

Home Church Questions

What's new?

1. Do you like grocery shopping?
2. What stood out to you from the message on Sunday?
3. Has anything you've experienced in the last month or so been relevant to the message on Sunday?

What do you think?

1. Read Jonah Chapter 3, what stands out to you?
2. How do the Ninevites show the concept of shüv in their response to Jonah's message? Use examples.
3. How can avoidance of shüv cause trouble for us in life? How did it for Jonah?
4. How does God's judgement provide an opportunity for positive change? How has it in your life?
5. God's grace has the ability to surprise us if we let it. How do the Ninevites allow God's grace to surprise them? How can we do the same in our daily lives?
6. "To live by grace means to acknowledge my whole life story, the light side and the dark. In admitting my shadow side I learn who I am and what God's grace means." What do you think of this quote from Brennan Manning?

Pray

1. Make space for God's grace to surprise you as you pray for each other in the group.

Jonah

Week #2: Surprised by Grace
Faith Community Church // January 20, 2019

Welcome Back

Welcome back to our series on Jonah. The book of Jonah is typically a story that we hear as kids and then don't really reflect on as adults.

In reality, Jonah is less like a children's story and more like late-night television as it's filled with scandal, humour, judgment, and irony. It is a true ancient satire, which exposes the human condition and confronts the sacred cows of our life.

Today we are looking at the idea of shuv and how it acts as a cure for avoidance, and allows an opportunity for God's grace to surprise us.

שוב

שוב (shüv) is the Hebrew for going one direction and then changing and going another direction. Jonah chapter 3 is all about **שוב!**

שוב is also a metaphor used to describe our life with God. When we consciously choose to turn the direction of our heart towards God and other, we are embodying shüv.

The author of Jonah is comparing the Ninevites and Jonah's understanding and application of shüv.

The Ninevites and Jonah's Understanding of שׁוּב.

1. Jonah Avoids and the Ninevites Engage

The whole story of Jonah has been one where he's been in a avoidance of this direction change. It has cost him and others greatly.

When we are avoiding something, it can be because it's a threat to our ego.

Unlike Jonah, who avoided his reality, the Ninevites engaged with their reality. We can all learn a lesson from the Ninevites.

2. The Ninevites See God's Judgement as an Opportunity for Change. Jonah Does Not.

God rendered a judgement to confront both Jonah and the Ninevites. For Jonah, he resists this judgement and it leads to all sorts of chaos, while the Ninevites embrace this judgement, and change.

It fascinates me that God is able to transform an entire culture, and yet one hypocritical prophet who had gone through a violent storm and spent 3 days in the belly of a fish is still defensive, apathetic and ticked with God's way of life.

3. The Ninevites Make Space for God's Grace to Surprise them. Jonah Does Not.

For Jonah, his life is still all out-of-whack, and although he gives the appearance of shüv be heading to Ninevah, he still isn't changing the direction of his heart.

The Ninevites hold on to the hope that if they make space with their lives, God's grace may surprise them.

"To live by grace means to acknowledge my whole life story, the light side and the dark. In admitting my shadow side I learn who I am and what God's grace means." - Brennan Manning

הָפַךְ (hâphak)

1. hâphak = "turned over"
Hosea 7:8 "Israel is like a baked bread that has not **hâphak**"
2. hâphak = "destroyed"
Lamentations 4:6 "The sin of my people is greater than that of Sodom, which was **hâphak** in a moment without a hand to help."
3. hâphak = "changed/transformed"
Psalm 30:11 "God, you have **hâphak** my grief and mourning into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy."