

Date: 6 Nov 2022

Scripture Passage: Jonah 4:10-11

Title: God's Unchanging Mercy

Introduction

- This is the last sermon on the book of Jonah. The emphasis of this last passage is that the Great Commission must be understood and upheld in all its glory.
- We are reminded that this is a true story with spiritual lessons. We will first review the whole book by looking at 4 key passages, before we consider the last two verses of Chapter 4.

Review of the book

- 2 Kings 14:25-27. We see from this passage that Jonah was a seasoned prophet before being sent to Nineveh. Superficially his action seemed childish. But Jonah was likely going through a crisis of faith as he understood God's covenant to the people of Israel. He was one of three minor prophets who stayed in the northern nation of Israel to minister to the people there, the other two were Amos and Hosea. We see here that even a seasoned believer can sin and needs repentance. Repentance is not just for the unconverted. We ought to obey God's revealed will, and not to question things that are concealed (Deut 29:29).
- Matthew 12:40. Jonah's experience in Chap 1 is pointing us to Christ's death & resurrection. The gospel of "Christ & Him crucified" must be proclaimed. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Jonah's ministry to mariners (1:16) is an example that we ought to be sharing the gospel in whatever situation we are in. Jonah's personal deliverance a lesson on faith in the midst of trials (1:3-4, 7). From the days of Solomon, prayer was directed to Jerusalem where burnt offering made at the temple (2:4). The burnt offerings all point to Christ's atoning death. Trust in atoning death is part-and-parcel of trusting in Christ. The fullness of the gospel must be preached.
- Romans 9:15-16. Chap 3 shows God's word used by the Spirit to convict & convert. A revival took place from the "bottom up" (5, 6). If people are saved, it is not because of any good in them. Salvation is truly of the Lord, by the means of the preached word (& prayer).
- Luke 24: 46-47. All of Scripture, including the old testament, points us to Christ. In Chap 4, Jonah was lost in his own world. He was too absorbed in own predicament. He sulked in discomfort under the hot sun and wind. We see here that the plant points us to Christ and Him crucified. Jonah failed to notice the miraculous growth and sudden death of the plant. He got angry and said, "It is better for me to die than to live (8d)." God's response contained two parts: Is it right for you to be angry? About the plant? In the midst of our troubles, God may be saying something to us. Are we missing it? Do you see that salvation is not yours? Are you so self-centered and self-pity that you are missing what God is saying to you? Sin shuts us from hearing what God is saying.

Reminder of God's commission to us (v10-11)

- God's sovereignty in salvation (v10). Jonah was told he did not labor for the plant, nor make the plant grow. So also, Jonah is not the one who brought about the salvation of the people of Nineveh. God is the Creator. He has the right to do what He likes with the plant - in growth & death. If God desires good to come to Ninevites, what is that to Jonah? God's sovereignty in salvation to be recognized & accepted. He chooses who to save and how one is saved.
- God's grace in salvation (v11). God shows mercy to undeserving sinners. If Jonah pitied the plant, God pitied people and livestock more. Are people not more precious than plants? Jonah has forgotten that salvation is of the Lord. God is unchangeable. And Jonah praised God for His attributes (4:2b). But Jonah was inconsistent and forgot that salvation is of the Lord. Our God is gracious & merciful,

slow to anger, abundant in lovingkindness. The gospel must be preached to all nations until Christ comes again. The Great Commission has to be seen in the light of God's sovereignty and grace. We ought to preach "Christ and Him crucified" to all. Repent & come to Christ!