

Jonah – The Secret You Missed

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MAIN VERSES

[Exodus 32](#) • [Exodus 33](#) • [Exodus 34:6](#) • [Psalm 86:15](#) • [Joel 2](#)

Welcome Home to Founded in Truth

Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love? A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God? Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home.

And we're going to be completing the Jonah series today. Now, have you guys enjoyed this series? I've enjoyed it a little bit. Actually a lot. Maybe you've seen some things that you never noticed before. Right? I sure did. I knew a lot of things, but then I started digging into the resources I had and it was like, wow, this book is much more profound than I ever could have imagined. I was raised in Baptist church. That taught me it was a book about a guy and a fish.

More Than Just a Guy and a Fish

Is this a book about a guy and a fish? This is not a book about a guy and a fish. This is something much more profound that God has allowed us to have in our scriptures to read from and glean from.

And we know about the possibility of it being identified as a satire narrative, which means that it's a story that a real person, Jonah, was taken and placed in. And there's some comedy in it, satire, if you will—lots of irony. Big city, big fish, big waves, big everything, all really emphasized in these areas.

And the purpose of that type of narrative in scriptures is to teach us who we are in the face of God's infinite mercy, his love, his fierce grace that took place when he pursued Jonah. And it also teaches us about religious hypocrisy, how our apathy in our faith towards God has a devastating effect on the people around us. Remember when Jonah got in the boat with all these

pagan sailors? And how their lives were impacted simply because he didn't want to do what God had called him to do, and he wasn't willing to step up to the plate that God had put in his life.

The Tables Turned

And it's fascinating because the author of Jonah takes all of the stereotypes that we typically see with the Bible and the stories, and he flips everything upside down. And so typically, you see a prophet of God, and he's the righteous one, like Elijah. And then you have the pagans at Mount Carmel, they're going to die. There's a big contrast between them.

But here we see that Jonah is actually the wicked person in the book, and the pagans that are on the ship are the ones who actually pray to God—right before Jonah even prays in the book. And they're the ones who vow to give to God and vow sacrifices to God and pursue God while Jonah is still turning his back on God. Fascinating.

And we see Jonah repent, but like so many of us, he walks into Nineveh, and he gives the letter of the law, refusing to expose the heart of God to the people of Nineveh. When he walks into the city of Nineveh, as we spoke about in our last message, he gave a five-word sermon in Hebrew. Five-word sermon. Walks into Nineveh. Forty days, Nineveh's going to be overthrown.

The Message Jonah Withheld

Is that technically what God said? No. God told him to call out the wickedness, saying, "I'm sending you." He doesn't mention any of this. He doesn't say, "You guys are wicked. God is upset with this. Yahweh, the God of Israel has sent me..." No, none of that. Just, "Forty days, Nineveh's going to be overturned. Good luck."

Almost as if he was anticipating Nineveh to just ignore the message. He delivered a message. Did they ignore it? No, they repented. They repented on such a scale that the king removed himself from his throne, giving authority to God over Nineveh, and everybody in the city repented. Even the pets repented. The cows repented and wore sackcloth, which is some of that satirical comedy, if you will.

An Unexpected Ending

And now we're going to come to the last chapter of Jonah. We're going to come to the part of the story that happens later, right after this, and how does Jonah respond to this mass

repentance and mourning for the lifestyle that they have engaged in, that they now realize is wicked, evil, immoral in the face of God's greatness and holiness?

And he should be pretty proud, right? I want you guys to picture yourself, if you could, as this prophet, right? Now, this prophet is mentioned in Kings. He was a prophet who delivered a message to Jeroboam II, the 15th king of Israel. So he was a prophet, and he has a resume. He's built quite a work resume, and now he has an opportunity to put Nineveh, the biggest, baddest city in the Assyrian empire, on his resume—check, that was me, right? What can I say except you're welcome, right?

And this is a great opportunity, but we see that he actually doesn't do that. He's not proud of the message that he delivered. And so if you turn with me, we're going to chapter 4 in a moment, but go ahead and look at one verse first—chapter 3, verse 10.

A Recap Before Chapter 4

And follow along with me, and this is going to be the recap of chapter 3 that the author of Jonah is telling us. And it says, "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."

Now, the story could have ended right here, and this would have been a fantastic children's book, right? I mean, you got the fish, and it's really a whale, even though it's a fish, but the fish swallows them and spits them up, and then everybody repents, and then all glory to God, and it's a story about God and his love and his mercy. But the book of Jonah is not necessarily about God as the protagonist. He's not the main character in the book. The main character is actually someone else completely.

