

Jonah, Lessons from a Man Who Ran
Part 3: “A Matter of Concern”
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Jonah 3 and 4
Sunday, July 26th, 2015

A. Nineveh Repents

Jonah 3:1-7, 10 (NIV)

[1] Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time:

[2] *“Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.”*

[3] Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very important city – a visit required three days.

[4] On the first day, Jonah started into the city. He proclaimed: “Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.”

[5] The Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

[6] When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust.

[7] Then he issued a proclamation in Nineveh: “By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let any man or beast, herd or flock, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink.”

[10] When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened.

B. Jonah’s Response

Jonah 4:1-3 (NIV)

[1] But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry.

[2] He prayed to the LORD, “O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.

[3] Now O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

1. Anger and disappointment because the Ninevites did not get the punishment he felt they deserved.
2. He became so depressed he wanted to die.

C. God's Object Lesson for Jonah

Jonah 4:4-11

[4] But the LORD replied, *"Have you any right to be angry?"*

[5] Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city.

1. The plant and the worm

[6] Then the Lord God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine.

2. Jonah forgot God had spared him when he was disobedient, and that God wanted to do the same for the Ninevites.

[7] But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so it withered.

[8] When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

[9] But God said to Jonah, *"Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?"* "I do," he said. "I am angry enough to die."

[10] But the Lord said, *"You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight."*

[11] *But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"*

3. Jonah was concerned about his own comfort, but God was concerned about showing love and compassion to other people.

D. Do Your Concerns match God's Concerns?

God is concerned about this generation.
What are you concerned about?

Jonah's theology was correct,
but in the moment when it mattered,
he went with what concerned himself,
and not God.