

Intro: There are times when the best of us find ourselves unhappy with God. Throughout the Bible we find saints, even prophets of God, unhappy and even angry with God. This was true of the prophet Jonah.

In chapter one Jonah is running from God. In chapter two Jonah is confronted by God. In chapter three Jonah is obeying God. But now in chapter four, Jonah is unhappy and upset with God.

Have you been there? Have you ever questioned God? Has there ever been a time you've found yourself angry with God? I have and many other saints have also.

Abraham argued with God to spare the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Moses argued with God and pleaded for Him not to destroy the Israelite people after they had sinned against Him in the wilderness. The prophet Habakkuk is known as the complaining prophet. His book starts out with *"O LORD, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not hear? Or cry to you "Violence!" and you will not save? 3 Why do you make me see iniquity, and why do you idly look at wrong? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise. 4 So the law is paralyzed, and justice never goes forth. For the wicked surround the righteous; so justice goes forth perverted"* (**Habakkuk 1:2-4**).

When we look around at the declining morality in our country, the falling away of many who call themselves Christians, and the increasing hostility being directed at the Christian faith, we find ourselves asking questions much like Habakkuk.

Why is this true? Why do we question God and complain about Him? It essentially comes down to this, God doesn't always do things the way we like. His timing is not always in sync with ours. We don't always understand God. Does this mean God is wrong? Does this mean we are ungodly? The answer is no. But what does cause it and what does it mean when we find ourselves unhappy and upset with God? For the answer let's look at the 4th chapter of Jonah.

Read Text:

Verse one states, "But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry."

I. Unhappy With God

Jonah was unhappy. He was unhappy with God. What was it that made him unhappy. It's found in verse 10 of chapter 3. It reads, *"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."

Jonah was hoping that the Ninevites would not repent. He was hoping that God would destroy them. But now that his hope had not materialized, he's mad. He's mad that God has chosen to spare the Ninevites.

Jonah reminds me of a child. Children become angry easily. What are some common things that causes children to get mad at Mom and Dad? Telling a child no doesn't go well in this day. Children want what they want, when they want, in the amounts they want, and in the place where they want it. Jonah knew what he wanted and that's all that mattered to him.

Maturity involves accepting the fact that we can't always get what we want and accepting the fact that we don't always need what we want. Unfortunately, children don't always grow up emotionally and mentally. Politicians, professors, religious leaders, and scientists can all have buried under their training and education, a little boy or girl who still wants what he or she wants, when they want it, and in the amount they want.

If they don't get it, they quit their job, their church, their marriage, or their research. They don't kick and scream at the checkout counter in Wal-Mart, but they do kick and scream internally and consequently, it affects their attitudes and actions as it did with Jonah.

1. It Affects Our Attitudes

Jonah's attitude stunk. He didn't care about the people of Nineveh. He didn't care about the will of God. All he cared about was seeing his wish, his desire fulfilled.

Our attitudes shape and mold us and they always precede our actions. As a result of Jonah not getting what he wanted, he now has an attitude problem. He now has a negative point of view, a bias against God. In fact, his whole life is suddenly centered around what he wants, the destruction of the Ninevites.

His attitude problem begins in chapter 1, but reaches its climax here in chapter 4. Verse 2 of our text states, *"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."*

It was what Jonah knew about God that made him mad, *for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in*

steadfast love, and relenting from disaster."

Today, most who are angry with God, don't really know anything about God. They are just looking for someone to take their anger out on, for all the pain and hurt that life has brought them.

It's kind of like coming home after a rotten day at work and kicking the cat. We want to take our frustrations out on something or someone. And deep down we know it's safe to take them out on the cat or on God, for the cat is scared of us and God loves us, so neither will fight back.

Jonah was so angry with God that he wanted to die. A prophet is nothing if his prophecies don't come true. He had prophesized that in 40 days Nineveh would be destroyed, but now God is going to spare them because of their repentance.

And in response God asks, "Do you do well to be angry?" When we find ourselves getting angry with God, there are some things we need to think about. Is it right for you to be angry? Do you have a legitimate reason for being angry? Do you have all the facts surrounding what God is doing?

