

Jonah: The Mercy of God and the Actions of Man

Week 11 – The Transforming God

Jonah 4:10-11

God is merciful to Jonah and teaches Jonah mercy

Action: We will continually remember God's mercy towards us and grow in showing mercy towards others

Series Graphic (SLIDE 1)

Opening Idea

A man was part of a movement he fully believed in. He altered his life, his priorities, his work, and his long-term plans to be a part of this movement. He was a core member of the small group of people who were in this movement together. The man who started this movement was arrested falsely, he was unjustly tortured and corruptly executed in public. The core members of the movement scattered, including Thomas. Like the other core members, Thomas hid. Then Jesus resurrected and appeared to the disciples, but Thomas was not present. The other disciples told Thomas that Jesus visited them, Thomas didn't believe them and declared he needed to see Jesus with his own eyes to believe. Jesus appeared again to the disciples and Thomas was there for this visit. Yet, Thomas doubted that this person who stood in front of him and the others was really Jesus. Jesus told Thomas to touch Jesus' scars of His hands and the puncture wound in Jesus' side. He told Thomas to believe. Thomas believed.

The spiritual work it takes to move us from skeptic and only trusting our senses to a believer who trusts by faith is great. This move only happens because by God's grace, He gives us faith to believe in Jesus Christ through God's good word given to and protected for us to know Him. All of His work is wonderful for us, but it is to His glory!

Let's continue our study of Jonah and see how God's mercy given to man is precious, powerful, and effective.

Merciful Reminder: Do You Do Well To Be Angry? (SLIDE 2)

Read

Jonah 4:10-11 ESV

(SLIDE 3) **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?"

Series Graphic (SLIDE 4)

Notes on Jonah 4:10-11

Sinful Man's Will is Corrupt (v. 10)

Jonah shows the reader of this historical account that his values and spiritual discernment are messed up. The statement the Lord makes in this verse shows that Jonah is not in alignment with the Lord. Jonah's anger has caused him to sin, and his sin has made Jonah pity the vine and not pity the man (the Ninevites). It is true that the unregenerated man is twisted and evil and cannot discern, understand, or value God's will and character. Jonah is a man of faith and is a spokesperson for God. He is regenerated and possesses faith, yet sin affects him in a terrible way. His sin causes Jonah to be out of alignment with God and value what is right in Jonah's own eyes. Man is able to exercise his will and desires to certain ends, but man is not capable of exercising his will and desire without influence. Free will does not mean free from influence. The child of God is at risk of sin's terrible impact!

God's Words Declares His Sovereignty (v. 10)

God makes a statement in this verse that reminds Jonah, as well as the reader, that God alone is sovereign over all of creation. The vine that grew and provided shade and joy for Jonah was there because God made it grow. The vine has no will of its own. Jonah does not have the power to cause the vine to grow in such the way it did, it "came into being within a night and perished within a night". God is reminding Jonah that God is sovereign and holy, Jonah is not. God did a similar thing with Job. God reminded Job, who questioned God, that only God was present when the earth formed and time began. God is reminding Jonah that there is only one God. The true God is The Lord who created the oceans and dry ground!

God's Will is Perfect and Effective (v. 11)

God reveals to Jonah that God has decided to pity Nineveh and show them mercy. God's mercy shown toward the Ninevites isn't because of their greatness, their potential for great things, or their situation as the capital city of the Assyrian empire. God is merciful toward the Ninevites only because He chooses. God's will is perfect and God will accomplish His will. God's will is effective and He has shown the effectiveness of His will in the humble repentant response of the Ninevites and in Jonah's declaring God's word to the Ninevites. God's will is perfect and effective!

God's Mercy is for His Creation that Bears His Image (v. 11)

God is the creator of the oceans and dry land, as declared to the sailors in the boat by Jonah. God does give His attention to the land, to animals, to seas, and to the skies, but He is clearly attentive to humankind who bears His image. God reminds Jonah that although Jonah pities the plant, God pities the Ninevites. The use of "great city" doesn't give special significance to the city. It is a descriptor that Nineveh is a large city. God isn't saying that He is concerned with the city as a place or location, but that there are many people who live in the city. God especially cares about people.

Lost People are Incapable of Helping Themselves (v. 11)

God makes a statement about the condition of the people of Nineveh. Jonah writes that God says the Ninevites don't know their right hand from their left. This is a way of saying that they need help. Their sin has corrupted them and their sense of right and wrong is grotesquely wrong. The right hand is seen as truth and the right way, and the left hand stands for deception, corruption, and the wrong way. This phrase also shows that the Ninevites are confused with what they should do. All they have known is now gone and they don't know how to respond appropriately to God. This might be the reason Jonah records that the Ninevites force their animals to show grief and humility in wearing sackcloth and fasting. The Ninevites are using old ideas to inform new living. God has pity on them and is helping them.

