

Grace Downtown CG Discussion Guide

October 21-24, 2019

Series: Mission of the Family of God

Jonah 3:1-10



Announcements:

Creating a Better Future: Q Commons 2019. A uniquely local and global event that will empower us to advance good in our neighborhoods and towns! **Friday, October 24, 2019 at 7:00 PM.** 700 Pennsylvania Ave SE, Floor 7 Washington, DC 20003 No matter where you are in the country, you'll get to hear exclusive simulcast talks on Creating a Better Future from journalist Malcolm Gladwell, pastor Francis Chan and author Rebekah Lyons. Sign up on our website.

Generous Justice Book Discussion: Join the Diaconate for a church-wide book discussion of *Generous Justice* by Timothy Keller. After sign-up, you will be assigned to a small group discussion, and we will do our best to accommodate location preferences. **Friday, October 25 at 7 pm or Sunday, October 27 at 11 am.** Questions? Contact Meg Montee (megmontee@gmail.com). Sign up on our website.

Intro to Grace Downtown: Interested in learning about Grace Downtown's vision and history as well as our community? Join us for this seminar on which serves as the first step toward membership, but does not obligate you to become a member. It will take place on **Saturday, November 2, 2019, from 9 am to 3 pm.** Lunch is provided. Registration required. See website. Contact Bryan at bryan@gracedc.net with any questions.

Fall Retreat Registration: Whether you're new to Grace Downtown or a long time member, join us for the Fall Retreat! The Fall Retreat is one of the best ways to forge deeper friendships at Grace Downtown. Email downtownretreat@gracedc.net with questions. This year's speaker is Stuart McAlpine, Pastor of Christ our Shepherd Church. **November 8-10, 2019** Visit downtown.gracedc.net for registration, including scholarship and carpool information.

Introduction:

Finally, true repentance comes not merely by understanding the relational aspect of sin, but by understanding the nature of the One with whom we are in relationship. In other words, the more we see God as glorious and holy, the more we will see sin as something to weep over. Repentance is less about feeling bad over behavior, and more about feeling awe and delight towards God. The more glimpses we have of the glory of God, the more we mourn for scorning that glory.

Matt Erbaugh via desiringgod.org

Confession of sins is both commanded and frequently illustrated in the Bible (e.g., in the penitential prayers, as (Psalms 25 and 51). When one is guilty of various sins, "he must confess

in what way he has sinned" in order to receive atonement and forgiveness (Lev 5:5 ; 26:40-42). Thus, confession belongs to repentance, and is needed for divine forgiveness (cf. 1 John 1:9). A great prophecy/promise is given in the Book of Isaiah: "The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins" (59:20).

To repent and to convert involved obedience to God's revealed will, placing trust in him, turning away from all evil and ungodliness. Each person was to "turn from his wicked evil way" (Jer 26:3 ; 36:3). Amos gave God's lament that despite all he had done for or to the people, "yet you have not returned to me" (4:4, 8-11). Hosea anticipated the day when Israel "will return and seek the Lord their God and David their king" (3:5). Thus he pleaded with them to return to the Lord their God and to say, "Forgive all our sins and receive us graciously" (14:2b).

Included also in the Old Testament is the idea of "regretting" something. The Septuagint is the translated Greek version of the Hebrew Old Testament. The Greek word metamelomai is used in Exodus 13:17 of the Septuagint to refer to the potential of the Israelites changing their minds. "When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, "Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt " (Exodus 13:17).

The use of the Hebrew word transliterated naham often refers to God "repenting," along with human beings doing the same. The basic sense is "being sorry, or grieved" for something that has been done. Frequently God "relents" or "changes his dealings" with humans. God was "grieved" at human evil in the earth, resulting in the flood (Gen 6:6-7). The Lord "relented" and turned away his threat of disaster (Exod 32:14). He was "grieved" at having made Saul king, and deposed him (1 Samuel 15:11, 1 Samuel 15:26).

