



## **Sunday Teaching Discussion Guide: THE BIBLE 11.11.2018**

### Recap:

- Some passages in the Bible seem to advocate actions that our society abhors and condemns, such as violence and genocide. These passages are particularly uncomfortable and people respond in various ways. Some people accept that God ordered genocide and that this is one of those areas where we aren't supposed to question things. For other people, the tension with these texts is so unmanageable that it breaks our ability reconcile a God of love with the rest of Scripture and we lose our faith in God or we don't accept faith at all. Others ignore these passages and pretend they don't exist at all and just try to manage.
- The stories of Jericho and Nineveh display a difficult tension for readers. On one hand, you have the story of Joshua (Jericho) where the enemies of the people of God are destroyed. On the other hand, you have the story of Jonah (Nineveh) where Jonah's strict tribalism (wishing the city be slaughtered) appears to be condemned.
- Jesus knew these stories. He accepted that the world was full of sin and violence, and rather than perpetuate violence, Jesus accepted it. At the cross, Jesus took the violence of the world upon himself and condemned it peacefully. As a result, the death of Jesus became for the disciples a clear new way to live in the world and Jesus's resurrection became its vindication.

### Discuss:

- READ Joshua 6:20-21
- What questions come to your mind when you read about the Israelites massacring an entire city? How do you feel thinking that the people who wrote this story down place God in the position of approving, even commanding this action?
- Only Rahab, a prostitute who sheltered Israelite spies, and her family were spared during the battle. Some may read this as condemnation against the people of Jericho. How do you think some might interpret the notion that a prostitute was saved and an entire city was destroyed?
- READ Jonah 4:11
- Jonah travels a long way to tell the people of Nineveh that if they don't repent, their city will be destroyed. When they do repent, Jonah is disappointed when God spares the city. How do you think Jonah embodies many human feelings that seem innate or natural?
- How do you handle the tension in regards to the different ways God seems to be depicted in the stories of Jericho and Nineveh (commanding tribalism vs condemning it)?
- READ Matthew 15:21-28
- Jesus's mercy is extended to everyone, regardless of race, nationality, color, gender, or any other way that we characterize people. How does the passage in Matthew demonstrate Jesus's grace?
- How do you think Jesus challenges a world full of sin and violence in his life and death?

Pray: Invite members of your group to share prayer requests. Give a short prayer thanking God for your group discussion and asking God to be with the requests that have been shared.

### Read at Home: Additional Readings about Handling Violence

- Genesis 9:6-7
- Matthew 26:47-56
- 1 Peter 3:8-22