



JONAH: THE PRODIGAL PROPHET

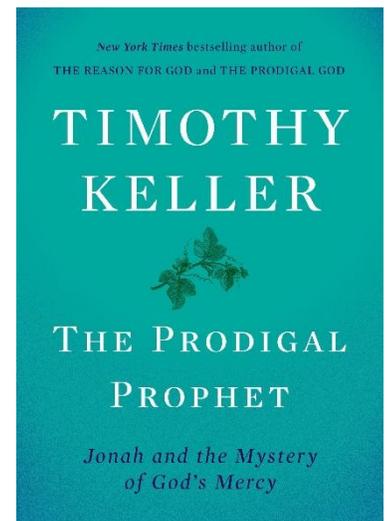
WEEK #2

BASED ON TIMOTHY KELLER'S BOOK

WHY "PRODIGAL" PROPHET?

1. What does "prodigal" mean?

2. How does the "Parable of the Prodigal Son" (Luke 15:11-32) line up with the book of Jonah?



WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SENT TO NINEVEH?

3. Why didn't Jonah want to go to Nineveh? What was Nineveh like?
4. Tim Keller compares this to a Jewish rabbi being sent to Germany in 1941 to preach against the Nazis. What other comparisons might you make that are from the 21st century?

Are there some other more subtle situations that are similar (e.g.: corporate board room)?

5. Since God was sending Jonah to preach a warning of His judgment against the evil city, what does Jonah know is also a possibility?
6. Have you ever seen an “enemy” come to your church?
How did you react?
What did you think about their spiritual status?

THE MYSTERY OF GOD'S MERCY

This is the subtitle of Keller's book.

Consider the following quotes and then discuss the question.

“Jonah wants to receive God's grace without being changed by it, and at the same time to snatch it away from those whose lives *are* in fact changed by it” (Timmer, *Gracious and Compassionate God*, as quoted in Keller, note 12, p. 233).

“The problem facing Jonah [is] the mystery of God's mercy. It is a theological problem, but it is at the same time a heart problem. Unless Jonah can see his own sin, and see himself as living wholly by the mercy of God, he will never understand how God can be merciful to evil people and still be just and faithful” (21).

7. Have you ever known someone who exemplified God's mercy in how they viewed themselves and how they viewed others?

8. What about our life together as disciples helps you to “see your own sin” and “see yourself as living wholly by the mercy of God”?

9. The conversation with family, coworkers, or friends turns to some recent horrific crime in the news. The criminal has been caught and confesses, perhaps even hinting that they are repenting and asking Jesus for forgiveness. Someone in your conversation, though, says, “They always ask Jesus for forgiveness when they get caught. I don't believe 'em. Besides, there shouldn't be any mercy after the terrible things they did!” How do you respond?