



Outrageous Grace

Community Group Study Guide: Jonah 4 – Week of May 14, 2023

1. Grace Confessed, but Misunderstood

Jonah overtly confesses that that God is gracious and merciful, and that that Lord has poured out these gifts on to the people of Nineveh. Instead of rejoicing in the Lord working His will out on the city, Jonah has his anger stirred up. What should have been a moment of celebration turns into grumbling. While Jonah recognizes the grace of God, he misunderstands it. Ultimately, Jonah does not give God His proper place of authority. Jonah acknowledges and approves of God's grace, as long as God uses that grace in way that Jonah finds acceptable. In this case, Jonah is grumbling because the Lord is pouring out His grace on Nineveh. Jonah disapproves of this action. This shows the idolatry that still resides in his heart, as Jonah dissents from the will of God. After all the events that Jonah has participated in, after all the grace that he has seen in his life and the life of the city, Jonah still misunderstands that God may have compassion and grace on whoever He wills.

2. Providence Enjoyed, but Ignored

In Jonah's rebellion, we see that God continues to be gracious to Jonah. As Jonah waits, in his hope that Nineveh might fall, God provides shade for Jonah through a plant. This shade brings great gladness to Jonah, as it removes the discomfort that he was experiencing. Then, as to bring the irony of the situation to the forefront, God causes a worm to kill the plant. In turn, Jonah returns to his suffering state, and his desire to die. God orchestrates Jonah's circumstance to show him clearly how much Jonah values the providential grace of the Lord. However, Jonah still does not relent. He still does not understand that it is purely out of the pity of God that any grace is given to humanity. Jonah continues in his ignorance.

DISCUSSION GOALS

Head

We are susceptible to contradictions, in which the disordered loves of our hearts can be exposed. We should humbly listen to the word of God, submit ourselves to it, and follow the commands given to us.

Heart

Often ordering our lives to what God has commanded will present areas of difficulty. We all have reasons for why our loves are disordered, but we are called to submit ourselves willingly to the Lord. Our calling is to have a humble and contrite heart, as the Lord grows us into the new life He has given.

Hands

The new life the Lord has called us into requires us to be refined, to commit ourselves to the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Shane Farewell Party
6/11 @ 1pm

3. Love Felt, but disordered

God compares Jonah's care and concern for the plant to God's pity on the people of Nineveh. Jonah felt the love of God, but was ignorant of God's love for the people of the city. Jonah grasps the concepts of love and pity, but does not have his heart properly ordered. God has dealt lovingly and graciously with His wicked and disobedient behavior.... And He is calling Jonah to prioritize his heart in a fashion that imitates the Lord's; to love Nineveh the same way that God does.

Read Jonah 4

1. After reading Jonah 4, what is the lesson that we should take from the passage? How has God been teaching you this lesson in your own life?
2. Jonah was persisting in his own self-righteous protest against the will of God. He did not approve of God blessing his enemies. Where in your own life have you struggle with this rebellion? In what way has the word of God convicted and changed your heart? How has the Gospel influence you in this area?
3. **Read Verses 5-8** What do these verses teach us about God's providence? What does this show us about the lessons that God teaches?
4. **Read Hebrews 12:9-11** How do we discern between circumstances that God is simply using together for good, versus situations in which God is disciplining us? How should we respond to God's discipline? What challenges do we face in our attempt to rightly respond to the discipline of our Father?
5. What does it mean to have "disordered loves?" How do we determine the order of our loves? In what ways or areas do we find our loves disordered in our present context?
6. How is Jesus the greater Jonah? What ways are they similar? Different? How can we see the nature and character of God in both?
7. Reviewing the book of Jonah... What ways has the study of this story changed your heart and mind? What ways have you been challenged in your faith?