



Jonah 4: Challenging a Mis-Aligned Heart

What's the greatest miracle found in Jonah's account?

This week's teaching highlighted a LONG but IMPORTANT lesson emerging from the final chapter of Jonah; namely, that the many supernatural interventions in this OT book are

To demonstrate that the greatest miracle of all is a God who desperately cares whether people perish or live and urges those who belong to Him to repent and participate in God's passion.

This study's objective is consider this lesson, and how much we as God's people (who represent Him to a world of people) share His passion for their often sinful and lost condition.

GETTING STARTED (some getting-the-juices-flowing questions)

One of the easiest defaults in our everyday Christian life is that of simply not thinking about nor praying for people who are spiritually lost. Let's explore this with a couple of discussion questions:

- How many spiritually lost (not believing or following Christ) people do you "rub shoulders with" regularly, and know fairly well?
- What do you know about why they are not believing or following Christ?
- Have you any chance recently with them to invite them "across the welcome mat" to Jesus? Yes, or no? Why, or why not?
- What would you say your passion is for seeing them "not perish"?

GROUP STUDY – We focus on the last two verses of Jonah

Here are the final words of God to Jonah:

Jonah 4:9-10 But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." And the Lord said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

How would you describe Jonah's "problem"?

- * Jonah seems to be a very emotional person...anger often crops up...what does that indicate?
- * Do Christians ever struggle with their emotions getting in the way of listening to God and agreeing with Him?
- * How would you describe Jonah's relationship with God at this point?

How would you summarize what God is trying to teach Jonah?

- * God suggests He "pities" those living in Nineveh, even though they as a culture are violent and evil. Anything surprising about that?
- * does it surprise you that the Lord enters into a dialogue with Jonah?
- * what does that indicate about the Lord's patience with us?
- * in what ways do "secondary" things (which we make PRIMARY) get in the way of sharing God's heart and reaching out to others?

CONCLUSION what you have personally been challenged by in this study, and the story of this stubborn prophet?

PRAYER TOGETHER – As we prepare for a new series in the Fall ("A Cord of Three Strands: Unbroken in the Tough Stuff"), we'll be focusing on how important it is to share when difficult things challenge our walk with God. Sharing with others – even with those who are not yet in the family of God – can be an effective way of establishing a relationship, a friendship, where trust can be established. The Holy Spirit can work effectively in these channels. So...

- a) Pray for those whom you identified above, for whom God is passionate about their lostness
- b) Ask the Lord to open up some new doors
- c) Pray as well for the challenges that are in the lives of your Connect Group.

"Let's be ready to share our life experiences with God with someone else. Your personal testimony is powerful!"
 Pastor David Staff