

Main Point: Obedience

We should rearrange our priorities in light of the urgency of God's great mission.

Supplemental Scripture: Romans 9:1-5

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.

Study Questions

Pre-study:

1. Can you think of a time when keeping the big picture in mind was important?
2. This is our last session in this study. What idea, realization, or anecdote is sticking with you to give you a new understanding of the gospel?

We will be looking at Jonah 4:5-11, the end of Jonah's story. Notice Jonah's reaction to God's work in Nineveh and consider what it reveals about him . . . and about you.

Read: Jonah 4:5-11

3. What resonated with you from the chapter?
4. What out of this session, or this whole study, has stuck with you most?
5. What did you find most transformational?
6. Spend a few minutes reflecting on these questions: What in your life do you care most about? What do you shed tears about?
7. How is Christ's great love for us, as seen in studying Jonah and these other places of Scripture, changing your response to Him?

The Book of Jonah leaves us with a question: What do we care most about? Why do we have so much passion for things that really don't matter and so little passion for the things that actually do? The repetition of "great" is there to demonstrate the greatness of God's mission to save humanity. You can either be part of the radical, self-sacrificial mission of Jesus, or you can walk in disobedience like Jonah.

Parallels in Romans 9:1-5

Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul penned some of the richest, most theologically deep thoughts ever recorded. In Romans 9:1-5, we get a clear reminder that the things of God were not just mentally stimulating for Paul; he carried the gospel as his most important possession. He didn't just write about God, he treasured God. His words in Romans give stark contrast to the

final words of Jonah in Jonah 4. Jonah lost sight of the grace shown to him. This brought about bitterness and selfishness instead of loving selflessness in his reactions to what God was doing. Much like we have done in earlier sessions in this study, setting Jonah up against another key biblical figure (in this case Paul) provides a way to examine Jonah's heart and our own. One question to bear in mind during this session is: What should my life look like if it were marked by the same conviction in the gospel and compassion for my neighbors as Paul had?

Read: Jonah 4:5-11 and Romans 9:1-5 - Paul begins this section by saying, "I am not lying" which he only does two other times in the New Testament.

8. What does this tell us about what he is about to say?
9. Read Romans 9:2-5 (see also 10:1). What do we know about Paul's "brothers" from his words here?
10. Contrast Paul and Jonah. What were their reactions to the state of those around them, and how were those reactions influenced by their knowledge of God??
Jonah wanted Nineveh to suffer while Paul wanted Israel to be redeemed.
11. Why was Paul in such anguish? To put it another way, what did Paul get that Jonah missed?
12. Why do you think we so often find ourselves reacting to God like Jonah in Jonah 4 instead of Paul in Romans 9 when it comes to the gospel? How do we grow beyond this?
13. How should the story of Jonah, and the fact that Paul is talking about Israelites, serve as a warning to those in the church today?

Application

1. Have you received the gift of grace for yourself personally?
2. Has that experience of grace so transformed your heart that you have become a person of compassion and generosity?
3. Have you rearranged your life priorities in light of the urgency of that great mission?
4. What do you sense God calling you to in light of hearing and studying the gospel message through the Book of Jonah?

Prayer

- Thank God for the power of the gospel.
- Pray for the people in your group to embrace God's grace in a way that radically changes their lives and priorities.
- Pray for boldness to live out the truths you all have learned over these weeks.