

Jonah

(week 5 – chapter 4)

1. Discuss as a group – How does the reality of God’s mercy compare to the world’s view of ‘justice’?

A question to get them thinking, and to begin to realise that God’s perspective of justice and mercy is not always the same as the world’s view.

Read Jonah 3:10-4:11

2. What causes Jonah to be angry in 3:10–4:4?

He is angry that the LORD has shown mercy to the Ninevites and tries to use this as an excuse for his initial disobedience (in chapter 1).

The context for 4:5-11 is set by 3:10-4:4, and in particular verse 4 where we are told that Jonah is angry and where God asks if Jonah’s anger is right.

3. How does God **act** in response to Jonah’s anger?

He provides a vine to shade Jonah, and then subsequently takes it away from him.

4. What does God **say** in response to Jonah’s anger?

He reminds Jonah that he does not have the right to question God’s motives (“what right do you have” – v4,9) God is the one who is in control. He is the creator and he has the right to determine what happens to his creation.

5. What do we learn about God’s character from his response?

We learn that God is sovereign (and rightly so). We also see that yet again he is compassionate and merciful in providing the vine to give shade to Jonah.

6. Summarise the lesson God is teaching Jonah by using the vine.

A chance to pull together the whole point of the story of the vine and the worm. Important for them to understand that God is the one who has sovereign control over all of his creation.

7. In what ways are we sometimes more concerned about petty things than about those things which God sees as important?

Identify some areas of life in which we focus on things that aren't really of eternal concern. How often do we worry more about our iPod than those who don't know Christ?

8. What can we practically be doing to begin seeing things from God's perspective?

Get some 'meaty' application in thinking about how we can re-orient our thinking so that we are more concerned with God's perspective than the things identified above. Get the group to give genuinely practical suggestions in what they can do.

9. Think back over the book of Jonah as a whole. What changes are you going to make to your life in response to what you have learnt?

A chance to think back and recap the broader truths learnt in the book of Jonah.