

Jonah 4 God's Compassion

Themes we have seen in the book of Jonah: **The Pursuing heart of God**

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

B) But another major theme of the book of Jonah is **the compassion of God.**

C) His compassion on the Prodigal prophet Jonah
And His compassion on the wicked city of Nineveh

Recap – Saw last time that Jonah finally gets with the program.

A) After Jonah cries out to God in the belly of the fish

Vows – I will go

B) God has the ship vomit Jonah onto the beach

1) Jonah goes to Nineveh to preach the words that God would tell him to say.

C) Saw it was a simple sermon – 8 words in English 5 words in Hebrew V.4

1) **Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!**

Now we noted last time that the word overthrown has a dual meaning – Destroyed – also changed.

A) The outcome would be up to them – how they would respond to the Word of the Lord

B) Nineveh responded in Repentance – They responded in Humility – Sackcloth ashes

1) Responded in brokenness – **crying out – Mighty cry**

C) They responded in Surrender – Fasting

D) The King led the way: Turn from our evil ways and perhaps God will spare us

E) All the marks of a Great Revival!!!!!!

Preachers Dream - That's a, "Let's grab the cooler of Gatorade. Let's dump it on Jonah's head. Moment

A) If that were today – Jonah would be booked at every church conference,

B) Invited to speak all over the world. Tell us what God did!

C) Mel Gibson – calling about a Movie!

D) This was a supernatural work of God – a major once in a life time outpouring of God's Spirit

1) You would think Jonah would be ecstatic

E) Rejoicing in the Grace and goodness of God!
NOPE

CH. 4:1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. {COME AGAIN – REALLY

What is wrong with this guy?

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

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

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

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

D) That is the idea here in the Hebrew

Then Jonah says to God in v.2 So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. ³ Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for *it is* better for me to die than to live!" {Really?

A) 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

B) **So just let me die! – Better! Where we left Jonah**

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 downright evil when it was applied to Israel's enemies.

D)Now at this point If I were God I would have blasted Jonah the 500 miles back into the Med Sea

E)this time had him pick up not by a big fish, by a **Big shark w/big teeth!...**

1) but that's not what God did –He is way more gracious than I.

God is going to give Jonah an object lesson in Compassion - 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 overturned."**

B) If all of this repentance took place in a few 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. He is waiting for.

D)He should have been in the middle of the city encouraging and discipling these new converts

1)But instead he detaches himself – goes outside the city to sulk – and hope for it's doom.

We see God's Compassionate 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)This is the first time in the entire story where Jonah is seen as being happy 😊

B)God looks at Jonah pouting because God just saved an entire city that Jonah was hoping would burn in Hell. ...

C)Jonah is sitting and sulking on the hill outside the city –

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

D)Isn't that amazing ?- God you are too much !!!

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 Compassion 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."** **Drama queen**

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

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

1) Disappointed with God – Angry –

D) 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?

The word pity in our Bibles – word compassion

A) God says – You had compassion on the plant – that you had nothing to do with in creating

B) Why shouldn't I have compassion on these pp that I actually created –

What is the compassion of God?

A) It's a very strong word. It is a word that speaks of heart attachment –

B) Your heart is attached to someone or something. To the point where your heart can be broken

1) Moves you at the very core of your being

C) This is a word that actually means to grieve.

1) It means to mourn over someone who you love who has died.

What God is saying here is, “Jonah, you got your heart attached to the plant so that when it died, you died.

A) Your heart was so attached to it that what affected it affected you.”

B) Then God turns around and says, “You had compassion on the plant.

1) Well, I have compassion on people. I have attached myself to people.

C) I have compassion on this huge city.

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.

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

D) Jonah cared for the destiny of 1 plant; God cared for the spiritual destiny of over 120,000 people.

Now that's amazing. Do you know why?

A) God doesn't need people.

B) God doesn't need anything. God made everything. God does not depend on anything.

C) Everything is dependent on him.

D) God is utterly and perfectly happy in himself, and he doesn't need us,

1) so why would he get attached to us?

You *are* a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm- **GOD IS LOVING**

A) That is his nature – His heart

B) Think of it this way – take Ants – like Ants ? - Ant farm?

C) I don't like Ants -**Fell into a Red Ant hill – don't like things crawling on me -**

1) Don't like ants – don't need ants – Ants in my opinion serve no good purpose.

D) So when I see Ants – I kill them – outside spray

1) inside Denise allergies – little more finesse –

But let's say one day I suddenly had compassion/ Hear attached to them –

A) I can't bear the thought of them being killed

B) Devise a Rescue plan –

1) I find where they were coming in and sought to divert them to a new location – My neighbor's house 😊

C) Chocolate cake crumbs – his back yard

No seriously I set up an Ant castle in the back yard – where they can have a ball -

A) You would think – Pastor Rob is really into Ants

Wonder why really into Ants – odd

B) Doesn't make sense

1) From heaven's view point that is how it would seem- odd that God would attach himself that way to people

C) Accept when they factor into the equation – the Character of God - **gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness**

E) Then it makes perfect sense!

