



**LC STUDY GUIDE: DONE IN SYNC WITH
THE SERMON SERIES "JONAH: CALLED TO GO"**

The Passage – Jonah 3

For LCs meeting 2.23.14 – 3.9.14

These LC studies complement the sermons, often using the same biblical texts, and will help your LC go deeper in personal understanding and application. These italicized portions are meant to resource and help you in leading and are not to be distributed to the entire group (it limits conversation). Not all of these questions need to be used in your LC meeting. Best to consider this a head-start to customize for your LC.

Big Idea: God wants our partnership in reaching the world with the hope of the Gospel because He cares deeply for the lost in these great cities.

Jonah 3 (NIV © 2011)

¹ Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: ² "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."

³ Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. ⁴ Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." ⁵ The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

⁶ When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. ⁷ This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:

"By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. ⁸ But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. ⁹ Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."

¹⁰ When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

Discussion Questions:

We see in verses 1-4 that the LORD gives Jonah another chance to be obedient and to be used by Him. What does this say about who God is? About His character?
(he is patient, forgiving, full of grace, gives second chances)

What is Jonah's response this time around? How does it compare to his previous responses?
(he goes to Ninevah and obeys the LORD by preaching to the people there)

Has there been a time in your life when it seemed that God was giving you a second chance to obey Him and/or to be a part of His work? How did you feel? What was the outcome?

From the example of Jonah's eventual obedience, what can we learn about what is required for obedience?
(listening to what God says and doing what He asks of us is required for obedience—not necessarily liking it or being happy about it)

What can we learn about what is required for repentance?
(repentance is changing our way or our mind and getting back to our duty)

When have you experienced personal repentance? What that was like for you?

Ninevah was a violent city, known for its brutality, which Jonah was certainly aware of. We can imagine that he was reluctant to go. Can you think of a time in your life when it seemed that God was calling you to talk to someone you would rather avoid or go to a place that you would rather steer clear from? What was that like for you? What did your family or friends think? What are some possible reasons for avoiding a person or group?
(indifference, apathy, fear, hatred)

Might God be stirring your heart to pray for and have compassion on a person or group of people that up until now you have avoided, disliked, or even hated? God calls His people to love everyone—no matter what group they belong to. Jesus even commands us to love our enemies. What are your thoughts about that?

In the face of imminent judgment, the Ninevites realize their sin and their desperate need for God's grace and mercy. How did they show their repentance?
(People from the greatest to the least began fasting. The King covered himself with sackcloth, sat in ashes, and declared a fast for the people and animals.)

If you were told you had forty days to live, what things would you want to take care of before your death?

What does God's response to the Ninevites say about who He is? About His character?
(He is merciful, abounding in grace, and full of love even for people that may be undeserving of love)

Jonah and the Ninevites have some things in common. What are some of those commonalities?
(both are in need of God's grace and mercy, both are undeserving of God's love) What about us?

- a. **Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting.** Take some time and select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your LIFE Community group. Certain questions work better for certain groups. You are encouraged to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best.
- b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?).
- c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- d. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- e. Application: Pace the study to conclude with “difference making” application.
- f. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching,” rather than facilitating. It can cause people to feel distracted or de-powered.