God Transforms His People (SLIDE 5)

God is the Only God (SLIDE 6)

God is Real and Present

He Is the Author and Creator

He Has Authority Over All Creation

People Are Unequal to God

Isaiah 64:8 ESV

8 But now, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

God Makes Dead People Alive (SLIDE 7)

Sin caused Death

God Defeated Death

God Makes People Alive

Ezekiel 37:12-14 ESV

12 Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. **13** And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. **14** And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will

place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.”

God Teaches Right from Left (SLIDE 8)

He is Absolute Right

Truth

Correct

There is Left

Wrong

Lies

Deception

God’s People are taught Know Truth and Set Free

John 8:31-36 ESV

31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” **33** They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?” **34** Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. **35** The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. **36** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Merciful Response: Make Me Alive to Join Your Life Saving Work! (SLIDE 9)

Read

Hebrews 13:20-21 ESV (SLIDE 10)

20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, **21** equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Series Graphic (SLIDE 11)

Daily Readings

Week 11 – The Transforming God

Day 1

Hebrews 13:20-21 ESV

20 Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, **21** equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us[[a](#)] that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

God's power brought Jesus from death, back to life. God is working in those who have been redeemed by faith in Jesus Christ to cause you to do His will and become pleasing to God as He looks on them. You are that person. God has saved you, has made you alive, and is working in you to equip you to participate in His salvific work. The desire to use your gifts to do God's good works and please Him glorifies Jesus Christ. God is the transforming God!

Day 2

Isaiah 64:8 ESV

8 But now, O Lord, you are our Father;
we are the clay, and you are our potter;
we are all the work of your hand.

When we are given faith, we realize that God is real, that God is present, God is perfect, and that God works. The faith to believe is evidence of salvation! Faith also causes us to realize that only God is God and only He has the right to deal however he wants to with His creation. This right is certainly extended to working with nature, but it also includes those whom He created in His image. You bear His image, and you are saved. Having this relationship with God and having this knowledge of God leads you to desire for Him to do as He will with you. Pray and ask God to help you desire His work in you, around you, and through you. Grow in seeing yourself as His clay and His creation as special. Ask God to make you useful to Him and that God would bring you honor in using you. God is the transforming God!

Day 3

Ezekiel 37:12-14 ESV

12 Therefore prophesy, and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, O my people. And I will bring you into the land of Israel. **13** And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I open your graves, and raise you from your graves, O my people. **14** And I will put my Spirit within you, and you shall live, and I will

place you in your own land. Then you shall know that I am the Lord; I have spoken, and I will do it, declares the Lord.”

The valley of dry bones in Ezekiel 37 did not know that they were dead or dry. Dead people do not know they are dead. God commanded Ezekiel to speak, and God put flesh on the dry bones, and they came to life. God commissioned Ezekiel to speak to Israel that they are spiritually dead, and God will overcome death and bring them back to life. This is what God does. He gives life to dead people. You were once dead and God brought you back to life. In that new life, you can look back and see how death had a hold on you and you were caught in a grave. But God, in giving you life, put His Spirit in you and you are no longer dead. You are alive in Christ! Your God is the transforming God!

Day 4

John 8:31-36 ESV

31 So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, **32** and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” **33** They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?” **34** Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave^{[a](#)} to sin. **35** The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. **36** So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

There is an idea in our culture of varied or multiple truths. How you see something, your truth, might be different than how someone else sees the same thing, their truth. The truth is that there is only one truth that exists. God’s truth is expressed in His word and is made clear to those who read and understand it. If you hold tight to God’s word and set up your life according to His word, then you will be God’s disciple and you will know the truth. His truth set you free! God’s truth revealed your sin and condemnation while also revealing that there was a forgiveness. Jesus Christ was God’s way of destroying the curse of sin. Believing in the Son by faith set you free from sin and death. You are free indeed! You are alive and free! Your God is the transforming God!

Day 5

Titus 2:11-12 ESV

11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, **12** training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,

As a child of God who is saved, God is working powerfully and effectively. This salvation isn’t just to close the doors of hell and open the doors of heaven. You received the Holy Spirit and He is working in you to train you, to cause you to desire God, to reject the world’s passions and values, and live by the fruit of the Spirit. The Spirit is working in you to produce Godliness and righteousness. You look less like you and more like Christ every day. This work doesn’t remove you to a compound that separates you from the world, but it guards your heart and mind as you

live in your Christlikeness in the world and neighborhood you once called home. Praise God for His work and petition Him to continue. Join God in this work in you. Your God is the Transforming God!