

## **Jonah: The Pouting Prophet**

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### I. The connection between chapters three and four.

- A. In chapter three, God is ministering through Jonah to a city. In chapter four, God is ministering to Jonah as an individual.
- B. We see God's power to redeem in chapter three and God's power to refine in chapter three.
- C. God teaches Jonah three courses in chapter four:
  - 1. A course in attitude. (Jonah 4:1-4)
  - 2. A course in consistency. (Jonah 4:5-8)
  - 3. A course in perspective. (Jonah 4:9-11)

### II. Jonah's course in attitude. (Jonah 4:1-4)

- A. The chapter begins with the connective "but." Chapter three ends with Nineveh repenting and Jonah remonstrating. He was greatly displeased with the repenting Ninevites and was angry at God for not destroying the city.
- B. We find God in the hands of an angry sinner. Have you ever been ticked off at God?
- C. Jonah prays to God and says that he fled to Tarshish to avoid this precise outcome.
- D. Jonah refers to being in "my own country." Jonah thought he had a corner on the grace of God, but nobody does.
- E. Jonah believes five things:
  - 1. God is gracious.
  - 2. God is compassionate.
  - 3. God is slow to anger.
  - 4. God is abundant in loving-kindness.
  - 5. God is one who relents concerning calamity.
- F. The truths that Jonah believed did not control his life. He did not want to be the channel of a loving, compassionate, and gracious God.
- G. Jonah did the right things with the wrong attitude. God never had Jonah's heart.
- H. The emphasis of the Word of God is never on what you are doing but on why you are doing it.

I. We often think that when we do the will of God we are finished. But the issue is why we have done the will of God.

J. This sin comes up a number of times in the minor prophets and God asks the Israelites to stop bringing their offerings because the gifts given without one's heart make Him sick.

K. Jonah is upset and embarrassed because his prophecy will not be fulfilled.

L. God asks Jonah if he has good reason to be angry? Do we have good reason to be angry?

M. The evangelical community is covered with bitter, hostile, resentful people.

N. Believers are called to get rid of anger, bitterness, wrangling, slander, and malice.

(Ephesians 4:31)

O. Our attitudes hurt others.

P. Believers are called to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, and forgiving to one another (Ephesians 4:32).

Q. God's attitude toward you should be the pattern of our attitude towards other people.

### III. Jonah's course in consistency. (Jonah 4:5-8)

A. Jonah answers God's question by leaving the city and making a shelter in the shade. He's waiting to see what will happen to the city.

B. God appoints three things:

1. A plant. (Jonah 4:6)

a. Jonah was extremely happy about the plant.

b. Jonah was angry about the conversion of the Ninevites and happy about the creation of a plant.

c. What we are angry and happy about say a lot about our spiritual condition.

d. Jonah is more attached to things than people. He is turned on by things and turned off by the lost.

2. A worm. (Jonah 4:7)

a. A worm or perhaps a group of worms attack the plant and it withers.

3. A wind. (Jonah 4:8)

a. Another disaster comes to get Jonah's attention.

- b. This is a blistering wind that is very powerful and destructive.
- c. The wind and sun bear down on Jonah and he becomes faint. Jonah feels physically what God feels spiritually.
- d. Jonah responds by asking to die. This is the only unanswered prayer in the book and there are prayers in each chapter.

1. The sailors pray in chapter one – its prayer and fear.
2. Jonah prays in chapter two – its prayer and faith.
3. The Ninevites pray in chapter three – its prayer and fasting.
4. Jonah prays again in chapter four – its prayer and foolishness.

C. Why didn't God answer Jonah's prayer? God is far more concerned in developing a man than in having someone to deliver His message. God is still interesting in the life of Jonah.

D. God is dealing with Jonah with grace but Jonah is not responding in kind.

E. God's acceptance of you becomes the basis of your acceptance of others. We are to love others not matter what, not based on performance.

F. If we are on a performance basis with God, then we are on a performance basis with everyone else. Where would we be if God dealt with us on the basis of our performance?

#### IV. Jonah's course in perspective. (Jonah 4:9-11)

A. This is the climax of the book because God takes off His mask and reveals His heart. Jonah's heart is also revealed.

B. God asks Jonah if he has reason to be angry with the plant. Jonah says that he does have reason to be angry enough to die.

C. God responds to Jonah by saying that "you" had compassion on the perishing plant, which he did not cause to grow and came up overnight.

D. Then God asks if He should not have compassion about Nineveh, a city with 120,000 children (people who have not matured enough to know the difference between right and left/right and wrong.)

E. Jonah has to learn the difference between what is perishable and what is permanent. This is the mark of spiritual maturity.

1. "I'd rather have leprosy and know God than be a stranger to His grace."

F. Where are you investing your time?

***Everything you are involved in on the planet earth is in the process of perishing except for investing in the spiritual life of people.***

G. When we look into the heart of Jonah, we look into our own hearts.

H. The contrast is between the grace of God and the greed of Jonah.

I. This has been called the Old Testament John 3:16 – it teaches that God loves both lost people and out of touch believers.

J. Just as God chased Jonah, He is chasing you with His love.

K. Everything in this book obeys except for Jonah – the wind, the waves, the plant, and the sun.

L. Though the book ends with a question, we know that Jonah wrote the book. Through the grace of God, Jonah seems to have learned the lesson and then share his story as the runaway prophet.

V. Three questions.

A. How's your attitude?

B. Are you consistent - do I really relate to other people the way God relates to me?

C. How's your perspective - are you working on things that are permanent or perishing?