

JONAH



GOD'S LOVE IS GREATER.

Jonah is not happy. In fact, he had hoped the people of Ninevah would not repent. He wanted to see them be judged. God pointed out that, as an always good and loving God, He had great concern for the city. He wanted them to be reached and saved. Jonah, on the other hand, sits back hoping his revival will turn out to be a flop.

We can think Jonah foolish or evil, but are we any better many times? Do we often want to have judgment instead of mercy? Get some sort of satisfaction in people getting called out or receiving “what’s coming to them?” The story of Jonah calls us to a higher standard.

IN THE BIBLE.

Jonah 4:5-11

Jonah had gone 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. Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. 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.” But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?” “It is,” he said. “And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.” But the Lord said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”

Romans 5:6-11

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if, while we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! Not only is this so, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

QUESTIONS.

- 1.) Is there anyone right now that you would honestly prefer to see judged instead of redeemed?
- 2.) Do you think Jonah has any justification for his thinking?
- 3.) How does the story of Jonah call us to a higher standard when it comes to loving our enemies?
- 4.) How can you learn to have a better heart for your personal enemies?

Whenever you read the Bible, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What does this tell you about God?
2. What does this tell you about yourself and the world?
3. How is this going to change who you are and how you live?