

10-6-24 Jonah

Week 4

Text: Jonah 4:1-11

Topic: Grace, Anger, Sovereignty, Mission

Big Idea of the Message: God uses a vivid object lesson to teach Jonah about his sovereignty over creation and salvation.

Application Point: Today God has lovingly put you in situations and places where your comfort and desires are pressed, so that they might conform to his plan for your life.

Dwight L. Moody once said, “There is no greater honor than to be the instrument in God’s hands of leading one person out of the kingdom of Satan into the glorious light of Heaven.”

What a sense of excitement and fulfillment that comes when you watch someone experience the wonderful love of God through repentance. In the 2000+ years that the church has been in existence, through all the wars and revolutions and through all the inventions and innovations, our challenge has never changed, “go into all the world making disciples.”

Are we more concerned with in here or out there?

Anyone willing to admit that they have been miffed with God regarding His grace and mercy?

Anyone willing to admit they have anger and bitterness issues, and it is so entrenched that they won’t forgive? You have chosen not to forgive.

The book of Jonah was authored by Jonah. I appreciate his honest assessment of where he was and how bad his bitterness and hatred were. In chapter 1, Jonah wouldn’t listen to God and God had to send a storm and a great fish to get him back on God’s path. God used Jonah’s disobedience to grab the attention of the crew on the ship he was fleeing on. In chapter 2, Jonah got his heart right to later be right back where he was, angry that God would save the Assyrians in Ninevah. In chapter 3 Jonah spent three days sharing God’s message to the city of Nineveh and 120,000 repented and turned to God.

Jonah was given the challenge of bringing deliverance to a whole city, but he let his attitude and emotions influence hinder him. How often are we guilty of the same thing? We’re going to look this morning at how God dealt with his heart and how God wants to challenge us this morning to take up this powerful mandate with courage, putting first things first.

Read Jonah 3:10, what a day, 120,000 turned from their evil ways and turned to God. Can you even imagine? If 100, or 1,000, or 10,000 turned to God after one message from God. But more than 120,000?! What would be our reaction? I can guarantee that it would make the news.

Read Jonah 4:1-3.

1. Until we get real with God, we only deceive ourselves.

- Jonah was displeased with the outcome of Ninevah. He was angry!
- In his anger Jonah finally got real with God. **Read verse 2** again.

- Do you think any of Jonah's fit throwing admission took God by surprise? Jonah just admitted what God already knew. Jonah hated the people of Ninevah and did not deem them worthy of being rescued.
- I find the irony and comedy in what he states he knows. **"I know that you are gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm."** God, I knew you would be you and win the day!
- How often have I complained about God's grace? Whether I felt like I wasn't shown enough or whether I was mad, someone else was shown what I perceived as more.
- How often have I not shown mercy because it would be an inconvenience to me? Or because they didn't deserve it.
- How often am I slow to anger when the other party fully deserves the wrath of Cecil?
- Would lovingkindness be said of me?
- Do I relent from doing harm?
- Does anyone that remotely know anything about God think Jonah being real was a shocker to God? The only person Jonah was fooling from day one was himself. He tried to justify his disobedience on the character of God. (sounds about what I have tried to do)
- Until an individual hits rock bottom, they can't be reached, the same can be applied in our relationship with God. Until we are honest with where we are with God, we cannot be fully free.
- **Read verse 3.** Jonah is completely irrational. He is so upset, frustrated that he begs God to take his life. Just days before he was pleading for his life and now, he wants to end it all. So, Jonah didn't fully get his heart right with God while in the belly of the fish trying to wheel and deal with Him. Jonah was halfheartedly, finger crossed making promises with God.
- Hmm, does that sound familiar? Could that be said of any of us? Get caught with our hands in the cookie jar and we promise all kinds of promises, if only God will get us out of it. Then like a dog returning to its vomit, we go right back.
- Notice the characteristics of God; He is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, fully of loving kindness and relents (ceases, holds back, gives in) on doing harm.

2. God will continue to press into the intentions of our heart.

- **Read verse 4.**
- Because of God's character, He will not allow us to believe our lies. He will convict and challenge.
- God repeats the question a second time in **verse 9**, when Jonah gets mad and pouts again regarding not understanding God.
- **"Is it right for you to be angry?"**
- Jonah was so angry that God cared for a people group that were so despicable, worthless and evil. I am not sure if it was being dramatic or would he rather die than see them turn to God.
- There is so much going on in this book. God is saving pagan sailors, an evil empire that He would eventually wipe out, now in **chapter 4**, God is trying to reach, press into the intentions of a pouting prophet. God is leaving more than 120,000 to reach Jonah.

