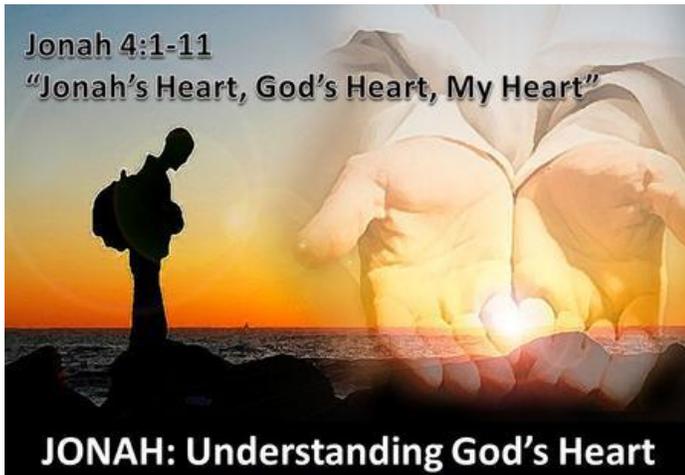


SPRING QUARTER SUNDAY SCHOOL 2017
THEME – SURVEYING THE MAGNITUDE OF GOD’S LOVE
UNIT III – THE EXTENT OF GOD’S LOVE

**“GOD’S LOVING GRACE IS IMMEASURABLE TOWARDS HIS CHILDREN AND HIS ENEMIES...THE JONAH STORY- PART IV”
(THE RELUCTANT PROPHET’S RESPONSE TO A GODLY REDEEMED COMMUNITY)**



Sunday School Lesson No. XIII
May 28, 2017

Presented by Rev. Frank Davis, III
Pastor-Teacher

Lesson Text: Jonah 4:1-11

Required Reading: Jonah Chapters 1–4

Motto Texts: Jonah 4:2, *“And he prayed unto the LORD, and said I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.”*

Jonah 4:11, *“And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?”*

Reliable Resources: Standard Lesson Commentary; Precepts for Living (UMI); Word Search 10 Electronic Library; Union Gospel Press Expositor and Illuminator; The Runaway Prophet Jonah by David Jeremiah; Expository Outlines by Warren Wiersbe; Life Application Bible Notes; The Outline Bible by Dr. H. L. Willmington; LOGOS Bible Software

INTRODUCTION

Well beloved, the prophet Jonah was coerced by Jehovah to return and complete the task of reaching Nineveh’s lost community. Surely God’s word is true, *“...not willing that any should perish, but that all would come to repentance.”* But beloved, who are *“all?”* I was told that “all” was an inclusive word leaving out no one! The thought of Jonah running from God’s will is frightening, yet we do it all the time, but not in such a blatant way. Jehovah is a patient God who will accept no excuses; that’s why Jonah again was sent to Nineveh to fulfill God’s will and demonstrate His integrity!

God’s will must be carried out in spite of the reluctance or even the rebellion of His servants. Jonah returned and stubbornly went to Nineveh, preaching without Godly compassion. And because of the power of God’s word and the life giving power of God’s Spirit, the Ninevites repented and were spared. Through obedience to God’s word, that generation became a redeemed community! But note the response and the reluctance of the prophet! His response to the redemption would cause us to bow our heads in shame. But the Ninevites’ redemption demonstrates that *“...Salvation is of the Lord.”* Note our exhibits for consideration which I call my **Anticipated Power Points:**

- **God’s Grace in Spite of Jonah’s Response. Jonah 4:1-3**
- **God Grants Space for Jonah’s Repentance. Jonah 4:4-11**

THE LESSON BACKGROUND

The hymn writer wrote: *“Alas! And did my Saviour bleed? And did my Sovereign die? Would he devote that sacred head, For such a worm as I?”* Many modern theologians despise the language of the hymn as being negatively sensitive because of the writer’s use of the words, *“such a worm as I.”* But beloved, the grace of God which renders salvation is not extended to the self-righteously privileged, but to the depraved! For Paul wrote in Romans 3, *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.”* He also said in that same treatise, *“There is none righteous, no not one.”* Jonah, our reluctant prophet, seems to be blind to that fact. Not that Jehovah cannot save from the “gutter most” to the “utter most,” but that Jehovah is no respecter of persons, and that sin has no boundaries! I have sinned, you have sinned, Nineveh had sinned, and even Israel had sinned. Yet the hand of God’s sovereign grace has been and is being extended to all in this day of grace. (Read Titus 2:11-12)

