

ZEALAND

Artist:

ZEALAND
ZEALAND.BAND

Album Title & Record Company:

LIBERATED
WORD RECORDS

Video Title:

YOUR LOVE IS WILD

Study By:

DAN SCHEWE
TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN
DANJSCHEWE@GMAIL.COM

Theme

God's Love

Objective

Your group will understand how God's love is unexpected and amazing.

Warm Up

Form a circle. Pass out a few balloons and ask the kids to keep them all in the air at the same time. If you want to add some chaos to things, put something in some of the balloons and face a fan toward where they are playing. Challenge the group to keep the balloons from touching the ground for as long as possible. You can add other wrinkles to keep your group challenged such as no one gets to use their hands, you can't hit the balloon until everyone else has, and so on.

Transition

Often groups find this activity hard because you can't anticipate where the balloons are going to go. We really can't control them – they are rather wild. Ask your group to define "wild." Look it up in a dictionary and see how your group does.

The Video

Let your group know that this is a new video by the band Zealand, who is led by Phil Joel – one of the original Newsboys. Ask your group to jot down lyrics, images, or thoughts that grab them as they watch the video.

Transition

Ask your group to share any lyrics or thoughts that came to them while watching the video.

Bible Study

Ask, "While we all have expectations for our everyday interactions and other things, how do we expect God to be?" The book of Jonah helps us engage our expectations of how we think God should behave. Read **Jonah 3:1-5**. Why did the Word of God have to come to Jonah a second time? Usually when God tells someone to do something, they do it. <Insert your favorite example here>

In **Jonah 1:1-3** God tells Jonah to go to Nineveh, but Jonah flees to Joppa and gets on a boat headed for Tarshish. Nineveh was near Iraq and Iran. Tarshish is a city in Spain. God tells Jonah to go east, and he goes west, as far west as there is on the maps!

A great storm comes and the sailors, who buy goods in one port and sell them in another, are so terrified that they start throwing the goods overboard so they might survive. Where is Jonah? See **1:5-6** – he is asleep below decks. When they wake him up, they confront him and what does he say? See **1:12**

This is when the part of the story everyone knows happens – he's tossed overboard and eaten by a great fish. After he prays in the belly of the fish, he is spit – or projectile vomited – onto dry land (**2:10**) where the Word of God comes to him a second time.

This time Jonah does what God asks and goes to Nineveh. He enters the city and shares one of the shortest sermons recorded in the Bible. (**3:4**) Literally, it's just four words in the original Hebrew. Ask your kids how would they respond to someone walking into town and shouting that your city will be destroyed?

Yet the Ninevites believed Jonah. They declare a fast (no one eats, not even the animals) and wear sackcloth (an ancient sign of repentance.) They repent, and God has mercy on them.

Then Jonah goes outside of the city and waits to see what God will do. Read **4:1-3**. Ask your group about why Jonah is so angry. Why would he rather die than talk to these people about God? You see, Jonah hates – and hate is too soft of a word – the people of Nineveh. This is the capital of the Assyrian empire – the very people who had conquered the Jews and did unspeakable things to them. Probably to Jonah's friends, family, and maybe even him. They have torn down the cities of Israel. They have hurt him and those he loves. They are the people who dragged his family and friends into slavery. He wants them to hurt. He wants to see them bleed. He wants to see their city burn. Note, Jonah knows God – he knows that God is forgiving, compassionate, and abounding in love. He knows that if he talks to these people about God, and they repent – change and ask for forgiveness – that God will give forgive them. Jonah knows how God loves and doesn't want God to love these people. He will do whatever it takes to make sure

they don't hear this message. Jonah would rather die than let them know about the loving God he knows. Jonah expected God to hurt those who had hurt him – but God showed them mercy. This made Jonah angry.

God didn't conform to Jonah's expectations of Him. God wasn't controlled by Jonah. Jonah's anger and pain blinded him to the mercy God was ready to extend.

God's love is wild, uncontrollable, and unexpected.

How do we expect God to behave? Are we like Jonah – do we want God to be good to those who are good to us and mean to those who are mean to us? Go back to their original list of how they expect God to be and talk about them.

Wrap Up

By the grace of God, we are loved by God. We don't deserve it. This is the amazing thing about grace. God loves beyond our understanding – He loves those people we can't love. Conclude by reminding your group that God's love is wild – we cannot control it. God does not love how we expect – He does not love how we love. Which is a good thing. God's love is wild.

Close your time together in prayer lifting up the concerns of your group and asking God to help us love as God does, not as we want to.