

Jonah Is Taught the Depth of God's Mercy

Jonah 04:01–11

1. *The displeasure and anger of Jonah: Over Nineveh's being spared, 3:10*

- a. The prophet's prayer:
Shared why he was angry
- 1) He had felt that God would save Nineveh
 - 2) He knew that God was...
 - Gracious and merciful
 - Slow to anger and abounding in love
 - Willing to relent, to turn back His judgment
 - 3) He was so discouraged and upset that he asked God to take his life
- b. The LORD's thought-provoking question: Did Jonah have the right to be angry?

2. *The depth of God's mercy*

- a. Jonah sought solitude to think through the question
- 1) He made a shelter
 - 2) He waited to see what would happen to the city

- 1 But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry.
- 2 He prayed to the LORD, "Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing 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, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."
- 4 But the LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"
- 5 Jonah had gone 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.

b. God comforted Jonah

1) God caused a fast-growing plant to cover Jonah's shelter

2) Jonah was very grateful

c. God taught Jonah a needed lesson: The depth of His mercy

1) God sent a worm to kill the vine

2) God sent a scorching east wind: The pelting sand of the desert storm and blazing sun made Jonah wish for death

3) God questioned Jonah again: Was it right for him to be angry over the vine's death?

4) Jonah replied: "Yes!"

d. God rebuked Jonah

1) Jonah was concerned for his physical comfort (the vine) — even though he had not given it life nor sustained it

2) Jonah showed less concern for the 120,000 people of Nineveh who were lost

3) God asked a piercing question: Since He was the Creator of all life, why should He not show concern for the Ninevites?

6 Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant.

7 But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that 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, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" "It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

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

11 And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left — and also many animals?"