

## Jonah – The Pouting Prophet

Text : **Jonah 3: 10 – 4: 11**

### **INTRODUCTION :**

#### **A. How do you respond when you perceive that you've suffered an injustice ?**

1. Some respond aggressively.
2. Others cry out for help.
3. While still enduring the pain of the cross, Jesus prayed for those who were unjustly killing Him. **Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing. Lk 23:34**

#### **B. Jonah perceived God's grace to the Ninevites as an injustice to him and to Israel.**

1. Jonah did not want Nineveh to be spared.
  - a. The Assyrians were the mortal enemies of the Jews.
  - b. It was prophesied that Assyrian would destroy Israel.
  - c. It's not clear if Jonah knew that prophesy, but the threat was evident to all.
2. God had used Jonah to prophesying good things for Israel.
  - a. He was the king's prophet. (*Member of government ... political person*)
  - b. He had carried messages of Israel's expansion and prosperity.
3. Jonah knew the deplorable spiritual condition of Israel.
  - a. Israel was more idolatrous than the Ninevites.
  - b. They had ignored God's warnings and His admonitions to repent.
4. In Jonah's mind, God was the God of Israel not the God of the universe.
  - a. This attitude was made apparent when he tried to run away from God.
  - b. As Israel's God, Jonah expected God would destroy all their enemies.

\* *God's special relationship with Israel was only because of His promises to Abraham.*

– God had already given them a land and made them a great nation.

- At that point the only promise remaining was that Israel would bless all nations.
  - God was maintaining a remnant to bless all nations through Jesus the Messiah.
5. Jonah's response to this perceived injustice was to pout.
- a. He was acting like a petulant child who didn't get his way.
  - b. Jonah wanted God to do what Jonah wanted done.
  - c. All of God's servants must adapt God's values. (*Surrender self.. take up cross*)

**I. Jonah was upset that God was consistent in what Jonah knew He had always been.**

**A. Jonah knew that God was a gracious, compassionate and forgiving God.**

1. **Jonah 4: 1-2** But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry. <sup>2</sup> He prayed to the Lord and said, "Please Lord, was not this what I said while I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity.
2. Basically, Jonah was seeking to impose HIS will on God.
3. Role reversal ... Jonah wanted God to be Israel's servant. (*Yet, God used Jonah.*)

**B. Unlike man, God is totally consistent.**

1. As God passes by Moses He describes Himself a Compassionate and Gracious. **Exodus 34: 6-7** Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; <sup>7</sup> who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations."
2. As the prophet Joel pleads for Judah to repent, he describes God in the same way.

**Joel 2: 12-13** Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “Return to Me with all your heart,  
And with fasting, weeping and mourning; **13** And rend your heart  
and  
not your garments.” Now return to the Lord your God, For He is  
gracious and compassionate, Slow to anger, abounding in  
lovingkindness And relenting of evil.

3. In the New Testament the Apostle Paul is still describing God in similar words.  
**Rom. 2: 4** – Or do you think lightly of the riches of His kindness and tolerance and  
patience, not knowing that the kindness of God leads you to

repentance?

\* *God did not suddenly change somewhere between Malachi and Matthew.*  
**Heb. 13: 8** – Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

C. God did not send Jonah to Nineveh to pronounce judgment, but to “cry out”  
against the city with the goal of bringing them to repentance.

1. God has never taken pleasure in bring judgment upon anyone, *even the very  
wicked.*

**Ezek. 33: 11** – Say to them, ‘As I live!’ declares the Lord God, ‘I take no pleasure in  
the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way  
and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will

you

die, O house of Israel?’

2. God is very patient with sinners because He does not want to have to punish them.  
**II Pet. 3: 9** – The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness,  
but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all  
to come to repentance.

D. Jonah’s attitude was totally out of step with God’s attitude.

1. God was very happy when Nineveh repented.

**Luke 15: 7** – I tell you that in the same way, there will be more joy in Heaven  
over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous  
persons who need no repentance.

