

Jonah 4

The Sovereignty of God

Themes in the book of Jonah: The Pursuing heart of God

A) He is the God of the 2nd Chance { Shows mercy

B) But another major theme of the book of Jonah is the Sovereignty of God

1) **What is the Sovereignty of God?** Put simply:

That means that God does what He wants / when He wants and How He wants – and whatever He does is always perfect.

C) Jonah struggles with the Sovereignty of God

We saw that Ch.3 ended in a Revival – 600,000 Ninevites turning to God

A) Now if the Bible was a book of stories made up by men, the Book of Jonah would have ended right there.

B) This is great story, an evil empire, a stubborn prophet, a Compassionate, Longsuffering God.

1) The stubborn prophet breaks down and delivers God's message to the evil empire,

2) they repent and God holds off His judgment and everyone lives happily ever after.

C) That's how man would end it.

But you see this is not a story conceived in the mind of man, it's a work of the Spirit that is designed to show us the heart of man and the heart of God.

A) So as we came to Ch.4 – We saw that Jonah wasn't excited about that

CH.4:1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry.

B) Noted that the English words that are used here don't even come close to conveying what this actually says in the Hebrew.

D The literal Hebrew here would go something like this, **"But it was evil to Jonah, a great wickedness and he was burning."**

The repentance of these people & God's subsequent mercy, was viewed by Jonah as a grave injustice.

A) In his mind, God had actually done evil, He had violated His own holiness & it was burning Jonah up.

B) Jonah says to God in v.2 This is why I didn't want to go to Nineveh because I knew this is what you would do – because you are **a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.**

C) I knew if they repented you would forgive them – and quite frankly God I don't like them –

1) I wanted to see them Judged

3 "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!"

Here is what is happening – God is drawing outside of the lines – and Jonah doesn't like it.

A) Jonah has created a box that He wants God to fit in / Set parameters for God to function in – **God is not staying in those parameters**

B) God's grace and mercy and forgiveness and loving kindness was fine when it applied to Israel,

1) it was great when it saved Jonah out of the belly of the great fish.

C) But it **was not so fine** when it was applied to pagan Gentiles and it was down right evil when it was applied to Israel's enemies.

D) Jonah was mad because these wonderful attributes of God weren't working in Jonah's favor /

1) God wasn't doing what Jonah thought He should do

E) So God is going to give Jonah a little object lesson in the Sovereignty of God

V.4 Then the LORD said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

A) Note Jonah doesn't even answer – He just leaves

B) I am out of here: That is usually the reaction of someone who Knows they are wrong! **They Run**

5 So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city.

A) Now what is Jonah doing here? Remember, his message was “40 days and Nineveh will be destroyed.”

B) **If all of this repentance took place in ten or fifteen days, then there was still time for the Ninevites to blow it and return to their sin and wickedness.**

C) **If they did, God could still wipe them out and he would have a ring side seat.**

1) I believe that this is what Jonah was hoping for.

Have to wonder what the People of Nineveh were thinking about Jonah – Mom why does that Prophet man seem so mad at us?

A) **I wonder if many unbelievers feel that way about the Church – Why do they seem so mad at us?**

B) **A lot of Christians come across like they are mad at the World. What should be our stance? –**

1) What do we see in Jesus?

2) Hate sin but love the sinner. Hate sin/ hate injustice ? **But we need to love the sinner**

C) **Seeing people the way that Jesus did is seeing them as being sheep without a shepherd . People in need of direction / People in need of Forgiveness**

Been said : Forgiveness is the deepest need of man and the highest achievement of God

A) **Mercy imitates God and irritates Satan.**

B) **If you want to be like God, be merciful. Be forgiving. Be slow to anger /**

1) Slow to criticize, slow to find fault.

C) **So it seems that Jonah is sitting there hoping that things fall apart –**

1) And that Nineveh gets judged anyway.

