



Jonah – A Pitiful Response

GETTING STARTED

We usually think about the Old Testament prophets as these towering figures in the Bible who clearly never struggled with sin. However, the Bible shows us that the prophets were still sinful people who were afraid and sometimes held on to sin for much longer than they should. Jonah is the perfect example, not just because he ran away when God called him, but even after his mission was complete his attitude hadn't improved a great deal. Jonah wanted to see the people of Nineveh judged for their sins and was angry when God didn't destroy them. And while we sometimes want to judge him, when we look at our own lives we can sometimes hold on to similar ideas in our own hearts. We can become more concerned with our own comfort and well-being than the eternal fate of our friends and neighbours. Jonah is an excellent reminder that God's love is for every person, city and nation!

READ THE TEXT: Jonah 4:1-11

4 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?"

5 Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. 6 Now the Lord God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his



head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant.
7 But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." 9 But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." 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?"

UNDERSTAND THE TEXT

1. Why was Jonah so angry? How does the writer portray Jonah's anger? Is it a righteous anger or not? Now, assuming that Jonah himself wrote this book, what does this description of his anger tell you about how he must have felt later on about his actions?
2. What was Jonah supposed to learn from the plant that God grew?

APPLY THE TEXT

3. Do I actively overcome evil with good by not seeking revenge on my enemies, but instead treat them with true pity?
4. Am I more concerned with my own comfort & contentment than I am over the sinful condition of my friends, family & neighbors who do not know the saving grace & mercy of Jesus?
5. Do I believe that I need the grace & mercy of God as much as the next person does?

SHARE & PRAY

1. What is one way that you are seeking to share the good news of Jesus this week? How can your life group help and support you in that?
2. In light of the Jonah, read and pray through Psalm 37 for one another.

