

Jonah: The Mercy of God and the Actions of Men

Week 9 – The Mercifully Patient God

Jonah 4:1-4

God continues being merciful to Jonah as Jonah judges God and uses God's character as an accusation of evil.

Action: We will spiritually see our judgment of God and self-righteousness, grieve, and praise God for His patience with us

Series Graphic (SLIDE 1)

Opening Idea

A man betrays his friend. The friend mentored him, shared resources with him, treated the man's family with kindness, especially his Mother-in-law, and the friend celebrated growth and wisdom. The friend was arrested and the man denied he knew his friend. Not one time, but three times. After Jesus was crucified and resurrected, He restored Peter. Jesus was patient with Peter, teaching him, correcting him, encouraging him, and restoring him.

Merciful patience is a major part of God's character and personhood. As we continue studying the book of Jonah, let's look at chapter 4 again and see God mercifully demonstrate patience with Jonah to be reminded of His work with us.

Merciful Reminder: Do You Do Well to be Angry? (SLIDE 2)

Read

Jonah 4:1-4 ESV (SLIDE 3)

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?"

Series Graphic (SLIDE 4)

Notes on Jonah 4:1-4

Jonah Worships Another god (v. 1)

Jonah confesses that he has assessed God's request, evaluated God's motivations, and judged God's character in reference to His plans for the Ninevites. Jonah's judgement of God is that God is doing something evil in His redemptive work to save the Ninevites. Jonah judges from a place in his heart that reveals Jonah thinks he is God. This reveals mankind's great struggle to find another god to replace God, place that god in a high regard, and worship that god. That god that mankind worships in place of the true God is self. Jonah, in judging God, is worshipping himself as god and thinks he is a better god than God.

God is Trustworthy and Jonah Judges (v. 2)

Jonah's place of judgement doesn't come from lies about God. Jonah doesn't judge God because God has failed or has proven Himself to be unworthy or incompetent. Jonah's evaluation of God's character and abilities is accurate. God is, "gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster." God is and did all the things Jonah has accused. It is that Jonah doesn't want God to relent from His wrath against the Ninevites. Jonah appears to want the Ninevites to suffer every bit of God's wrath against them. There is a sense in Jonah's actions that Jonah might be judging God to be like the Ninevites. Jonah thought the Ninevites were evil for the grotesque things they did to conquered people, and he was angry that God would forgive the Ninevites for their evil. The language used in Jonah 4:1-4 indicates that Jonah thought God was doing evil. Jonah judges both the Ninevites and God to do evil things. Jonah isn't likely to think that God is evil like the Ninevites, but judging both indicates that Jonah is angry and judges.

Jonah Plans a Coup (v. 3)

Jonah would rather die than to see God redeem the Ninevites. This request from Jonah helps to shed light on why he asked the sailors to toss him overboard into the raging sea. Jonah thought the Ninevites should be destroyed, and he did not want to live any longer. This prayer from Jonah reveals his heart. He is angry and his anger drives him to judgement and selfishness.

God Mercifully and Patiently Reveals Jonah's Sin (v.4)

God doesn't take counsel from Jonah and therefore God doesn't take Jonah's life. Rather, God asks Jonah a question. This isn't a question of discovery. God knows what is in Jonah's heart and mind. The question reveals Jonah's condition to Jonah. The question is an act of mercy by God. Rather than wrathfully destroying Jonah for his sin, God reveals that Jonah is angry and that his anger is causing Jonah to sin. The question gives Jonah a moment to realize his situation with God and to take a different course of action. God does not take Jonah's life. We see God's mercy cause Him to deal with Jonah patiently. God patiently leads Jonah to relent from his anger and judgement.

God is Mercifully Patient with His People (SLIDE 5)

God is Patient for Repentance (to the lost) (SLIDE 6)

2 Peter 3:9 ESV

9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

God is Patient for Reliance (to His children) (SLIDE 7)

Psalms 86:15-16 ESV

15 But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

16 Turn to me and be gracious to me;
give your strength to your servant,
and save the son of your maidservant.

Merciful Response (SLIDE 8)

God, thank you for being mercifully patient!

Growing awareness of Merciful Patience

Spiritual Awareness of God's Merciful Patience with you

Growing response of Gratitude

Reveal God's Merciful Patience

He is patient with you

Be patient with others

Read

1 Timothy 1:16 ESV (SLIDE 9)

16 But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

Series Graphic (SLIDE 10)

Daily Readings

Week 9 – The Mercifully Patient God

Day 1

1 Timothy 1:16 ESV

¹⁶ But I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as the foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life.

You, like Paul and Timothy, have “received mercy so that Jesus Christ displays His perfect patience as an example” to others who would believe in Jesus Christ and receive eternal life with God. God is mercifully patient with you. You benefit from God’s patience, but it isn’t only for you. God is using you to Glorify Himself as He draws others to salvation in Jesus Christ! God is mercifully patient!

Day 2

2 Peter 3:9 ESV

⁹ The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.

You experienced God’s patience and He brought you to repentance by graciously giving your faith in Christ. Take time throughout today to express gratitude to God for His patience and praise Him for your salvation. Plead God to be patient with someone who has not professed faith in Jesus Christ or with a child of God who is acting like a fool. Humbly ask God to continue patiently dealing with you as you grow to become more like Christ. God is mercifully patient!

Day 3

Psalms 86:15-16 ESV

¹⁵ But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

¹⁶ Turn to me and be gracious to me;
give your strength to your servant,
and save the son of your maidservant.

God patiently gave you faith, changed your heart and mind, helped you realize your wrathful situation with God, and caused you to believe in Jesus Christ as God’s Son who died on the cross and resurrected. He is gracious, merciful, slow to anger, overflowing in steadfast love and faithfulness. Like the Psalmist, pray and give thanks to God for being mercifully patient towards you, turning His face toward you, and saving you. Plead for Him to continue doing that with someone who has not believed in Jesus Christ. God is a mercifully patient God!

Day 4

Romans 2:4 ESV

⁴ Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

God has been and is mercifully patient with you. Paul writes that God has been more patient with you than you can realize. Was God mercifully patient with you just so you can continue doing destructive things from a warped heart and mind? When you were separated from God, due to your sin, did God abandon you? No! God was patient and kind to lead you to realize your need for Jesus Christ and repent. God is a mercifully patient God!

Day 5

Exodus 34:6-7 ESV

⁶ The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, ⁷ keeping steadfast love for thousands,^[a] forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children's children, to the third and the fourth generation.”

God reveals Himself to you in this passage from Exodus. God's character is shown in both patience and in action. His patience has been active for generations. Praise God for His patience. But God will take action one day against sin and sinners. This will be an awesome action and will demonstrate His justice and wrath. Praise God that He was patient with you and pray for Him to continue patiently drawing His people to Himself. Praise God for also being just! God is a mercifully patient God who is perfectly just!