

July 28, 2019

(Bigger Series)

“God is Bigger”, Jonah 3:10-4:5

The story of Jonah is about God’s mercy and grace. At the end of Chapter 3, Jonah had just witnessed one of the greatest acts of repentance and mercy ever recorded, because Salvation is of the Lord! To end the story on that merciful note would have been Big... but, God is Bigger! In Chapter 4, instead of Jonah rejoicing for God’s mercy to the Ninevites, he burns with anger toward them and for God’s compassion upon them. And, so God’s story of mercy continues...

I. God’s mercy was bigger than the Ninevites sin.

When God saw that Nineveh had repented, he decided not to destroy them – even though they deserved punishment for the evil acts they had done. By sparing their lives, God showed mercy offering Nineveh a second chance. We too are given a second chance to avoid the punishment we deserve of being separated from God, living in hell forever. God’s mercy is “bigger” than any of our sin and “bigger” than what we “dare to hope for.”

II. Jonah’s sin was bigger than his understanding.

Jonah did not view his sin the same way that God does. Even though Jonah had enjoyed God’s mercy time and again, he could not fathom why God would show mercy to the very enemies of Israel. He thought God was wrong and that the Ninevites deserved to be destroyed. Jonah played the “comparison game” ranking his virtue higher (and his sin far lower) than that of his present company. Yet, the Bible tells us the problem is not about our outward actions which seem “good” to us, but our hearts. ALL sin is sin against a perfect God!

III. God’s understanding was bigger than Jonah’s.

Jonah thought his ways were better than God’s ways, so when things didn’t go his way, he got angry. God gave Jonah a gentle reality check: Jonah is creature, God is Creator, “so why are you angry?” Do you need your own reality check (of course, we do!)? Read Job 38 when God speaks to Job after great loss and unmet expectations. Who is God that we can possibly fathom his majestic ways? (Ro. 11:33-34). What about you, what are you expecting that you haven’t gotten. Is it right for you to be angry?

To begin to measure God’s grace or merit understanding of our need for it... we haven’t a clue! But in our lack of understanding we can trust that God will work ALL for good and for His glory. (Ro. 8:28). God is for you! His mercy has entered your story. Trust in Him, the author and finisher of our faith, to write it ... because God is Bigger.

Discussion Questions:

1. Why is it dangerous to start comparing sin?
2. Is it encouraging to you that God hasn’t abandoned Jonah yet?
3. Describe a time you “misunderstood” a situation only to see later how God was doing something bigger.
4. How can we exercise our “trust muscle” when we do not understand what God is up to?
5. Have you ever been angry at God for not meeting your expectations? Do we have the right to be angry? Explain.