

Let's go ahead start...

This morning we come to the end of the book of Jonah.

FYI - our next book will be a short one as well as we will begin the book of Philippians next Sunday morning, Lord willing.

So as we have been studying the book of Jonah for the past three weeks, two themes have become evident.

1. Theme 1 - God's sovereignty – we see this through God appointing the different props to get His will done: Wind, waves, a great fish, Jonah and we will continue to see His sovereignty this morning.

2. Theme 2 - God's love for all – Nineveh was a gentile nation, and we see God's grace and mercy extended beyond the nation of Israel.

Adding to God's love for all. we also see that love, grace and mercy extended to those that have gone astray. And this certainly is something that we should be thankful for - since we all fail.

None of us would be here right now if our God was not the God of 2nd chances. Amen.

So, before we get started today, turn with me real quick to Luke 15 – we will be visiting Luke 15 later on in the study as well, so leave a bookmark here.

**[Luk 15:4-7 NKJV] 4 "What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? 5 "And when he has found [it], he lays [it] on his shoulders, rejoicing. 6 "And when he comes home, he calls together [his] friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' 7 "I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.**

I want to remind you about God's love for you and me – think about this parable as we read chapter four today.

God never abandons us, we abandon Him. We become the lost sheep, He never gives up on Jonah and He didn't give up on the people of Nineveh and He will never give up on us.

As we have seen throughout the book of Jonah, God will use any means to get us back.

Let's pray...

So last week, in chapter three, we finally see Jonah respond to God's chastisement as he was obedient to the will of God and goes to Nineveh.

We saw Jonah proclaim judgment upon the great city of Nineveh – 40 days and you will be destroyed.

Nineveh responds with true repentance, from the least to the greatest, as many as 600,000 Assyrians turned from their wickedness.

They humbled themselves before the Lord by fasting and covering themselves with sackcloth.

God saw their response, their true repentance and He because of His tremendous grace and mercy, He didn't destroy them...

That was chapter three,

You know, this would have been a nice ending to the book of Jonah.

After all, this was "mission accomplished", for Jonah.

These are the type of stories we all like...

Feel good stories where everyone lived happily ever after!

Jonah would forever be known as the prophet that God used to bring forth the greatest spiritual awakening ever!

**But**, the book of Jonah isn't finished. You see, God still has work to do.

You see, there is still bitterness in Nineveh. There is still rebellion. However, the problem is no longer in the people of Nineveh –

**The problem now resides in the heart of God's own prophet, Jonah.**

And we will see that God will have more trouble dealing with this one prophet than He did with the entire city of Nineveh.

So before we read chapter four, I want to take one last look at the last verse in chapter three.

**[Jon 3:10 CSB] 10 God saw their actions; that they had turned from their evil ways; so God relented from the disaster he had threatened them with. And he did not do it.**

Now, depending on what translation you hold in your hands, most of them have the word "relented" while others like the Old King James may have the word "repented" and yet others might even state "changed His mind"

It is important to note that God is immutable – which means God never changes.

He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow.

If Nineveh had **not** come before the Lord with a repented heart – **they would have been destroyed on the 40<sup>th</sup> day.**

But, because Nineveh **responded to God's message** and **repented** they were saved.

**It wasn't God who changed. It was Nineveh who changed.**

**[Jon 4:1-11 CSB] Read it**

So, after seeing God's tremendous mercy upon the people of Nineveh. After seeing the people of Nineveh repent.

Jonah's worst fear become a reality – Nineveh wasn't destroyed by God and this angered Jonah.

It is interesting to point out that the Hebrew word "charah" (**ka-rah**) is used to describe Jonah's anger.

It means to be burning up inside. To be hot under the collar – to boil over with rage!

It is the same word that is used to describe Cain's anger toward Abel before Cain proceeded to kill him.

Now, regarding anger – anger is not always a sin. There is such a thing as righteous anger. Jesus exhibited anger as He was flipping the tables of the vendors that were fleecing the people in front of the temple – yet, Jesus never sinned.

As believers, are we allowed to get angry?

Yes, we see reports of child sex trafficking or child abuse or how pornography is corrupting the youth – these things should anger us.

