

The Challenges of being a missionary: how do you cope? Jonah 4

REASONS FOR REJOICING – Work of God in this Book of Jonah

JOY – MERCY AND FORGIVENESS of God

Sailors – saved from Storm and saved from SIN

WITNESSED MIGHTY POWER OF GOD – Worshipped Him

Jonah – Saved from Himself, Stubbornness – Restored to Father God

SALVATION FROM LORD // WORD CAME A SECOND TIME

Nineveh – Saved from Wrath of God / SPARED BY COMPASSION

CAUSES TO REJOICE – Mercy to Sailors, Jonah, Nineveh

JONAH – far from rejoicing – ANGRY, VIOLENTLY ANGRY

STORY NOT MYTH – no “happily ever after ending” REAL LIFE

1. Case of Anger

a. Self-Justification - Story goes Full Circle – Back to God and Jonah

BEGINS – God and Jonah – add sailors, fish, Ninevites

END – God & Jonah – STORY OF OUR LIVES – End – Alone before God

Jonah tried to JUSTIFY HIMSELF in eyes of God and Self

v. 2 “That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish”

TOO OFTEN OFFER EXCUSES FOR OUR FAILURES

“It wasn’t ME!!” – ADAM “The WOMAN that YOU Gave ME!”

1) Finger Points to God 2) Finger to Eve 3) THREE Fingers Point to ADAM

FORGIVENESS IS REAL AND COMPLETE – So are the SCARS of SIN

How could a Holy Man of God have so many Godless Holes?

OLD NATURE – DEAD BUT NOT ERADICATED / Still Hangin’ ON to US

b. Scripture Twisting Jonah tried to TURN GOD AGAINST GOD

v. 2 I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.

And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.
Exodus 34.6,7

JONAH quotes Bible back to God to PROVE THAT GOD IS WRONG

Jonah is CONSISTENT – God is ERRATIC / Jonah RIGHT – God WRONG

// Satan's use of Bible to Jesus – Wilderness Temptation

SATAN QUOTED ACCURATELY – BUT WRONGLY

A TEXT WITHOUT A CONTEXT IS A PRETEXT

POSSIBLE TO MAKE BIBLE SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT

Take Out of Context, Ignoring Obvious Meaning to Support Own Ideas

“The using of God's word to tempt God is a danger which threatens all Christians. Every time the Christian thinks he has God's Word in store to be needed, he commits this sin, which is that of Satan himself against God. This is the attitude of a historian who dissects Scripture to set it against Scripture, of the theologian who uses a text to construct his doctrine, or of the simple Christian who opens his Bible to find himself justified there, or to find arguments against non-Christians or against Christians who do not hold the same views, arguments which show how far superior my position is than that of others...The Bible is not a neutral book which one can read and then take arguments from it. It is an explosive power which must be handled with care.” Jacques Elull

BIBLE IS LIKE ELECTRICITY – Very Useful and Very Dangerous

BIBLE READING FORMULA –

Danger – Reading the Bible for Self-Justification

Blessing – Reading to see self as sinner and God as Savior

c. Suicide instead of Service - Chapter 1 – tells Sailors to throw into Sea
 DEFAULT SETTINGS ON COMPUTER – Same Things Over & Over Again
 WRONGLY PROGRAMMED to Perform HABITUAL SINS

NEED Re-Programming > NEED Strong Anti-Virus Program for our Hearts

“Keep your servant from willful sins; may they not rule over me.” Psalm 19.13

BESETTING SINS – Habits Hard to Break – Struggle to Grow and Obey

FAMILY IN Church in HAWAII – Wife VERY DEMANDING & BOSSY
 HUSBAND – MOSTLY SILENT – really was SEETHING IN ANGER
 SO ANGRY HE SHOWED HER – REVENGE – HUNG HIMSELF

Finally, found Peace from Her – FAMILY FOREVER IN DEEP PAIN

Jonah AGAIN ASKED FOR DEATH

v. 3 “Now, O Lord, take away my life, for it is better to die than to live”

v. 9 “I am angry enough to die”

JONAH OUTWARD OBEDIENCE - SEETHING with INWARD ANGER

“If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge,
 and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing”

1 Corinthians 13.2

“Jonah was an angry servant, which is often the tragic consequence of service
 without love. Ministry motivated by love will build you up, but ministry
 motivated only by obligation or duty can produce hidden anger and eventually
 wear you down”

