

***“The Heart Of The Matter”***  
***Jonah 4:1-4***

**Introduction:**

1. Please Head Back With Me To The Book Of Jonah!
  - Where, This Morning, We Will Begin:
    - Looking At The Final Chapter Of This Book!
    - Chapter 4!
  - But - If You Have Read Through The Book Of Jonah:
    - And Are Like Me!
      - You Almost Wish That The Book Would Have Ended With The Last Verse Of Chapter 3!
  - Because Then:
    - It Would Have Ended:
      - On A High Note!
    - It Would Have Ended With:
      - A Great Spiritual Awakening In The Great City Of Nineveh!
      - And A Great Deliverance From God Himself!
  - Because Chapter 3 Ends Like This:
    - 3:10 - “And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not!”
      - And If It Were Up To Us - That’s Right Where We Would Want The Book Of Jonah To End!
2. But - Guess What? It Doesn’t End There!
  - Because: That’s Not What God Wanted To Do!
    - He May Have Been Through Dealing With:
      - The Great City Of Nineveh!
    - But He Was Not Yet Through Dealing With:
      - His Own Prophet: Jonah!
  - There Were Still Some Lessons:
    - Jonah Needed To Learn!
      - About The Lord!
      - About Others!
      - And About Himself!
    - Because - As We Will See:
      - There Was Still Something Missing In The Heart & Life Of Jonah!
  - So - What Was Missing?
    - Let’s Look More Closely At The First 4 Verses Of Chapter 4 To Find Out!
      - 4:1-4 - “But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. / And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. / Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. / Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?”
  - In These Verses:
    - God Starts Getting To The “Heart Of The Matter” In Jonah’s Life!
      - And Even To The “Heart Of The Matter” Of Jonah’s Initial Disobedience!
    - And The “Heart Of The Matter” Is This:
      - Jonah’s Disobedience Was:
        - A “Matter Of His Heart!”
          - And It Still Is For Each Of Us!
    - Whenever There Is:
      - Doubt Or Disobedience In Our Lives:
        - It Is A “Matter Of The Heart!”
      - And That Is What The Lord Is After!
        - The Heart!
          - Jonah’s Heart! My Heart! Your Heart!
    - How Can The Lord Get Your Heart?

\* First - We Need To:

## 1. *Look At The Compassion Of The Lord!*

- Like Jonah Did!
  - In Chapter 3!
  - We Last Saw & Heard From Jonah In 3:4 - Where He Was Proclaiming The Word Of God's Warning To The People Of Nineveh:
    - 3:4 - "And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"
  - And Then - All Eyes Turn To Nineveh!
    - What Will They Do? How Will They Respond?
      - And Then - What Will God Do?
  - But Where Is Jonah Through All Of This?
    - What Is Jonah Doing?
      - He Is Hearing & Seeing Everything That Is Going On!
    - He Had The Best Seat In The House:
      - To Watch God Work!
      - And To See The Compassion Of The Lord In Action!
  - And What Did He See?
- The Shocking Compassion Of The Lord!
  - Look Again At The Result Of Nineveh's Repentance:
    - In 3:10 - "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not!"
  - God Got The Attention Of The People Of Nineveh!
    - And They Responded Through Faith & Repentance!
  - And Through That, They Got The Attention Of The Lord Himself!
    - And He Delivered Them From His Own Hand Of Judgment!
      - What Mercy! Love & Compassion!
  - But - Jonah Didn't Want Any Of This To Happen!
    - And This Is Why In The First Words Of Chapter 4, We See:
- The Shocking Contrast Of Jonah!
  - Jonah Does Not Respond:
    - The Way We Would Expect!
  - We Would Expect Joy & Jubilation!
    - Like We Hear About In Luke 15:7 & 10 - Where Jesus Tells Us: "I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance!" / "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth!"
  - Now If That Is What It Is Like In Heaven:
    - When Just 1 Sinner Repents & Turns To The Lord!
    - Imagine What Heaven Must Have Been Like:
      - When The Whole City Of Nineveh Repented From Their Sin & Put Their Faith And Trust In The Lord!
  - We Would Expect:
    - The Prophet Of God:
      - Who Was An Eyewitness Of This Miraculous Event:
        - To Be Joyful & Jubilant!
  - But Instead, We Read This About Jonah:
    - 4:1 - "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry!"
      - What A Shocking Reaction:
        - From God's Own Prophet!
        - From God's Own Missionary!
      - What A Shocking Contrast:
        - To The Compassion & Mercy Of God!
  - We See That:
    - The Pleasure Of God – To Have Mercy:
      - Displeased Jonah!
      - "It Displeased Him Exceedingly!"
        - He Was So Upset, That He Could Have Been Shaking!
      - Have You Ever Been That Upset About Something?

