



What Jonah Learned about Abundance

by **Lee Hull Moses**

At first glance, Jonah seems an odd choice for a reflection on stewardship. There is no offering of gifts here, no passing the plate, no mention of money at all. Missing is the imagery of the overflowing baskets of first fruits in Deuteronomy 26, or the quiet generosity of the widow in Luke 21. Jonah, as we'll see, isn't even a particularly generous person; quite the opposite, in fact. And yet, this little story of a reluctant prophet has much to offer as we discover the joy of sharing God's abundant grace.

Jonah learns over the course of his story that God's justice is not a zero-sum game; more for other people doesn't mean less for me. There is plenty of God's grace to go around, enough for all the Ninevites and Jonah too. "Should I not be concerned about Nineveh?" God asks (4:11), as Jonah sulks, but the obvious truth is that God has been concerned about Jonah all along. Even when Jonah is running away from God, God provides what he needs: safety in the storm, a rescue from the depths of

the sea. The abundance of God's grace is that there is enough; no one needs to be left out.

We live today in a culture that is bent on scarcity; we have believed the narrative that there is not enough to go around, and so we should hang on tight to what we have. We're convinced that if *you* get something good, that means there will be less available for *me*. Perhaps the greatest gift the church can give the world right now is to bear witness to God's abundance. The story of Jonah – along with the rest of the Biblical witness – convinces us that there is enough – enough of God's care, enough of God's grace, enough of God's love.

Questions to Consider:

1. In what ways does our congregation operate within a mindset of scarcity?
2. In what ways do you practice abundance?
3. What could our congregation do if we really took seriously the abundance of God's grace? How would lives be transformed?
4. What might happen if we oriented our whole lives and our whole ministry toward the abundance of God's grace?



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