

GRUMPY OLD MAN – JONAH 3 & 4

INTRO: “Sinners in the Hands of An Angry God”

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. It is true, that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the mean time is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are constantly rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw his hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God, would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment.

2 / 36 para. From sermon that shape the latter part of The Great Awakening.

Jonathan Edwards: mild, read manuscript, high, nasally voice, yet through his sermons he sparked and shaped one of the greatest revivals of all time.

DOOM IS SURE; HELL IS REAL

Wrath of God: not popular, but a reality nonetheless

Wrath of God and Mercy of God – point and counterpoint

How could a loving God send people to hell? How could a holy God allow unrighteousness to stand unremedied before Him? So, in love, He created a way for us to stand in the righteousness of His Son. Do you think that the sacrifice of His Son was so small a thing to Him that He might say, “Oh it’s okay! You don’t HAVE to believe in Jesus! I’ll welcome you in anyway!”???

THE GREATS OF JONAH (review)

- Great City of Nineveh | **When God calls us to share His Word with others, our opportunity is to run to it, regardless of whether or not we find the “others” to be “unloveable”.**
- Great Storm
- Great Fish | **When God puts us back on track, our opportunity is to come to Him in genuine repentance that changes the way we see ourselves and our actions and allows us to embrace God’s unstoppable grace.**
- Now back to the Great City...
 - The walls 8 miles in circumference (175,000 people);
 - the ‘burbs, etc. stretched for up to 60 miles. (That’s why it “required” 3 days.)
 - Great communicates size, volume, and intensity but I believe in Jonah “Great” also indicates a preparation from God.

UNSTOPPABLE GRACE FOR JONAH

1. God reiterates His call, but with a twist, first call was: "preach **against it**". But now He says, "Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim **to** it."
2. Jonah's original message was five words! ["In 40 days, Nineveh's destroyed."]

UNSTOPPABLE GRACE FOR NINEVEH

1. The people may have recognized Jonah was a Jewish prophet... the only thing the Bible says he said to them were those five words, likely repeated over and over again.
2. The Ninevites were quickly receptive to Jonah's message.
3. The King and noblemen issued an edict.
4. The people REPENTED. **Always expect God's work in the hearts of those to whom He is calling you to share His message. He may have prepared them for years for them to say yes to you now, or He may be using you to prepare their hearts to say YES down the road.**

GRUMPY OLD MAN SYNDROME

Now that the Ninevites repented it really didn't matter if the city was destroyed, but Jonah prophesied that it would happen and by golly, it should happen!

GOD WANTS TO DO SOMETHING THROUGH YOU, BUT HE ALSO WANTS TO DO SOMETHING IN YOU.

God just did something through Jonah, but Jonah didn't like it!

Yells at God in 4:2-3.

Cf. the truths about God in 4:2 with Jonah's view of the pagans in 2:8... **with such unstoppable grace from a great and loving God, is it possible that God would deny these Ninevites the opportunity He had planned for them to get right with Him?** [No!]

Could you imagine what could have happened if ...

- Jonah had been **happy about their repentance?**

- Jonah started teaching the Ninevites how to be faithful followers of God? Better parents? Better merchants? Better spouses?
- Jonah enrolled all the thousands of little Ninevite girls and boys in a Sunday School?

You know, as hellfire and brimstone-ish as it was, Jonathan Edwards did have some lines of grace and mercy in his sermon, "Sinners In The Hands of An Angry God." Edwards didn't emphasize grace and mercy much because he was preaching in an era in which he knew his audience already understood the mercy and grace of God; they just needed to be motivated to *seek* it. I'm not sure that these words would be in keeping with Jonah's attitude toward the Ninevites either. Edwards writes,

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands in calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God. Many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are now in a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him who has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest one moment in such a condition? Are not your souls as precious as the souls of [others who at this time] are flocking from day to day to Christ?

"Do you have a right to be angry, Jonah?" (4:3)

Jonah doesn't answer, he retreats!!! Just as Jonah tried to get to the beaches of Spain to avoid the annoying God of the Universe, so now Jonah goes to sit on the East ridge of Nineveh. Maybe the East Ridge was the new up and coming Ninevite

neighborhood or maybe from there Jonah could look SW over Nineveh and also face the Temple in Jerusalem (so he could watch the Ninevites be destroyed as he imagined his people worshiping and enjoying blessings). And he waited...

UNSTOPPABLE GRACE FOR GRUMPY OLD MEN, AND ALL PEOPLE

God used creation on a big scale to get Jonah's attention, now He also includes small parts of creation.

Booth – Sun - Plant (castor-oil) – Jonah happy

The Very Hungry Caterpillar – Sun and Wind – Jonah is mad again and wants to die.

Conversation between God and Jonah

- God, Creator of Heaven and Earth vs. Jonah, His prophet.
- “do you have a right to be angry?” (4:9)
- Jonah finally blurts out that he does; he's still so angry he could die.
- “I created the vine and the very hungry caterpillar in a day and they accomplished my purposes. But I've been working with humanity a lot longer than a day!”
- Care less about your comfort, and more about the people I created in my Image!
- “120,000 didn't know left hand from right” ... could refer to special needs folks or slaves, but it most likely refers to children!!!

1 TIMOTHY 2:4 – God “Wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.”

When we are part of an outpouring of God's grace, our opportunity is to REJOICE and SERVE, not RECOIL and SEEK COMFORT.