Jonah's Fury Exposed

And so starting in Jonah chapter 4, verse 1, do I have all my slides? For those of you who didn't bring your Bibles, I got you. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. 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, merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. Therefore now, O Lord, please just take my life from me. I just want to die. It's better for me to die than live."

This is Jonah's response to everybody, including the cows. And I like to emphasize that because it's funny. Including the cows in the city repent, right? What did the cows do? I don't know, but

whatever. Bad cows. Mad cows. I don't know.

But 120,000 people repent, fall on their knees, and commit themselves to the ways of God. And Jonah is ticked. He just shows us all of his cards right now. He's so mad at God. And why? Well, Jonah's ticked at God because God's graciousness and love is given to a people that Jonah does not think deserves it.

The Real Reason for Jonah's Anger

He even goes on to say—anybody ever heard that Jonah was scared to go to Nineveh? That's been the traditional teaching. But wait, he didn't want to go to Nineveh because the Assyrians are really, really tough and they're really bad. We talked about that, I think, in the first or second message, how they used to do very bad things to people in war, especially when they fought against the Judeans.

Jonah wasn't scared to go to Nineveh. He just didn't want any part of Nineveh experiencing the grace and the love and the mercy of God. He goes on, saying, "Just kill me then. I knew this would happen. This is why I ran. And look, it happened. And somehow I ended up being a part of it. So just kill me."

Jonah would rather die than to live under the reign of Yahweh and the ways of God concerning his kingship on the earth.

Not a Children's Book

This is a severe, severe reality. You see why I said in my first message that Jonah is not a children's book? This is not a children's story. Children can grasp some of the concepts, but the sheer religious hypocrisy that is going on here—this book wasn't written for kids to read. It was written for you to read.

And look at verse 2 where Jonah lists these attributes and throws them in God's face. He says, "For I knew that you are a gracious God, merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, relenting from disaster."

Do these things sound familiar? I think this phrase and these attributes are given to God 11 or 12 times in the Tanakh. This is the [John 3:16](#) of the Tanakh, the Old Testament. And we see this in [Psalm 86:15](#). Joel too. You know where the very first place that this is said is located? It's actually in [Exodus 34:6](#). And it's God saying this about himself: "A God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."

The Context We Must Understand

And so to get the irony of what is taking place here with Jonah, you have to understand chapter 34 of Exodus. But the chapter before that is, of course, chapter 33, and the chapter before that is 32. And in chapter 32 of Exodus, something profound happens, a big event. Anybody know what it is? It involves a cow that's not made of flesh. It's made of gold, right? Golden calf.

And so Israel makes this calf, right? Actually, it just pops out of the fire according to Aaron. And they worship this calf and God is upset, is a good way to put it. And we see that the next chapter is chapter 33, where Moses is interceding on behalf of Israel, saying, "God, don't blow them out of the water." He's like, "No, I'm just going to kill them all, just destroy them all." "No, please don't do that." And so chapter 34 is when Moses is going up to get the second set of tablets that he kind of lost it and crushed, right? And he's going up to get tablet number two, and before this happens, or as this happens, God comes down the mountain and proclaims to his people. He says, basically, "The reason you're not dead is because your God, me, is a God of mercy and graciousness, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness." This is the reason why all of you are still breathing right now. And Jonah is so irrational because if God was not a God of mercy and graciousness, slow to anger, relenting, if he was not that, then Jonah wouldn't even exist. Because Israel would have—see the irony. But Jonah's throwing that back in God's face, just ticked, just out of his mind.

You guys ever read those cheesy t-shirts? Or you ever seen them? I'm sure you've seen them. We got them at church. I think this church has them. The cheesy t-shirts, bumper stickers, and church signs all say, "God is love." Anybody ever seen those? "God is love," right? And I mean cheesy. It's a little cheesy. "God is love" and everything that goes with that thought. And it makes you wonder what kind of agenda these Christians have when they say these things: "God is love." And today you always see "God is love" and this kind of liberal loving God that loves you no matter what you've done or how wicked you are—a God willing to forgive you despite how far you've gone, how disgusting you are, and regardless of the unspeakable things that you have done in your life. And does anyone ever think, yeah, how naive can they be? I mean, seriously?