These descriptions may be regarded as anthropopathic, in which God exhibited emotional responses known to be present in humans also. Not infrequently, God relented and withheld predicted judgment on Israel. An especially vivid illustration of this reversal is found in Hosea 11:8-9: "How can I give you up, Ephraim? My heart is changed within me I will not carry out my fierce anger." God's true love for Israel would triumph, and he would keep covenant with his people.

Walter M. Dunnett

Read and Discuss:

Jonah 3:1-10

Dear CG Leaders, per your requests, you will find relevant commentary information for many of the questions below.

Source: *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible (Jonah 3)*

1. Share a time when you forgave someone or had to ask for forgiveness from someone.
2. The city of Nineveh is a great city that is a three day journey, yet the passage states in verse 4 that Jonah only went one day. What does that suggest about Jonah's attitude/heart?
 - (Verse 3) "Nineveh was an exceeding great city"--literally, "great to God," that is, before God. All greatness was associated with GOD in the Hebrew mind (compare "great mountains," "mountains of God," Psalms 36:6; "goodly cedars," "cedars of God," Psalms 80:10; "a mighty hunter before the Lord," Genesis 10:9).
3. The people of Nineveh responded immediately to Jonah's message from the Lord. How did the people of Nineveh show more faith than Jonah?
 - (Verse 9) "Who can tell"--(Compare Joel 2:14). Their acting on a vague possibility of God's mercy, without any special ground of encouragement, is the more remarkable instance of faith, as they had to break through long-rooted prejudices in giving up idols to seek Jehovah at all. The only ground which their ready faith rested on, was the fact of God sending one to warn them, instead of destroying them at once; this suggested the thought of a possibility of pardon. Hence they are cited by Christ as about to condemn in the judgment those who, with much greater light and privileges, yet repent not (Matthew 12:41).
4. God gave a command to Jonah that took two chapters for him to obey. Jonah shared a sentence with the Ninevites and they believed God. Why do you think their belief was sudden but Jonah's slow?
5. Why do you think the people of Nineveh responded the way they did?
 - (Verse 5) "Believed God"--gave credit to Jonah's message from God; thus recognizing Jehovah as the true God.
 - (Verses 7 & 8) "Fast . . . sackcloth"--In the East outward actions are often used as symbolic expressions of inward feelings. So fasting and clothing in sackcloth were customary in humiliation. Compare in Ahab's case, parallel to that of Nineveh, both receiving a respite on penitence (1 Kings 21:27, 1 Kings 20:31 1 Kings 20:32 , Joel 1:13).
6. How does the people of Nineveh's repentance align with biblical repentance?
7. What does God's relenting tell you about his character?

- (Verse 10) “God repented of the evil” --When the message was sent to them, they were so ripe for judgment that a purpose of destruction to take effect in forty days was the only word God's righteous abhorrence of sin admitted of as to them. But when they repented, the position in which they stood towards God's righteousness was altered. So God's mode of dealing with them must alter accordingly, if God is not to be inconsistent with his own immutable character of dealing with men according to their works and state of heart, taking vengeance at last on the hardened impenitent, and delighting to show mercy on the penitent.

Prayer:

The Grace Downtown Prayer Team creates opportunities for our community to learn more about prayer together for our church family, our city, and our world. Throughout the coming week, the Prayer Team is asking our church community to...

...for the recent unrest in Hong Kong. Give thanks that the Lord is always in control and that he has power over every authority on earth. Pray that he would protect people in Hong Kong who are being oppressed and utilize the churches and missionaries in Hong Kong to care for them.

...for the mental health of people in our city and country. Confess that we can quickly ignore and forget people whose lives are affected by unseen diseases like depression, anxiety, and other conditions. Pray that our church would care for those with such illnesses and that we would welcome them into our community.

...for people in our city who live in poverty. Confess that we can become so overly focused on our own comfort and wealth that we can forget to care for those less fortunate. Give thanks that God does not forget any of his people. Pray for organizations that provide health and welfare services to people around Washington, DC.