

“God’s Great Compassion” Jonah 4:5-11

This morning we are completing our series “God Is Faithful” and the book of Jonah. We have learned through Ruth and Jonah that our God is faithful. We can trust Him to provide, protect, pursue us even when we are running from Him. We have seen that God is in control. He provided food and a husband for Ruth and a storm and a great fish for Jonah. God never gives up on His children and will do whatever it takes to care for us. God’s patience with us and His great compassion for us is unexplainable. Even when we do not deserve it God still loves us and cares for us. Similar to our Mom’s. Recognize moms. Moms are a beautiful example of God’s Grace.

This morning as we continue where we left off last week we will get to see that even in Jonah’s ugly self centeredness God still has not given up on teaching him that God’s great compassion and love is not only available to him but to others as well and even to his enemies.

This book, this series and all of our life is all about God. His love, His compassion, His will, His plan and His ways. The book of Jonah started with God speaking and it ends with God speaking and having the last word in the story. God will ultimately have the last word in every story.

As we left off last week we see God ask Jonah the question, “Have you any right to be angry?” Jonah was very displeased with the way that things had worked out.

Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Jonah had proclaimed God’s message throughout the city and then went outside to wait the rest of the 40 days and see how things may work out. We can assume that maybe Jonah had not totally given up on God still judging the Ninevites.

Jonah was having a pity party. Totally self centered, idol worship, he only saw how it affected him, his reputation as a prophet, repentance changes God’s mind, is available to everyone. Jonah was acting totally opposite of our God. We are

to reflect the character of God. But God, in His grace and mercy continued to pursue Jonah.

Then the Lord God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort,(God’s compassion, 110 degrees) **and Jonah was very happy about the vine.** Jonah sure didn’t mind receiving God’s grace. Although Jonah’s attitude was not right he was still in a position for God to bless him because of his obedience. Judgment and discipline is for the rebellious, the boat, the storm. God even pursues people with His grace in their rebellion but if you continue to rebel there will be consequences. God was not through teaching Jonah. **But at dawn the next day God provide a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah’s head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, “It would be better for me to die than to live.” But God said to Jonah, “Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?” “I do,” he said. “I am angry enough to die.”** God again uses His control of nature to teach Jonah.

Throughout this story we have seen that God controls everything. The storm, the fish, the plant, the worm, the wind. God is speaking to us through our circumstances.

Jonah’s attitude was wrong. Circumstantial joy and happiness. Jonah wanted to die because of a plant that he had nothing to do with it’s growing or dying. We get so caught up in temporary things.

We get derailed because of losing a pet, a job, money, a treasured item, a messed up relationship inside the church and outside, because things are not working out the way we planned we are ready to check out on God. Talk about messed up thinking. We have permanent solutions to temporary problems. We would rather run than deal with our problems and self centeredness.

I believe that Jonah knew that he could not get away from God, (he was a prophet called by God, we are children chosen and called by God and there is nothing we can do to get away from Him once we are His. We can’t go back to being lost but I believe that many of us are like Jonah and let the circumstances of the world get us to the point that we would rather die than continue.

Jonah showed that he valued a plant and personal comfort over people. Are your values distorted? Do you make decisions for the comfort for you and yours? Do you hate your enemies (family members, co workers, ex spouses, ex friend) while accepting God's Grace for yourself? Our response to the death of Bin Ladin. Jonah needed an attitude adjustment.

But the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

Again, a messed up value system. We see that God has the last word in this story. It is interesting to see that there is no response from Jonah. His silence could be seen as maybe he finally began to submit to what he already confessed to knowing about God. "I knew you that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity."

Maybe Jonah was finally saying "yes Lord"

We have learned a lot about Jonah and a lot about God and what is important to God through this book. I have learned that I have Jonah like tendencies that need to be addressed through the reality of knowing who God is and what that should mean to me as I live my life for Him. God's desires should be my desires.

We have learned that God is a God of Grace and Mercy motivated by His compassion for all people. As His children we should model His compassion to those around us.

Compassion: A move from self centeredness to God centeredness.

A divine as well as a human quality,
A sympathetic consciousness of others, distress together with a desire to alleviate it. "Vines" A feeling and an action.
To be moved in ones bowels, for us today our heart. Moved emotionally and physically to do something. You should care.
Involves personal sacrifice. Compassion for the lost and hurting should change the way we live our lives.

We build relationships not on what we get out of it but for the purposes of God.

With lost people to witness to, not enjoy sin with.

With the saved for accountability, fellow laborer, fellowship, worship.

Compassion for widows, orphans and poor around you and around the world.

Obedience to God in where He calls you to help, spiritual sensitivity, God is always at work around you. The Holy Spirit is inside you to remind, convict and empower you.

Compassion for sinners, rebellious, enemies. This takes an eternal perspective and a trust in God. This will lead you to dependent prayer. A good thing.

Compassion in the little things prepares us for the big things: It is easy to creep back into self centeredness.

Speaking to people, inviting people to church, parking further away to save spots for others, sitting closer to the front in the service, leave the end seats, meeting people you don't know, giving faithfully, being a good steward of God's money for the sake of others and the kingdom.

Being sensitive to the Spirit, Pray for people at the altar, call people God lays on your heart.

Even when you are the one in need continue to minister to others.

Another thing we have learned is that all people are important to God. The angels rejoice when 1 sinner repents and is saved.

People are more important than personal comfort and security. Missionaries get this. They give up comfort and security to be used by God to serve and rescue people.

Our attitude toward people reflect our attitude toward God.

People provide us an opportunity to serve God.

Our Great and Compassionate God has given us the greatest example to follow through Jesus. Left heaven, came to earth, for His enemies, gave up His life, so that we could live. That story and the reality of the Grace of God should motivate us all to model His compassion to all people. We should say yes to Jesus' last words to His disciples. The Great commission.