

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

SUMMARY

In this final message of the Jonah series, Pastor Jeremy explores how we can pursue God's mission without having God's heart. After Nineveh repents, Jonah becomes angry rather than celebrating—revealing that the greatest problem wasn't Nineveh's wickedness, but Jonah's lack of compassion. The sermon challenges us to examine who the "stranger" is in our lives—the person we've placed on the other side of our line.

Through Jonah's story, we discover three truths:
(1) We can pursue God's mission without having God's heart,
(2) We can let our comfort become more important than showing compassion, and
(3) We need God's compassion to change our hearts.

The sermon reminds us that we were once strangers to God, but Jesus crossed the greatest line imaginable to bring us home. As we experience God's compassion, we're transformed to see others through His eyes.

SHARE

Think about a time when you found it difficult to celebrate someone else's success or second chance—maybe because you felt they didn't deserve it, or because their blessing stirred up something uncomfortable in you. What was that like?

READ

Read **Jonah 4:1-11** together out loud as a group.

DISCUSS

Feel free to pick/choose what is most helpful for you. Remember, the goal is to have rich, relational, authentic, Jesus-centered discussions.

1. What stood out to you the most about the sermon?

2. In Jonah 4:2, Jonah recites a description of God that comes from Exodus 34:6—*"gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love."* Yet despite knowing this theology, Jonah doesn't want God to show compassion to Nineveh. What does this text reveal about the relationship between knowing truth about God and having a heart like God's? How can we know doctrine correctly but still miss God's heart?

3. Pastor Jeremy pointed out that the Hebrew word ra'ah (evil) is used throughout Jonah to describe Nineveh's wickedness, but in Jonah 4:1 it's used to describe Jonah's response. What is the significance of this literary choice? What might the author be communicating about the nature of evil and the condition of Jonah's heart?

4. Who is the "stranger" in your life right now—someone you've placed on the other side of your line? What keeps you from moving toward them with compassion?

5. Pastor Jeremy used the illustration of the plant to show how Jonah cared more about his comfort than the fate of 120,000 people. Where in your life might comfort be winning over compassion? What would it look like to prioritize God's compassion over your personal comfort this week?

6. Jonah 4:11 ends with God's question: "Should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh?" How does this open-ended question challenge you personally? What might God be asking you through this same question today?

7. The sermon concluded by reminding us that we were all once strangers to God, and Jesus crossed the ultimate line to bring us home. How does remembering the compassion God has shown you change the way you see the strangers in your life?

NEXT STEPS

- **Identify your stranger:** This week, prayerfully ask God to reveal who the "stranger" is in your life—someone you've labeled, avoided, or written off. Write down their name.
- **Move toward them:** Take one practical step to move toward that person with compassion. This could be a conversation, a text, an act of service, or simply praying for them by name each day.
- **Remember God's compassion:** Spend time this week reflecting on the gospel—how Jesus crossed the line to rescue you. Journal about or meditate on what it cost Him to bring you home, and let that shape how you see others.

PRAY

Spend time praying together as a group:

- **Confession:** Ask God to reveal areas where you've pursued His mission without having His heart. Confess where comfort has become more important than compassion.
- **Transformation:** Pray for God to give you His eyes to see the strangers in your life—those you've labeled or avoided. Ask Him to soften your heart toward them.
- **Empowerment:** Pray for courage and grace to move toward those people this week, trusting that God's compassion can flow through you.

- **For one another:** Pray specifically for each person's "stranger" by name if they're willing to share, asking God to do a work in both hearts.

CONNECT

As Cornerstone pursues the vision to go deeper in discipleship and reach wider in mission, consider how your group can serve together in welcoming newcomers and neighbours.

Check out **The Hub** for upcoming community **events**, **workshops**, or **serving opportunities** where your group can show God's compassion in practical ways across Markham, Stouffville, and the broader GTA.

Cool off with **Group Life Ice-Cream Social** **Saturday, August 15th** from 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm. All ages are welcome. **Let us know you're coming**.

CLOSING

Close by reading Jonah 4:11 together one more time, letting God's question linger: *"Should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people…?"*

May we become a people whose hearts beat with God's compassion for every stranger.