He was moved by their condition

A) Look closely at what he says.

Aa) He doesn't just say, **“Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 residents**

B) He doesn't stop there. The Source of his grief?

1) There are 120,000 people who cannot discern their right hand from their left.

C) What does this mean? – Commentators are divided – **Minority – ref more than 120,000 Babies**

1) Young one's who can't discern right hand from left

D) If that is the case it would put the population of Nineveh somewhere – between 600K – 1 million

1) Very large for that time period

E) Also it would seem that the sole reason that God had compassion on the people was for these kids

1) Which doesn't seem to fit with the flow of the story

So other commentators see this as more of a description of the condition of their hearts

A) They call this a very evocative Hebraism.

B) It's a way of saying they are spiritually blind, they're spiritually lost,

1) and they don't know how they should live their lives.

C) Similar to the heart of Jesus – Multitudes – Compassion – like sheep without of Shepherd

Or even when he prayed from the cross – **Father forgive them – they don't know what they are doing**

A) Even – though Jesus claimed to be God in human flesh – Claimed to be Messiah –

B) They ignored the signs. Ignored his word – Still said – Father forgive what doing

1) No idea – Crucifying the son of God

C) God looks down at that kind of spiritual fog, that spiritual confusion,

1) that spiritual blindness, that spiritual stupidity, and he doesn't say, “You idiots.”

D) He has compassion. He's moved. He's grieved.

1) The first aspect of God's compassion

The second aspect of God's compassion –

It means to be moved by someone's trouble, moved by someone's problem, moved by someone's condition, their suffering, or their difficulty, **and to want to do something about it.**

In the Case of Nineveh God sent his prophet Jonah – in the Case of the world – God sent his Son Jesus

A) The story of Jonah points forward to one greater than Jonah – JESUS

B) The book of Jonah ends with God having compassion on this city - attaching himself to it

C) That reminds us of Jesus – Wept over the city of Jerusalem – Oh Jerusalem..... not willing

1) it broke his heart

D) Despite their hard heartedness and rebellion – Jesus attached himself in the Ultimate way

- **Jonah is fuming over the city**
- **Jesus is weeping over the city**

➤ **Jonah goes outside the city rooting for its condemnation**

➤ **Jesus goes outside of the city to purchase its salvation**

➤ **Jonah detached himself from the city – no compassion**

➤ **Jesus attached himself to the city – was full of compassion**

Jesus attached himself in the ultimate way – Became sin for us

For He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:21

➤ **He who was sin free became sin filled, so that those who were sin filled could become sin free.**

So here is the question I want to leave us with today – **Who do you want to be more like Jonah or Jesus?**

I 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.

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!”**

C) A lot of Christians – **THE WORLD STINKS**

1) Lord come back – get us out of here

D) **But God has compassion on our world**

The Lord is not slack concerning *His* promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. 2 Peter 3:9

What should be our Attitude?

A) What do we see in Jesus ?

B) 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 .

1) **People in need of direction / People in need of Forgiveness**

If we are being Honest

A) We should be those who are full of compassion because – we have received compassion

B) We should be **forgiving – because we have been forgiven of so much**

C) We should be **dispensers of great grace and mercy** because **we have been shown such great grace and mercy**

D) We should be those **who are patient** – God has been very patient with us

We should seek to attach ourselves to those who are hurting – without Christ

A) Because Jesus **attached himself to us** – Became flesh and blood

B) **Who are we going to be more like – Jonah who sought to detach himself from sinners**

1) Or Jesus who attached himself to sinners – that they might be rescued

Close today – I want you to notice how the story ends

Cliffhanger

A) **The entire story has been one of God pursuing Jonah, first with a fearsome storm,**

B) **then with gentle questions and reasoning.**

C) **Yet even though the methods vary, the purpose remains the same.**

1) God wants Jonah to see himself, to recognize the ways that he continues to deny God's grace

2) **and the ways he holds on to self-righteousness.**

God poses one final question: “You don’t want me to have compassion on Nineveh, but shouldn’t I?”

A) In light of all I’ve shown you, Jonah—should I not love this city, and should you not join me?”

B) Without an answer, the book ends!

C) We are never told what Jonah’s response was, whether he understood and accepted the logic of God’s mercy.

D) We feel that there must be a missing page.

Why would the story end so abruptly?

A) Many commentators suggest: “[The book] forces us to contemplate our personal destiny.

B) It remains unfinished in order that we may provide our own conclusion. . . .

1) For you are Jonah; I am Jonah.”

C) It is as if God shoots this arrow of a question at Jonah, but Jonah disappears,

1) and we realize that the arrow is aimed at us.

D) How will we answer?

Are we going to treat others the way that Jesus has treated us?

A) Will we be dispensers of His grace and mercy? Or will we hold on to pride, prejudice, bitterness?

B) What will the world see in us the most – Jonah or Jesus?

C) The Love of God has been poured into our hearts by the Holy Spirit

1) We will allow His love to be poured out of us – to the people in our sphere of influence

D) To a hurting -sick – dark – world – that Jesus loves and has compassion for?