

OUR COMPASSIONATE GOD

jkroberts_us@yahoo.com
www.pacolethillsbaptist.org

September 22, 2019

Jonah 1:1-3

1. God's dealings with humanity are motivated by, among other attributes, His compassion; including manifestations of His discipline, judgment and wrath.
2. We see that truth exemplified in the ministries of Jonah (784-772 BC), Amos (767-755 BC), and Hosea (755-714 BC).
3. Jonah's ministry was to Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian Empire.
 - a. According to 2 Kings 14:25 Jonah was from Gath-hepher, a town not far from Nazareth, which made Jonah a Galilean.
 - b. This fact contradicted the stated view of the chief priests and Pharisees recorded in John 7:45-52.

Note their response to Nicodemus, who asked, "Our Law does not judge a man unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it? They answered him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee."
 - c. An unsubstantiated Jewish tradition suggests that Jonah was the son of the widow of Zerapath that Elijah raised from the dead. 1 Kings 17:8-24
 - d. The Assyrians were an extremely ruthless people who threatened and eventually conquered the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 722 BC.
 - e. Yet, God showed them mercy by giving them a chance to repent and change their ways.
NOTE: Even though their repentance was not permanent, it did delay their actions towards Israel.
4. Shortly after Jonah's ministry to Nineveh both Amos and Hosea were sent to Israel, but their ministries did not lead to repentance toward God on the part of the Israelites, which would have saved them from the judgment that was to come.
NOTE: Again, here we see God's compassion as He withholds His judgment while sending His prophets to confront His wayward people.
5. The book of Jonah can teach us much about walking with God and being used by Him to advance His purposes and His Kingdom.
6. There are a number of things that will manifest themselves in the lives of those whom God chooses to use.

I. Conflict. 1:1-3

- A. Jonah was God's prophet, and God gave him a clear and direct order; a clear and direct order that Jonah chose to disobey.
- B. He chose to do the exact opposite of what God wanted him to do.
- C. The reason behind his decision to disobey God is found in Jonah 4:1-4.

But it greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry. 2 He prayed to the Lord and said, "Please Lord, was not this what I said while I was still in my own country? Therefore in order to forestall this I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity. 3 "Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for death is better to me than life." 4 The Lord said, "Do you have good reason to be angry?"

NOTE: He wanted God to destroy Nineveh, because the Assyrians were Israel's enemies.

D. The question we should ask ourselves is, “What is our reason for ignoring and disobeying the clear commands and intentions of God as revealed in His Word, and at times impressed upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit?”

E. Jesus asked a probing question in Luke 6:46 when He asked, “Why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?”

NOTE: Jesus is Lord, but He will not force His lordship on us. Being saved involves repenting towards God and embracing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. It is my belief that until we do all three we are not saved. That does not imply that we are immediately fully instructed, and mature Christians, but it does mean that we have come to recognize that we have surrendered the control of our lives to God.

II. Consequences. 2:4-17

A. The fact that we have embraced Jesus Christ as Lord does not mean that we always respond to the lordship of Jesus Christ as we should.

B. Like Jonah, we sometimes resist the will of God for various reasons.

C. Because Jonah was God’s prophet His disobedience led to serious discipline, and our failure to live under the lordship of Christ will also lead to discipline-sometimes very serious discipline. Heb 12:4-11

You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; 5 and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; 6 FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." 7 It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? 8 **But if you are without discipline, of which all (sons) have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.** 9

Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? 10 For they disciplined us for a short time as seemed best to them, but He disciplines us for our good, so that we may share His holiness. 11 All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.

D. Notice also that God’s discipline not only impacted him, but also those he was with.

NOTE: It is a sad but true fact; our sinful shortcomings and failures impact the lives of others; often in ways that have serious repercussions for those we love and care about.

E. Yet God is merciful and able to help and to heal us and those we have failed.

F. Jonah was delivered from death through the instrumentality of a great fish and given three days and three nights to reconsider his actions.

III. Contrition. 2:1-10

A. Fortunately for Jonah he could not do what he thought he was doing, which was fleeing from the presence of the Lord. Ps 139:7-10

Where can I go from Your Spirit? or where can I flee from Your presence? 8 If I ascend to heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, You are there. 9 If I take the wings of the dawn, if I dwell in the remotest part of the sea, 10 even there Your hand will lead me, and Your right hand will lay hold of me.

B. When we get ourselves in a mess it is a good idea to do what Jonah did; he prayed to the Lord his God from the stomach of the fish.

NOTE: Note both the honesty and humility manifested by Jonah.

IV. Cooperation. 3:1-4

A. In response to Jonah's prayer God changed his circumstances by commanding the fish to vomit Jonah up onto dry land. 2:10

NOTE: For the record Jesus substantiated this incident in Matthew 12:38-41.

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You." 39 But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; 40 for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. 41 "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.

B. I am glad that God is a God of second chances.

1. The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time.
2. God's instructions were clear; go to Nineveh and preach what I tell you to preach.
3. Jonah arose, went to Nineveh, and walked through the city crying out, "Yet forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown."

V. Conviction. 3:5-9

A. The people led the way by believing God and calling a fast.

B. When the king heard about Jonah and his message he arose from his throne, humbled himself before God, and issued a proclamation that all his subjects must fast and pray earnestly so that all might repent and turn from their violent and wicked ways.

C. The king expressed the hope that God might relent and withdraw His burning anger so that they would not perish.

VI. Compassion. 3:10

When God saw their deeds, that they turned from their wicked ways, He relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. And He did not do it.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

1. Jonah was so displeased and angry that he asked God to take his life.
2. God asked Jonah, "Do you have good reason to be angry?"
3. Then God gave Jonah an object lesson related to his misguided perspective and lack of compassion.
 - a. Jonah decided to camp outside of the city and see what would happen to it.
 - b. He made a shelter for himself, but it did not provide the shade he needed.
 - c. God **appointed** a fast growing plant to provide Jonah shade which made him extremely happy.
 - d. Then God **appointed** a worm to attack the plant and it died so that Jonah would have no protection from the sun, and then He **appointed** a scorching east wind to increase Jonah's discomfort.
 - e. Jonah became very angry about the plant and begged with all his soul to die.
 - f. God pointed out that Jonah's priorities were all wrong in that he was moaning about a dead plant while having no compassion for the population of Nineveh.
4. What moves and motivates us; God's love and compassion or self-interest?
5. We can learn a lot about ourselves by asking, "What makes me glad and what makes me sad?"