And I want to tell you that these types of Christians that promote this idea about God are not only not naive, they have actually read their Bibles. Because this is what Scripture actually says about the God that we serve. It says, "Whoever does not love does not know God because"—what's that last part? "God is love." And I used to be one of those people a long time ago that whenever they would see a sign that says "God is love," I went so frou-frou. And then I realized,

and I'm so thankful that I did, that God is love. And no matter how badly we want God to be created in our hateful, self-righteous, unforgiving image, he never will be.

We have a choice to make. We can either be molded into his image or we can perish along with the people that we so desperately want to see destroyed by him. This is who our God is. He is a God of love and of mercy and of graciousness and slow to anger, abounding. I mean, this is who our God is.

God Is Love

And so I have a question: Who are the Ninevites of today? If the Ninevites at this time period in Israel were the biggest, baddest—they were fighting against Judea and they were doing awful things to the men, women, and children. Torture, just awful, wicked people.

Who are the Ninevites today? The worst of the worst. The unforgivable. The ones that you would secretly love to experience the wrath of God. And don't act like you've never thought about someone that in the back of your mind you're thinking they just deserve it. They're going to get what's coming to them, right? Oh, that jungle revelation is going to come down on them. A few people I could see are, yeah. We do it all the time, and it's such a horrible, horrible, horrible representation of who our God is.

It's the condition of our flesh, the human condition that we have, that we war against. You are called to be witnesses of God's love to those people. This could be someone maybe you're really, really, really concerned about terrorism in the world. This could be the faceless ISIS fighters that you so desperately yearn to see their destruction by the wrath of God. This could be politics. How many of you guys realize that we live in a country that is very, very, very, very passionate about politics and stances on stuff? I can't do—I can't go there. We're a church. We can't. So maybe you're very, very upset about recent events, and maybe this person is someone who's kneeling at a football game. Yeah, they don't deserve that. Maybe it's the face of someone you saw marching, exhibiting a hate that has been established generation after generation, that we thought we destroyed through war and violence in the '40s, carrying a torch. Who is it that you picture that deserves that? The wrath of your God.

Who Are the Ninevites Today?

Jonah pictured the Ninevites, and God told him what his job was. His job was to take the message of repentance to them. And it's so ironic because when Jonah went in there, and Jonah's probably ticked because God tricked him—and He really did—because God told Jonah to

go into the city that he knew Jonah hated, the people there, men, women, children, cats, cows, dogs—hated them. And he said, "Go in there and preach against their wickedness and tell them that after 40 days they will be overturned." And so he goes in there, five-word sermon in Hebrew: "40 days, none of it's going to be overturned," right?

And I think we discussed this regarding the Yom Kippur service—we talked about how that Hebrew word, "overturned," has several different meanings in Scripture. It literally means to flip over, right? And so lots of Scriptures talk about when God's judgment and wrath does come, how it flipped Sodom over. There's other instances where it kind of is a neutral word. It talks about Israel being like a piece of bread that wasn't flipped over, so burnt, throw, trash. And then there are times where it also talks about how God's mercy and God's love have flipped my life over. It's also used in that context. It's a variety of contexts.

And so the joke here is that Jonah went into the city proclaiming that Nineveh was going to be flipped over. And in his mind, fire and brimstone and everything he wanted them to deserve because they were not like him and they didn't believe the same way he did and they were disgusting and they were unforgivable in his mind. Which definition or term do you think God meant? Because Nineveh was turned over at the end. Everybody repented and put on sackcloth, mourned because of their actions before God. The king rose and then sat down in the dust and ashes. The entire city was flipped over. Jonah's ticked, ticked.

And so in verse 4, here we go. Jonah chapter 4, verse 4—it continues: "Then the Lord said"—and the Lord asked Jonah a question. He says, "Do you do well to be angry?" I mean, are you really mad at me because of this? Verse 5: "Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. And he sat under it in the shade till he should see what was to become of the city."

So Jonah goes out east of the city, which if you wanted to, you could say far from God. Because when you face east, you're facing towards Jerusalem. That's the idea. When you go east, you're going away from it. So he goes east and he sits down there, and he's waiting to see what happens to the city. What do you think he wants to see happen to the city? If there's a hope. He can't wait. He just can't wait for God's judgment to fall on the city.

Do You Do Well to Be Angry?

And I gotta go back because I read a commentary that was absolutely so ludicrous. How many of you guys know that you can find a lot of junk on the internet? And I want to tell you about this junk on the internet, because people have liberties when they go on this wonderful thing

called the internet, and sometimes they take liberties with God's word, and it really, really messes with me, because people try through some type of selfish agenda to get Facebook likes or video likes to change the context of God's word in order to make it sensational.