Warren Wiersbe

MANY PEOPLE – even Christians – ANGER IS JUST BELOW SURFACE

OUTWARDLY SMILING – INWARDLY SEETHING

SEEN in OVER-REACTION TO SMALL THING – Traffic Jams, Broken Laces

ANGRY PEOPLE – Spend Life Swearing at Small Annoyances

2. Cause of Anger

a. Insists on Own Way – Cannot ACCEPT God’s Will

He did what God wanted / God did not do what he wanted

Not RECONCILED with the WILL OF GOD

REASON FOR MANY MISERABLE, BITTER CHRISTIANS

God Let Them Down > Gave WRONG: Life, Spouse, Kids, Job, Health

JOY OF THE LORD IS OUR STRENGTH – Content and Confident

Met American Pastor in Kampala Tuesday Night in early 70’s

LAST 5 yrs Great Pain – Survives on Heavy Medication – Pain Management

“THESE HAVE BEEN the BEST YEARS of MY LIFE!”

GOD HAS US WHERE HE WANTS US – House, Job, Marriage, Kids

JOY NOT IN ANY OF THOSE THINGS – ONLY IN JESUS

Ex. Job of Pastor – Only Work ONE DAY a Week / Sit Around and Read Bible

DIFFICULTY IN MINISTRY – If did not have any people, no problems!

LOOKING FOR JOY IN BEING PASTOR – SORELY DISAPPOINTED

ONLY IN JESUS – JOY OF LORD IS STRENGTH – ENDURE PROBLEMS

b. Ignored God’s Mercy FORGOTTEN GOD’S MERCY TO HIM

LONG JOURNEY from Mediterranean shore to walled city of Nineveh

Like the WANDERING ISRAELITES who longed to return TO EGYPT

Forgot MIGHTY DELIVERANCE thru RED SEA

Have we forgotten MIGHTY DELIVERANCE – Jesus upon Cross?

Mt 18 – Servant who was forgiven Millions of Dollars by Great King

FINDS FELLOW SERVANT WHO OWES him Few Ugandan Schillings

Refuses to forgive that SMALL AMOUNT – even though forgiven much

"The master called the servant in. 'You wicked servant,' he said, 'I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?'"
Matthew 18.32,33

ANGRY BELIEVER – MERCILESS BELIEVER – SHORT MEMORY

c. Ignorance of God Did not know God as well as he thought

JONAH was PROUD JEW – Revelation of Only True God - TORAH

v. 2 "I knew you were a gracious and compassionate God" A BAD THING?

Grace and Compassion FOR NINEVITES? Isn't this monopoly of Jews??

2.8 "those who worship worthless idols" – confession of his own problem

SUBSTITUTED TRUE GOD FOR ONE OF HIS OWN IMAGINATION

KNEW SOMETHING ABOUT GOD – BUT NOT MOST IMPORTANT

Did not Know God's Grace and Mercy – for himself and for Nineveh

LIKE OLDER SON who SULKED AS FATHER CELEBRATED w/ Prodigal

But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!" "My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'" Luke 15.30-32

Nineveh – Greatest Revival in History // Jonah – Greatest Evangelist

NOT ULTIMATELY Important – IS NAME WRITTEN IN GOD'S BOOK?

d. Isolation - Jonah had a "Pity Party" – Only Guest Invited was Himself

WHY BUILD SHELTER – Every House in Nineveh Open, incl. King's Palace

HE WAS GOD'S INSTRUMENT OF THE ENTIRE CITY'S SALVATION

Should have been like JOHN CALVIN – taught Scripture to City of Geneva

INSTEAD – Jonah got hillside view of Nineveh – FRONT ROW SEAT

EAGER TO SEE PREACHING FULFILLED “Nineveh will be destroyed”

Shelter = Christians building Denominations – HISTORY – Unresolved Anger

Being Spectator, Not a Servant makes one Overly Critical - ANGRY

Actively participate in Worshipping God? – Encourage Saints? – Spread Gospel?

OR SIT LIKE SPECTATOR & CRITIQUE A SUNDAY PERFORMANCE?

SURE TO BECOME ANGRY – Not Good Performance!

3. Cure for Anger

Not Fully Solvable in this Life – BUT CAN GET SOME HANDLE ON IT

a. Right Perspective – Ultimate Truth

God CALMS DOWN Difficult Situations by ASKING Questions

To Adam & Eve – Guilty in Court Room of Eden -

“Where are you? Who told you that you were naked?”

To Cain whose brother’s blood was on his hands -

“Where is your brother Abel? What have you done?”

To Judas Iscariot who sold out our Lord -

“Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?”

ANSWERS REVEAL WHERE WE STAND BEFORE A HOLY GOD

First Question to Jonah – 4.4 “Have you any right to be angry?”

