

Grace for the Angry

Jonah 3:10-4:11 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 12 September 2021

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: Do you have a story of where an “enemy” / adversary of yours ended up becoming a good friend?

Worship: [Psalm 4](#) (*Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation?*)

Sermon Summary for [Jonah 3:10-4:11](#) (*Read the passage aloud before reading the sermon summary.*)

In Jonah, we discover God's amazing grace afresh. Grace for all kinds of people in all kinds of places: for those who run from God (Jonah 1), for those in raging storms or drowning under waves (Jonah 1-2), for those who rage with fury at God Himself, as Jonah does in chapter 4. God is uniquely present and accessible to those in deep, dark places – even when that darkness is our own anger. There is grace for us when we repent and cry out for mercy, no matter how great the sin, just as the Ninevites learned in chapter 3.

To be human is to get angry; it's in all of us. But its commonness shouldn't blind us to how destructive anger is. It dehumanizes us, driving us away from the love of God and others. As Jonah's tale comes to an end, we don't find a triumphant prophet... which he was! Jonah had spoken to – and reached the hearts of – an entire city in God's name. Yet here we find a person consumed by anger. His story reveals how all of our unresolved anger is ultimately anger against God. Because intuitively we know that God is Lord over everything. *But He isn't doing what we want (or even demand) for Him!* Instead of submitting ourselves to God by faith, we rage against Him, trading Him out for substitute gods. Fortunately, God's gracious love for us is greater than our anger towards Him.

When we get angry because the unexpected and uncontrollable come into our lives // God unexpectedly, provided grace for others in a way that left Jonah and his people vulnerable. Jonah was furious, and it's destroying him as he cuts himself off from God's mercy. But God loves Jonah through his anger, absorbing it as it's hurled at Him. God keeps moving toward Jonah. And He will do the same for us. Ironically, the cure is for God to keep doing the uncontrollable – to keep knocking away our expectations of how we think He should operate. In doing this, God is making a path for us to leave behind our vain efforts to be in control and move toward humble trust in Him.

When we get angry when the uncomfortable come into our lives // Jonah ridiculously says that he is angry enough to die. Why? Because he loses his source of shade (v8-9). The fever of this anger reveals an idolatry of comfort. He wants to be cared for exactly how and when he wants. This can be so true of us as well. And the result of idolizing comfort is that we become very small people. Like Jonah, our priorities become so misaligned that instead of caring for lost cities, we become upset about lost shady spots. And still, God graciously loves us through this by taking away these comforts and reasoning with us. What has angered us can become a path to our healing as he reveals our misplaced priorities through gracious love.

When we get angry at the undoing of our lives // Jonah is undone by God's mercy. As a prophet, his words are supposed to come to pass. Yet God spares the brutal enemy of his people because of their repentance. And what of Jonah? God has the last word, but what will be the fate of his prophet? It can be frustrating that we get no closure; his story is left open-ended. But this should offer us hope. Because our story remains open-ended, doesn't it? Those places of pain, anger and brokenness in our lives – God is Lord over them. And we have the same choice to make as Jonah: Will we embrace God's gracious love in those places? Will we trust Him? Will we let Christ, the true vine, provide shelter and comfort and security to our broken lives?

Discussion Questions (You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)

Anger because of the Unexpected and Uncontrollable

- What is surprising about Jonah's response to the mercy God shows the Ninevites?
 - Why is this so difficult for Jonah? What was he missing about God?
 - What circumstances would cause (or have caused) you to respond to God how Jonah did?
- When Jonah goes and sits to the east of the city, what do you think he was waiting for?
 - How does this show Jonah's failure to understand the nature of God's love?
 - In what ways do we, the church, and our culture do the same thing?

Anger When Uncomfortable

- Review the story of the vine, the worm and the wind ([v5-8](#)).
 - What do we learn about God from how He uses His creation to teach Jonah?
 - What was the lesson for Jonah? What is the lesson for you?
- Are there circumstances where you – like Jonah – become so self-consumed / angry / upset that you forget the other people involved and the situation you are a part of?
 - How does God come alongside you in these times? How does He teach you?
 - What are some practical ways to handle such situations of spiritual or social discomfort?

Angry at the Undoing of our Lives

- Do you agree with the idea that all of our unresolved anger is ultimately against God? Why or why not?
- What has been the most impactful part of Jonah's story in this series?
 - How can your community group grow together through these lessons? How can you better love and support and care for one another because of what you have learned?

Prayer

Pray for God to bring your heart into sync with His, and to fill you with compassion for spiritually lost people. (Share the names of one or two people you want God's help in loving this week.) Prayer Guide click [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Generous Service

“Because of travel restrictions and the persistence of the pandemic, I didn't think it'd be possible to have a global outreach trip this year. But our God makes a way where there isn't one. Through a brand-new collaboration with Redeemer San Diego, we put on an all-virtual outreach trip to minister to the unreached in Tokyo. In August, five PCC'ers took part in a week-long English-speaking camp that allowed Japanese students a fun, encouraging environment to practice English. We helped students tell their story, so that they could share it in English at our last large group gathering at the end of the week. 17 Japanese students participated, and a few got the opportunity to share their testimony with their non-Christian friends for the first time!

“Considering that less than 1% of the Japanese population identifies as Christian, it's amazing how impactful a week of English-language practice can be. Interacting with native English speakers is inspiring and so encouraging for young Japanese students. It's my hope that we will be hosting more of these camps in 2022 and possibly sending a short-term team to Tokyo. I am so encouraged by our global outreach partners in Japan and I hope you will join me in praying for and supporting them as they reach the unreached.”

- Alex McKee, Director of Send