

## Main Point: Witness

God saves us to be a part of His salvation plan.

Supplemental Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

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## Study Introduction

The Gospel is how Christ has saved us from our sin. Coming to be obedient to all that the Father has commanded, dying in our place, and then being raised from the dead to new life. However, the Gospel is something that God had in mind from the very beginning. Scholars call Genesis 3:15 the “protoevangelium,” that is greek for the first Gospel. It is where God made clear his intent to redeem sinful humans for his glory and their good. Aspects of this story can be seen through all of the Old Testament. Over the next six studies we will look deeper into Jonah, while at the same time looking at other stories from Scripture either comparing to our contrasting with Jonah and his tale of disobedience to and exasperation with God, and how we see ourselves in that same position with the Lord of all.

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## Study Questions

Pre-study:

1. Share a time when you were given a second chance at something. Why did you take the second chance?
2. When you think of a missionary or witness, what type of person comes to mind? Why? We will be looking at Jonah’s journey to Nineveh where he preached God’s Word and Nineveh responded. In Jonah we will see what is and what is not the responsibility of a witness.

Read: Jonah 3:1-10

3. How did the people respond to Jonah’s message?
4. What was the source of power in Jonah’s message?
5. When you think about sharing your faith with others, does it make you nervous? Why or why not?
6. How does knowing salvation belongs to the Lord influence how you view sharing Christ with others?
7. If God answered right now, in one fell swoop, every prayer you prayed last week, would anybody new be in the kingdom? Discuss.

Becoming an effective witness requires that you know two things: 1) Salvation belongs to the Lord (Jonah 2:9). We’re not dealing with skeptics who need to be persuaded; we are dealing with dead people who need to be raised to life. 2) Faith comes only by hearing (Romans 10:17). The Word cannot do its work where people haven’t heard it. Knowing this should lead us to two things: Get people in the presence of the Word of God, and pray like crazy.

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## Parallels in 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

The apostle Paul held tight to a perspective on the death and resurrection of Christ that compelled him to live a singularly motivated life seeking the glory of God. Second Corinthians 5:11-21 ties the awe Paul felt over the grace of God to his unparalleled zeal for preaching the

gospel to those who hadn't heard it yet. Paul said he was compelled by the love of Christ in such a way that he couldn't live for himself any longer but for Christ, the One who died and then was raised. Like Jonah, Paul was simply the mouthpiece of God's working in the world. It is our job to preach, and God's job to appeal through us.

Read: 2 Corinthians 5:11-21

What Jonah and Paul both teach us is that there is power in the Word of God when preached. The power was not in either of these men, but in the living and active Word of God. God chose people to be His "Plan A" to tell other people His Word. When we engage in preaching God's message, God Himself is empowering our words in the ears of the hearer. Jonah, Paul, and all Christians are thus ministers of reconciliation. We do not have the power to reconcile, but the love of Christ compels us to make visible the reconciliation God offers.

8. If you are a Christian, what do you recall about the moment you decided to follow Christ? What do you recall about the message?
9. Most of us as believers seem more like Jonah than Paul. We know we are supposed to share Christ, but we don't do it. Why not?

At this point, divide into smaller groupings of two or three. In these groups, practice sharing the gospel message with one another. Do not worry if it seems awkward at first. Beyond the awkwardness is the joy of hearing and speaking the gospel to one another.

10. In the exercise, what did you find easiest about sharing the gospel? What was most difficult?

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## Application

1. Who are the people in your circle of influence who may never have clearly heard this message of salvation?
2. What is a feasible next step you can take to share the message of salvation with them?
3. What is one achievable action step you can take this week in response to what we've discussed in this group?

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## Prayer

- Allow participants to share names of lost friends or family members that the group can pray for together.
- Spend time praying specifically for those people.
- Close by asking God to give each person an urgency for the lost and a passion for the gospel.