

Major Lessons from the Minor Prophets

Jonah: The Depths of God's Mercies

Message 5: Lessons in Mercy

Jonah 3:10 (ESV)

¹⁰ When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

How God works:

Jeremiah 18:1-10 (ESV)

¹ The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD: ² "Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will let you hear my words."

³ So I went down to the potter's house, and there he was working at his wheel. ⁴ And the vessel he was making of clay was spoiled in the potter's hand, and he reworked it into another vessel, as it seemed good to the potter to do. ⁵ Then the word of the LORD came to me:

⁶ "O house of Israel, can I not do with you as this potter has done? declares the LORD. Behold, like the clay in the potter's hand, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel. ⁷ If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, ⁸ and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will relent of the disaster that I intended to do to it. ⁹ And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build and plant it, ¹⁰ and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will relent of the good that I had intended to do to it.

Jonah's reaction:

Jonah 4:1 (ESV)

¹ But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.

Why?

Jonah's tragic (and ironic) prayer:

Jonah 4:2-3 (ESV)

² And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. ³ Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."

Compare that to his prayer in chapter 2:1-9!

If ever there had been cause for celebration, this was it! God's _____ is on full display!
First, God showed incredible mercy to _____ ...

Second, God showed saving mercy to the formerly pagan _____ ...

Finally, God turns from destroying _____ and gives mercy instead!

Jonah's three **wrong moves**:

- 1) He tried to _____ himself for his disobedience earlier.
- 2) He tried to use God's _____ against Him! (See: Exodus 34:6-7)
- 3) He asks to _____ again!

At the least, this shows us that it's possible to obey God and still not _____ God!

God's reaction to Jonah's prayer:

Jonah 4:4 (ESV)

⁴And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?"

Jonah 4:4 (NIV)

⁴But the LORD replied, "Have you any right to be angry?"

Jonah's pout and the ensuing **lesson on grace and mercy**:

Jonah 4:5 (ESV)

⁵Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city.

What was he waiting to see?

What is wrong with this guy?

- 1) He was never really reconciled to _____.
- 2) He still didn't understand God's _____.
- 3) He was God's prophet, but did not _____ God as well as he thought he did.

Jonah 4:6-8 (ESV)

⁶ Now the LORD God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. ⁷ But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered.

⁸ When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint. And he asked that he might die and said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

The objection lessons God used ...

One more evidence of God's mercy ...

What did Jonah learn?

Jonah 4:10-11 (ESV)

¹⁰ And the LORD said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹ And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"

Everyone and everything is God's. He can do with them/us as He pleases.

Just as Jonah did not "deserve" the vine, no one "deserves" mercy.

God's heart of compassion goes out to all.

The book ends on a question. Why?