- What Was The Reason?
- What Was Jonah's Reason!
- We Also See That:
  - The Peace Of God – To Spare Nineveh:
    - Angered Jonah!
    - “And He Was Very Angry!”
    - Angry With God!
- What A Shocking Contrast To The Compassion Of God!
  - And Through This - God Was Showing Jonah:
    - And Us - That There Was Still Something Missing In Jonah!
      - There Was Passion In Jonah's Heart!
      - Just Not Com-Passion!
  - Even Though:
    - Jonah Finally Obeyed The Voice Of The Lord In Chapter 3:
- Something Was Still Missing:
  - In His Heart!
    - Just Like There Are Things Still Missing In Our Hearts & Lives!
    - Something You Have Not Fully Yielded & Surrendered To The Lord!
- This Is Why God's Attention Shifts Back To Jonah:
  - In This Chapter!
  - Because God Is Not Through Dealing:
    - With Jonah!
  - And We Can All Be Thankful:
    - That God Still Deals With Us!
- The Heart Of The Matter For Jonah Was This:
  - He Was Compliant To The Word Of God:
    - But He Had No Compassion For Those Who Were Lost & In Need Of God's Word Themselves!
  - He Needed To & We Need To:
    - Look At The Compassion Of The Lord!
    - And Seek After The Same Heart!
- How Else Can The Lord Get Our Heart?

\* Second, We Need To:

**2. Learn From The Character Of The Lord!**

- Which - Unfortunately - Jonah Did Not Do!
  - Even Though Jonah Was Visibly Upset:
    - With The Lord!
  - He Still Remembered Some Things:
    - About The Lord! And That's As Far As It Went!
  - Jonah Remembered In 4:2 His:
    - Prayer To The Lord!
      - “And He Prayed To The Lord!”
    - One Thing Jonah Still Has Going For Him:
      - Is That He Took His Complaint To The Lord!
    - Now - He Didn't Go To The Lord:
      - In The Right Way & For The Right Reasons!
    - But He Still Went To The Lord:
      - In Prayer!
    - Something We Need To Remember!
      - You Should Be “Casting *All* Your Care Upon Him; For He Careth For You!” (1 Peter 5:7)
      - When You Pray, You Are In A Position To Learn From The Character Of The Lord!
    - Jonah Also Remembered His:
- Purpose Against The Lord!
  - Listen Carefully To What Jonah Prayed In 4:2 - “And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish?”
    - Jonah Is Admitting To The Lord:
      - The Reason / The Purpose Why He Disobeyed The Lord In The First Place!
  - Jonah Seems To Have Forgotten Everything:

- That The Lord Had Done For Him:
  - In Chapters 1-2!
- And Now - He Is Displaying:
  - The Selfish & Self-Centered Heart He Had From The Beginning!
- We May Fault Jonah For This:
  - But How Often To We Return:
    - To The Very Actions & Attitudes That We Had Before We Experienced:
      - God's Grace & Mercy!
  - We Often Feel As Robert Robinson Once Described:
    - "Prone To Wander, Lord, I Feel It! Prone To Leave The God I Love!"
  - What Do We Need To Do?
    - "Here's My Heart, O Take And Seal It; Seal It For Thy Courts Above!"
- Jonah Also Remembered His:
  - Perception Of The Lord!
    - In This Prayer:
      - Jonah Finally Admits To The Lord & To Us:
        - Why He Did Not Want To Go To Nineveh In The First Place!
    - It Was For This Reason:
      - "For I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil!"
    - This Doesn't Make Sense To Us!
      - The Reason Jonah Disobeyed The Lord:
        - Was Because He Knew The Character Of The Lord!
      - He Knew It Through The Word Of God!
        - Exodus 34:6-7; Numbers 14:18-19
        - Psalm 86:5, 15; 145:9
        - Joel 2:13 - Word For Word!
      - He Knew It Through His Own People!
      - He Knew It Through His Own Experience!
        - Recently!
    - He Knew About:
      - The Favor Of The Lord!
        - That He Is A Gracious God!
    - He Knew About:
      - The Forgiveness Of The Lord!
        - That He Is Merciful!
    - He Knew About:
      - The Forbearance Of The Lord!
        - That He Is Of Great Kindness!
    - He Knew About:
      - The Faithfulness Of The Lord!
        - That He Will Repent & Relent From His Judgment!
    - Jonah Knew All Of This About The Lord!
      - And ***This*** Is Why He Didn't Want To Obey:
        - And Go To Nineveh!
        - What We Are Not Told - Is Why Jonah's Heart Was So Hard & Calloused Against The Ninevites! Was It Political? National? Spiritual? Or A Combination? We Just Don't Know! Perhaps His Reason Is Vague & Absent To Show That No Reason Would Have Been A Good Reason To Have This Kind Of Heart Toward Anyone!
      - So - Jonah Admits That He Knew:
        - That God Would Show Mercy To The Ninevites! And He Did Not Want That To Happen!
      - This Also Shows Us That:
        - You Can Know A Lot Of Truth About The Lord! Very Orthodox In His Theology!
        - He Had A Head- Knowledge:
          - Not A Heart- Knowledge!
      - What He Knew About God:
        - Still Did Not Impact His Heart!