- Can I simply state that God is a multitasker. The thread through the whole book is God sparing the lives of pagans and trying to establish a relationship with a backslidden prophet.
- Has there been a time in your life when God has pressed into the intentions of your heart?
- Maybe, jealous of someone's success and secretly wishing for failure.
- Or a believer who you tried to warn that they were sinning or on a slippery slope has fallen and it's hard not to think to yourself that they are getting what they deserve.
- Or how could someone so evil and vile have it so good.
- Or possibly you think you are pretty good and there is no room for improvement, but that guy over there....
- Can our hearts be trusted?

“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? 10 I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings. Jeremiah 17:9-10

3. God will not give up even when we do.

- **Read verses 5-6.**
- The Bible doesn't indicate if Jonah said anything back to God. I think at the very least there was an eyeroll and a sigh. (we love eyerolls)
- Off went Jonah, he grabbed his favorite blanket a big gulp, a tub of movie style popcorn, and built himself a place to have tailgate party at. He was going to watch from a distance how the city would make out.
- Do you think Jonah wanted the city to have a successful revival? Based on the information the Bible gives us, what is your deduction?
- Would it be safe to say he hoped or imagined it to fail? Jonah gave God's message and washed his hands of having anything further to do with the people. Jonah distancing himself spoke volumes.
- My next statement is pure humor, creative speculation, but in my mind's eye, I can see this as being one of the best revivals known to mankind. All the most talented musicians and singers putting on a concert, singing the scriptures, the light show and fog that God provided was probably epic. Think of the feast, 120,000 people bringing out their best dishes to share!? Then there is Jonah sulking in his makeshift shelter.
- Speaking of shelter, he didn't even build that right. The scripture says he built a shelter to sit in for shade and what do we read in **verse 6**?
- Jonah was in misery, and hot, so God made a plant grow up from the ground and provide him shade. Jonah was very grateful for the plant (sidebar, why is it people argue about a fish that can swallow a man and he lives in its belly for 3 days, but I have never heard anyone challenge a plant that can grow to full size in a quick timeframe). How many farmers do we have here? Have you ever seen a plant go from seed to adult in the same day? So, I guess since we never heard or seen it happen means it's not true, huh?
- God provided for Jonah even in his sinfulness and anger. God didn't give up on Jonah even though Jonah gave up on people and God's plans.
- **Read verses 7-8.**

- Jonah chose to be disobedient and angry with God, but he had no choice in God's correction and the consequences.
- Just as God prepared a fish and a plant to protect him and get him back on in God's purpose; God prepared a worm and a scorching east wind to chasten him.
- Personally, I think Jonah was bald, **"and the sun beat down on Jonah's head,"** a bald head in the sun is enough to make you grow faint!
- Now we see Jonah give up on himself, again he wishes to die. He is so unsettled with all he has seen and experienced that he wishes that he was dead, again.
- Seriously, there could come a time in your life when you think things would be better off without you. Or that it would make the pain go away. Let me say that is the farthest from God's plan or will. When He decides it is time for us to come home, you will be the first to know. Until then we must continue and get the help we need to continue.
- **Read verses 10-11.**
- God pressed in, **"You feel sorry about the plant, though you did nothing to put it there."** God wasn't going to allow Jonah off the hook. He wasn't going to leave him in the place he was without challenging him.
- Jonah showed more concern for a plant that kept the sun off his head than 120,000 lost human beings from being set free.

Conclusion

Until we get real with God, we only deceive ourselves.

God will continue to press into the intentions of our heart.

God will not give up even when we do.

Where are you with God? Do you know Him personally? Have you placed your faith and trust in Jesus? God sent His Son Jesus to save us from our sins. Have you trusted in that message?

What is it God is pressing in on in your life? Are you allowing your heart to overrule what God says?

God will NEVER give up on you! He has said He would never leave nor forsake (abandon) you. People may, but God will not.

Sought after (Isa. 62:12) Precious in his sight (Isa. 43:4) A new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17) Not condemned (Rom. 8:1) Forgiven (Col. 1:14) Loved (1 John 3:1) Accepted (Rom. 15:7) A child of God (John 1:12) Jesus' friend (John 15:14) Free (John 8:36) The temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19) God's treasured possession (Deut. 7:6) Complete in Christ (Col. 2:10 NLT) Chosen (Col. 3:12) Called (2 Tim. 1:9) An ambassador of the Most High God (2 Cor. 5:20) God's masterpiece (Eph. 2:10 NLT) **Able to do all things through Christ, who gives you strength (Phil. 4:13) More than a conqueror through Jesus, who loves you (Rom. 8:37)**