

The Fathers Heart: Jonah 4
Calvary Chapel Titusville 10/25/26
Pastor Paul Andris

Chapter 3 ended with the greatest revival in the Old Testament.

You'd expect the preacher to be dancing in the streets. Instead, he's sulking on a hillside.

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. – (Jonah 4:1 NKJV)

Heaven threw a party over Nineveh, and Jonah refused to come.

You can be close to the work of God and still far from the heart of God.

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. "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for [it is] better for me to die than to live!" – (Jonah 4:2-3 NKJV)

Jonah rejoiced that God spared him from death. Now he asks to die because God spared someone else.

Then the LORD said, "[Is it] right for you to be angry?" – (Jonah 4:4 NKJV)

When someone you've written off gets saved, blessed, or restored, is it right for you to be angry?

Not every strong feeling is holy, and not all outrage is righteous.

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. – (Jonah 4:5 NKJV)

He's hoping God will change His mind and send the fire anyway.

God calls us to be intercessors for the lost, not spectators of their judgment.

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. – (Jonah 4:6 NKJV)

Jonah loved mercy when it rescued him. He just couldn't stand it when it reached Nineveh.

The real test isn't whether we love mercy for ourselves,

Rather do we rejoice when it reaches someone else.

But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it [so] damaged the plant that it withered. 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." – (Jonah 4:7-8 NKJV)

Here's the irony...

"But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, "that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. – (Matthew 5:44-45 NKJV)

Jonah is devastated over a plant and indifferent to a city.

When our comfort matters more than people,

God may remove the shade to show us what we really love.

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!" – (Jonah 4:9 NKJV)

Jonah digs in: "I have every right to be angry!"

"For My thoughts [are] not your thoughts, Nor [are] your ways My ways," says the LORD. – (Isaiah 55:8 NKJV)

Self-righteousness protects its pride by calling it justice.

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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. "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?" – (Jonah 4:10-11 NKJV)

This is the heart of the whole book.

"Do I have any pleasure at all that the wicked should die?" says the Lord GOD, "[and] not that he should turn from his ways and live? – (Ezekiel 18:23 NKJV)

He is sovereign in it:

For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." – (Romans 9:15 NKJV)

Isaiah foresaw a day when God would say;

whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, "Blessed [is] Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance." – (Isaiah 19:25 NKJV)

God's compassion is always bigger than our concerns.

God's mercy isn't cheap or sentimental... It's costly.

"for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." – (Luke 19:10 NKJV)

That includes you and me:

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), – (Ephesians 2:4-5 NKJV)

We were Nineveh, every one of us.

No one is beyond the reach of mercy. Not Nineveh, not your enemy, and not you.

Jonah's story ends with a question hanging in the air: "Should I not pity Nineveh?"

For judgment is without mercy to the one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgment. – (James 2:13 NKJV)

And John writes;

Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. – (1 John 4:11 NKJV)

The very grace we're tempted to resist is the grace that saved us.

Don't despise the mercy you needed. Become the kind of person who celebrates the mercy God gives.