

Radical Response Required

2024-05-20 • PASTOR MATT ROSE



Jonah 3:5-10

FOR THE LEADER

These questions help you run the conversation. They are not your study. Get into the passage yourself first, because your group needs what God taught you, not just a list of questions. These also lean on Sunday's message, so a few will not land for anyone who missed it. Watch it before you lead.

WHAT THE MESSAGE WAS ABOUT

Nineveh heard one day of preaching from a reluctant prophet, and the whole city responded with a fast, from the king on his throne down to the cattle in the field. Pastor Matt pointed out how unreasonable that was. A relaxed, measured response would have been far more sensible. It also would have changed nothing. Some situations call for the radical version. And radical change starts the way Nineveh's did: with a proclamation, saying out loud what you are going to do, over your own life first. Verse 10 records the result. God saw what they did, and he relented.

To get started

- When did a small, sensible response to something turn out to be the wrong size?

Looking back at the message

He ran case studies asking whether a situation called for a relaxed or radical response. Those were illustrations, not counsel; never apply one to someone's actual crisis in the room, and involve a pastor when a real situation surfaces.

- 1 The Ninevites knew almost nothing about God and still responded radically. What does that tell you about how much you need to know before you act?
- 2 Radical change starts with a proclamation, saying out loud what you are going to do. If you made one this week, what would it say?
- 3 Pastor Matt said that when he became a Christian in eighth grade, a radical response was the only thing that made sense: if Jesus really rose from the grave, everything should change. Was your response radical or gradual? OPTIONAL

Looking at the passage

Read Jonah 3:5-10. The extent of the response is almost comical, and it is meant to be.

- 4 Read Jonah 3:5-9. Who fasted, and how far down the order did it go?
- 5 Verse 9 says: who knows, God may yet relent. They acted without a guarantee. What kind of faith is that?
- 6 Read verse 10. What did God see, and what did he do about it? Notice what the verse says he saw: what they did.
- 7 Read Romans 12:1. Offering your whole body as a living sacrifice is called reasonable worship. Does it sound reasonable to you? OPTIONAL

Bringing it home

The application is about the person's own life, not about prescribing radical steps for anyone else.

- 8 Where in your life have you been giving a relaxed response to something that needs more?
- 9 What excuse do you use most often for not changing something?
- 10 In the area you already know needs it, what would the radical response actually look like?
- 11 Who would you have to tell for it to actually happen? OPTIONAL

The group together

The king led by example and the city followed. Leadership by going first is the pattern.

- 12 The king went first and the whole city followed. Who has gone first for you?
- 13 Why do we admire radical change in other people and avoid it in ourselves?
- 14 How could this group support someone making a genuinely costly change?

BEFORE YOU FINISH

What is the proclamation you are willing to make out loud this week?

You might pray about

- For courage to change something that will cost us
- For people facing situations that need more than a small adjustment
- For a response to God that matches what we say we believe