

“No Compassion” - Jonah 4:1-11

Ask - “Do you obey God willingly or out of obligation (or sometimes both)? Talk about it.”

Background - Ultimately Jonah ended up preaching in Nineveh, albeit half-heartedly. Perhaps not for his entire ministry, but at least in this instance, Jonah obeyed God out of compulsion rather than loving willingness. The difference could be more clear.

“Jonah’s Response” - Jonah 4:1-4

(v1) When the Ninevites repented and the LORD showed them mercy, how did Jonah respond? Why?

(v2-3) Review Jonah’s prayer. What did Jonah know about God’s character, as opposed to his own? What did Jonah ask for and why?

(v4) How did the LORD answer Jonah? Answer the question God asked and justify your response.

JONAH WAS ANGRY THAT GOD SHOWED COMPASSION TO THE NINEVITES. HE WAS SO UPSET THAT HE ASKED GOD TO TAKE HIS LIFE.

“The Shade Plant” - Jonah 4:5-8

(v5) Where did Jonah go? What did he do? What did he hope to see from that vantage point?

(v6-7) How did God provide for Jonah? How did Jonah react? What happened at dawn on the next day?

(v8) When the sun rose, what happened to Jonah? What did he say - again? How would you describe the way Jonah was feeling?

EVEN IN HIS ANGER, GOD TEMPORARILY PROVIDED HIM SHADE - BOTH AS AN ACT OF COMPASSION AND TO TEACH HIM A LESSON.

“No Compassion” - Jonah 4:9-11

(v9) Describe the exchange between God and Jonah after the plant withered. Have you ever felt like Jonah? Share.

(v10) To what degree did Jonah care for the plant that had died? What was the value of the plant?

(v11) In contrast, to what degree did Jonah care for the people of Nineveh?

What was their value to God? Discuss.

JONAH EXPRESSED MORE SORROW OVER THE LOST PLANT THAN THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE IN NINEVEH.

Application - The book of Jonah ends without any indication of whether or not the prophet's heart ever softened. He seemed to have no regard for his enemies and was furious at God for sparing them. His story demonstrates that God can use even a reluctant disciple to bring salvation to lost souls. Sometimes we all lose perspective and fail to see others through God's eyes. Will we always be bitter and angry that God is merciful toward sinners or will we celebrate His compassion and show it to others?