

Jonah 4:4–11

“Then the LORD said, ‘Is it right for you to be angry?’ So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. And the LORD God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah’s head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, ‘It is better for me to die than to live.’ Then God said to Jonah, ‘Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?’ And he said, ‘It is right for me to be angry, even to death!’ But the LORD said, ‘You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?’”

“An Angry Prophet” ***Jonah 4:1-11***

INTRO:

Jonah now throws his famous temper tantrum because God was just being God. We discovered last time we were here how God works. Jonah hated these Gentiles so much, he argued with God about what God did. The LORD preserved this record for us in the Bible because He wanted to challenge us with the reality with which He challenged Jonah.

I. Jonah’s Problem (v. 1-3)

II. The LORD’s Solution (v. 4-6)

I. Jonah’s Problem (v. 1-3)

Jonah 4:1–3 “But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. So he prayed to the LORD, and said, ‘Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness,

One who relents from doing harm. Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!”

A. One would think Jonah would be ecstatic. God had given a wide-spread repentance. However, Jonah was as far from happy as anyone could be. Jonah was very angry because God chose to spare these horrible Gentiles. This was a very sinful reply to God.

B. The primary reason Jonah refused to do what the LORD demanded at the beginning was that he knew God and he knew that God was ready to be gracious and relent. He did not want to relent and spare Nineveh.

C. Do we know these realities about our God?

v. 2 *“You are a gracious and merciful God.”*

Our God loves grace and mercy. Remember **Psalm 130:3-4?**

“If You, LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, That You may be feared.”

Where would we be if God was not gracious and merciful? Jonah rhymes the thought in the next phrase.

v.2 *“[The LORD is] slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm.”*

Hallelujah! If this were not true we would all be without hope.

D. Jonah so hated these Gentiles that he actually despised who God is. If we will not take God as He is there is no other hope.

v.3 *“Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!”*

II. The LORD’s Solution (v. 4-6)

A. How intent was the LORD to deliver His rebellious prophet? God prepared first a plant to grow up miraculously to shade Jonah.

v.6 *“And the LORD God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery.”*

Jonah made a covering but it was insufficient. So, God began his plan to restore His prophet by creating a plant to grow up and shade Jonah. This plant grew up in less than 24 hours to shade Jonah.

B. Next the LORD prepared a worm with an appetite and the worm ate the plant and killed it.

v.7 *“But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered.”*

The LORD who began His therapy for Jonah by showing how He could supernaturally take care of Him now proceeded to demonstrate He could make him miserable. The LORD also

sent a blistering hot east wind to make the situation unbearable and to cause Jonah to cement his attachment to the plant.

C. Now God begins talk therapy with Jonah.

v.9a *“Then God said to Jonah, is it right for you to be angry about the plant?”*

The annoying question is asked the second time. As annoying as this question is, it is vital to Jonah to understand the right and wrong in this situation. Jonah replies like you and I would probably reply.

v.9b *“And he said, “It is right for me to be angry, even to death!”*

D. God then expounded why it was not right for Jonah to be upset over the plant.

v.10 *“But the LORD said, ‘You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night.’”*

God made two major points. First, Jonah did absolutely nothing to have the plant. He did not plant it and cultivate it. He did not make it grow. The plant Jonah loved so much and was so exercised over he did not in any way deserve. The plant was God’s grace gift to Jonah. Second, it was temporary. The plant grew in a night and died in a night. It was never permanent. It was never designed to be something for which anyone lived.

E. Here is the point.

v.11 *“And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?”*

Jonah, you are so worked up and ready to die for a plant that has no lasting value. Shouldn’t I, the eternal God, be concerned about a city of people who will exist eternally?

Now I want to camp on this last point. Why do you live? We hear people talk about others in this way. “He lives to eat and he eats to live.” Others say, “He eats to live and he lives for football.” Some people live for their jobs, or their money, or prestige or power. None of these things are evil in themselves. God did not call everyone to be a pastor or a missionary.

Whatever is our vocation, we must not forget the words of the Apostle Paul in **2 Corinthians 4:16-18**,

“Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

Hymn #378 Only One Life

Only One Life
CT Studd

“Two little lines I heard one day,
Traveling along life’s busy way;
Bringing conviction to my heart,
And from my mind would not depart;
Only one life, ’twill soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last.

Only one life, yes only one,
Now let me say, ”Thy will be done”;
And when at last I’ll hear the call,
I know I’ll say “’twas worth it all”;
Only one life, ’twill soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last. ”

Only one life, yes only one,
Soon will its fleeting hours be done;
Then, in ‘that day’ my Lord to meet,
And stand before His Judgment seat;
Only one life, ’twill soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last

Only one life, ’twill soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last.
And when I am dying, how happy I’ll be,
If the lamp of my life has been burned
out for Thee.”

Only one life, a few brief years,
Each with its burdens, hopes, and fears;
Each with its clays I must fulfill,
living for self or in His will;
Only one life, ’twill soon be past,
Only what’s done for Christ will last.