This is righteous anger –

However, despite how reprehensible these activities might be, we are never justified to sin in our response.

**[Eph 4:26 NKJV] 26 "Be angry, and do not sin": do not let the sun go down on your wrath,**

**[Eph 4:26 NLT] 26 And "don't sin by letting anger control you." Don't let the sun go down while you are still angry,**

We must never allow our anger to consume us. If we do, the righteous anger we had will lead to unrighteous anger. And that church, is sin.

Now, the question is why was Jonah angry?

Turn with me back to Luke 15.

Two weeks ago when Jonah was in the belly of the great fish, we looked at the story of the prodigal son and I made the statement that Jonah is the prodigal son in the Old Testament.

However, in the story of the prodigal son, there are two sons.

And we will see how Jonah becomes the other son in the story as well.

So for those of you that are not familiar with the story of the prodigal son, this man had two sons and the younger son demands his inheritance and pretty much blows it and falls on hard times.

It had gotten so bad that he is willing to eat from the scraps that they would feed the pigs that he was tending.

So this is where we are going to pick up the story.

Let's start in verse 17,

**[Luk 15:17-32 NKJV] 17 "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! 18 'I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, 19 "and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants." ' 20 "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. 21 "And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put [it] on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on [his] feet. 23 'And bring the fatted calf here and kill [it], and let us eat and be merry; 24 'for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry. (Now up to this point in the book of Jonah, we can see how both Jonah and Nineveh are each the prodigal son. Jonah back in chapter two and Nineveh in chapter three.)**

**25 "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 "So he called one of the**

servants and asked what these things meant. 27 "And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.' 28 **"But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him.**

29 "So he answered and said to [his] father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. 30 'But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.' 31 "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. 32 'It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.' "

You see, for the older brother,

He was fine with his younger son being estranged from their father.

He was fine with him being distant and living wildly and ungodly.

He was fine with him starving.

But he wasn't fine with him coming to his senses and repenting and the father inviting him back into the fold with love and compassion.

Instead of rejoicing in the return of the prodigal son, both the older son and Jonah turn their anger to the one that showed mercy and compassion unto the prodigal son.

Church, there is a kind of religious mindset that loves judgment and hates mercy. Be careful.

Only those whose hearts are filled with self-righteousness can hold that mindset cause they don't think they need mercy.

Jonah forgot the mercy he needed and received in the storm and while he was in the belly of the fish.

This lesson is one I had to learn in my own life...

Growing up with two other brothers being one year apart, we were always in the midst of sibling rivalries.

My middle sibling – I know, it's always the middle one.

He made many dumb decisions as a kid and eventually one day when he was about 20 years old, he simply vanished.

We didn't know his whereabouts, we didn't know whether he was dead or alive.

As a young believer, I would pray for his protection. I would pray for comfort for my parents as well and I would pray that God may change my brother's heart so that at least he would be able to let my parents know that he was ok.

Well about 12 years passed.

On October 2nd of 2006, my oldest daughter was born.

Later that morning, I went home to call my parents with the awesome news of how God had blessed me - and then my mom says the following, "Guess what happened today? Your brother called and he is coming to see us. He had spent the last couple of years living in the streets of Miami sleeping under freeway overpasses"

My initial response was – are you kidding God? This is supposed to be my day, Lord. How could You !!!

My response as a believer should have been to offer praises to God for giving me multiple blessings.

Yet, my pride – my self-righteousness would not allow me to see the blessing that God had provided.

I too had forgotten the mercy that God had showed me as well.

Jonah is angry because God showed mercy upon Israel's enemy.

Jonah is angry because he knew the attributes of God. That He is a merciful God, slow to anger, not willing that any should perish.

Jonah is angry at God.

Let's take a look at Jonah's prayer in the chapter (2,3)

**[Jon 4:2-3 CSB] 2 He prayed to the LORD: "Please, LORD, isn't this what I thought while I was still in my own country? That's why I fled toward Tarshish in the first place. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and one who relents from sending disaster. 3 "And now, LORD, take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."**

In the book of Jonah, Jonah offers up two prayers to the Lord, the first one is in chapter two as Jonah is the belly of the fish.

