

# Jonah - The Mercy of God and the Actions of Men

## Week 1 - Introduction to the Series – God is Merciful

### Jonah 4:1-4

God's mercy is revealed through the context of people's responses

Action: Praise God for His Mercy, Grace, Being Slow to Anger, Not Destroying Us, and Making Us Right with Him

### Series Graphic (SLIDE 1)

### Opening Idea

Massachusetts man swallowed by a Humpback whale –

On Friday, June 11, 2021, something possible, but improbable, happened.

This... **Show Picture (SLIDE 2)**

*A commercial lobster diver says he escaped relatively unscathed after nearly being swallowed by a humpback whale, in a biblical-sounding encounter that whale experts describe as rare but plausible.*

*Michael Packard, 56, said in local interviews and on social media that he was diving off the coast of Provincetown, Mass., on Friday morning when the whale suddenly scooped him up.*

*"I was in his closed mouth for about 30 to 40 seconds before he rose to the surface and spit me out," Packard later wrote [on Facebook](#). "I am very bruised up but have no broken bones."*

*reports that Packard was pulled out of the water by his crewman and rushed back to shore, where he was transported to Cape Cod Hospital. He walked — albeit with a limp — out of the hospital that afternoon.*

Did you catch what the newspaper reported, “a biblical-sounding encounter...” Does this story and this incident make the Bible believable? Or is the Bible believable and this story is a fantastic incident, especially for Michael Packard?

We will begin studying the book of Jonah and you will be pressed to ask yourself, “are there truths for me to learn and grow or is this a fantastic story for kids about a man and a big fish?”

Let's read and see what God has to say...

### 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?”

- a. V4 - Jonah 4:1 Hebrew *it was exceedingly evil* to Jonah

## **Series Graphic (SLIDE 4)**

### Notes on Jonah 4:1-4 Series Overview

#### **Jonah Sins**

There are instances of sin in this passage. Jonah's great displeasure toward God is more than just unhappiness. The literal translation from the Hebrew is that Jonah judged God to be evil, to be an evil doer, and to be wicked and perverse. Jonah's belief and accusations against God are grotesque. Jonah was angry toward God for what Jonah feels is God's wickedness and evil doing. Jonah's accusation against God isn't a rash statement or a moment of insanity. Jonah confesses that he has held this belief since God first commissioned Jonah with the salvific message for the Ninevites. Jonah disobeys and runs from God. Again, this isn't an accidental move or a moment of poor judgement. Jonah runs from God purposefully and with energy. Another revealed sinful action is that Jonah continues refusing to share the words of God to the Ninevites. Although Jonah has come out of the belly of the fish and was saved by God from drowning and being digested by a fish, Jonah still has a reluctant heart to go and share God's word. The fourth sin revealed in this passage is that of self-destruction to avoid obedience. Jonah is pleading for God to take Jonah's life. Jonah would rather die than to be included in God's salvific work in the Ninevites. Jonah is bold and brash in his sin and posture towards God. Jonah is in serious trouble and deserves to be destroyed by God. But...

#### **God is Merciful**

God is merciful! This is a big statement that is true in 2 ways. One, God is merciful toward Jonah. Jonah sinned in serious ways toward God and God is merciful to hold back His wrath against Jonah. There are at least four instances of God's mercy in Jonah's statement to God in the first three verses of chapter four. The second way God shows He is merciful is in His call of repentance to the Ninevites. They are a wicked and perverse people who deserve God's wrath and destruction. God, through grace, shows them mercy and sends a messenger to call the Ninevites to repentance. Rather than destroy the Ninevites, God graciously reveals their situation, calls them to repent, and turns His face toward them in forgiveness.

## **Big Themes in Jonah (SLIDE 5)**

Sin puts all people at risk of suffering God's wrath and destruction.

**(SLIDE 6)** God is just and merciful toward sinful people.

**(SLIDE 7)** God Causes His people to Desire Obedience and Do It.

### **Truths to Remember as we study the book of Jonah**

**(SLIDE 8)** The Book of Jonah is a Historical Account

**(SLIDE 9)** The Book of Jonah is about God

**(SLIDE 10)** We are not Jonah

**(SLIDE 11)** There are truths for us to learn

### **Jonah is a Historical Account teaching...**

- 1) God's Power and Mercy
- 2) God's Sovereignty
- 3) God's Will in Action
- 4) Man's Relationship to God and with God

### **Jonah is a Prophetic Book showing...**

- 1) Condemned People Need Salvation
- 2) God's People Need Mercy and Restoration
- 3) The Need for a Faithful Messenger

### **Do You Do Well to be Angry? (SLIDE 12)**

Do You Do Well to be Angry...

- This question...
  - o Demonstration of Mercy
  - o Ask God to Search you and
    - Reveal Your sin
    - Show Mercy and Patience
    - Cause you to grow in knowledge and love of God

### **Action (SLIDE 13)**

As we study the Book of Jonah, there are truths we will discover. I encourage you to take note and ask God to open your heart and mind to what He has written. What will God teach you in the days to come and how will it affect the way you know God and how you live in obedience to Him.

**Learn about God**

**Learn about Jonah**

**Learn about Yourself**

**Read**

### **Joel 2:12-13 ESV (SLIDE 14)**

**12** "Yet even now," declares the Lord, "return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; **13** and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

**Jonah: The Mercy of God and the Actions of Man**

## Daily Readings

### Week 1

#### Day 1

##### Joel 2:12-13 ESV

**12** “Yet even now,” declares the Lord, “return to me with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; **13** and rend your hearts and not your garments.” Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

God calls His people to return to Him after a season of disobedience and discipline. We are commanded to come to Him in humility and hope. Joel reminds you that your God is “gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.” What a wonderful reminder today.

#### Day 2

##### Romans 9:15 ESV

**15** For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”

You may struggle to understand God’s character and how, why, when, and to whom He is merciful. It is His determination, alone. Take a moment and praise God for being merciful and for showing you mercy.

#### Day 3

##### Jeremiah 9:23-24 ESV

**23** Thus says the Lord: “Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, **24** but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.”

There is honor and blessing in declaring God’s practice of steadfast love, justice, and righteousness. Take a moment and remember so that you, too, can declare that your hope is in God. Praise God that He has shown you love faithfully, dealt with you justly, and made you His righteousness. Through His word and your experience, you can boast in some understanding of God and His goodness.

## **Day 4**

### **Proverbs 9:10 ESV**

**10** The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.

Growing in your understanding of God's power, holiness, mercy, and kindness is wonderful thing in which to grow. Plead for God to grow you in knowing His might and mercy. Find Him in His Word and in His work in and with you. Fear and knowledge of God is a great reward to the child of God!

## **Day 5**

### **Proverbs 3:5-6 ESV**

**5** Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

**6** In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.

You have experienced crooked paths of discipline that are the work of God to correct you and cause you to trust Him, lean upon Him, and acknowledge Him. Reject any thoughts of trusting, leaning, or acknowledging yourself and grow in trusting in God. Wisdom is knowing God and living in response to what you know. Today is a great day to declare your full trust in God.