

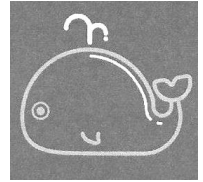


Jonah

October 2023

Jonah 4 Prodigal Prophet

(sermons: Oct 15)



Jonah 4: 1-4 Jonah's Anger

v.2 *a gracious and compassionate God... – Jonah is quoting from Exodus 34:6-7 where God revealed his Name and his character to Moses on Mt Sinai; the words are repeated in other Old Testament verses. Jonah might be happy to see God show this grace to his covenant people to Israel – but not to others.*

1. Why was Jonah angry with God? What did Jonah say that was true? Why couldn't he accept this truth? Why did he feel that his life had lost its meaning so that he might as well die?
2. Do we ever resent God's kindness towards other people? Do we forget the mercy he has shown to us? Do we think some people are beyond the reach of God's mercy and forgiveness? Is our picture of God and of his grace too limited?
3. Was it right for Jonah to be angry (v.4) ? Would God challenge us about the things that make us angry? – or the things about which we show no concern?

Jonah 4: 5-9 The Plant, The Worm and the Wind

v.5 *Jonah had gone out – verses 5 to 8 describe the build-up of Jonah's anger that is described in vv 3-4*

v.6 *God provided... – 'God provided' a leafy plant (v.6), a worm (v.7) and a scorching east wind (v.8)*

4. What was Jonah expecting, or hoping, would happen to Nineveh as he watched at a distance? How would his discomfort have reinforced his negative feelings? Do we over-react to things, or get them out of proportion, when we are suffering in some way?
5. What three things do we read that 'God provided' for Jonah? How did Jonah react to each one? What was God teaching him through this experience? Do we try to see what God is teaching us through good and bad things that happen to us? Do we need to see everything as sent directly by God? Is it sometimes our reactions to circumstances that need to change as much as, or rather than, the circumstances themselves?

Jonah 4: 10-11 God's Concern

v.10 *concerned – literally the word means to have tears in one's eyes. Jesus showed the same concern when he wept over Jerusalem, foreseeing its future destruction (Luke 19:41-44)*

v.11 *people who cannot tell their right hand from their left – ignorant, unable to tell right from wrong*

6. What was Jonah most concerned about? What was God most concerned about?
7. In what ways do we (individually or as a group or as a church) care more about ourselves than others? What helps us to see people and situations more as God sees them? How can we learn to 'love your enemies' (Matthew 5:44) ? What fuels our compassion rather than our anger?

The Book of Jonah as a Whole

8. Share what you think is the main thing that you have learned from the Book of Jonah – about God, about the way he works, about his world, or about ourselves.
9. Which parable(s) of Jesus teach a similar message to the Book of Jonah?