It is one of the most beautiful prayers in all of scripture.

If you remember, it was a prayer of thanksgiving and it was also a prayer of a broken man who was grabbing onto the promises of God. One who was tired of running, one who wanted deliverance and salvation from the only one who could deliver it, the Lord. It was a prayer of complete surrender to God's will.

The prayer that he prays here in chapter four, is about Jonah's own will.

Jonah wants to live in chapter two, he wants to die in chapter four.

The reason... he no longer wants to be a part of God's will.

You see, Jonah knew God. He knew all His attributes. However, he only knew them up here (point to head) in his head, he never knew them down here (point to heart) in his heart.

This is a question that we must ask ourselves repeatedly, do we really know God's attributes in our hearts. Because, if we do, it would move us to share the gospel.

Jonah had placed his nationalism ahead of God's will. He wanted the best for Israel – he wanted prosperity. He didn't want to partake in the salvation of the wicked - especially Israel's enemy.

This was too much for Jonah to bare – this is why he wanted to die.

In verse four, we have God's response to Jonah's anger. God asks Jonah a simple question,

**Is it right for you to be angry??**

This is the question we should and must ask ourselves if we find ourselves angry with God.

Whenever we get angry at God for not answering prayer.

Whenever we get angry at God for an atrocity that has just occurred. How could you let that happen God???

The answer to this question must always be **"No, LORD. All Your ways are perfect even if I don't understand them."**

God is all-knowing, He know Jonah's heart. He knows **our** hearts. The reason that God asks questions is so that we can do a self-examination of where we stand.

God wants Jonah to rethink his anger and to see if it is justified.

In verse 5, Jonah goes east of the city and camps out. He is still holding on to the hope that God will destroy Nineveh.

Jonah is probably thinking, “God, Nineveh duped you – they said all the right things so that they wouldn’t be destroyed – when you see their true heart – you will destroy them”

Jonah wants a front row seat to Sodom and Gomorrah 2.0!

Now, we shouldn’t be so hard on Jonah because I believe that we do this as well.

Think about that someone, when we were told they accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, and we said to ourselves – that will never last.

They will go back to the way they were.

Because of our self-righteousness, we know what those individuals were capable of and now we start questioning their salvation. What we are in effect doing is doubting that God is capable of saving them.

Jonah believes that his little tantrum convinces God to destroy Nineveh.

However God had a different plan as He now proceeds to teach Jonah a lesson.

**[Jon 4:6-8 CSB] 6 Then the LORD God appointed a plant, and it grew over Jonah to provide shade for his head to rescue him from his trouble (some of your versions might have grief or discomfort). Jonah was**

greatly pleased with the plant. 7 When dawn came the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, and it withered. 8 As the sun was rising, God appointed a scorching east wind. The sun beat down on Jonah's head so much that he almost fainted, and he wanted to die. He said, "It's better for me to die than to live."

So God provides a plant for provide Jonah to provide shade. We don't know what type of plant it is – all we know is that it wasn't there before.

The plant provides shade for Jonah and this provided rescue from his **trouble** – I asked you guys to make a note of that word.

The reason is that the Hebrew word utilized here for trouble, (discomfort or grief), is the same word that is utilized earlier in the book of Jonah to describe the wickedness of Nineveh and it is the same word that is used to describe the destruction of Nineveh in chapter three.

Yet, here it is used to describe Jonah's trouble.

Jonah loved the plant God provided him because it provided relief from the hot sun.

Notice how this is happening despite Jonah's disobedience.

Jonah is acting like a little brat right now.

If I were in God's shoes, I would probably be appointing a new fish to swallow up Jonah.

But God instead, He blesses Jonah with this plant.

Here is a question?

**Why does God at times, continue to bless us despite our disobedience?**

**Have you ever asked yourself that?**

Even in those times when we stop praying or we are angry with God and stop having fellowship with Him, God, at times will continue to bless us.

**[Rom 2:4 NKJV] 4 Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?**

When we come to accept God's kindness, His mercy, His willingness to forgive us despite our disobedience – this is what leads us to repentance.

