

**Who Doesn't Deserve God's Mercy?**  
**Discussion Questions**  
**Jonah 1:4-17**

- 1) What is something that you really don't like?
- 2) God is a merciful God and offers abundant life to everyone. Is there anyone that you can think of that you think doesn't deserve God's mercy?
- 3) Jonah says, "I knew that you are a merciful and compassionate God...eager to turn back from destroying people" (Jonah 4:2). Why does Jonah run *because* God is merciful?
- 4) What fears or prejudices do you see in Jonah's attitude toward the Ninevites and the Phoenician sailors? Where do you see similar fears or prejudices in yourself or in our culture?
- 5) Jonah seems to think: "If you're Hebrew, you're good; if you're not, you're not." What groups of people today might we subtly treat as "less deserving" of God's love?
- 6) In this text there are three types of fear that arise in the lives of the sailors: fear of circumstances (storm), fear from action (what is going to happen when we throw Jonah overboard), and fear of the Lord (realization and awe of the power of God). Which of these do you see most clearly in the sailors? Which do you relate to most?
- 7) The sailors try everything to avoid throwing Jonah overboard. What does their reluctance tell you about their sense of right and wrong?
- 8) Before throwing Jonah into the sea, the sailors cry out to Yahweh, not their own gods. What does that suggest about how God draws people to Himself, even through crisis? (Jonah 1:14)
- 9) After the storm calms, the sailors offer sacrifice and vow to serve the Lord. Why is it significant that they respond *after* the danger passes, not just in the moment of panic?
- 10) What are some ways the story of Jonah so far reverses what we expect?
- 11) Daniel Timmer says Jonah's "anti-missionary activity" ironically leads to non-Israelites coming to faith. Have you ever seen God bring good out of someone's disobedience or failure?
- 12) "Everyone is deserving of abundant life...not because they earn it, but because God is the giver." How does this truth challenge the way you view people who seem very different from you?