

Shrinking Prophet, Expansive God

May 26, 2019



Open: What are some things that make you angry? Why?

Read: Jonah 3:10-4:11

Discuss:

1. In Jonah 3:10 God showed mercy to Nineveh. What does Jonah's response to God's mercy tell us about Jonah (v. 1)? Why do we sometimes find offense when others receive forgiveness?
2. Would you say Jonah does not *understand* God, or that Jonah does not *like* God (v. 2)? Why? How do people today want God to be different than He is? Are there ways you sometimes want God to be different than He is? Explain.
3. How should Jonah's knowledge of God as described in verse 2 have affected Jonah? How has this knowledge of God affected you?
4. What does verse 3 tell you about Jonah's attitude? In verse 4, why do you think God questioned Jonah regarding his attitude? What does our anger tend to reveal about us?
5. In verses 5-8 God appointed three things (a plant, a worm and a scorching east wind) to play a role in Jonah's life. What do you think God's purpose was in this series of events? How were each an extension of God's mercy?
6. Jonah's attitude in verse 3 is still present in verse 8. What does Jonah's answer to God in verse 9 tell you about the depth of Jonah's anger? Why do you think he still feels this way?
7. In verse 10, God confronts Jonah about his concern for the plant. What was the real reason Jonah had concern for the plant (v. 6)? What are ways we may see similar misplaced values present in our lives today?
8. From the book of Jonah, how would you contrast Jonah's values with God's values? What are ways that we can cultivate a heart that is more like God's heart?

Apply: What's one lesson that has stood out to from the book of Jonah? How will you practically apply that lesson?

Pray: Ask God to give us—both individually and collectively—a heart like God's for those who are in need of God's rich mercy. Pray that God will then use us to take His message to the world.

Jonah 3:10-4:11

^{3:10} When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

^{4:1} But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. ² And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. ³ Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴ And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?"

⁵ Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. ⁶ Now the LORD God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. ⁷ But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." ⁹ 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." ¹⁰ 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. ¹¹ 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?" (ESV)