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## OPENING PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank you for preserving this ancient text of Jonah. And thank you for its relevance today. Lord, thank you for not condemning us and always giving us a second chance. Today we ask that you would give each of us the wisdom to know what to do with what we study and then give us the courage to do it. And we pray all of these things in Jesus's name. Amen.

## SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

### Jonah 3:1-10

<sup>1</sup> Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time: <sup>2</sup> "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you."

<sup>3</sup> Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. <sup>4</sup> Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." <sup>5</sup> The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

<sup>6</sup> When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered

himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. <sup>7</sup> This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh:

"By the decree of the king and his nobles:

Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. <sup>8</sup> But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. <sup>9</sup> Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish."

<sup>10</sup> When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

## INTRODUCTION

Have you ever felt like God has given up on you? Sometimes we are ashamed of our actions and think God will never use us again. But what we learn from the story of Jonah is that God is a God of second chances. But how do we get that second chance?

God wants to have a relationship with you. But when we stray from God's path (sin) it causes our relationship with Him to be broken. Jesus came to bridge the gap created by our sin—not our unintentional mistakes, but our sin. Recognizing our sin paves the way to restoration and redemption. Jesus isn't put off by your sin. He's ready to forgive your sin and restore God's relationship with you.

## QUESTIONS

- 1) Why do you think our culture is uncomfortable with the word "sin"? Do you resist the idea that you are a sinner? Is there something offensive about that? If so, why? If not, why not?
- 2) Was there ever a time when God gave you a second chance. Why do you think God gave Jonah a second chance to go to Nineveh? How do you think Jonah felt about it the second time?
- 3) Why do you think the Ninevites were so quick to repent and believe God? What has God shown you that you need to do, but you have not yet done?
- 4) Repentance means to turn from sin; to change one's mind and actions so that they agree with God. How does true repentance transform a person, inside and out?
- 5) In what situations would you consider fasting and/or giving up physical comfort, like the Ninevites, in order to seek God? Have you ever fasted and prayed for the salvation of another person or people group?