And actually, I read a commentary here that said that because he went out and he made a booth, he was celebrating Sukkot. Bible doesn't say celebrate Sukkot at Nineveh. Jerusalem is a booth. Just because he made a booth doesn't mean it was a—I also ran across a commentary I heard about a long time ago, and ran across it again recently. And it basically asserted that Jonah was not going to Nineveh for the Ninevites to get the grace of God and mercy. God sent him to Nineveh because that's where the lost tribes of the northern kingdom were taken away to. Anybody ever heard that a little bit?

And so the idea is that around 722 B.C.-ish, that generation, Nineveh, Assyria had been conquering the northern kingdom and exiling people, bringing people out, taking people in, and they were scattering them all over the Assyrian empire. And this was, of course, orchestrated by God because of their sinfulness. And so because it's the Assyrians and they have a big city, the idea in this teaching is that God wanted his people, the kingdom of Israel, to be the scattered who were in Nineveh, even though they were scattered everywhere, but Nineveh, to repent and come back to him. And so that's what Jonah was sent to do. And the teaching goes, since there's some evidence that they worship Dagon, that Dagon is a fish god, and so there's a fish, and he threw up Jonah, and so the Ninevites or the Israelites or whoever they were repenting saw the fish and thought it was a sign from Dagon.

Dagon and the Misinterpretation of Jonah

Dagon's not a fish god. We have primary sources—Rastamla tablets, Canaanite myth, and Maori tablets discovered in northern Syria—all of which attest to him being a god of grain. Regardless, one interpretation that's been circulating is that he was sent to the northern tribes, and the Ninevites were always destined to die.

And so the issue I have with this—I just want to give you an immunization against these types of messages. Because opinions are great, and if I ever tell you an opinion that has no proof—yeah, this sounds good, but it might not be right. I would like to think I would tell you that. This is a good idea; I don't know if it's true. This message has kind of infected a lot of different areas.

If you go back to Kings where it mentions Jonah, the real person, remember he takes a message to Jeroboam II, who was the 15th king of the kingdom of Israel. And this was the generation

before Assyria ever attacked and took over the northern kingdom. Jonah was not alive when the first exile was taken into Assyria. Jonah was not sent by God to go and give a message of repentance to the lost tribes of Israel. He was sent by God to go to the most wicked, pagan city. They deserved the most horrible death and justice from God.

Jonah was sent there to a people that Jonah didn't want to be in covenant with God because they weren't Hebrew. They had no bloodline. They were not of the father Abraham. They weren't any of this. And they were wicked. They were just a bunch of pagans. And God was stating a message saying, listen, you're going to go here and you're going to be a witness to my love, my mercy, my justice, and the reign of my kingdom. And you don't get to decide who's going to be in it and who's not. That is what Jonah was about, and that's the agenda of Jonah. So that's my rant. I apologize.

Jonah's Anger and God's Mercy

And so Jonah's sitting outside the city, east of the city, and he's waiting for the city to be destroyed. And at this point in the story, no one's sympathizing with Jonah. You know, he's kind of being a jerk. And no one's sitting there reading the story and being like, yeah, that's right, Jonah. We're on your side. Bad God. Everyone's like, Jonah, why are you being like this? Really, why are you being this bad about this?

And the reason why Jonah's so angry, when we read it and actually apply it to ourselves, is actually pretty understandable for many of us, despite us realizing it's wrong. You guys ever heard of the cross, the crucifixion, and what took place on the cross being referred to as scandalous? It's a profound word. A lot of commentaries, a lot of passionate Christian scholars will say the cross was a scandal. And what was so scandalous about it is that God's love was so great that it defies the understanding of the human condition.

And we are so thankful. We're so thankful for God's love and mercy, aren't we? Everybody's saying, yeah, of course we are. Think about who you would be today or maybe who you would have become if you had never known Yeshua. Some of us really, we're very—are you thankful? We're thankful. And we came with our shame and our guilt and we placed this at the foot of the cross and we were overtaken by the amount of mercy and grace that God has, that he would forgive us in his fierce love for us. Giving us a new life. Giving us his spirit. Ushering in this eternal age of his presence within our lives. Are we thankful?

And then we look over and we realize that God loves a person that we hate just as much as he loved you, and his forgiveness is offered to them. And no matter what they've done, his

forgiveness is offered. If they repent, come to him, embrace his ways, embrace his holiness, embrace his love. And we're all like, God, thanks for your mercy. But do you know what they did to me?

