this: God's priority is not to pay you back for what you've done, it is to get you back from what you've done.
3. **God's grace is often unconventional and unexpected. Ask them:** *What do you think of this idea? Have you seen God's grace come in an unexpected way?*
4. **God's grace is not always comfortable. Tell them:** Pastor Andy said: "Sometimes it's the discomfort that's needed to bring us to where we need to go. God uses our discomfort to work in and on us. God's grace is not getting what's easy all the time, but what you need the most. God does bring storms for a very important purpose. **Ask them:** *So, what does this tell you about the storms in your life? How might you react to them differently and more faithfully in the future?*
5. **God gives you grace, but He also works over time. Tell them:** Pastor Andy said that grace is ongoing, there is always more for Him to teach you. You can't approach Him like it's a one-time event. Don't judge your repeated failure as something odd, it's normal. There is always more grace that will be needed. **Ask them:** *Could there be things in your heart God is still working on through painful circumstances?*
Ask them: *How does this understanding of pain affect your response to the trials in your life?*
6. **God gives you grace to change your heart.** God is looking for internal change. **Ask them:** *What do you think about the idea of obeying God just because you have to, while having a heart that hates that obedience? Can you relate?*
Pastor Andy said: "If your heart hasn't changed over time then you have to ask if you've actually encountered God's grace." **Ask them:** *What do you think about this idea?* (God works on your heart over time. So, the answer is that you have to realize that you aren't perfect. That's the gospel.)
Ask them: *Which is most often your reaction when you notice something wrong in your life: I've got to work on this OR I will rely on Jesus for this?*
7. **God gives you grace for God's Glory: Tell them:** Pastor Andy said that, in the end of this chapter, Jonah finally gives God the glory for saving Him. You need grace because you exist to give glory to God. The way you give Him glory is by receiving grace from Him.
Application: Don't hide your mess. Don't hide your neediness, weakness, failure, sin. Don't pretend you have it all together. There is no glory for God in you being fine on your own. And there is no truth in it either. Let your weakness be a canvas for God's grace. So, don't hide how much you need God's grace. Let it be seen.

Ask them: *How do you feel about this idea?*

8. God gives grace to rescue you from God's judgement. Tell them: Pastor Andy said: "The storm, the water, etc. is God's judgment, and the fish is God's grace. When there is judgement it's God's judgement and when there is grace, it's God's grace. God provides grace to rescue us from His righteous judgement. The grace of God swallowed up God's judgement and turned it into grace."

Ask them: *What do you think about that idea?*

Tell them: Pastor Andy said: God showed judgement and grace on the cross like this:

- Jesus death took the judgement of God and swallowed it up in grace for us not to have to suffer the storm of God's wrath.
- God abandoned Jesus to death, that's why He will never abandon you.
- He crushed Jesus, that's why He will heal your self-inflicted wound.
- Unlike Jonah, Jesus did not run away. Because He did not run away, God comes running after you even when you run away from Him.
- God pours his grace out on you because God poured His judgment out on Jesus."

Tell them: Before the foundation of the world, God was preparing to send His Son to save us. Jonah is evidence of that preparing for the coming of Christ. We all need to keep an eye on that as we read the Old Testament. It is the preparation for the coming of Christ. **3 days in the belly of the fish?** Pastor Andy said: "The grace God gave Jonah was so much bigger than Jonah that Jonah didn't get to even see it. God was preparing us for the death and resurrection of Christ. Consider that the grace God gives you might be something you will never see the end of, but those that come after you may see it."

Tweetable Quotes to Remember

1. God rescues you from self-inflicted wounds.
2. God answers the pray of those who run.
3. God's priority is not to pay you back for what you've done, it is to get you back from what you've done.
4. God's grace is not getting what's easy all the time, but what you need the most.
5. Let your weakness be a canvas for God's grace.
6. The grace of God swallowed up the judgement of God.