- Jonah May Have Finally Been Compliant To The Word Of God:
  - But He Had No Compassion!
    - He Did Not Have The Same Heart That He Knew Belonged To The Lord!
- He Needed To & We Need To:
  - Learn From The Character Of The Lord!
    - And Seek After The Same Heart!
  - That He Is: "A gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil!"
    - Does Your Heart Reflect The Heart Of The Lord?
- How Else Can The Lord Get Our Heart?

\* Third, We Need To:

**3. Listen To The Counsel Of The Lord!**

- In 4:3 - We See Just How Deeply Jonah Felt About This!
  - And We See The Lord's Own:
    - Counsel To The Sorrowing Heart!
      - Even When The Sorrow Was Misplaced & Wrong!
        - 4:3 - Jonah Is Still Praying - "Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live!"
          - Jonah Wanted To Die!
            - Why?
      - Because God Showed His Character Of Mercy:
        - To The People Of Nineveh!
          - Here, Jonah Is Sounding Like A Sulking, Moping And Pouting Child!
        - Because Jonah Did Not Get His Way!
      - Now - Despair Is A Common Emotion:
        - When A Christian Is Guilty Of Sin!
          - Have You Ever Felt This Way?
      - But Look At The Reason For **Jonah's** Despair:
        - God Did Not Kill The Ninevites:
          - So Now, Jonah Wants God To Kill Him!
        - And Really - God Had Every:
          - Right & Reason To Accomplish Jonah's Request!
        - God Could Have Easily Finished:
          - What He Started In The Mediterranean Sea!
        - We Would Expect & Even Want:
          - God To Let Jonah Have It!
      - But He Doesn't!
        - No - Instead We See The Lord's Own:
    - Counsel To Search Your Heart!
      - And In 4:4 - The Lord Simply Asks Jonah A Question:
        - "Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?"
      - And With This Question:
        - And With Others Throughout This Chapter!
        - He Is Trying To Get Jonah:
          - And Us - To Provide The Lord A Thoughtful Response!
      - Of Course - The Answer The Lord Is Looking For:
        - Is "No!"
          - It Was Not Well For Jonah To Be Angry!
        - But For Now - This Is All God Says & Asks!
          - Why?
    - Because The Lord Was Getting To The Heart Of The Matter!
      - And Reaching Into Jonah's Own Heart!
        - And Now - Jonah:
          - Needed To:
            - Listen To The Counsel Of The Lord!
            - And Seek After The Same Heart!

**Conclusion:**

1. See - Jonah Had No Right Or Reason To Be Angry!
    - But The Lord Did!
    - God Had The Right To Be Angry:
      - With The Ninevites!
        - Because Of Their Sin & Wickedness!
      - But When They Heard God's Word:
        - They Repented & Believed!
      - And God Showed His Character To Them!
        - His Character Of Compassion!
          - And Mercy!
    - But God Also Had The Right To Be Angry:
      - With Jonah – His Own Prophet!
        - Because Of His Disobedience & Selfishness!
      - Yet - God Was Still Showing His Own Character:
        - To Him!
        - His Character Of Compassion!
          - And Mercy!
        - Because God Was Not Done With Jonah Yet!
          - And: “God Does Not Condemn, But Invites Jonah To Condemn Himself And Admit That His Anger Was Not Good!” (Leslie Allen)
      - But Will Jonah Hear God's Word This Time?
        - And Give The Lord All Of His Heart?
2. After All - This Really Is:
    - “The Heart Of The Matter!”
      - The Lord Is After All Of Your Heart!
        - Does He Have It! All Of It?
    - We Can Also Be Thankful That The Book Of Jonah Did Not End In Chapter 3!
      - Why?
        - Because It Shows Us That God Is Still Working On Each One Of Us!
      - Like Jonah - We Still Have Much More To Learn!
        - Like Jonah - We Still Have A Long Way To Grow!
    - So:
      - Look At The Compassion Of The Lord!
      - Learn From The Character Of The Lord!
      - Listen To The Counsel Of The Lord!
    - And Give The Lord Your Heart!
      - Give The Lord All Of Your Heart!

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