As we learned in Jonah 1:1-3 and 3:1-9, Jonah was sent to the Assyrian capital called Nineveh. It was described by the very language of Jehovah as *“A great city of wickedness!”* (Jonah 1:2). Jonah, God’s eighth century prophet, refused to preach to this people, but fled as the scripture says, *“from the presence of the Lord.”* (Jonah 1:3). But God sent a special missionary of consideration and transportation called *“a great fish.”* (Jonah 1:17) After a three day and night revival service in the fish’s belly, Jonah was convinced to preach the message of Jehovah! (Jonah 2:9).

Chapter 3 details that the preached message of only eight words was so stirred by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the Ninevites that a camp meeting revival broke out all over town and a community repented and was saved from the judgment of Jehovah! Nineveh received God’s gift of salvation in spite of the reluctant preaching of Jonah. This proves that the power of salvation is in His word! Romans 10:17 declares, *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*

THE LESSON OUTLINE

“GOD’S LOVING GRACE IS IMMEASURABLE TOWARDS HIS CHILDREN AND HIS ENEMIES...THE JONAH STORY- PART IV” (THE RELUCTANT PROPHET’S RESPONSE TO A GODLY REDEEMED COMMUNITY)

I. God’s Grace in Spite of Jonah’s Response. Jonah 4:1-3

Grace and mercy are only God’s to truly give, and in this lesson it is abundantly personified! God not only showed grace on Nineveh, but on more than one occasion it is exercised on behalf of this reluctant, rebellious prophet. Jonah knew God’s outstanding power of grace as spoken in verse 2. He knew the heart of God as he describes it in the words *“gracious,” “merciful,” “slow to anger,” “great kindness.”* Jonah’s refusal to go to Nineveh was because he knew that if his mortal enemies, the Ninevites, would hear and receive the Word, they would be saved! And Jonah, being a true patriot of Israel, did not think that their enemies should be saved, but destroyed. (Read Psalm 35:1-9)

But he had not heard the message of Jesus’ interpretation that would come many years later. (Read Matthew 5:43-45). Because of Jonah’s adamant attitude against his enemy, even in the face of Jehovah, he would rather die than to face his countrymen as the man that prayed for his enemies and brought them a word of salvation, grace and deliverance. He was so angry (vs. 1). Anger is an emotion that must be carefully monitored. Paul warns us in Ephesians 4:26-27 not to let the devil control our emotion of anger. Jonah’s anger was on a level of danger, so much so, but God was merciful and deflected it back to him for thoughtful consideration. Note the next point...

II. God Grants Space for Jonah’s Repentance. Jonah 4:4-11

A. Twice God questions Jonah for the reason of his fierce anger displayed (Jonah 4:4, 9).

But Jonah’s emotions were greater than his sober mind. He only repeated to God that he would be better off dead. God displays grace and mercy on Jonah more than once in this small book. Even when Jonah was in open sin and rebellion against God, he received the benefit of God’s grace and mercy (Jonah 2:1-2; 3:1; 4:6).

B. Because of Jonah’s tirade of anger, even after God had demonstrated grace, God removed Jonah’s comfort in order to open his eyes (Jonah 4:7-8).

Then God made space for Jonah to see that he (Jonah) had more compassion on an inanimate plant that comforted him than on 120,000 souls that God sought to save from the discomforts of Hell! Thank God for His salvation to redeem a lost community. And may we learn that the heart of even a prophet or Christian can be blinded by the need for a soul (or 120,000 souls) to be redeemed!

CLOSING

II Peter 3:9 tells us, *“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”*

Remember Titus 2:11-14, *“For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”*

Bibleway Missionary Baptist Church, New Orleans & Little Bethel Baptist Church, Amite City, LA

Mailing Address: Post Office Box 19768, New Orleans, LA 70179

Phone: (504) 486-7876

Website: www.thestudyhour.com

TV Broadcast: WHNO TV 20, Sunday, 6:30 a.m.



LOOKING AHEAD:

June 4, 2017

Judges 4:1-10

Please join us each Wednesday noon at Bibleway where Pastor Davis teaches the Sunday School lesson.