

Jonah: The Reluctant Prophet - 18

Introduction: We begin again by looking at Jonah **chapter 4**. This chapter deals with Jonah and God working in Jonah's life. God reveals His heart to us and reveals Jonah's heart to himself.

Whatever Jonah did, he did it with all of his heart.

In **chapter 1**, Jonah ran from the Lord in disobedience.

In **chapter 2**, Jonah showed repentance toward the Lord and prayed accordingly.

In **chapter 3**, Jonah earnestly preached the message that God gave him.

Here in **chapter 4**, we discover Jonah is exceedingly angry and displeased at Nineveh not being destroyed.

When we study the Scriptures, we discover that one of the most dangerous, hindering states to be in is lukewarm. The great difficulty in this condition **is that it is deceptive**.

In **Revelation chapter 3**, the great indictment concerning Laodicea was that they believed they were "rich," they believed that they were "increased with goods," and they believed that they had "need of nothing." In **verse 15**, the Lord states "*I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.*"

There are many today that are suffering from this very malady. They are saved, but they are not fully committed to the Lord Jesus Christ and His local church.

Let's read **verse number 1 again**. The Bible says, "*But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.*"

IV. Jonah's Pouting: God's Presentation - Chapter 4

A. Anger and displeasure v1-4

It is easy for us to see the folly in sin and how it bends and distorts man's actions and thinking from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In the book of Acts, we read that the Lord compelled Peter by a vision and visitation of Gentiles to go to the house of Cornelius.

But when Peter arrived back at the church in Jerusalem, here are the words we read in **Acts 11:1-3**, "*And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, **they that were of the circumcision contended with him**, Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.*"

John Butler pointedly said this, "We may think and profess piously that we want revival and spiritual growth and blessing; but all it takes to reveal this "displeased" attitude is for the preacher to go **an extra few minutes in his sermon** or for **an invitation to last a few more verses** of a hymn than usual or for **someone to ask us to give more money for missions**, a building program, or some other church ministry. When this happens we fuss, complain, gripe, and murmur. We are "displeased"; and if the truth were known, we, like Jonah, are also "angry." Spiritual progress has upset us. Jonah has nothing on us. We can keep pace with his sour disposition without missing a beat."

1. _____ and _____ v1-3

Notice **verses number 2 and 3** that gives us this prayer of Jonah.

*"2 And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this **my** saying, when I was yet in **my** country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. 3 Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, **my** life from **me**; for it is better for **me** to die than to live."*

We might say it this way using the language of the Bible, *"...out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."* (**Matthew 12:34**)

The hallmark of displeasure toward God indicates **selfishness**.

Jonah did not complain about the grace of God as it concerned the restoration of Israel's land (**II Kings 14:25**)

Jonah did not complain about the grace of God when he was delivered from the fish.

But now Nineveh was on the receiving end of God's grace and mercy and this was somehow different.

Jamieson-Fausset-Brown in his commentary had this to say, "If Nineveh had been the prominent object with him, he would have rejoiced at the result of his mission. But Israel was the prominent aim of Jonah, as a prophet of the elect people. Probably then he regarded the destruction of Nineveh as fitted to be an example of God's judgment, at last, suspending His long forbearance so as to startle Israel from its desperate degeneracy, heightened by its new prosperity under Jeroboam II at that very time, in a way that all other means had failed to do." Robert Jamieson, A. R. Fausset, and David Brown, *Commentary Critical and Explanatory on the Whole Bible*, vol. 1 (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), 686.

Jonah indicated by his prayer, that the grace of God **is to be exclusive** (based on my judgment) **not inclusive** based on God's judgment.

Throughout this chapter, we will discover exactly how deep this runs in the life of Jonah.

I can say without a doubt when I stop to consider my selfishness and pride, that it makes me sick. Apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, I cannot find my way.

As we continue to consider this prayer and honesty of Jonah, will see that he requests the LORD to take his life.

What a terrible indication of how sore vexed Jonah is by his clouded vision.

We must ask ourselves this question: How can we find our way? How can we see rightly? The only way is by yielding ourselves to God and His ways. The only way is to allow God to show us the truth, and to see Him high holy, and lifted up.

If you and I were writing the narrative, we would stop at the end of **chapter 3**. We would end this small book with a high note. It might go something like this:

1. The prophet got right with God.
2. The prophet preached a great message.
3. The people all repented and trusted God.
4. God spared the people in his great mercy.
5. And the prophet rides off into the sunset.

But this is not how this book ends. We see that Jonah thought he knew what was best for his life. It is amazing, how the Lord answers Jonah with such a thought-provoking question.

It is a question you and I need to consider this week, "Doest thou well to be angry?"

The question is not are you angry? Jonah has made it pretty plain in his prayer as to why he believed he was angry, but do you do well to be angry?