

The Bane of Self-Pity

Jonah 4:1-4

“The lessons of this book are many. There are lessons that concern Jonah himself. He is a type of practically everything: a type of Christ (who was buried but who rose again), a type of Israel, a type of all believers (for we all run away from God at times and need to be disciplined). There are lessons that concern Nineveh and the true meaning of repentance. There are lessons relating to the doctrine of God’s sovereignty over men and nature.

But greater than all these lessons is the lesson of the greatness of the mercy of God. How great is God’s mercy? We have a hymn that says, ‘There’s a wideness in God’s mercy, like the wideness of the sea.’ But even that is not wide enough. The real measure of the wideness of the mercy of God is that of the outstretched arms of the Lord Jesus Christ as he hung on the cross to die for our salvation. That is the wideness of God’s mercy. That is the measure of the length to which the love of God will go.

How can we, who have known that mercy and benefited from it, be less than merciful to others? How can we do less than love them and carry the gospel to them with all the strength at our disposal.” Boice

- I. Jonah shows us that living God’s will is an act of the will. We can either chose to accept his will out of appreciation for his love, grace and mercy toward us, or we can begrudgingly live it with a self-centered, sinful view of God and the circumstances he has us in. *“It 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.” Boice*

Jonah 4:1

Eph. 4:26

Exodus 34:6-7

Luke 15:10

Philippians 4:11-13 *11 I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. 12 I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. 13 I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

- II. God shows us through Jonah's attitude, that as believers, our outlook on life greatly depends on our appreciation toward what His grace and mercy have meant for us. Consequently, the level of our appreciation demonstrates itself in our attitude toward God, toward self and toward others. A lack of appreciation speaks of a heart that is not fully committed to him and his ways, especially when it comes to living the fruit of the Spirit. On the other hand, having appreciation speaks of a heart that is at peace with Him and with oneself, which naturally leads to a desire to express his love, grace, and mercy to whomever God brings our way.

Jonah 4:2-3

Philippians 4:4-5 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all.

Psalm 139:23-24 ²³ Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.²⁴ See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

- III. The question God asks Jonah is meant to get him to think objectively about his self-pity and anger. He needs help in getting his thinking straightened out, that's why God gives us His Word. We are at the mercy of our own subjective thinking without its powerful influence in getting us to think the Lord's way. The important thing to see here is that Jonah and God are in conversation, they are interacting with one another on a level that will certainly bring about change in Jonah's heart toward knowing God, if he is willing.

Jonah 4:4

Romans 3:3-4 What if some were unfaithful? Will their unfaithfulness nullify God's faithfulness? **4** Not at all! Let God be true, and every human being a liar. As it is written: "So that you may be proved right when you speak and prevail when you judge."