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“The Prodigal Prophet”

Jonah 4:1-11

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Jonah 4:1-11

1 Jonah was greatly displeased and became furious. 2 He prayed to the Lord, “Please, Lord, isn’t this what I said while I was still in my own country? That’s why I fled toward Tarshish in the first place. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and one who relents from sending disaster. 3 And now, Lord, take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

4 The Lord asked, “Is it right for you to be angry?”

5 Jonah left the city and found a place east of it. He made himself a shelter there and sat in its shade to see what would happen to the city. 6 Then the Lord God appointed a plant, and it grew over Jonah to provide shade for his head to rescue him from his trouble.[a] Jonah was greatly pleased with the plant. 7 When dawn came the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, and it withered.

8 As the sun was rising, God appointed a scorching east wind. The sun beat down on Jonah’s head so much that he almost fainted, and he wanted to die. He said, “It’s better for me to die than to live.”

9 Then God asked Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?”

“Yes, it’s right!” he replied. “I’m angry enough to die!”

10 And the Lord said, “You cared about the plant, which you did not labor over and did not grow. It appeared in a night and perished in a night. 11 So may I not care about the great city of Nineveh, which has more than a hundred twenty thousand people who cannot distinguish between their right and their left, as well as many animals?”

Exodus 34:5-6

“The Lord came down in a cloud, stood with him there, and proclaimed his name, ‘the Lord.’ The Lord passed in front of him and proclaimed:

The Lord—the Lord is a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger and abounding in faithful love and truth,”

“If your god never disagrees with you, you might just be worshiping an idealized version of yourself.” – Timothy Keller

Jonah 4:10-11

“You cared about the plant, which you did not labor over and did not grow. It appeared in a night and perished in a night. So may I not care about the great city of Nineveh, which

has more than a hundred twenty thousand people who cannot distinguish between their right and their left, as well as many animals?”

Matthew 18:32-33

“Then, after he had summoned him, his master said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Shouldn’t you also have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’”

“Man’s memory is short.”

“Sheep without a shepherd.”

1 Timothy 1:15-16

This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance: “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners”—and I am the worst of them. But I received mercy for this reason, so that in me, the worst of them, Christ Jesus might demonstrate his extraordinary patience as an example to those who would believe in him for eternal life.

The gospel is both a confrontation and an invitation.

Luke 15:31-32

“‘Son,’ he said to him, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

You are invited to join the party.

Life Group Discussion Questions:

- 1) What did God say to you through the Scripture during our Sunday gathering?
- 2) The book of Jonah ends without telling us how Jonah responded. Why do you think God chose to leave the story unfinished?
- 3) Have you ever been angry with God? Do you think it’s wrong to be angry with God? Why or why not?
- 4) How do we see God’s patient pursuit of Jonah in this passage? How have you experienced this in your life?
- 5) Why is forgetfulness such a danger in our spiritual lives? How do we combat it?
- 6) How has this book pointed you to Jesus?
- 7) What do you think real compassion looks like in our lives today? Who comes to mind in your life who you could show compassion to?
- 8) How can your Life Group help you apply this passage to your life this week?