

SUMMARY

In this last week of Run, Nineveh repented, God relented, and Jonah was furious about it. Jonah finally admits why he ran in the first place: he knew God was merciful and compassionate, slow to anger, filled with loving kindness, and eager to turn back from destroying people. Jonah did not doubt God's grace, he resented it. Grace for him made sense. But Grace for "those people," Jonah's enemies, did not. God's love is a stubborn commitment to love people who some don't think deserve it.

Notice who obeys in the book of Jonah. The storm, the fish, the plant, the worm, the east wind, and even Nineveh all respond to God immediately. Jonah is the only character who keeps resisting, and what he is resisting is God's heart for people he had written off. So God finds something Jonah cares about: you had compassion on a plant you did not grow, should I not have compassion on 120,000 people? John Newton, who was involved in slave trade before God got hold of him, wrote "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me." He did not deserve grace. Neither do we, and neither does anyone else. That is the whole point of grace and the moment we start deciding who deserves it we sound a lot like Jonah.

MAIN TAKEAWAY

You are no more deserving of grace than "them." That is exactly when grace becomes amazing.

ICE BREAKER

When was the last time you got genuinely irritated at a stranger, in traffic, in a line, online, and later realized you had done the same thing yourself?

LOOK BACK

- Who is someone you have quietly decided is beyond grace, and what does that say about how we often understand grace?
- Think of a time you received grace you knew you had not earned. What did that do to you, and did it change how you treated anyone else?

LOOK UP

- Read Jonah 4:1-4. What does this say about who God is, and why does Jonah react the way he does? How is God's response to those we call "enemies" different from our own?
- Read Jonah 4:2 again. God's "abounding-love" stays committed to people even when they have given him every reason not to. Where have you been shown that kind of love by God or others, and who is hardest for you to show it to?
- Read Matthew 5:43-46. Are you okay with God loving your enemy? Why or why not.

LOOK AHEAD

- Who is your Nineveh: a political opponent, someone who has betrayed you, a critic, a competitor, an ex-spouse, a difficult neighbor or coworker? Who came to mind first?
- The Lord's Prayer is full of "us" and "our," not "me" and "my." How does praying "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" change the way you think about the person you just named?
- What do you think would change **in you** if you began to pray for your enemy?

WEEKLY CHALLENGE

Pick the one person you would least want to pray for and pray for them by name every day this week, not that they would change, just that God would be good to them. Notice what it does to you.

CONVERSATION TIPS

- **Make Room.** Resist filling every silence, allow room for those who may need more time to think before answering.
- **Ask, Don't Advise.** When someone shares something hard, ask a follow-up question before offering a fix.
- **End with prayer.** Share requests around the group, then close your time together in prayer.