D) **Jonah is angry and depressed – focus is in the wrong place**

Reminded me of the story of the Grandkids who played a joke on their grandpa – Grandpa was a sound sleeper

Each afternoon Grandpa would lie down for a nap. One day, the kids decided to put Limburger cheese in his moustache. It wasn't long before he awoke sniffing.

“Why, this room stinks,” he said as he got up and went out into the kitchen. He wasn't there long until he decided that the **kitchen smelled too**, so he walked outdoors for a breath of fresh air. Much to Grandpa's surprise, the open air brought no relief, and he proclaimed, **“The whole world stinks!”**

That's the kind of mood Jonah is in. As far as Jonah is concerned, “the whole world stinks.”

A) God saw that Jonah needed an attitude adjustment.

B) **There he sits, feeling sorry for himself, & judging the city God had just pardoned!**

1) Here is a guarantee recipe for depression: Do what Jonah did & remove yourself from people.

C) Hey if you want to be miserable do what Jonah did – Isolate yourself from people and sit back from **a distance and watch and analyze and JUDGE**

D) Here are 10 steps to overcoming depression:
Step one: Do something good for someone else.
Step 2: Repeat step one, 9 times!

The place where Jonah should have been – in the city encouraging these new converts – discipling them and teaching them

A) But instead where was he – a spectator on an hill side

B) If you want to be blessed get out there and Minister.

Now at this point If I were God I would have blasted Jonah the 500 miles back into the middle of the Mediterranean, & this time had him pick up not by a big fish, by **a small shark w/big teeth!...**but that's not what God did –

He is way more gracious than I.

We see God's response in the next verse? 6 And the LORD God prepared a plant and made it

come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant.

A) Here is what God does – he looks at Jonah pouting because God just saved 600,000 people that Jonah was hoping would burn in Hell. ...

B) God says: I think I'll bless him by bringing him shade from the hot Middle Eastern sun.

1) **Isn't that amazing?**

C) Here we have for the 1st & only time in the book, that Jonah is **happy!**.. **Grateful** = rejoiced w/great joy

1) Over his own personal comfort being met!

D) This is Jonah's problem is he is so self absorbed all he can think about is himself

Jonah has his shade and he is happy – but God is going to mess with him here –

A) Here comes His object lesson on the Sovereignty of God.

7 But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. 8 And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint.

Then he wished death for himself, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

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

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

What a "pouty baby"! { I couldn't have handled Jonah at this moment!

A) **Q:** Has the Lord ever asked you this... "Is it right for you to be angry?"

B) **At your wife?** At your Husband? At someone else in the Body of Christ? **At your Boss?**

1) At God Things are not going the way I wanted Lord

D) The truth of the matter is this: We can be just like Jonah – things don't go our way –

1) **Disappointed with God – Angry –**

E) God in His grace instead of blasting Jonah will seek to reason with Jonah

10 But the LORD said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. 11 And should I 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?"

God says to Jonah you are grieving over a gourd? A) But what about the 120,000 Children in Nineveh who are too young to even know their right hand from their left ?

B) I know that you are angry at the adults and their evil ways – and horrible cruelty

1) But what about the kids – what about the livestock

C) God is asking Jonah where is your compassion? Where is your mercy?

Two things we learn from this:

#1 A lesson on God's Priority!

A) The plant was temporal; people are eternal.

B) The plant was of little value; people are highly valued.

1) Jonah cared for the destiny of 1 plant; God cared for the spiritual destiny of 1000's of people.

C) Jonah played no part in making the plant grow; God had every part in creating the Ninevites.

D) The lesson is clear: not only does God's concern for people go beyond Israel, but He is totally justified in doing so.

1) The lesson of Jonah reminds us that God is the creator of all people.

Jonah thought that the things that were important to him, should be important to God.

A) And so he fixed his eyes on them and wouldn't look any place else.

B) That led to nothing but frustration.

1) But what God wants is for Jonah and us to see things from His perspective.