PERSPECTIVE – Who is Right? – Angry Prophet or Awesome God

2 OPPOSITE OPINIONS - God is Pleased, Jonah is Angry

WHATEVER OUR THOUGHTS OR FEELINGS – GOD IS RIGHT!

PAUL “Let God be true, and every man a liar” Romans 3.4

JONAH SO ANGRY – IGNORES GOD – WALKS OUT OF CITY

God's Second Question to Jonah – 4.9 “do you have any right to be angry?”

ONLY TIME IN WHOLE BOOK see – v. 6 “Jonah was very happy”

NOT ABOUT Sailors Conversion, Big Fish, Salvation of Nineveh

“Jonah was very happy about the vine”

NO JONAH IS ANGRY ABOUT THE SHRIVELED VINE – Enough to DIE!!

NOW HE'S NOT ANGRY AT GOD – ANGRY AT WORM - PETTINESS

b. Right Authority – Ultimate Power

Some have only a BIG, MUSHY, TEDDY-BEAR GOD / not Biblical

1.4 “the Lord sent a great wind on the sea” - We Cheer and Marvel

1.17 “the Lord provided a great fish” – We Praise His Great Power

4.6 “the Sovereign God provided a vine and made it grow” – We Agree

4.7 “God provided a worm which chewed the vine” – What is this?

4.8 “God provided a scorching east wind” – How could a good God do that?

IF GOD IS SOVEREIGN – ABSOLUTE POWER & AUTHORITY

EVERYTHING COMES FROM HIS HAND

WE WILL RECEIVE THE OBVIOUS BLESSINGS

BUT QUESTION – EVEN CURSE – APARENT CONTRADICTIONS

God gives Children / how about Barrenness?

God gives Safe Travel / how about Plane Crashes?

God gives Health / how about Sickness?

God gives Food / how about Starvation?

God gives Life / how about Death?

Do the DIFFICULT THINGS – COME FROM SATAN?

Has God given over His Sovereign Rule to the Evil One? – not 2 gods

One is Creator – other a mere creature

ONLY ONE SOVEREIGN – ONLY God will work all things together for the good of those who love Him, who are called by Him

Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.
1 Thessalonians 5.18

“be thankful IN all circumstances” – NOT FOR ALL CIRCUMSTANCES

NOT thankful FOR Barrenness, Plane Crashes, Sickness, Starvation, Death

BELIEVER IN SOVEREIGN GOD – Even in GREATEST TRAGEDY
God is working, for the Good of his People, and the Glory of His name

Joseph’s brothers had sold him to slavery and misery – bitter separation
“You meant these things for evil, but God intended them for good, and the saving of many people”
Genesis 50.20

“The Lord works out everything for his own ends – even the wicked for a day of disaster”
Proverbs 16.4

“Surely your wrath against men brings you praise”
Psalm 76.10

“Consider therefore, SAYS APOSTLE PAUL TO ROMANS, the kindness and sternness of God: sternness to those who fell, but kindness to you, provided that you continue in his kindness”
Romans 11.22

c. Right Motive – Ultimate Love

GOD’S Third and Final Question to Jonah

v. 11 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?"

IF YOU DON’T CARE ABOUT ADULTS IN NINEVEH – Kids? Cattle?

Jonah was sorry about Wilted Vines // God sorry about Wicked Sinners

“This is a warning that it is possible to obey God but to do so with such a degree of unwillingness and anger that, so far as we are concerned, the obedience is no better than disobedience”
James Boice

Book of Jonah – Picture of every believer see ourselves – Israel and Church

Moments of Victory – Moments of Shame – God’s Mercy will Find Us

Book – Most Importantly – Picture of God of Mercy & Grace

La Salle St. in Chicago – Lutheran church with Crucifix on Wall – 1000’s see Inscription -

“Is it nothing to you, all who pass by? Look around and see. Is any suffering like my suffering that was inflicted on me, that the Lord brought on me in the day of his fierce anger?”
Lamentations 1.12

v. 11 “Should I not be concerned about that great city?” – Nineveh, Chicago, Kampala, Beijing, Berlin, Lagos,

BOOK ENDS WITH THIS QUESTION --- No Written Answer

Question Echoes Down the Corridors of Time – Right to us at UCU Today

Question that God wants YOU and I to answer

Jonah 4

1. But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. 2. He prayed to the LORD, "O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3. Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." 4. But the LORD replied, "Have you any right to be angry?" 5. 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. 6. Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. 7. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. 8. 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." 9. 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." 10. 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. 11. 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?"