

THE BOOK OF JONAH

3. Jonah's Lessons



God can speak to us through the things he has created. We see this in the Book of Jonah. In the first chapter we saw that God spoke to Jonah through the storm and the great fish, and now in the last chapter we see that God speaks to Jonah through a vine, a worm and an east wind. Although Jonah had obeyed God and gone to the City of Nineveh there were still many lessons that he had to learn.

Scripture Reading: Jonah 4:1-11



What were the things that made Jonah angry? What were the things that made Jonah happy? See verses 1-2, 6, 8-9

(In v1-2 we see that Jonah was angry because God forgave the people of Nineveh and did not send judgment.

In v6 we see that he was happy because the vine grew up and gave him shade.

In v8-9 we see that he was angry because the vine which had given him shade had withered up.)

What does this show us about Jonah's character? Discuss.

(Jonah was angry when things did not go his way! It seems that he was only thinking of himself and had no concern for the lost. He was selfish, proud and moody.)

Before we judge Jonah too severely, let's think about ourselves! How would we have responded in a similar situation? Are we sometimes angry when things don't go our way? God was working through this situation to teach Jonah some valuable lessons and change his heart.



What lessons do you think God wanted to teach Jonah from the vine, worm and east wind?

(God was exposing his selfishness and lack of concern for others – not to condemn him, but to change his heart.)

Share what God has been saying to you as we have studied the life of Jonah.

One of the most amazing truths we learn from the Book of Jonah is that God is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness. (Exodus 34:6) We see that grace extended towards the people of Nineveh. They didn't deserve to be forgiven and yet God wanted to give them an opportunity to repent, and when they did, he did not bring on them the judgment they deserved.

However we see that same grace extended towards Jonah. He should have been very different as he was a prophet and knew God's Word, but his heart was hard towards the lost. God used the storm, the fish, the vine, the worm and the wind, not just so Jonah would obey him, but because he wanted to change Jonah's heart and give him a revelation of who he is. God wants us to have a concern for the lost, but we need to know that he loves us so much, he is working through experiences in our lives to change us to become like Jesus, and so we too will know him more.