C) He is a lover of People. All people – all races / all colors

1) He wants to give us His eyes and His heart for the world.

#1 A lesson on God's Priority!

#2 Lesson on God's sovereignty:

A) What right do I have to question God?

Isaiah 55:6-11

6 Seek the LORD while He may be found,

Call upon Him while He is near.

7 Let the wicked forsake his way,

And the unrighteous man his thoughts;

Let him return to the LORD,

And He will have mercy on him;

And to our God,

For He will abundantly pardon.

God enjoys showing grace to the repentant sinner

Sometimes we don't get that

8 "For My thoughts are not your thoughts,

Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD.

9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth,

So are My ways higher than your ways,

And My thoughts than your thoughts.

10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, but water the earth,

and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

So Who am I to question what God does? Who he chooses to show mercy to

A) His ways are higher – His thoughts are higher – so beyond us – But His word doesn't return void

B) It goes forth and accomplishes what God wants it to accomplish.

C) Our Problem is we want everything has to make sense to us.

1) We think God should act this way: Respond in that way

D) People are most disappointed with God when life throws them a Changeup –

1) Wait – that wasn't supposed to happen.

Romans 11:33-36

33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

34 "For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?"

35 "Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?"

36 For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

NKJV

E) We say It wasn't supposed to work that way. – God says **trust me – I know what I am doing.**

Tension in scripture: God's Sovereignty and man's responsibility

A) Election / Free will / God's foreknowledge

B) For 100's and 100's of yrs some of the greatest minds in the Church have wrestled with these things – **REALLY NO ANSWER**

C) Every answer only puts God in a box – sets him in parameters and ignores the verses where God is clearly drawing outside of those parameters

D) What is the solution – the conclusion – He is God and I am not {Fun to wrestle but no answer****

E) His ways are higher than my ways – His thoughts than my thoughts

1) God's word is going to accomplish what he wants it to accomplish.

Remember what God said to Job? Job was questioning God's dealings in his life.

A) Questioning the way that God was doing things

Job 38:1-4

Then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:

2 "Who is this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge? 3 Now prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me.

4 "Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding.

5 Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it? 6 To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone,

God would continue Where were you when I put the stars in place – gave the oceans their boundaries

When made the heavens – atmosphere and space and set their boundaries

Have you ever commanded the sun to come up or to set?

Read Job 38 fascinating: Question God reveals his sovereignty –

Now does that mean that God is saying – Don't question me? No not necessarily

A) Saying just remember who it is that we are talking to – that His ways are so beyond ours

B) Rest in that! – rejoice in that!

1) We serve a big God – Great God – that is who we belong to

C) That is who makes Himself available to us

**1) Every task and challenge – He is there for us
GLORIOUS**

Did Jonah get it? Not sure really. – We notice that the book ends abruptly

A) I think that is a clue: You see I ask you this question – Who wrote this book – Jonah

B) Said all along the focus of the book of Jonah is not Jonah it is God

1) God's pursuing love / God giving 2nd chances / God showing mercy – God being Sovereign

C) The main Character is God – Jonah is just a supporting actor

1) Jonah the writer appropriately gives God the final word

D) I personally think that is an indication for us – Jonah got it

Jewish tradition says that after God said the words of Jonah 4:11, Jonah then fell on his face and said: "Govern your world according to the measure of mercy, as it is said, To the Lord our God belong mercy and forgiveness." (Daniel 9:9)

A) We can only hope that Jonah - and we - would have such a humble response.

B) I am told that the painter Michelangelo did a painting that hangs in the Sistine Chapel there in Rome called "The Prophets and the Apostles"

C) And there is one face that stands out as having a far more radiant countenance than any other.

And that is the Prophet Jonah.

It seems like Michelangelo also believed that Jonah got the message of God's wonderful grace and mercy that goes out to all.

A) We can't be totally positive about Jonah – But we can be about ourselves

B) Maybe you have been one who has said – What about this what about that

Excuses for not trusting God - Stop today!