This is God's grace. Jonah is receiving this blessing because of God's grace.

Remember, God's grace is undeserved.

So, God appoints a worm now and the worm goes into the plant and destroys it and this make Jonah angry once again.

Now, what this teaches us is that even some of the bad things that happen in our lives, come from God.

However, God appoints these worms in our lives to teach us His will, to correct us – so that we can learn from them, to develop us so that we can mature and be utilized by Him in other ways.

Think about all the worms that God has appointed in each of our lives. Think about how undergoing that trial strengthened us as it caused us to mature in our faith. To return to our first love – to seek Him first.

There is no greater example of this than the life of Job, after all his children were killed.

**[Job 1:21 CSB] 21 saying: Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will leave this life. The LORD gives, and the LORD takes away. Blessed be the name of the LORD.**

This is what God is doing with Jonah.

After the worm kills the plant, God provides the hot wind to come from the east.

And once again Jonah makes the claim that it is better for me to die than to live. This time however, he says it in response to the loss of the plant – earlier in the chapter, he made the claim in response to Nineveh repenting.

That is when God asks Jonah the same question He had asked Jonah earlier in the chapter.

[Jon 4:9 CSB] 9 Then God asked Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant? " "Yes, it's right! " he replied. "I'm angry enough to die! "

I find it sad that the wind, the tempest, the great fish, the plant, the worm and the east wind were all obedient to the will of God – Jonah is the only one struggling with His will.

And finally, the chapter ends with the Lord final statement to Jonah.

**[Jon 4:10-11 CSB] 10 So the LORD said, "You cared about the plant, which you did not labor over and did not grow. It appeared in a night and perished in a night. 11 "But may I not care about the great city of Nineveh, which has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot distinguish between their right and their left, as well as many animals? "**

Church, the main problem with Jonah was that he had his priorities wrong. Jonah was selfish in only seeking the things that were going to offer him temporary satisfaction.

Whether it was the shade of a plant or the wellbeing of the nation of Israel, Jonah placed all of these ahead of God's will.

You see, the problem for Jonah was his heart.

**[Eph 6:6 NKJV] 6 not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart,**

Everything that we do unto the Lord must come from the heart.

Those 120,000 people that could not distinguish between their left and their right hands were children that lived in Nineveh that had not reached the age of accountability.

What God is demonstrating to Jonah is how his priorities are skewed, you care more for a plant that you had nothing to do with than innocent children that lived in Nineveh.

Jonah cared more about the now than the eternal.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 4,

**[2 Corinthians 4:16-18 NKJV] 16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward [man] is being renewed day by day. 17 For our light affliction (worms), which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding [and] eternal weight of glory, 18 while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen [are] temporary, but the things which are not seen [are] eternal.**

One of the questions we must ask ourselves today is, do we care for the lost, if our answer is yes: the next question we must ask ourselves is, what are we doing about it?

**Church, may we obedient to the will that God has set forth for each of us.**

**May we allow ourselves to be utilized by God as a channel of His grace and mercy.**

We are His representatives and like it or not, for some of us, we are the only bible that many people will read.

Did Jonah finally come before God with a repentant heart or did he continue to live his life in a selfish manner?

We don't know. I believe that the Holy Spirit left Jonah's answer out for one reason.

So that we can examine ourselves and make that decision about ourselves.

Let's pray...

Today I want to give an opportunity to anyone here that has not accepted

Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior –

We just read that salvation is from the Lord and through no one else.

Admit that you are a sinner,

Believe that Jesus Christ died for you

Accept Him as your Lord and Savior

Repent of your sins.

Lord Jesus, I know that I have sinned against you. I know that I am not perfect and that I cannot please you through my own efforts. I know that I deserve to be judged according to my sins. And, I know that I have nothing to offer you.

Lord Jesus, I ask you to forgive me of my sins. Please cleanse me and make me right before you. I trust in what you have done on the cross. I do not rely on myself but only on you and I receive you as Lord of my life and as savior of my soul. Lord Jesus, save me. I look to you alone.

In Jesus name.