

Jonah: The Grumpiest Missionary

Week 10: Jonah 4:1-4:4

Jonah preached; Nineveh repented; God relented; now what?

Chapter 4, verse 1

וַיִּרַע אֶל־יְהוָה רַעַה גְּדוֹלָה וַיִּחַר לוֹ:

But this was a great, evil misery to Jonah (Jonah was very displeased), and it was hot for him (he was angry).

Verse 2

וַיִּתְפַּלֵּל אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר אָנֹכָה יְהוָה הֲלוֹא־אָנֹכָה דְּבָרֵי עַד־הַיּוֹתֵי עַל־אֲדָמָתִי עַל־כֵּן קָדַמְתִּי לְבָרֶחַ תְּרַשִׁישָׁה כִּי יָדַעְתִּי כִּי אַתָּה אֱלֹהֵי־חַנּוּן וְרַחוּם אַרְךָ אַפַּיִם וְרַב־חֶסֶד וְנִחָם עַל־הָרָעָה:

So he prayed to the Lord, saying, “O Lord, isn’t this what I said while I was upon my territory (or soil)? On account of this reason I went earlier to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, long of nose (Hebraism for ‘slow to anger’) and great in love, and one who relents from calamity.

Verse 3

וַעֲתָה יְהוָה קַח־נָא אֶת־נַפְשִׁי מִמֶּנִּי כִּי טוֹב מוֹתִי מִחַיִּי:

Now, Lord, take my life from me, for my death is good from my life (Hebrew’s way of saying, ‘it is better for me to die than to live.’).

Verse 4

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה הֲהִיטֵב תִּרְהָ לָּךְ:

But the Lord said, “Is it right that an anger is to you?”

1. Jonah seemed to be doing so well—he did what God had told him to do and reaped the benefits of being a minister of the Word. And yet, after likely waiting for the forty days to expire, he does not respond the way we think he would. What was at the root of Jonah’s anger?
2. Jonah finally tells us why he fled (God knew all along but, until now, we had to speculate). When might Christians today become angry with God over the same things Jonah was angry about—that God is gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, and rich in love?
3. I think we ought to be careful of accusing Jonah of such a terrible thing here that no one else could ever be capable of. Yes, he uses extreme language in the heat of the moment—he was so angry, he didn’t want to live anymore—but what might cause even what we would call strong Christians to say something similar today?

4. There is a right way for a Christian to express their desire to die. What factors must be kept in mind as that desire is expressed?

5. Think through the words of the Lord's Prayer. Which petition(s) would have been good for Jonah to have on his heart?

6. Jonah was displeased that God blessed other people through his ministry. Think about your reaction when someone you are or have been at odds with either a) has something good happen to them or b) has something bad happen.
 - a. What might we feel when someone "who doesn't deserve it" receives a blessing?

 - b. What might we feel when someone "who had it coming" receives bad news?

 - c. Read **Romans 12:9-21**. This question has a simple answer, but it bears asking: who is the only person to perfectly abide by all of these New Testament commands of God? What does that mean for us? Can we just give up, be an angry jerk, and say we're forgiven?
 - i. Are any of the things in Romans 12 easier for you to do? Why do you think that is?

 - ii. When we are struggling to carry out these types of things, whether within our home, in this congregation, or in our daily interactions with strangers, what are the main things we can do to grow in our desire to do good to others, deserving or otherwise?

Closing Prayer *634 These Are the Holy Ten Commands sts. 9 and 4*

"You shall not murder, hurt, or hate; your anger dare not dominate.

Be kind and patient; help, defend, and treat your foe as your friend." Have mercy, Lord!

Our works cannot salvation gain; they merit only endless pain.

Forgive us, Lord! To Christ we flee, who pleads for us endlessly. Have mercy, Lord! Amen.