

NORTH CHRISTIAN CHURCH PREP SCHOOL LESSON

Jonah Part 4

When we last left Jonah, he had just shared God's warning with the Ninevites and, great news, they repented from their sinful ways! Jonah was overjoyed, worshipping the Lord for His grace and mercy, right?

Jonah 4:1 *"But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry."*

Wait... whaaaattt???!!! Jonah was God's prophet, sent out by God, Himself, to warn sinners to repent before they were destroyed. His mission was a success! Why in the world was He angry? Remember how we said before that the Assyrians were enemies of the Jewish people and that Jonah clearly did not want them to be shown God's mercy? This was why Jonah initially disobeyed God's command to go to Nineveh. One would think that after God's discipline and then mercy towards Jonah that he would have experienced a change of heart when it came to these people. You would expect that he would rejoice when God showed them mercy like was shown to him, but, as we read in the verse above, he absolutely did not! How did the Lord Jesus Christ command us to think about and treat our enemies?

Matthew 5:44 *"But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you,"*

It seems that Jonah forgot about this command. He even admitted to God that He did not want the Ninevites to be shown mercy and that is exactly why he got on a ship for Tarshish. He then tells God that he is so upset about it, he just wants to die.

Jonah 4:3 *"Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."*

God allows Jonah to keep pouting for a bit, even when he decides to camp outside the city. He was waiting to see and hoping that God would change His mind and destroy it, instead. Does God just ignore Jonah's evil attitude? Does God ever let any of us get away with sin?

Galatians 6:7-8 *"Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life."*

Next, we see how God teaches Jonah a lesson. Jonah had built a little shelter for protection from the sun as he waited outside the city. So, God grew him a plant to provide even more shade, which made Jonah "extremely happy" (**Jonah 4:6**). Jonah spent the night there, still hoping for the destruction of Nineveh. He woke up to this lesson from God...

Jonah 4:7 *“But God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day and it attacked the plant and it withered and died.”*



Then, the Bible says that God sent in a “scorching” (very, very hot) wind and caused the sun to beat down on Jonah’s head. Jonah became extremely hot and faint and, again, asked God to kill him. God asks him if he has good reason to be angry about the plant and Jonah says he does, “even to death” (**Jonah 4:9**). Jonah is being a bit dramatic at this time, yes? We all tend to get that way when we are uncomfortable. Anyway...

Jonah 4:10 *“But the Lord said, ‘You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?’”*

Do you see the lesson God is trying to teach Jonah? Jonah liked the plant because it made him comfortable, shading him from the sun. He was upset when it died because the loss of it made him uncomfortable. He cared about the plant and its life for selfish reasons. With the same selfish attitude, he did not care about the people of Nineveh and actually wanted them to die. He cared more about the life of the plant than for the people! Well, God created the plant, as well as all of the people and animals in Nineveh. He cares for His creation, not for selfish reasons but because HE created it. He has mercy and compassion because that is just who He is. God is trying to show Jonah how unmerciful he is being, and also that he is, selfishly, hoping for God to be unmerciful just because he does not like these people.

The book ends rather abruptly with the verse above; it is like God “dropped the mic”! (lol) We have learned so many wonderful lessons in this series, let us review them. We learned the importance of obedience to God, that we cannot run or hide from Him, and that no one gets away with anything. We learned that God desires us to repent from our sin and shows us mercy by disciplining us and getting us all alone when we need it. We have seen how God can use our discipline to reveal His glory and power to others, including unbelievers. We have learned that God always does what He says He will, that we will not always understand the reasons for what He does or allows, but we can always trust Him because He is perfect, fair, gracious, merciful, compassionate, faithful, and patient.

Psalm 89:8 *“Who is like you, Lord God Almighty? You, Lord, are mighty, and your faithfulness surrounds you.”*