

B. The extent of God's desire to rescue demonstrated in the cross

## JONAH 4:5-11

Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. 6 Now the Lord God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. 7 But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." 9 But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." 10 And the Lord said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. 11 And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

# SERMON REFLECTIONS

1. What evidence of God's sovereignty appears in Jonah 4?
2. In what ways do you find God's sovereignty a difficult doctrine to grasp? How can a better understanding of this doctrine help us grow?
3. How does God discipline Jonah throughout the course of the book?
4. In what ways is God's discipline a comforting idea rather than a dreadful idea?
5. What are some of the ways in which the gospel proves God's delights in saving rebels?



**JONAH**

**WEEK 6**

**GOD'S LOVING HEART  
FOR REBELS**

**JONAH 4:5-11**

## READING THE STORY

Making observations is the first step in becoming familiar with a passage and to help understand what is being said. In a notebook (or separate piece of paper), make the following observations about this passage...

- List any **People/Places**—
- List any important **verbs** (actions), **repeated words/phrases**, or other **theological/special terms**—

## **OBSERVATIONS**

- 1 Three times in the passage, it says, "*God appointed.*" What do you think is the significance of the repetition of this phrase?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 2 What is it that makes Jonah exceedingly glad, and what is it that changes Jonah's response to anger?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- 3 What do you notice about what Jonah pities **[4:8-9]** versus what God pities **[4:11]**?

## **SUMMARY SENTENCE**

In your own words, summarize this passage in 1 sentence—

## **JONAH'S WORLD**

**till he should see what would become of the city (4:5)** even though he knew that God was going to be gracious and merciful toward the repentance of the Ninevites, Jonah still wanted to sit back and watch, perhaps waiting to see if God might change His mind.

**to save him from his discomfort (4:6)** while God gave Jonah some temporary peace as his physical discomfort was eased, God quickly took that away by bringing the worm and the wind. This reveals God's heart: that physical comfort is temporary, but the long-lasting, eternal comfort comes from our salvation and the salvation of others.

**Do you do well to be angry for the plant? (4:9)** similarly to 4:4, God asks Jonah if his anger is justified. First, Jonah had anger towards God's forgiveness of the Ninevites, and now, in 4:9, Jonah's anger is towards the dying plant. Jonah's heart is still clearly hard.

# WORLDS COLLIDE

## STAMP OF APPROVAL

This passage can be a head-scratcher—a plant, a worm, and the sun-soaked scorching wind can all seem a bit strange. However, when we step back to see what exact problem God is helping Jonah see in this passage, we can be personally challenged with the very same problem. Most of the time, just like Jonah, we will gladly welcome God's rescue, but when it comes to the rescue of those whom we think are unworthy, our self-righteous feathers get in a tizzy, and we want them to pay for their transgressions. However, God's economy doesn't work like that. Jonah had more compassion for the withered, worm-eaten plant than he did for the repentant Ninevites (or even their cows, for that matter). All of the characters in this passage are God-created and God-ordained, from Jonah to the Ninevites to the cows, plant, worm, and wind—it all belongs to God. He is in control. God offers His mercy, revealing His loving heart toward ALL who would repent and believe. Yes, even Jonah's enemies and enemies of ours.

We often want to give the stamp of approval to those who we think should be eligible to receive God's mercy. Praise God, in His divine wisdom, that we do not have that power! But through the life, death, and witnessed the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the response of God will always be the same to any rebel sinner. Those who *"confess with [their] mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in [their] heart[s] that God raised him from the dead, [they] will be saved"* **(Romans 10:9)**. God alone is the one who gives His great salvation to anyone who makes this confession—no matter who you are or what you've done.

## **GOING TO NINEVEH**

*This week, as you meditate on this passage and think through the implications in your own life and in the lives of those you know, identify ways you relate to Jonah in this passage. Perhaps you can spend some time in prayer, confessing to God the ways in which you can see a reluctance to want God to forgive those who seem unforgivable in your own eyes. Pray that your heart would be submissive toward God's loving heart toward rebels. Ask that He would be merciful to soften your heart towards them, so that the sweet fragrance of the gospel would bring lost souls into salvation, just as He called you.*

### **RESPONDING QUESTIONS**

- 1 List ways that you relate to Jonah in this passage.

List ways that you see God softening your heart to those who you consider enemies.



## **JONAH 4:5-11**    *GOD'S LOVING HEART FOR REBELS*

### **RESPONDING QUESTIONS**

2 What are ways we can reveal God's loving heart for rebels?