

Scripture Text from Sunday Sermon; *Jonah 4:1-11 (NIV)***Note:** The “*this*” in v.1 is pointing to the events in ch.3, where Jonah gave a 5-word sermon to the Ninevites and they repented, and ...

3:10, “When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.”

4:1 But to Jonah *this* seemed very wrong, and he became angry. 2 He prayed to the Lord, “Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. 3 Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

4 But the Lord replied, “Is it right for you to be angry?”

5 Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. 6 Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant^[a] and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. 7 But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah’s head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, “It would be better for me to die than to live.”

9 But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?”

“It is,” he said. “And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.”

10 But the Lord said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. 11 And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”

Some additional notes: Jonah’s description of God is a virtual quote of Exodus 34:6–7, God’s description of Himself when He let Moses see His glory. Jonah is essentially complaining that because of God’s true nature, he knew God’s message of judgment had a non-judgmental purpose behind it, and that the ultimate goal was repentance. And to Jonah, the last thing cruel Ninevites should receive was mercy. God responds by giving Jonah an object lesson. Finally, the book of Jonah then ends with a question, allowing the readers (us) to seek the answer; to learn the lesson, that Jonah was seemingly unable to grasp.**Observation** (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)**Discussion/Topic Starters** (Ice Breakers)

- In what situation(s) have you found yourself at odds with God?
- : What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

Know (what does the text say about God?) **Be** (what does it say about us?) **Do** (what does it call us to do?)**v.1-11**

- : What do we learn about God from this final documented episode in Jonah’s life? (**KNOW**)
Follow-up: What do you think God is trying to teach Jonah in this chapter?
- : Why is Jonah so angry at God and what does that reveal about his heart? How did God respond to Jonah’s anger?
Follow-up: Why does Jonah persist in his anger/disobedience in the face of God’s clear message that He wishes to deliver the people of Nineveh from destruction?
Follow-up: How would you describe Jonah’s understanding, or lack of understanding, of God?
- I: God asks Jonah a very important question in **verse 4**, ... what do we learn about us and how we interact with and experience anger? (**BE**)
Follow-up: Do you think it’s possible a lot of the anger we have/experience isn’t as warranted as we think it is? If so, what does God’s message to Jonah mean for us, in terms of how we are to respond/repent?
- I: What do the three things that God provides Jonah (vine, worm, hot sun) reveal about God? About Jonah? (**KNOW**)
- A: Although Jonah knew God’s character in theory, he didn’t like the reality of God’s character. In what ways are we in danger of living with a caricature of God that is easier to accept than the reality?
- A: To what extent do you think Christians live by an “us-and-them” mentality? In what ways does this attitude hinder God’s work in our community? In the world?
- A: In what ways can bitterness skew our perspective of God? What does Jonah’s experience tell us about how people with deeply rooted bitterness over the circumstances of their lives can find healing for their pain?
- A: We’ve gone through Jonah for 4-weeks now, in what ways do you personally identify with Jonah?
-How WILL you respond this week? What one question do you want us to ask of you next week in regard to this? (**DO**)

Recommended Follow-up:

- **Respond:** Spend this week responding to God’s word as fleshed out in the group time, as well as journey through this week’s companion devotional guide.
- **Read:** Next week’s sermon (9/8/19) will focus 1st John 1:1-7. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, as well as journey through this week’s companion devotional guide.

An explanation on how Riverside structures these discussion guides*:

Riverside defines a disciple of Jesus as a **“Know, Be, Do”** person. And since Jesus told us to “make disciples” we use the “Know, Be, Do” framework in our discussion guides.

Riverside leadership regularly asks questions around these areas:

- “What do we need to **know** about God?”
- “Who do we need to **be**?”
- “What do we need to **do**?”

Here is what we mean by “Know, Be, Do” (based on Colossians 1:9-10, see below)

Know – *“to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives ..., growing in the knowledge of God”* Not just knowing about Jesus, but knowing Him personally, intimately, and deeply. This is also about knowing the scriptures, knowing the voice of the Holy Spirit, even knowing yourself.

Be – *“so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way”* Becoming more like Jesus (sanctification). This is about our character and our heart and our motivations, our passions and convictions change the more we get to Know Jesus (and others).

Do – *“bearing fruit in every good work, ...”* Knowing Jesus and Becoming like Jesus practically will change our actions. As we grow in these areas we will naturally DO the things that Jesus did while in the flesh on earth (living and loving like Jesus). Some broad categories around DO are evangelism and justice and service.

Notice *“bearing fruit in every good work”* then yields more *“growing in the knowledge of God.”* In other words, while “Know, Be, Do” are three distinct words, they are deeply interconnected.

As a side note, the next chapter states: *“⁶ So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, ⁷ rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. ⁸ See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ. (Col. 2:6-8)* To aid in this process Riverside also has a **daily devotional guide available each week**.

Colossians 1:9-10, NIV

For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, so that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God,...

* As discussed in Riverside’s HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid “go through this guide word-for-word.” There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. This guide relies heavily upon the following resources: Thomas, Mack. *The Complete Bible Discussion Guide: Old Testament*; Smalley, Hutson. *Chasing Jonah: A Mission 119 Guide to Jonah*; Baker Books. *A Walk Thru the Book of Jonah (Walk Thru the Bible Discussion Guides)*; Arthur, Kay. *Discovering the God of Second Chances (The New Inductive Study Series)*; Burkholder, Kyle. *Jonah: A 30-day Devotional on Running, Rescue, and the Incredible Depth of God’s Love*