So I think that some of us, despite not wanting to sympathize with Jonah at all, we can kind of understand why this conflated example is here in the book. Because it's something that we've all been through. And it's hypocrisy in our faith.

The Smith Family and the Power of Forgiveness

I want to show you a picture of something great. This is a picture of a family, and this is the Smith family. And this is Anita to the left, and this is Ronnie to the right, and that's their son, Hosea. Beautiful family, right?

And so the Smith family is a Christian family that lived in the U.S., and in 2012, I believe they were called, and everything, the stars aligned, if you will, for him to go and teach chemistry at an international high school in Benghazi. And they were called to go there to this strange culture that did not accept their faith, Libyan culture. And they went, had their child, and they were embraced by the community, and they fell in love with the children, and they fell in love with the families, and the families fell in love with them. And they were giving to their community. And it was an incredible testimony of when God calls you somewhere—it's okay. He's going to make it okay. Even if you're scared, he's not going to be surprised. And he taught high school chemistry every day.

And one day he was jogging around his home there in Libya, and a jeep pulled up beside him and shot him multiple times in the street and then drove off. Nobody ever took credit for it. No al-Qaeda or terrorist group ever took credit for it. No one. Who did this?

Devastating to his wife, of course, his child, to the school, his friends. And his wife ended up writing a letter to the people of Libya that they knew and they loved. And I'm going to read the letter. Can I read you the letter that she wrote? She wrote this after her husband was brutally slaughtered in this foreign land that they really had nothing invested in, that was never going to give anything back to them per se as far as finances. They were giving to this land, and they went for a calling that they felt like was from God, and this is the result. And she says:

"My husband and best friend Ronnie Smith loved the Libyan people. For more than a year, Ronnie served as a chemistry teacher in a school in Benghazi, and he would gladly have given more years to Libya if unknown gunmen had not cut his life short on December 5th, 2013.

"Ronnie and I came to Libya because we saw the suffering of the Libyan people, but we also saw your hope, and we wanted to partner with you to build a better future. Libya was very different from what we had experienced before, but we were excited to learn about the culture there, and Ronnie grew to love you and your way of life, as did I. Ronnie really was Libya's best friend.

"Friends and family from home were concerned about our safety, as some of you were, and we talked about this numerous times, more than I can count, but we stayed because we believed that the Libyan people were worth the risk. Even knowing what I know now, I have no doubt that we would both make the same decision all over again.

"Ronnie loved you so much, especially his students. He loved to joke with you, tell stories about you, help you with your lives, and challenge you to be all that you could be. He did his best to live out his faith humbly and respectfully within a community of people with an entirely different faith.

"To his attackers, the ones who slaughtered him, I love you and I forgive you. How could I not? For Jesus taught us to love our enemies, not to kill them or seek revenge. Jesus sacrificed his life out of love for every people, for the very people who killed him, as well as for us today. His death and resurrection opened the door for us to walk on the straight path to God and peace and forgiveness.

"Because of what Jesus did, Ronnie is with Jesus in paradise now. Jesus did not come only to take us to paradise when we die, but also to bring peace and healing on this earth. Ronnie loved you because God loves you. Ronnie loved you because God loved him. Not because Ronnie was so great, but because God is so great.

"And then she goes on to speak to the Libyan people, expressing her love to them. And her last sentence is, 'I want all of you, all the people of Libya, to know I am praying for the peace and prosperity of Libya, and Ronnie's blood shed in Libyan soil, I hope that this encourages peace and reconciliation between the people there and God. Sincerely, Anita Smith.'"

The Scandal of God's Grace

So she received some criticism for writing this letter—that she was nuts for forgiving these people, as if it has to be an issue with your mental capacity in order to forgive like Yeshua did.

You see, Jonah's not so ridiculous to be angry or upset. How many of us would deny the grace of God to someone based on our hate for them? It's justified, right? I mean, we have the right, right? Any legal government on the earth would facilitate our revenge in the form of some type

of justice system, execution, court case, right? Any legal system on earth would get with us and say, yeah, you're right to be angry about this. We're going to get to the bottom of this. But God's kingdom is not of this earth. That's a very hard, hard thing to actually commit to. It's one thing to say and read it. It's another thing to commit to it and actually step where God wants you to step and follow where his son stepped.

So for the remainder of [Jonah 4](#), God's going to make several attempts—he already made one—to try to help Jonah understand the severity of his own grace and love for the Ninevites and what his kingdom truly looks like when it reigns.

