

CHASING JONAH

aka the prodigal prophet

Lesson Five: Jonah's Angry Heart

First Baptist Church Chappell Hill, May 30, 2021

Some Preliminaries

- Jesus and Jonah (Matthew 12:38-42)
 - We are responsible for the revelation we have
- God is long-suffering but not forever-suffering when it comes to chronic disobedience
- Eventually there is a last chance — eventually God closed the door to the ark and the flood rains came
- That is where we find Jonah (and Israel) in the last chapter
- And perhaps where we find the United States?

Jonah's Angry Heart (ch 4)

Jonah 4:1 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. **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: for I knew that thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. **3** Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for *it is* better for me to die than to live.

- Read Luke 15:7 (we saw this play out in Jonah 3), but what is Jonah's response?
- Why is he angry?
- The "dove" desperately wanted the sinners to die — he wanted another Sodom and Gomorrah
- Verse 2 is a big "I told you so!"
- Why does Jonah ask for death?

Jonah's Angry Heart (ch 4)

Jonah 4:4 Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?

- Read Genesis 4:1-7 and Hebrews 11:4
- What was the difference between Cain and Abel's offerings?
- God told Cain the source of his unhappiness was his own heart motivations in the matter of the sacrifice, and that if he did not deal with his heart, sin waits at the door to take control.
- The word "well" in Genesis 4:7 and Jonah 4:4 is the same word and has the sense of doing what is right.
- Jonah was not doing right by God through his anger.
- Jonah knew what God required and chose to disobey.
- So also with the nation of Israel.

Jonah's Angry Heart (ch 4)

Jonah 4:5 So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city.

- Jonah never answered God's question.
- In verse 5 he still manifests a hardened heart.
- The Ninevites fear they are about to die, but Jonah focuses on personal comfort as he hopes and waits for the fireworks.
- Israel of Jonah's day was also completely self-centered.
- Israel has material prosperity (comfort) but it did not drive them to God.
- Read Matthew 5:14 (can we be like Jonah?)
- God pursues Jonah despite his rebellious heart.

Jonah's Angry Heart (ch 4)

Jonah 4:6 And the LORD God prepared a gourd, and made *it* to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd. **7** But God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. **8** And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, *It is better for me to die than to live.*

- The gourd plant represents the reign of Jeroboam II (793-753 BC) during which Jonah ministered and during which Israel enjoyed historic prosperity.
- But they did not turn to God as their provider; they could not see beyond their prosperity.
- Jonah's anger turned to gladness, not over the mighty hand of God among the Ninevites but because of the plant.
- The worm is predictive of God's ending the dynasty of Jehu (2 Kings 10:30, dynasty would end after 4 generations)
- East wind associated with judgment of God and Jonah wants to die again!

Jonah's Angry Heart (ch 4)

Jonah 4:9 And God said to Jonah, Doest thou well to be angry for the gourd? And he said, I do well to be angry, *even* unto death. **10** Then said the LORD, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: **11** And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and *also* much cattle?

- The question in v. 9 is rhetorical, designed to make Jonah consider his attitude and how his anger stemmed from the loss of the gourd. But Jonah refused to listen.
- Jonah claimed to fear God in ch. 1 but his true colors are revealed
- Jonah cared more for the gourd than people.
- Jonah was oblivious to the fact that if God destroyed Nineveh even after the repented then He must destroy Israel also.
- Why end with a question?

Application Points

- God is long-suffering but the window of opportunity to repent and turn back to Him will eventually close.
- Anger is never a proper response to the will of God.
- No one is beyond the reach of the love of God.
- QUESTIONS
 - What indication is there that Jonah ever repented?
 - Why does Jonah persist in his disobedience in the face of God's clear message that He wishes to deliver the people of Nineveh from destruction?
 - What do we learn about Jonah from his repeated desire for death?