2. Jonah was angered by what God desired, but God tried to educate him.

a. **Jonah 4: 3** – Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me,  
for death is better to me than life.

b. He’s like a spoiled child throwing a temper tantrum.

3. In order to be a servant of God one must love what God loves.

\* *The man who will not allow God to rule in His life cannot be saved.*

a. Man must conform to God, ... **not** try to bring God down to our level.

**Eph. 4: 13** – building up of the body of Christ; **13** until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man,

to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

b. Learning to conform to the likeness of Christ starts with changing our attitude.

**Rom. 12: 2** – And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the

renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God

is,..

\* *The changing of our minds is the processes of adopting God's values.*

## II. When Jonah saw the Ninevites were repenting he left the city to watch.

**A. Jonah didn't stay for any follow-up studies to teach them about God.**

1. Jonah got on high ground so he had a view of the city.

2. He was hoping against hope that God would destroy it like He did Sodom.

3. He evidently made no attempt to make proselytes out of those who repented.

**B. His actions made it clear that Jonah had repented of his repentance.**

1. Repentance is not just feeling guilty for a while. (**II Cor. 7: 9-11** cf **Exod. 10**)

a. Repentance is a change in mindset ... a change of one's value system.

b. Once one's value system has changed, he cannot / will not act as he did before.

c. Jonah's actions made it clear that his value system had not changed.

2. Jonah went to preach to Nineveh because he was afraid not to go.

a. He obeyed God out of fear of the fish's belly.

b. Though he legalistically obeyed God, *he never surrendered his heart to Him.*

**C. Many Christians today have the same kind of attitude toward God.**

1. They come to church because they are afraid of being condemned by God.

2. They fit God in as best they can, but have never surrendered their will to His will.

3. One who serves out of fear or obligation withholds what God wants most, ..

heart.

D. Obviously, Jonah's vigil was not for good.

### III. While Jonah watched Nineveh, God worked in his life to convert him.

A. None of us start off mature in Christ .. i.e. .. in our relationship with God.

1. God's interaction with Jonah gives us great hope.
  - a. Nineveh deserved to be punished. ( *They were very cruel people.* )
  - b. Jonah also deserved to be punished for his hatred of Nineveh and his attitude.
  - c. God gave both the opportunity to repent. ( *We deserve punishment, but ...* )
2. God allots time for us to grow and gives a support group to help us.
  - a. Remember .. **Eph. 4: 11-16** .. *Every joint supplies to every other until all mature.*
  - b. **Heb. 5: 12** – For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food.
3. Don't wait; Jonah had been a prophet for years, but was still in need of growth.

B. God works in the lives of His people to help them mature in the faith.

1. God started off *hurling* a great wind ( **1: 4** ) to prevent Jonah's rebellion succeeding.
2. Then God "appointed" events to happen in Jonah's life.
  - a. **1: 17** ... **A great fish**
  - b. **4: 6** ... **A plant**
  - c. **4: 7** ... **A worm**
  - d. **4: 8** ... **A scorching east wind**
3. God works providentially in the lives of every person, but not all benefit from it.
  - a. **James 1: 2-3** Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials,  
**3** knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance.
  - b. Those that have a bad attitude toward trials do not profit from them.

**C. God desires the hearts of men, but never forces people to change their attitude.**

1. God's providential workings present opportunities for people to learn,.. to develop.
2. Every person makes his own choices and then bears the consequences thereof.
3. Like Jonah, we may have multiple opportunities, but there is no guarantee.

**IV. We must all learn the same lesson that God tried to teach Jonah.**

**A. Jonah had his values all mixed up. ( *He valued things above people.* )**

1. He became upset at the loss of a plant.
  - a. **Vs. 9** ... God asked Jonah if the death of the plant was a good reason to be angry.
  - b. Jonah felt a deep sense of loss when his shade was taken away.
2. Yet, the death of hundreds of thousands of people caused him no sense of loss.
  - a. **Vs. 4** ... God asked Jonah if it was good to be angry that Nineveh had repented.
  - b. The death and eternal destruction of Ninevites was viewed as a benefit.