So he's already tried once when asking Jonah, hey, are you sure it's okay for you to be angry with me about what I want to do with my grace and mercy and love because I'm God? He hadn't noticed, right? And this is not so much of a fun book anymore, is it? We liked it better when it was just about a guy and a stupid fish, right? Easy. The story of Jonah has nothing to do with a fish.

And so the first attempt was in verse 4 when God asked Jonah the question. And how does Jonah respond to this question in verse 4? He doesn't say a word. He just kind of stonewalls God. Anybody ever stonewalled somebody? Any married couples ever been in that situation—just so upset with somebody that they try to ask you a question. Nope. Nope. And so Jonah just packs up his stuff, walks outside and walks out of the city and sits down. City right there. Doesn't really want to respond to God.

God's First Attempt

And so in verse 6, here we go, God's going to try a different tactic with him. 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 this plant. He was happy, happy, happy. And so the plant gave Jonah some shade. And this is the first time in the book of Jonah that Jonah is happy.

But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm, a little worm, that attacked the plant so it withered. And 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, Is it better for me to die? It is better for me to die than live. Just let me go.

But God said to Jonah, do you do well to be angry because of the plant? And Jonah said, yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die. Have you not been here, God? Like, this is so dramatic.

And so the first time, Jonah didn't even answer. The second time, he's just short with God. Like, yes, I should be angry. Yes.

The Plant and God's Lesson

And so God continues, and he says in verse 10. Oh, wait, I think I have some of the slides up. Where's verse 10? Here we go.

And the Lord said, You, pity—some translations may say concern or compassion. You have all of this energy and emotion that you've invested in this plant. You have all of this concern for the plant, which you did not plant, you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. Once it was up, it was gone. Pfft. You have nothing invested in this plant, Jonah. Nothing. But let's just say that you're justified with being all ticked off the plant's dead. You're heartbroken over this green plant.

And he says, this is great. Should not I pity Nineveh, the 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? Cows again. God loves these cows. And also their cattle. Betsy, I mean...

So God tries first to expose Jonah's ridiculous anger for him being too gracious to the Assyrians, and that didn't work. And so God moves on to this plant thing. And it's fascinating because this is the first time that Jonah is happy and cares for something other than himself the entire story.

And so God takes it away to show how ridiculous it is for him to have this much anger over this stupid plant. And then God tries a different tactic, and he sees Jonah so attached to this plant, and he basically tells Jonah, okay, so you're good to have this concern for this little insignificant plant. Okay, that's fine, Jonah. Is it okay with you, Jonah, if I, God, have the same type of concern over something just slightly more significant like 120,000 people and much cows? Is it okay with you, Jonah, if I can love something too? You love the plant. I love the people. Is that okay with you?

The Book Ends with Your Question

Maybe some of you who are reading your books right now realize that we've come to the end of Jonah. This is the end of the book. This is it. This is the last verse in the book of Jonah. And it kind of causes you to turn the page. No, that's not Jonah. What's Jonah say? What's he going to say? How's he going to come back from this? And if we're reading the book and we're searching for what Jonah's going to say here, we're missing the point of the book of Jonah.

Remember how I said that God was not the protagonist of the book of Jonah? Neither is Jonah. The reason why the book ends with a question is to cause the reader, everybody say me, to ask themselves that question.

The entire reason the book is written the way it has been has nothing to do with Jonah. It has nothing to do with Jonah. And it has everything to do with you. You are the main character in this book. And it was written this way to make that obvious.

What is Jonah going to say? Jonah's not going to say anything, so you begin to ask yourself the question, is it okay with you? The book is a story of God asking you why you are not concerned with telling others about his love and his forgiveness as he is.

The Challenge to Believers

Jonah was very excited to proclaim that he was a Hebrew and he feared God. How many of you say that you fear God and that you're a believer? A couple of us. Okay, I'll pray for the rest of you. And that's what the book is about.

It's asking you, O covenant believer, O fear of God, O you believer in Yeshua, O you follower of Jesus Christ, O you follower of the Messiah who has accepted and been saved by God's mercy and grace and still refuse to forgive and to love the unlovable in your own eyes.

The book is about you. And so how many of you want the answer to the question? Is it okay with you that God loves mankind? That God loves the world, that whosoever believes in his only begotten son, that whosoever believes in him will enter into the eternal age of his presence and will not perish? That is the question that is given to you at the end of this book. And the reason why the book doesn't give an answer is because God is still waiting for your answer, Jonah.

More from Founded in Truth

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