

“Jonah: Rights and Expectations”

Growth Group Guide

November 23, 2025

WELCOME *(Connecting with each other)*

As we've learned over the last few chapters of Jonah, Jonah (the man) kept getting his goals blocked because he didn't want what God wanted. Sometimes we have blocked goals too. A vital service stops, a vacation flops, a garden is storm damaged, a job ends badly, a special relationship breaks-down. Moments like this can reveal things we think about God or ourselves and the rights and expectations that we have for Him and us. Discuss what those thoughts, rights and expectations might be? Imagine putting all those rights and expectations in a bag and giving them to God. How might that feel? Discuss.

WORSHIP THROUGH PRAYER *(Connecting with God)*

Read the verses below. Celebrate that God, our wonderful Father, is forever compassionate and gracious so we can give any right or expectation to Him freely and trust His love for us in return.

Psalm 86:15 NIV But you, Lord, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

Psalm 116:5 NIV The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion.

Psalm 145:9 NIV The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.

WORD *(Letting God speak to us)*

1. If the book of Jonah ended in chapter 3, we would see Jonah (the man) differently. However, in chapter 4, we discover Jonah's inner thoughts and motives don't line up with his actions. **Read 1 Samuel 16:7.** Using this verse, what do we see God is trying to work out in Jonah's life? Does this change your thoughts on His work in your life? As humans, why is looking on outward appearances so appealing?
2. **Read Jonah 4:1-4 NIV.** This has been Jonah's attitude from the start of chapter 1 until now. Does this change your perspective on Jonah's prayer in chapter 2 and his taking God's message to Nineveh?
3. Often God is talked about as the vengeful God of the Old Testament and the Compassionate God of the New Testament. Based on what Jonah said he knew of God, does that thinking hold true? Does what Jonah knew about God change your view of Him in the Old Testament?
4. Since God wasn't the wrathful one in the book of Jonah, who was and how did he show it? Why does he feel justified?
5. Jonah had knowledge about God, but it was intellectual and didn't change him. His experience of the God he "knew" about was kept at bay because of his death grip on his rights and expectations. Based on

what Jonah says in v1-4, what are some rights and expectations you think he had? (Right=entitled to have something, Expectation=how something is to be performed or happen.)

6. **Read Jonah 4:5-11.** What other rights and expectation did Jonah have based on these verses?
7. What is Jonah's repeated solution to not having what he wants? What is his state of mind? Discuss why it's possible that some of our internal turmoil could be linked to rights and expectations we have?
8. We all have rights and expectations we hold onto. Sometimes we don't know they are there until they are threatened in some way. Like Jonah though, they hinder us from enjoying God and His Life in and through us. They can leave us lonely, worn out, unhappy, and unfulfilled. How might things have been different for Jonah if he'd given his rights and expectations to God instead of fighting for them? How does this encourage releasing our rights and expectations to God?

WALK *(Living out God's purposes)*

- ✓ **One Big Idea: Demanding our rights and requiring our expectations be met keeps us from the benefits of living our resurrected life with God.** At the end of the sermon on Sunday, we began to make a list of things we are holding onto as rights and expectations with God. This week spend time talking with God about this list. Are there any changes or additions to be made? Afterward, let Him lead you through this simple prayer of release. Make it your own however He leads you. "God, I have claimed these rights and expectations as mine, but I give them to You and put them under Your control. Do with them whatever seems best to You. Thank You, that what I give to You, You don't give back. But instead, You give me a fuller and richer experience of the resurrection life that I share with Jesus. In His Name, amen."

WORLD *(Embracing God's heart for others)*

One Hope is partnering with the Oregon Ducks Football team again this year to produce hundreds of Thanksgiving Meal Boxes! They continue to serve 1,600 families and will be delivering the meals on Monday (11/24) before Thanksgiving. Here, just down the street, Ridgeview Elementary has given out Thanksgiving Meals to families in need at their school too. We here at Thurston Christian Church participated by donating rolls and frozen turkeys, and the meals were picked up on Tuesday (11/18). Let's join in praying that every family will experience the tangible love of Christ, and for positive relationships to be developed around the dinner table. Pray for a blessing on our communities and neighborhoods as we take time to celebrate Thanksgiving Day. Pray for a sense of God's presence and goodness in our homes and of his care for each individual adult and child.

Ps. 13:6 (NIV) "I will sing the LORD's praise, for he has been good to me."
Proverbs 17:22a (NIV) "A cheerful heart is good medicine."

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