

Jonah 4 “A Deeper Work”

John 4:1-11

July 26, 2026

Jonah 4:1-11

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. 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?”

There is more than the task and the mission.

God is not just interested in getting things done but how the heart is formed.

We all want to direct the activity and blessings of God.

Jonah 4:2-4

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?”

Exodus 34:5-7

5 The Lord came down in a cloud, stood with him there, and proclaimed his name, “the Lord.” 6 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, 7 maintaining faithful love to a thousand generations, forgiving iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But he will not leave the guilty

unpunished, bringing the consequences of the fathers' iniquity on the children and grandchildren to the third and fourth generation.

Jonah's isn't confused, he just doesn't agree with it.

How can God be truly loving and not punish the guilty?

Matthew 9:9-13

9 As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me," and he got up and followed him.

10 While he was reclining at the table in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came to eat with Jesus and his disciples. 11 When the Pharisees saw this, they asked his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?"

12 Now when he heard this, he said, "It is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who are sick. 13 Go and learn what this means: I desire mercy and not sacrifice. For I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners."

Mercy is a shift in the mindset from what I am giving up towards who am I going to.

Jonah 4:6-9

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. 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!"

When we disconnect from the things God cares about, we get angry about the wrong things.

Jesus is the prophet that Jonah never was.

Life Group Discussion Questions

- What did God say to you through the Scripture during our gathering?
- If the task of preaching a successful revival was all that God cared about then why do we get Jonah chapter four?
- Do you ever get angry? About what?
- Have you been angry with the Lord?
- What would it mean if your anger is less about what is happening out there and more about what is happening inside of you.
- When do you decide not to associate with someone and when do you build a relationship with them?
- In Matthew 9:9-13, Jesus gives us the image of a doctor caring for the sick. What principle is Jesus expressing about Himself? About the Church?

- God desire “mercy not sacrifice.” What does this mean for us? Why is sacrifice easier than mercy?
- How do Jonah’s feelings about the plant show his misplaced priorities?
- Who would you ask to tell you if insignificant things have become too important? What do you think they would say?
- What is encouraging to you about God in Jonah Chapter four?
- Ask God to help restart your imagination of what is possible in the heart of someone far from God.