

Recap of Jonah chapter 3

- Jonah finally obeys God and delivers the message to the Ninevites.
- The Ninevites respond positively and immediately, from the highest to the lowest person.
- A great fast and wearing of sackcloth as a sign of remorse and repentance is decreed by the king and nobility.
- The Lord sees their good works and does not overthrow them.

Jonah chapter 4

Verse 1

But it displeased (annoyed, offended, irritated, disturbed) Jonah exceedingly (extremely, greatly), and he became angry (mad, furious, enraged).

- What was the real reason for Jonah's anger? Self-righteousness.
- Did Jonah have the right to be displeased with God's decision to forgive the Ninevites?
- It is wrong - always wrong - to disapprove of God for what he does and permits.

(Genesis 18:25)

"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?"

It is arrogant for finite, sinful creatures to disapprove of God for what he does and permits.

(Revelation 16:7)

"Yes, O Lord God, the Almighty, true and righteous are Your judgments".

- Was Jonah justified in being angry at God?

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth as a propitiation (appeasement) by His blood, through faith, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His forbearance God had passed over the sins that were previously committed, to demonstrate at the present time His righteousness, that He might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

- Jonah still demonstrates his lack of faith in God.

Verse 2

So he prayed (addressed) to the Lord (The gracious and merciful one), and said, Ah (used as an exclamation of pain, pity, surprise, complaint), Lord, (gracious and merciful one), was not this what I said when I fled my Country? (Canaan, or Galilee, or in Gath-hepher) (Show map)

Therefore I fled (run away from) previously to Tarshish;

- In a nutshell, I sinned/ disobeyed you.

For I know (certain, sure in my knowledge) that you are a gracious (tender, compassionate) and merciful (Forgiving, sympathetic) God, slow to anger (patient, long suffering) and abundant (full of) in loving kindness, one who relents from doing harm.

Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

Joel 2:13

So rend your heart, and not your garments; return to the LORD your God, For He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.

Verse 3

Therefore now, (for that reason now), O Lord (mighty, eternal, sovereign), please take my life from me (kill me), for its better for me to die than to live!

- Because of God's mercy to the Ninevites, Jonah is weary of his life.

Verse 4

Then the Lord (gracious one, long suffering, slow to anger) said, is it right for you to be angry?

- In other words, are you acting like a prophet?
- Like a man who fears God?
- Is your anger justified?
- Do you have the right to be angry?
- Every time we are angry with God we are essentially saying God does not know what He is doing?
- Every time we are angry with God for showing mercy to, and forgiving our enemies we are essentially saying that we are better than them.
- But what should be our attitude according to the bible?

Philippians 2:3

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteems others better than himself.

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Verse 5

So Jonah went out of the city (out of danger) and sat (waited) on the east side of the city. (On the east side which was higher ground and which he presumed to be safer).

There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, (he wasn't planning on going anywhere just in case God changes His mind and destroys Nineveh).

- Till he might see what would become of the city.
- The forty days had not yet expired. Maybe just maybe, the Lord would overthrow them.

Verse 6

And the Lord God (Jehovah Jireh) prepared (made provision) a plant,

- The bible does not specify which plant. All we know is that it grew quickly and was able to reinforce Jonah's temporary shelter which would eventually wither from the sun as he waited in vain.

And made it come over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver (rescue, save) him from his misery (sorrow, distress).

So Jonah was very grateful (thankful, appreciative) for the plant.

- God shows Jonah how powerful and awesome He is by miraculously growing a plant from nowhere to provide shade.
- God also shows Jonah more and more mercy and kindness, by providing him shade which was ironical considering that Jonah did not want God to show mercy to the Ninevites. And he Jonah basked in it. He was very grateful.

Verse 7

But as morning dawned the next day God prepared (allowed, ordained) a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered.

- The destruction caused by the worm was to show Jonah where his true values lay.
- Some say, to teach Jonah a lesson about his materialistic attitude.
- The same God Who prepared a plant for shelter the previous day also prepared a worm to damage the plant the very next day.
- What attitude should Jonah have had at this moment?

Job 1:21

And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD."

- Though Jonah saw grace in his own life, he did not desire the same grace for the Ninevites.

Verse 8

And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared (ordained) a vehement (Intense, fierce, violent) east wind. And the sun beat, on Jonah's head so that he grew faint (weak, exhausted, worn out).

- Some say he may have experienced sunstroke (**dehydration and severe burns from overexposure to the heat from the sun**)
- They say that people over 50 are more likely to experience it. It can kill or cause damage to the brain and other internal organs.

Then he wished for death himself; and said, it's better for me to die than to live.

Proverbs 30:4

Who has ascended into heaven, or descended? Who has gathered the wind in His fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established all the ends of the earth? What is His name, and what is His Son's name, if you know?

- God continues to show Jonah His awesome power by controlling the weather, the elements.
- God also continues to create discomfort for Jonah to further show him where his values lie.

Verse 9

Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

- The plant was a representation of God's mercy and covering upon Nineveh.

Romans 9:12

It was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." So then it is not of him, who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy.

- Jonah need to learn God's values than to hold fast to his own values which were flawed and corrupted by his human nature and understanding.

And he said, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!"

- Jonah was totally given over to a materialistic way of thinking. He wanted to die because his shelter (**comfort**) had been taken away because that is all he cared about.
- Where do our values lie?

Verse 10

But the LORD (the sovereign one) said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored (worked, toiled, sweated, struggled), nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night.

- Jonah shows more concern for a worthless plant whose origins he did not orchestrate because he was getting something from it. It was making him comfortable.

- Yet the thing he cared for more than Nineveh was fleeing. Here one night and gone the next.

Verse 11

And should I (Yahweh, the great I AM, the merciful one) not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left-and much livestock?"

- That great city; a stately structure, which cost immense treasures, was the labour of almost one million and half of labourers, through eight years, the great wonder of that world.
- They say that God was referring to 120,000 children alone who couldn't tell the difference between their left and right hand in Nineveh. This was a 5th of the population. Meaning that the total population of Nineveh was about 600,000 people and over.
- God was challenging Jonah saying that if he did not care about the entire population of Nineveh then at least he should care about 120,000 children who can't distinguish right from wrong.

Conclusion

Jonah cared more for his materialistic needs than for the lives of hundreds of thousands, yet, to God, all life is valuable. All Jonah needed to do was to submit to God, 100% and trust that He knew what he was doing and whatever he was doing was good.

Application

It is easy for our self-righteous, earthly and materialistic mind sets to blind us from what God intends to do for us and through us. It's not for us to choose who God will bless and who God will curse. Or who God will pardon and who God will punish.

Romans 3:10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one;

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

We have never earned the right to be angry at God. If we get angry at God like Jonah, we will always be the losers.