

Week 5 – Jonah 4:1-11

Jonah's Anger at Nineveh's Deliverance



Key Verse:

Title:

Four Point Summary:

1. What is Jonah Doing?
2. How is God responding?
3. What do we learn about the character of Jonah in the story?
4. What do we learn about the character of God in the story?

1. (Read Exodus 34:6-7) In Exodus, God reveals his character to Moses after the terrible sin of Israel at Mt. Sinai. What is it that Jonah reveals to us about his initial flight from God in 4:2-3? What is it Jonah knows about God and expected of the Ninevites?

2. What is it that Jonah is angry about? What is it about the Lord that he is displeased with?

3. It seems that Jonah's mission has been more than successful. Why do you think that Jonah would prefer death to life in light of his success (4:3, 8)? Do you think that it is ironic that Jonah was thankful, calling out to the Lord for his life, and pious in the belly of the whale (2:7-9) and now suicidal, angry with the Lord and critical of his character in chapter 4? Explain.

4. In 2:9 Jonah says that "salvation belongs to the Lord." Now, in accordance with this truth, the Lord has stayed his judgment. What do you think Jonah is waiting for in 4:5, and why? Who does Jonah think the Lord should care about?

5. Why do you think the Lord responds to Jonah's request for death with the question, "Is it right for you to be angry?" Has the Lord been angry in the book of Jonah?

6. In 4:6 the Lord again displays his sovereignty over creation, and this time, as with the fish, to "save Jonah" from his discomfort. What happens to Jonah's anger he had expressed in 4:2, 5?

7. Compare verses 4:1-3 to verses 4:7-8. Where has Jonah's anger moved to? What do you think the Lord has been doing in verses 6-11? What sort of lesson is Jonah learning about himself and about the Lord? How would you explain Jonah's ability to move from angry to happy with every new act of God?

8. In verses 9-11 we arrive at the crux of the matter between Jonah and the Lord. Explain what you think the point of these verses is.

9. Do you think it is common for Christians to care for the more insignificant parts of creation (a plant, or a puppy) than their fellow humanity? What have we learned about the Lord's desire for Jonah (or us) and about the Lord's posture towards the unsaved?

10. What do you think the idiom, "persons who do not know their right hand from their left" means? Some have said it means children. Others have said it means the Ninevites could not make moral judgments (ie., they were ignorant of God's requirements).

11. Look again at 4:1-11, and count the number of references Jonah makes to himself. What might we discern from this about Jonah's heart? From delight, to a desire to die, what is the central factor that motivates Jonah?

12. If Jonah fled from the Lord and his call in chapter one because of his fear that God would forgive them and not destroy them, what do you think in fleeing he hoped to accomplish? Do you think Jonah believed he had some control or sway over the Lord and his salvation/judgment?

13. The Lord has shown pity or compassion for Jonah, the sailors, the Ninevites and their animals. Why do you think that the book of Jonah is left open ended with a rhetorical question to Jonah (and to us it's reader) about the character of the Lord?