Day 1: Anger and Prejudice

Jonah 4: Matters of the Heart

John Stott in his book, Authentic Christianity, noted: "We need to repent of the haughty way in which we sometimes stand in judgment upon Scripture and must learn to sit humbly under its judgments instead. If we come to Scripture with our minds made up, expecting to hear from it only an echo of our own thoughts and never the thunderclap of God's, then indeed He will not speak to us and we shall only be confirmed in our own prejudices. We must allow the Word of God to confront us, to disturb our security, to undermine our complacency and to overthrow our patterns of thought and behavior." Jonah did God's will, but deep within his heart he wanted God to destroy the Ninevites. He was prejudiced against them and wanted God to be as well. God will not echo back to us what we want to hear, especially when we are wrong. Today we will find a very unhappy prophet railing against God for His lack of prejudice and lack of judgment upon the Ninevites. Jonah is wrong and appears unwilling to admit it. It is a pathetic day when someone desires to elevate themselves above another, especially considering we are all sinners in need of a savior, and we are saved by grace alone.

RECEIVING God’s Word

Open in Prayer
Read Jonah 4:1-11
Today’s Scripture Focus: Jonah 4:1-3

EXPERIENCING God’s Word

1. Read Jonah 4:1. Why was Jonah upset? With whom was he upset?

a. Explain why his response could be considered strange, given the fact that a whole city had just turned from evil to doing good?
2. Read Jonah 4:2-3. What did Jonah do? What did he say to the Lord?

3. From Jonah 4:2-3, look at the five character qualities Jonah remembered concerning God. Answer the questions in the chart below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>God’s Attribute</th>
<th>How was this demonstrated to Jonah?</th>
<th>How was this demonstrated to the Ninevites?</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gracious &amp; merciful</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Slow to anger</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abundant in loving kindness</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Relents from doing harm</td>
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</tbody>
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4. Explain how Jonah’s response to God’s judgment of the Ninevites could be considered selfish.

5. In Jonah 4:3, Jonah asks God to take his life. Why does Jonah want to die?

6. In Jonah’s response from Jonah 4:1-3, how did Jonah show a prejudice to the Ninevites and why?
a. Define prejudice

b. Read the following verses and note what you learn about what God said concerning prejudices.

Romans 12:3

Galatians 3:28

Ephesians 4:32

Colossians 3:11


ACTING on God's Word

1. If you were to look deep into your heart, would you say you have a prejudice against anyone or any group of people? If so, can you identify what has brought about your prejudice? How do you exhibit this attitude against another person? What can you do so that you are loving others as God commands in His Word?
2. Have you ever been angry when you heard of someone being pardoned for a sin even though they were guilty? Explain. Would you say this could be considered hypocritical? Why or why not?

**DELIGHTING on God’s Word**

“And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.” Ephesians 6:9

Close in Prayer
Day 2: Questions From a Loving God

Jonah 4: Matters of the Heart

When I (Brenda) was in college studying to become a teacher, one of the things I recall studying and using immensely during my career was Bloom’s Cognitive Taxonomy. This was a system I utilized for asking questions that promoted thought. There were six levels to the taxonomy: Knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The knowledge questions were the most basic while the evaluation questions were to be designed to be the most challenging.

Today we find God asking Jonah the most difficult level of questioning on Bloom’s Taxonomy when He asks him to evaluate his own attitude. God did not ask these questions to trick Jonah or make him fail, but rather to help him identify what was in his own heart. God brought these questions up not in condemnation but out of love for Jonah. We learn a lot about Jonah today from how he responds to God, and unfortunately, he continues to harbor not only prejudice (which we saw yesterday) but also anger toward God.

RECEIVING God’s Word
Open in Prayer
Read Jonah 4:1-11
Today’s Scripture Focus: Jonah 4:4-8

EXPERIENCING God’s Word
1. In Jonah 4:4 what question does God ask Jonah? What do you think God was trying to reveal to Jonah by asking this question?

2. How did Jonah answer God?
3. Often God asks us questions in order to test our faith and reveal what we really believe. He also asks us questions to reveal something to us about Himself. Let’s look at the questions God asked other people and see what is revealed. Read the following verses and note what you learn.

a. Read Genesis 3:1-13. List the questions that God asks Adam and Eve. Look at their responses. Why do you think God asked them these questions?

b. Read Matthew 16:13-20. List the questions that Jesus asks His disciples. Look at their responses. What do you think Jesus was trying to reveal in asking these questions?


