

STUDY GUIDE

Monday, February 27 – Read Jonah 3:1-2. Jonah had failed to listen to God. He had actually tried to run and hide from God. Literally going in the opposite direction from Ninevah. But God gave him a second chance. How many times have you gotten a second chance? Or a third? A fourth? God's love and forgiveness don't run out. There is no limit. Romans 8:38-39 says, "**For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**" Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Tuesday, February 28 – Read Jonah 3:3-4. The message that Jonah preached to the Ninevites was a hard one. Telling someone that they need to stop doing what they're doing and act differently is never easy. Few of us like having difficult conversations. You know the kind, the ones where you have to confront a friend about a drinking problem or a cheating problem or a gambling problem or an anger problem. That's what Jonah did. He told a whole society that they need to stop what they were doing and change. Only these people weren't his friends, they were his enemies. Is there someone in your life you need to have a difficult conversation with? What's holding you back? Have you ever been on the receiving end of a difficult conversation? How did you respond?

Wednesday, March 1 – Today is Ash Wednesday. What does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6.8
You are encouraged on this day to consider a deeper commitment to Christ through as we begin a season called Lent in the church world (a time period leading up to Easter). We invite you to consider how you might mark this time with intentional discipleship. You might want to participate in a fast from particular luxuries, material consumerism or various forms of entertainment, and take each opportunity to refrain as a reminder of Christ's sacrifice and a call to prayer. You might want to add a spiritual discipline such as morning or evening Bible reading, daily prayer for church/community/world, or actions of service and compassion. Whatever you decide to do in these next 46 days, may you experience the presence and power of Christ.

Thursday, March 2 – Read Jonah 3:5-10. Often, we feel bad about things that we do wrong. We're miserable, but we're not broken. We feel bad, but ultimately, we don't really want to change. We don't like how we feel, but we like what we're doing too much to stop. You can be miserable and even have a desire to get well, but still be so self-absorbed and self-reliant that you won't humble yourself to the point of surrender. True brokenness, true repentance always results in surrender to God's leadership and a resolve to walk a new direction with his help. What does it take to move from misery to brokenness so that we can start on the path towards healing? Have you been trying to change on your own, or have you surrendered to God and allow Him to change us?

Friday, March 3 – Read Jonah 4:1-2. Jonah was upset because God’s forgiveness of the Ninevites wasn’t fair. They were a truly awful people who had done terrible things. But God isn’t a fair God. He’s a gracious God. And that’s something we should be grateful for. Because while we all like to think of ourselves as good people, an honest evaluation of our lives would reveal some decidedly not so good things. Who among us hasn’t belittled someone, making them feel small and worthless? Hasn’t failed to stand up for someone who has been picked on? Hasn’t callously walked by someone in need? Hasn’t lied or cheated or stolen? We should thank God that He isn’t fair but that he’s rather a God of grace, who through the work of Jesus on the cross took the punishment for our wrongs. God’s gift of grace to us calls us to extend grace to others. What would it take to shift our mindset such that we stop treating people fairly and started extending them grace?

Saturday, March 4 – Read Jonah 4:3-11. Like Jonah, we often fail to appreciate the many blessings that we have. And should one of those blessings happen to be taken from us—whether by God’s direct action or simply the circumstances of life—we’re likely to fly off the handle. Counting our blessings helps us to keep perspective. Today and (through Easter) set aside five minutes at the end of each day to reflect on three things that you are grateful for, and write them down. The many blessings God has given us quickly become apparent when we begin to look for them.