

Questions God Asks: Is It Right For You To Be Angry?

Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you." Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown." The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. ⁶When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. ⁷This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. ⁸But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. ⁹Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish." ¹⁰When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened. **4** But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. ² He prayed to the LORD, "Isn't this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing 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, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." ⁴ But the LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

"Anger is never without a reason, but seldom with a good one." **Benjamin Franklin**

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There's a little Jonah in all of us and a lot of Jonah in most of us.

Then the LORD God provided a vine-v. 6.

God provided a worm - v. 7.

God provided a scorching east wind - v. 8.

Will Jonah be happy with God only when God makes him happy?

If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. ⁶ But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. ⁷ That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. ⁸ Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. **James 1:5-8**

Jonah had a divided heart – he believed and served the true God but also believed and served a rival God.

Whatever controls you is your Lord. The person who seeks power, is controlled by power. The person who seeks acceptance is controlled by the people they want to please. We do not control ourselves – we are controlled by the Lord of our life. If Jesus is Lord he is the One who controls you. There are no bargains, there is no in between.”

Rebecca Pippert

This story speaks to all of us who would rather not get involved in what is happening around us.

Jonah has two problems :

- he has no heart for the people of Nineveh
- he has no room for a God who does.

Key lessons

1. God loves Nineveh
2. Nineveh stands for any part of the will of God that you are afraid to face.
3. God is still willing to do whatever it takes to get you to Nineveh!
4. Nineveh needs you.

Nineveh was a literal city, but it also is a personal one.

It stands for . . .

- That place only you can go.
- That person only you can reach.
- That opportunity only you can take hold of.

“In the understanding expressed by Jonah, the sense of God’s grace is discarded and retribution is emphasized: only those who live in certain patterns established as God’s will

have the right to receive compassion and mercy. These patterns are composed of social, cultural, geographic, political, and economic practices established with religious value. This is the source of all intolerance. Yahweh-God does not conform to human standards. This is the message of Jonah. God is entirely love and because of this God is patient, merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness, and repents of evil. All of this is compassion, without selectivity or exclusivity. To those who follow Yahweh as pilgrims in the journey of life, these attributes must be cultivated in themselves and in their collective, in a permanent process of conversion, stripping away all rage, violence, rancor, revenge, and responding to the invitation out of tolerance and compassion. In this sense, it will be a pilgrimage of justice and peace.”

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