



Not THAT! | Not THEE: The Choice You Make in the Shade | Week 4 | November 25, 2018

Jonah 4; Luke 15: 11-32

Opening: Pastor Dan Meyer speaks again concluding Jonah's story with the Ninevites. Jonah heeded God's call to go to Nineveh with a message that "40 more days and Nineveh will be overturned" (vs. 4). We don't know what Jonah expected to happen as he delivered this word to the barbaric Ninevites but the result was dramatic.

Context: Last week (chap. 3) saw Jonah reluctantly accept God's call and begin his prophetic duty to this large city of Assyrians. We're told "he started into the city" (vs.4) and surprisingly, in vs. 5, "the Ninevites believed God". In vs. 10 we, along with Jonah, learn that [God] "did not bring on them the destruction". This week we watch Jonah's response to God's grace to the Assyrians.

The Assyrians' Repentance: Most of Chap.3 is a description of Nineveh's repentance. Pastor Meyer gives some historical background that says this was not a permanent change—it was more like a "foxhole" prayer.

Have you experienced "foxhole" repentance? Were you sincere at the time? We probably were, but what happens to us that we can't make our repentance (turning around) and humility stick?

Jonah's Situation: Jonah had faced what he thought was likely certain death. He had left his Jewish people for the first time to come to a heathen barbarous tribe. He must have thought his only purpose was to announce God's power and might before his God annihilated these wicked people—Jonah announces, God annihilates, God gets the credit, Jonah goes home. *Imagine Jonah's state-of-mind as he learns of God's grace and compassion. What emotions do you think he is experiencing? What conflicts might he be dealing with?*

Jonah's Response: We begin Chap 4 with Jonah angrily talking to God. Paraphrasing vs. 2, "I told you something like this would happen" he says, "that's why I tried to get out of this". He is almost saying "You made a fool out of me".

Do we, like Jonah, demand an outcome from God? Share an experience where you had an expectation and God provided different results.

Jonah Describes God: I knew that you are a **gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love**, a God who **relents from sending calamity** (vs. 2).

What is Jonah's problem with this situation? What is not right?

God Answers: "Is it right for you to be angry?" (vs 4). It's a simple question. Do we ever have the right to be angry with God? Pastor Meyer makes the case that there are situations that



appear to require God's power and fury rather than His compassion and grace. We see the result in vs. 5. Jonah goes off by himself and "pouts".

What's going on here? Have you ever been in such a place? Angry, disillusioned, demanding justice....how does that feel?

Jonah's Shade: God offers Jonah some relief and an object lesson with a plant (vs. 6-8). Jonah then again declares "It would be better for me to die". Nineveh is saved—Jonah wants to die; the plant dies—Jonah again wants to die.

What is the object lesson? What clarity is God trying to bring to Jonah?

God Answers: "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" So far, God has only asked two questions, both about anger and questioning what is right.

Read vs. 10. What is the message to Jonah and to us?

Living with the Heart of God: Pastor Meyer drew us to parallel errors of selfishness and self-righteousness. The parable of the prodigal son (*Luke 15: 11-32*) has two sons, each one practicing one of these errors. Jonah practiced both.

Describe Jonah's selfishness. Describe his self-righteousness. When our hearts harden in these ways, how does the Heart of God get back in?

Practice of the Week: Living within the Heart of God

Dallas Willard writes "But time is within eternity, not outside it. The created universe is within the kingdom of God, not outside it"¹. And our story on earth is within God's Story, not outside it. Our view of God, the God that Jonah describes in vs. 2, is the "secret sauce" for combatting our selfishness and self-righteousness. Celebrate that this week. Live within His unfathomable majesty, and power, and grace and love that is offered to us—and give thanks.

Family Formation: Be Angry and do not Sin

Revisit prayers..... Jonah was angry and he could not see God's way. Ephesians 4 instructs us: "*Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and give no opportunity to the devil.*" (vs. 26,27)

Explain the sequence: anger is a natural emotion; handle it honestly and quickly, do not sin and reach forgiveness wherever possible; don't let it sit inside and ferment or you'll "give the devil an opportunity" and be like Jonah. Don't go off and pout.

Additional Resources: "*A Fish Out of Water*" By Ravi Zacharias—a CD or DVD on Jonah

¹"*The Divine Conspiracy; Rediscovering our Hidden Life in God*" By Dallas Willard pg. 392

We'd love to hear from you!

If you have thoughts questions, comments, ideas on how to make these study guides more meaningful for you and your group, please let us know.

We also enjoy hearing how God is using these scriptures and study guides in your lives.

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