

LIFE GROUP Q & A



Good News Bad News

NOVEMBER SERIES

WEEK ONE

Grace
Jonah 3:1-4:4

WEEK TWO

Peace
Nahum 1:1-15

WEEK THREE

Restoration
2 Chronicles 36:17-23



Bad News, Good News

It's tempting to want to hear only news that is positive and encouraging. Ancient philosopher Sophocles (440BC) once said, "No man delights in the bearer of bad news." But the good news shines brighter once we know the truth about the darkness of this world. We will study three biblical stories of bad news during this sermon series. However, against the backdrop of depravity shines the beauty of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which can become the headline of all our stories.

GRACE

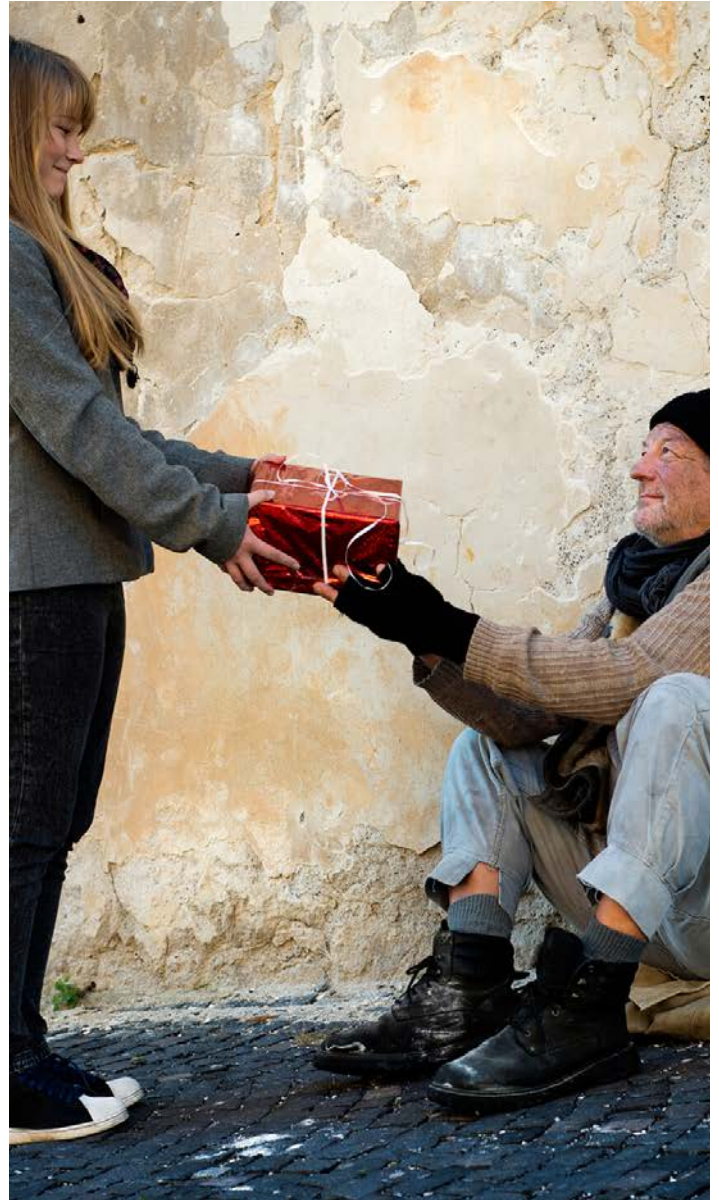
Jonah 3:1-4:4

“Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time.” This statement shows the amazing love of God toward the rebellious prophet. Though Jonah did everything in his power to resist God’s call, God continued to speak to him. Later, God would show this same mercy to the people of Nineveh. It says, “God saw their works...and God relented.” In this passage, we are reminded of David’s declaration in the Psalms that “The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him.”

QUESTIONS

1. James later writes in the New Testament, “mercy triumphs over judgment.” One external evidence of receiving God’s mercy is showing his mercy to others. How might you show his mercy this week?

2. The story of Jonah is another reminder that no one is beyond the mercy of God. Who have you written off as beyond God’s mercy?



PRAYER PROMPT

Heavenly Father, we praise you for extending your mercy when we acknowledge our sins to you. Please show us the areas where we need to receive your mercy and extend mercy to others. Amen.

PEACE

NAHUM 1:1-15

Nahum most likely wrote around 100 years after Jonah came to Nineveh. His message is clear, that the city has fallen back into sin and was again ripe for judgment. Nineveh is a famous ancient city. It was founded by the first dictator, Nimrod (Genesis 10:11). “From Nineveh’s walls, temples, palaces, inscriptions, and reliefs, a mute yet elaborate witness is given to a city that flourished up to its destruction in 612 B.C. Accordingly, the magnificent buildings, artistic designs, and water-supply projects of Nineveh have resulted in its being likened to ancient Versailles.” (Major Cities of the Biblical World). Although this text seems full of bad news, it ends with a promise that Paul [loosely] quotes in Romans 10:15: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news.”

QUESTIONS

1. In the same way God brought judgment upon the iniquity of Nineveh, He will bring judgment on the iniquity of all people. Paul later writes, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these, the wrath of God is coming.” The Bible is clear; God’s wrath is coming. What implication does this bring for us in our daily lives?

2. “Behold, upon the mountains, the feet of him who brings good news, who publishes peace!” What would it look like for you to bring the good news to your family, coworkers, and friends?

PRAYER PROMPT

Heavenly Father, we thank you for bringing the good news of Jesus to us when we least deserved it. Empower us by your Holy Spirit to be bearers of good news to those you’ve placed in our midst. Amen.



Restoration

2 CHRONICLES 36:17-23

The people of Judah rejected the messengers of God's compassion (2 Chronicles 36:15). Therefore, God gave them up to a leader with no compassion. The impression of what occurs next is clear: complete destruction of Jerusalem, its inhabitants, and the temple, as the word 'all' is used four times (v. 17-19). Those fortunate enough to have "escaped the sword" are carried into exile. Then something interesting happens. Seventy years later, the Persian King Cyrus sends the people of Judah back to rebuild their city, and restoration, not desolation, is the final word in 2 Chronicles.



QUESTIONS

1. Has God ever sent you a messenger of compassion that you didn't heed? What was the result?
2. During the 70 years of exile, Daniel writes, "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, to whom belong wisdom and might. He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; he reveals deep and hidden things; he knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with him." How does this declaration of God's sovereignty written by someone in the midst of exile speak to you?

PRAYER PROMPT

Heavenly Father, please reveal to me any ways I may have strayed from you. Help me to turn from my sin and run back to You, knowing that you are faithful and just to forgive me of my sins and cleanse me of all unrighteousness. Amen.



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