

SCRIPTURES FOR 9/10/06 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Jonah 1:1-3

¹ The word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai: ² "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." ³ But Jonah ran away from the LORD and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the LORD.

Jonah 1:11-12

¹¹ The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?" ¹² "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," he replied, "and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you."

Jonah 3:3-5

Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city—a visit required three days. On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

Matthew 22:37-40

Jesus replied: " **LOVE** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: '**LOVE** your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 28:19-20

Therefore **GO** and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

2 Peter 3:18

But **GROW** in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.

NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed

LESSON 2: YOU HAVE A COMMISSION

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

INTRODUCTION:

Last week, Jon shared that we have a gift. This week, Jeff explains that we have a commission.

YOU HAVE A COMMISSION

Jonah was a prophet of God, set apart as an example for future generations to better understand God's calling. Jonah's commission had three distinct elements we can learn from...

THE CALL

Have someone read Jonah 1:1-2.

That's about as clear as can be. You couldn't ask for a clearer call. But what does Jonah do?

Have someone read Jonah 1:3.

Have you ever felt like running away from God? In other words, have you ever known what God wanted from you but ran the other way? If so, what happened?

God sends a fierce storm to foul up Jonah's flight from responsibility.

Have someone read Jonah 1:11-12.

Did his running imply that Jonah did not trust God, love God, or fear God? If not, what does it say about him?

So they chucked Jonah overboard, but even that could not thwart God's call over Jonah's life. Return to this story whenever you feel like God is hounding you. Then pray that there are no great fish in your future!

THE JOB

After three days praying in the belly of the fish, God made the fish vomit Jonah onto dry land. Then He spoke His call to Jonah again. This time Jonah listened.

Have someone read Jonah 3:3-5.

Have you ever wished people would listen to you this well?

THE RUB

As a result of their response, God spared Ninevah, but Jonah 4:1 says, "Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry."

Why was he angry? Would you be?

Jonah had been a prophet all his life and was used to calling it like he saw it. He was angry because he knew if the Ninevites responded, God would show them mercy and that just wasn't fair. They were awful and they deserved God's wrath. But don't we all?

Would you follow a clear call from God, even if it might benefit a serial killer? Osama Bin Laden? Someone who hurt your children?

YOUR COMMISSION

Jeff said he wasn't going to read off a laundry list of volunteer needs to make us feel guilty, BUT he did say he hoped God would lay a burden on our hearts much like He did with Jonah. In light of Jonah's example, I think I would prefer the laundry list.

While we all have unique gifts and talents that are vital to the function of the body, Jeff shared three things we are ALL called to do – LOVE, GO, and GROW.

Have someone read Matthew 22:37-40, Matthew 28:19-20, and 2 Peter 3:18.

CONCLUSION

God uses regular people to do His work -- Moses, Jonah, Peter, you – but we must be patient, be attentive, and be vigilant. If we do God will use us in amazing ways!