

God Is Always In Control – Jonah 4.5-11

⁵ Jonah 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. 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.” ⁹ But God said to Jonah, “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?” And he said, “Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.” 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?” (Jonah 4.5-11, ESV)¹

Memory Verse: 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?” (Jonah 4.11, ESV)

Jonah is a great example of how we are not to act when God calls us to act for Him. However, he is also a great example of how God is always working within His people, moving them, encouraging them, and motivating them to complete the tasks He has asked them to do. He has never asked anyone to do something, where He is not in control of the situation and is not willing to see the task to completion (Philippians 1.6).

We can look throughout all of scripture and see this truth, and if we were paying close attention in our own lives, we would know this to be true for us as well. Here is Jonah we have seen how God was moving in Jonah’s life from the very beginning to get him to Nineveh.

Even though Jonah did not want to go, and he ran away, God did not leave him, He came after him, sent a storm of great magnitude, prepared a great fish to carry him to the shores of Nineveh and then said, “Go, preach what I tell you.” And this time Jonah went and preached to the people of Nineveh.

But for Jonah it was too much, his hatred and anger for these people was too great and he just wanted to die, he asked God to take him (vs. 3). Jonah hoped God would not spare the people, that He would just destroy them so, he went out of the city to wait and see what God would do.

What an attitude, this is the same kind of attitude we have from time to time when God asks us to speak to our neighbor, classmate, co-worker, or yes enemy about who God is, the gospel. But we do not want to, we do not like those people, “you do not know what they have done,” “you do not know what they are like,” “you do not know what they did to me.”

Correct, we do not know all the ins and outs of what people have done, but God does, and it is not for us to ask why, but to do, to be obedient and say, “yes Lord.” Jonah eventually did what God wanted but he was not happy about it, yet God still used him and the whole city repented and turned from their wickedness.

As Jonah sits outside the city waiting to see the disaster that will never come because he knows God has spared them. God tries to show Jonah again His compassion and mercy, something Jonah knows all too well. God prepares a plant, a worm and a scorching east wind to illustrate to Jonah His power, His love, His mercy and grace, and His control over all things.

First the plant, as Jonah sat waiting to see what God would do with the city, God prepared a plant (vs. 6), to come over Jonah. Jonah was happy because it was hot out there in the desert and the sun was beating down on him, therefore, the shade was greatly appreciated. Jonah had nothing to do with the

¹ [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Jon 4:5–11). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

plant, it was all God.

With many things in our lives God has given us the ability and skill to do them, He has made things possible which we never thought were possible. But when have we given God credit for them? When have we recognized God for His influence in our lives? His sovereign control over all things allowing things to happen or providing protection for us (Job 1.1-2.10; Psalm 91.1, 94.22, 143,9; Lamentations 4.20).

Second the worm, God prepared the worm to destroy the plant which had provided the comfort for Jonah from the scorching sun. Third, when the plant was destroyed God appointed a scorching east wind and the sun to beat down on Jonah's head so he was faint (vs. 8). Jonah wanted to die, he saw no reason to keep on living, not because the city had been saved but because the plant had been destroyed.

God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" (Jonah 4.9, CSB)² Jonah said, "Yes, enough to die" (vs. 9). Think about the anger Jonah had, he could not get over God's love of people especially the people of Nineveh, a people Jonah hated, yet he loved a plant. He had nothing to do with it, but loved it so much he was willing to die over it, how silly, right?

This is how we think and look sometimes though, we allow our attitude, our prejudice, our bias to get in the way of the mission God has called us to. We will even have greater feelings for things than people, God's people. Remember God has created us all in His image (Genesis 1.26-27), therefore, we should and must treat each other with love and respect. Taking the gospel to all people no matter who or where they might be.'

Jonah lost sight of this mission, and was more concerned about a plant than the people. God pointed this out to Jonah saying, "Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know *the difference* between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?" (Jonah 4.11, NASB95)³

God is in control of everything, there is nothing which takes place that He is not aware of, however, He has called us to serve, to be obedient, and to share His gospel message to everyone (Matthew 28.18-20). We must maintain our focus on the important things in life, people, sharing God's message, and not get sidetracked with the unimportant things like Jonah did.

Application

1. Do you believe God is in control of everything? Explain why you believe He is or is not in control of everything.
2. When was the last time you obeyed God even when His order did not make sense to you? Please explain.
3. **Deeper Thinking:** Read Job 1.1-2.10—explain how God was in control of this situation, and how did Job respond to all that happened to him. How do you think you might have responded if this was you?
4. Commit to memory Jonah 4.11 and seek ways to share the gospel at school this week.

Prayer

God of All, Creator of All, without You was nothing made that was made. Lord I trust Your judgement, I thank You for Your mercy and grace. Lord, You have created every person, and have called me to share Your gospel message with everyone. Help me to not have a bias or prejudice attitude when I see someone You are calling me to. Help me to see them as You see them, lost and alone, without You, needing a Savior. Give me the words to say and the boldness to share Your gospel message to everyone I come into contact with today. All this I pray in Jesus Christ's Name, Amen.

² *Christian Standard Bible*. (2020). (Jon 4:9). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.

³ *New American Standard Bible: 1995 update*. (1995). (Jon 4:11). La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation.