



Leading People into a Growing
Relationship with Jesus Christ!

Antioch CELEBRATION Message: "Rejecting God's Mercy"

Sermon Series: Jonah

Dates: May 27-28, 2017

Start the Conversation

If you could ask Jonah one question, what would it be?

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The people of Nineveh did not deserve God's compassion or Jonah's intervention. God gave them a second chance anyway. Jonah was angry. He did not want to participate in bringing God's kindness to violent people. The book of Jonah is a book of honest confession, and it invites us to take a look at our hearts. Are we willing to participate in God's plan to receive and promote repentance and reconciliation?

Then the LORD spoke to Jonah a second time: "Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you."

This time Jonah obeyed the LORD's command and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to see it all. On the day Jonah entered the city, he shouted to the crowds: "Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!" The people of Nineveh believed God's message, and from the greatest to the least, they declared a fast and put on burlap to show their sorrow....When God saw what they had done and how they had put a stop to their evil ways, he changed his mind and did not carry out the destruction he had threatened. **Jonah 3:1-5, 10 (NLT)**

This change of plans greatly upset Jonah, and he became very angry. So he complained to the Lord about it: "Didn't I say before I left home that you would do this, Lord? That is why I ran away to Tarshish! I knew that you are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. You are eager to turn back from destroying people. Just kill me now, Lord! I'd rather be dead than alive if what I predicted will not happen." **Jonah 4:1-3 (NLT)**

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Have you ever been in Jonah's shoes—angry that God would extend kindness to a person or people that hurt you? What does the Lord's Prayer remind us about forgiveness?

Give us today the food we need, and forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us. **Matthew 6:11-12 (NLT)**

Have you ever been in the Ninevites' shoes—needing to repent? Aren't you glad the person who introduced you to Jesus had the heart of God and not the heart of Jonah?

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Then Jonah went out to the east side of the city and made a shelter to sit under as he waited to see what would happen to the city. And the LORD God arranged for a leafy plant to grow there, and soon it spread its broad leaves over Jonah's head, shading him from the sun. This eased his discomfort, and Jonah was very grateful for the plant.

But God also arranged for a worm! The next morning at dawn the worm ate through the stem of the plant so that it withered away. And as the sun grew hot, God arranged for a scorching east wind to blow on Jonah. The sun beat down on his head until he grew faint and wished to die. "Death is certainly better than living like this!" he exclaimed.

Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?" "Yes," Jonah retorted, "even angry enough to die!"

Then the LORD said, "You feel sorry about the plant, though you did nothing to put it there. It came quickly and died quickly. But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, not to mention all the animals. Shouldn't I feel sorry for such a great city?" **Jonah 4:5-11 (NLT)**

Jonah struggled with prioritizing his own comfort over his compassion. Two important truths:

- 1) If God wants you to reach out to someone, He will prepare the way.
- 2) God loves the whole world, not just the parts I'm comfortable with.

The "Jonah Question" is for you: Do I really want those people to be saved?

Who are "those people" for you?

How can you show love internally and externally, becoming useful in God's hands?

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Pastor John said, "I believe people in this world are much more ready to accept the message of salvation than Christ-followers are to share it."

What opportunities do you anticipate God giving you to share the message of salvation this week? Are you preparing your heart to serve in this way?

Pray!

How did God show his love both to Jonah and the Ninevites? Thank God for his heart for you!