**B. All mankind belongs to God. ( **We are ... the sheep of His pasture. Psa. 100: 3** )**

1. When ANY soul is lost, God feels a sense of loss.
2. The bible asserts God's ownership of all mankind. ( *Not just Jews or Christians* )
  - a. **Psa. 24: 1** – **The earth is the Lord's, and all it contains, The world,**  
**and those who dwell in it.**
  - b. **Ezek. 18: 4** – **Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as**  
**the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.**

**\* THUS, *when any soul is lost, God suffers lost.***

3. When the souls of the parents are lost, the souls of the children most often follow.
  - a. Children are born innocent, but educated by their parents.
  - b. God cares about the children.
  - c. **Vs. 11** – **Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there**  
**are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between**

their right and left hand, as well as many animals?" ( i.e. 120K *children*

)

\* **THUS, *when a mother is lost, God suffers her loss and the loss of her children.***

**C. It's easy to judge Jonah for caring more about his vine than about those children, but many Christians have exactly the same attitude.**

1. When a tire on your car blows you feel a sense of loss ... **\$120 for a new one.**
  - *Do you have that same sense for the lost soul who is installing the new tire ?*
2. When you lose your job, you are justifiably saddened and very concerned.
  - *Are you just as concerned about the souls of children who are raised in ungodliness ?*
3. When you lose your house in a fire, flood or foreclosure, you are devastated.
  - *When you go to the funeral of one who died outside Christ, are you devastated.*

\* **This is exactly the lesson taught by the vine and Jonah's attitude toward it.**

**Far too many times we place a greater value on things than on souls.**

**D. Some of the parables of Jesus taught us the same lessons we learn from Jonah.**

1. The events of Jonah taught the same lesson as the parable of the older brother.
  - a. We miss the main message of the parable when we concentrate on the prodigal.
  - b. It is true that everyone falls away and God is waiting to receive them back.
  - c. Jonah was just like the Jews who were the target of that parable.

The older brother would not receive the repentant younger back again.

The Jews would not receive non-Jews back into God's grace. (*Jonah ..*

*Nineveh* )

2. Jonah was like the rich man in the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus.
  - a. The rich man worked hard to further his own personal welfare.
  - b. So long as he was taken care of, he hardened his heart toward others.
  - c. He accumulated much, but left it all on this earth when he left.

\* **Earthbound thinking is always spiritually fatal. *God values souls.***

## **CONCLUSION :**

**A. The book of Jonah is not just a great fish story for children's bible classes.**

1. In it we have learned much about God.
2. We have also observed the attitude God wants His servants to have.
  - a. We must surrender our will to His will.
  - b. We must love for all those created by Him.

**B. Chapter four has applied those lessons well.**

1. We must broaden our vision to place a value on ALL souls.
2. Even those we consider to be the most wicked can be reached by the gospel of God.

**C. God wants more than legalistic obedience and service.  
He wants your heart and mine.**

**INVITATION :**

**Lesson Texts :**

**Jonah 3: 10 – 4: 11**

**10** When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked way, then God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do *it*.

**Chapter 4**

**1** But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry. **2** He prayed to the LORD and said, "Please LORD, was not this what I said while I was still in my *own* country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. **3** "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life." **4** The LORD said, "Do you have good reason to be angry?"

**5** Then Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen in the city. **6** So the LORD God appointed a plant and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head to deliver him from his discomfort. And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant. **7** But God appointed a worm when dawn

came the next day and it attacked the plant and it withered. **8** When the sun came up God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with *all* his soul to die, saying, "Death is better to me than life."

**9** Then God said to Jonah, "Do you have good reason to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "I have good reason to be angry, even to death." **10** Then the LORD said, "You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work and *which* you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight.

**11** Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know *the difference* between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?"

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