

Title: The Anger of Man Does NOT Produce the Righteousness of God

(Jonah 3:1-4)

(Luke 6:27-36, 15:11-32; James 1:19-20)

I. Introduction:

A. Today we are going to finish out the book of Jonah. We are going to talk about how Jonah rejoiced over the repentance of upwards of 120,000 people. Jonah was humbled by the event and worshipped God with the king and all the people.

B. Actually, that's not the topic of today's sermon; I wish it was in all honesty. If you're honest in here today, I bet you're thinking the same thing.

II. Jonah's reaction to city-wide revival

A. I know you all are coming off of the last Jonah sermon about the powerful Word of God that changes hearts and offers repentance to the most wicked of sinners (you and I!). v.10 is so powerful and we saw God's mercy and grace and how he relented from disaster towards the people of Nineveh...

B. And then we get to 4:1 – But, and it's a big BUT – Used to offer an exception or objection. You know what I'm talking about – I'm sorry, but you did this... It's a small word, but we've seen it all over the place in Jonah – God commands Jonah – But Jonah rose to flee, But the Lord hurled a great wind, But Jonah had gone down into the ship, and on and on it goes.

1. Except by His grace, we are all in opposition to God's working!

C. *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, or it was exceedingly evil to Jonah* or NIV *But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry.* What?!?! Did we miss something? Jonah is angry because God used him to bring repentance to upwards of 120,000 people? Exactly. But are you and I so different? No.

1. Don't ever get to the place where you are shaking your head at Jonah or others thinking, I can't believe that they would think that or do that or complain of God's working in this certain way. That leads to self-justification instead of relying on the grace of Christ to uphold you and sustain you and provide you with what you need for righteousness before a holy God. Instead of those things you become like the prodigal son's good brother who was angry at the repentance and acceptance of the Father. (Luke 15:11-32) – If you ever want to see the heart of God towards the repentant please read this story – The father who had great wealth and position saw his rebellious son coming from afar and before he had even heard from him that he was repentant, he gathered up his robe between his legs and ran. An old man, threw off all dignity and ran to embrace the lost son – That is God's heart for the repentant! But if we're honest in here today, and as we have seen in Jonah, our hearts are not always glad at the mercy and grace of God. God, why don't you deal with this wickedness in the world? Why do you let these people still live? Why don't you deal with the murderers and rapists and terrorists and crooked politicians? Are we crying out to God, broken for the oppression that men like Qadaffi, Kim Jong II, or what about the lost co-worker or family member?

2. The self-righteous older brother is never happy with the repentance of underserving sinners! But that is the Gospel! In fact, God saving the unworthy sinner gives hope to you and me.

III. The reason Jonah ran

A. Up until now we have made application on Jonah running from God and why he ran, but now it all comes out. Jonah didn't want a warning to come to the Ninevites, he wanted them destroyed. He wanted them to be given the consequences that they deserved because of their wickedness. The only problem to this line of thinking is the Gospel! You and I deserve what every other sinner who has ever lived has deserved. The wrath of God! But God! Here Jonah cops an attitude at God and tells him what he thinks... You will notice the grace of God at work here as well. God allows Jonah to speak to him in his pride and shows his mercy just like he showed to the Ninevites.

B. 'I told you so' does not work with God – (Shhh...He's all knowing)!

C. I told you so is typically used concerning a warning that you gave to someone and they didn't heed that warning and the calamity that you predicted happens. That is why this is so strange to me that Jonah goes there. He gives an I told you so to God that he knew God's nature and that because of His grace the people would repent and God would relent. But again, before you are dumbfounded by this, take a look into your own heart and ask God to reveal who it is that you don't want his grace to find. That person (or people group) that you want to spend eternity under his wrath.

IV. The nature of God – The God of the Old Testament

A. Gracious, merciful, slow to anger, relenting from disaster – Do you know this God? The one true God? Or do you know God as angry, vindictive, overbearing, a cruel taskmaster? We talked about this last time that the God of the OT is the God of the NT - he is unchanging and though he is angry at sin and he does take vengeance; he is also these things – gracious, merciful, slow to anger, relenting from disaster. This is primarily what the book of Jonah gives testimony to.

B. Jonah knew this nature – Know means to know by experience, to perceive – Jonah knew God – that was not Jonah's problem, it was not in the knowing of God or who he is or what he's done. Some of us have a hard time believing God because we don't know him or don't recognize that we know him. We also have a tendency to know God (who he is and what he's done) and yet we're angry and unrepentant and shaking our fists at God. That's what was up with Jonah

V. The anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God. (James 1:19-20)

A. vv. 3-4 Therefore – again, because of the repentance of the Ninevites, because of God's grace, mercy, being slow to anger and relenting from disaster, Jonah wants to die. What a crazy response!

B. Have you ever been so mad at someone, so unforgiving of how they've wronged you or sinned against God that you just wanted to die? Jonah was there. He saw the work of God and was mad. And as we'll see next week, Jonah had no right to desire one way or the other concerning the response of the people.

C. Do you do well to be angry, do you have any right to be angry, do you have good reason to be angry? What about you, do you do well to be angry? Just know that it is Christ's work, his death, burial, and resurrection that brought salvation to you and I. It is God's kindness that brings us to repentance. So, God is asking Jonah, but I'll ask you, do you think it's ok for you to feel the way you do?

D. Jonah doesn't answer God here; he won't answer God until later in the chapter. God is extremely gracious to Jonah here. And if we're honest, we've all copped an attitude with God where he was completely gracious to us in response.

E. Job – God says out of a whirlwind prepare yourself like a man, I will question you and you will answer me. Habakkuk is answered by the Lord in a way that he doesn't want to hear – Namely that his people will be overthrown by the Chaldeans (Babylon) and that God has ordained them for this judgment.

F. Every time God answers people, it is his grace and mercy at work. He owes no response and yet, he chooses to (and desires to) communicate with his people. God's response to Jonah next week will be one that exhibits the character traits of God we have seen today.

G. I think that is one of the reasons I love the Bible so much. It is the story of God's relentless pursuit of his own glory through the choosing of messed up sinners to be his people. That is why I have such hope, because Jonah and I are the same!

VI. Conclusion:

A. Before us, we can be judgmental of the lost, hateful of them, not pursuing them, not praying for them, not investing time and relationships to see salvations in their lives, or in love, we can humbly preach the message of the cross to a lost and dying world, not leaning on the cross casually as if we're so comfortable with Jesus' death and so proud as if we earned it. Instead, we should be bowing before the cross telling others, there's room here for you as well. Whoever God would draw to himself.