

Jonah: Reluctant Prophet, Relentless God

Week 4: The Pouting Prophet

Jonah 3:10-4:11

Introduction:

- A. People like to know how the story ends. No one really likes to read a book or watch a movie and be left wondering how the story ends.
- B. As the story of Jonah comes to a conclusion, the ending is not what we would expect. If we were writing the story it would end with, *“When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it”* (Jonah 3:10).
- C. But as we take a closer look, we notice something we did not expect to see, it’s that little word, *“BUT.”* Instead of Jonah’s story ending with chapter 3, there are a few more unforeseen lines to his story.

Jonah Resented God’s Grace (vs. 1-4)

- A. What should have been a joyous occasion was not. Jonah was angry that God had relented of the disaster that he said he would do.
- B. Back in chapter 2, Jonah prayed a prayer of repentance and praise. Here in chapter 4, Jonah prayed a prayer full of resentment and pouting.
- C. Jonah did not run from God’s call because he was afraid of the Ninevites, he ran because *“He knew”* what God was like (Exo. 34:5-7). As far as Jonah was concerned, the people of Nineveh did not deserve God’s grace because of how evil they were (Rom. 3:10).

Jonah Saw Sin Differently (v. 5)

- A. Jonah left Nineveh and found himself a spot to watch to see what would become of the city.
- B. Perhaps Jonah was watching to see if God would somehow change His mind and destroyed wicked Nineveh. After all, they deserved the wrath of God.
- C. Jonah had forgotten his own actions pretty quickly. Nineveh did not know the Lord, but Jonah did. Nineveh did not serve the Lord, but Jonah did. Nineveh had not received a divine revelation from the Lord, but Jonah had. How were the sins of Nineveh any worse than the sins of Jonah? All wrong doing is sin (Jam. 2:10-11; I Jn. 5:17).

Jonah Cared about the Temporal (vs. 6-9)

- A. God granted Jonah a measure of grace he did not really deserve by appointing the plant to come up. This made Jonah exceedingly happy. However, Jonah’s happiness was temporary.
- B. Jonah was so angry about God taking away the plant, that he asked that he might die.
- C. Jonah was more concerned about a plant dying than he was a group of people dying (Rom. 9:1-3).

Conclusion: God Cares about the Eternal

- A. God was grieved over the sins of Nineveh. He has very different priorities than man (vs. 10-11).
- B. God is concerned about the salvation of souls (I Tim. 2:1-4). Do our priorities reflect that we are concerned about the salvation of souls?
- C. The book ends with God asking a question. We are not told how Jonah answered or what his actions were in response to God’s question. What really matters is how we answer the question. Do we care more about the temporal or the eternal?