

# MORE TO THE STORY

## JOURNEY WAYPOINTS

July 13-19, 2025

A stop along the journey to study, share, and support one another while we learn the way of Jesus.

### This Week's Big Idea:

The story of Jonah reveals a God whose mercy extends to all people and invites us to join His mission of reconciliation. Will we, like Jonah, resist sharing His grace, or will we embrace our calling as image bearers to partner with Him in loving the world?

### Scripture and Study:

**KEY TEXT:** Exodus 34:6, Matthew 5:44, 2 Cor. 5:18-19, Jonah 1-4 [Click here to access this week's scripture](#)

In the 8th century BCE, Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire, was a symbol of cruelty, feared and despised by Israel. God asking Jonah to go and preach mercy and repentance to the Assyrians would have felt like a slap in the face. They don't deserve it! But as we dive deeper into the Book of Jonah, we see that this story is so much more than the story of a runaway prophet, or a giant fish. It is a story about God's unstoppable heart for all people and His wild invitation to us, His image bearers, to jump in and partner with Him to bring His love to the world—even the ones we'd rather write off.

Jonah's response was to God's call was to flee. He knew God's character—"gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love," and he recoiled at extending that love to Nineveh. But God chased after Jonah with a storm, a fish, and even some pagan sailors who ended up worshipping Him. God's presence cannot be escaped, and His purpose reaches beyond our boundaries.

The Hebrew word *hesed*—God's covenantal, unwavering love—defines this story. It rescued Jonah from the depths and transformed Nineveh through their repentance. Jonah's half-hearted sermon—five measly words in Hebrew—sparked a citywide revival! That's God's power, not Jonah's. Jonah was furious when God showed mercy to Nineveh. He loved *hesed* for himself but not for "those people." God's question, "Should I not care about Nineveh?" is also a challenge to us. It is Jesus saying, "Love your enemies." It is God saying, "I'm all about restoration and reconciliation, and I want you to partner with me in it!"

And that is our call. God's heart beats for everybody—sailors, Ninevites, neighbors, enemies. He's invited us to be co-workers in His mission of reconciliation to carry His *hesed* to the world as His image bearers. Like the father in the prodigal son story, God is running toward the lost, and He's calling us to run with Him. So, who's your Nineveh? And are you ready to say, "Yes, Jesus, I'm in!"?

### Discussion Questions:

- How does Jonah's story reveal God's heart for all people, and what does it teach us about our role in His mission?
- When have you resisted sharing God's grace with someone you deemed unworthy? What might help you align with His heart?
- As image bearers, how can we practically partner with God to extend His *hesed* in our daily lives?

### Apply It:

- Reflect: Spend time journaling about a moment when God's mercy reached you or someone unexpected.
- Pray: Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal your "Nineveh"—a person or group you struggle to love—and how you can join God's mission toward them.
- Act: Identify one person this week who represents your "Nineveh." Commit to praying for them daily and take one intentional step to reflect God's love.