

“I Knew That You Are a Gracious God”:
Probing the Heart of Prayer in Jonah
Sermon Notes

➤ **God’s compassion for lost people is so breathtaking - it will either melt your heart, or harden it**

**When it comes to outreach, Jonah teaches us that...*

1. A perfectly formed prayer cannot fix a totally deformed heart (2:1-10)

2. An utterly free prayer always reveals the deepest desires of the heart (4:1-11)

→ *If your heart condemns you...praise our sovereign God that he is greater than your heart and that One greater than Jonah has come! (1 John 3:19-20; Matthew 12:40-41)*

Next Sunday: Matthew 6:5-15 - “Our Father in Heaven”:
Jesus’s Pattern for Prayer

Community Group Study Questions

For the Week of June 27th-July 3rd

Getting Started

1. It's evangelism temperature check-in time. Looking back over the last 30 days, how are things going with your 'List of 5'? If you had to give yourself a number from 1 to 10 (1 being ice cold, 10 being blazing hot¹) what number would you say you're at today? Why?

Digging Deeper

2. Looking ahead to the next 30 days, what practical steps will you take toward those on your 'List of 5' so that you raise your temperature at least one degree? Recalling the B.L.E.S.S. Practices, make a few concrete plans right now (perhaps even put them in your calendar if you have it on you - don't worry...we'll wait ;0).

Open Your Bible to Colossians 4:2-4...

3. Why is prayer so mission-critical as it relates to evangelism? What is Paul's specific request in Colossians 4:2-4? How about in Romans 10:1 or Ephesians 6:18-20? How close do prayers like these approximate your own as you pray for those in your life who are far from Christ?
4. What makes praying for the folks on our 'List of 5' such a challenge? There are a number of obstacles (both within us and without). How many can you name?² On the other hand, given what Paul prays for in the Scriptures listed in #3, why is praying in these cases such an encouragement?
5. What sorts of gifts, talents, and abilities do you have that you could use to serve those on your 'List of 5'? At the same time, what sorts of practical needs or limitations do you have that might open the door to ask one of these people to serve you? Why is our 'List of 5' serving us just as important (possibly more so in some cases) as us serving them?
6. Read carefully through 1 Peter 3:13-17. Have you ever had anyone "ask...you for a reason for the hope that is in you" (v.15)? If so, what were the circumstances? Please share with the group. Why do you think this tends to happen so seldom in our lives? Have you ever had the experience of 2 Timothy 3:12? If so, what happened? Should this discourage or encourage us? How does Jesus answer that question in Matthew 5:11-12?

1 Remember the B.L.E.S.S. practices? **B** (Be in Prayer) **L** (Listen) **E** (Eat) **S** (Serve) **S** (Story). If you're having difficulty giving your outreach efforts an objective number, imagine that each letter is 'worth' 2 points. So, if you did nothing but pray for your 'List of 5' on a regular basis (which is huge by the way!) then you're at 2. If you engaged in more of the B.L.E.S.S. practices over the last month, your number goes even higher. Try it!

2 If you get stuck, here are some to take into consideration: 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; Ephesians 2:1-3; 6:12; 1 John 5:19.

7. When was the last time you had the opportunity to clearly explain the message of the gospel to a person that you're confident didn't know the Lord (Acts 8:35)? Please share a story, if you have one. How about a time you had an opportunity but you let it pass you by? Or maybe a situation where the Lord opened a door, but your witness to Christ suffered from a lack of clarity (Colossians 4:4) or gentleness (1 Peter 3:15) or boldness (Ephesians 6:18-20)? What do you plan to do differently in the days ahead?
8. Close your time as a group by praying for all of the people on your 'List of 5' by name, especially focusing on ways that you can take practical steps toward them with the B.L.E.S.S. practices over the next 30 days.