4. Read Jonah 4:5. What did Jonah do in response to God’s mercy toward Nineveh?

a. Why do you think he waited to see what would become of the city? What do you think he was waiting for?
5. In Jonah 4:6-8 we see God provide something for Jonah’s physical comfort. Jonah responds to God’s provision. Fill in the chart from the verses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List God's Provision</th>
<th>Why did God make his provision?</th>
<th>How did Jonah respond?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v. 6</td>
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<td>v. 7</td>
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<td>v. 8</td>
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6. What do you think God was trying to teach Jonah through His continual provision?

7. List adjectives describing Jonah’s overall attitude toward God’s provisions to this point. What does this say about his heart’s attitude?

8. In Jonah 4:8 what is Jonah’s final response to God? Why do you think Jonah is responding this way again? What does his response indicate?

“The plant (qiqayon) may have been a castor-bean plant (Ricinus communis), which grows rapidly in hot climates to a height of 12 feet and has large leaves. It easily withers if its stalk is injured. The fact that the plant grew overnight shows that the more-than-usual rapid growth was as much a miracle as God providing the fish for Jonah.” (Bible Knowledge Commentary, pg. 1471)
“If, dear friends, like Jonah, you want to complain, you will soon have something to complain of. People who are resolved to fret, generally make for themselves causes for fretfulness.” (Charles Spurgeon)

A.

**ACTING on God’s Word**

1. Jonah’s responses toward God in today’s lesson demonstrate that he is angry with Him. Do you ever think it is appropriate to be angry at God? Explain your answer.

2. When we think about God, many of his wonderful attributes come to mind, like loving, merciful, our creator, and all sufficient One. Have you ever noticed ‘righteous judge’ does not often make the top 10 list of attributes people like to talk about? Why is it easier for some people to accept God’s love and forgiveness but not accept His judgment, sovereignty or unwanted provision?

D.

**DELIGHTING in God’s Word**

“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world.” Philippians 2:14-15

Close in Prayer
Day 3: A Final Lesson

Jonah 4: Matters of the Heart

Have you ever read a book or watched a movie and disliked the ending because it left you hanging without a personally satisfying conclusion? This is how I (Brenda) feel as we come to the end of Jonah. Jonah’s final recorded words are “It is right for me to be angry even unto death!” I wanted the story to end happily with Jonah celebrating the amazing revival in Ninevah, thanking God for sparing his life from the fish despite his disobedience and passing the worm test with flying colors! Yet, this is not what happens. We find Jonah is still angry and ranting at God even after all God has done for him through His various provisions and even after His abundant mercy toward the Ninevites! But just like God, He is still not done with Jonah. He tries once again to help Jonah see his error and redirect him back toward His heart of love for all mankind. This final lesson is where our book ends and we will just have to wait until heaven to hear what became of Jonah after Ninevah.

RECEIVING God’s Word

Open in Prayer
Read Jonah 4:1-11
Today’s Scripture Focus: Jonah 4:9-11

EXPERIENCING God’s Word

1. Read Jonah 4:9. What question does God ask Jonah? Why do you think God asked this question?

2. From this same verse, how does Jonah answer God? What does his response reveal about his overall attitude toward God as well as his attitude toward his circumstances?
3. In Jonah 4:10, what did God point out to Jonah? Rewrite what He says to Jonah in your own words.

4. Define pity.

   a. How did God show pity to Nineveh?

5. In Jonah 4:10-11, what point is God trying to drive home regarding Jonah’s attitude:
   - Toward Himself?
   - Toward God?
   - Toward other people?

6. From Jonah 4:10-11 what point is God trying to make regarding:
   - His care for people & animals?
   - His judgment?
   - His love?

7. Why do you think Jonah ended this book so abruptly?

“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 belongs mercy and forgiveness.” (Daniel 9:9) We can only hope that Jonah - and we - would have such a humble response.” (Dave Guzik commentary)

**ACTING on God’s Word**

The overall title of this study is called “Jonah: Delighting in God’s Will and His Provision.” Let’s review the last four weeks and note what have you learned about doing God’s will in each chapter of Jonah.

**Chapter One:**
What did you learn about delighting in doing God’s will even when you don’t understand it or think it will end well for you personally?

**Chapter Two:**
What did you learn about delighting in doing God’s will when you don’t listen to your feelings but rather respond out of facts and faith?
Chapter Three:
What did you learn about delighting in doing God’s will when you finally submit your own will to God?

Chapter Four:
What did you learn about delighting in doing God’s will when your attitude is right in God’s sight?

DELIGHTING in God’s Word
“Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God; Your Spirit is good. Lead me in the land of uprightness.” Psalm 143:10

Close in Prayer