Jonah's attitude then affected his actions.

2. It Affects Our Actions

The Bible says in **Hebrews 12:15** *"See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;"* Bitter attitudes lead to bitter actions.

Jonah's attitude led to Jonah's actions in **verse 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."*

Jonah didn't give up hope of seeing the Ninevites destroyed. He just wouldn't let go of it. He was determined to have his way. He was like Eve who just had to have the forbidden fruit and like the rich young ruler who just had to have his riches.

Whenever our criteria for being happy or having contentment is all about having our way, then we will never be content, and we will never be happy, at least not for any length of time.

The key to experiencing a wonderful life is knowing God's will and accepting God's will. The word Amen, means Lord" let it be so." When we can recognize the things in life that we cannot change, and be able to say, "Amen," we can enjoy the life we have been given and the God we know, that is if you really know God.

In Jonah's case, he knew God, so let's look at the underlying cause for Jonah's anger.

II. The Underlying Cause

I'm sure there are more, but I've listed four reasons that could have been behind Jonah's anger toward God. They are the same reasons we often get angry with God. The first has to do with others.

1. Our Concern For Others

If we are made in God's image, we should have concern for others even as God has concern for all of His creation. This concern, this love for our fellowmen and women, condemns pain and suffering in the lives of others. We feel for others. We know suffering is bad.

Although Jonah had no feelings for the Ninevites, his desire for the destruction of the Ninevites may have been his fear and concern for his own people. If God destroys the Ninevites, they can't be used by God to punish the Israelites.

During the time of WW II, there was a lot of anger directed at God for not preventing or stopping the atrocities committed against the Jews, the killing of 6 million. Such an anger is understandable. In fact, we should get angry when others are mistreated. We should get angry at pain and suffering that is in the world. We should get angry, but instead of directing it at God, we should direct it at the root cause of the pain and suffering.

Sin is the root cause. There was no death, disease, or suffering prior to sin becoming a part of everyday life. Sin is at the root of the second underlying reason for our anger. It has to do with our view of self.

2. Our View of Self

Jonah viewed himself, his thoughts, his perspective, his rational and logical reasoning as being superior than that of God. From his view point, the world would be better off, the Hebrew people would be better off, and he would be better off if the Ninevites were wiped off the earth.

When our view of self-elevates us above God, we will not only disagree with God, but to the degree that we become angry with God. In Jonah's mind he knew better than God. Do we do the same thing at times? Don't we sometimes think we know better than God?

I love the movie Bruce Almighty. In it, the character Bruce thinks he can do a better job at being God than God. As a result, God gives him the job of being God for a short time. It doesn't turn out very well. It never turns out well when we try to take God's place, or do God's job.

An Unhappy Prophet

Text: Jonah 4:1-11

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May 31, 2015

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But the biggest reason for Jonah's anger toward God was his inability to see the big picture. This is also true of us.

4. Our Inability to See The Big Picture

Jonah thought he saw the big picture, or at least he thought he saw enough of it to know that God was wrong in what he was doing. Haven't we all made judgments about God and others that were wrong because we didn't have all the facts.

There are lots of things about God I can't explain, but what I do know about God enables me to accept what I don't know and can't explain about Him. If we can misjudge people that we can see, how much greater is the likelihood that we will misjudge God.

For instance, last Wednesday I went to see my Mom at the hospital in Owensboro. On my way I missed a road I was supposed to turn on. The next turn around spot was a Wal-Mart fuel station. Since the gas price was .30 cheaper than Madisonville, I thought I'd quickly fill up. I pulled in behind an older gentleman who was just finishing up. When he finished pumping, he took his receipt and started to his car and then went back to the pump. He then begin writing what looked like was the price of his gas purchase and the gallons he had pumped and he took a long time doing it.

I wanted to yell out, it's already on your receipt dummy. Are you blind, open your eyes and look. Finally I filled up and headed to the hospital. When I got home I pulled out my receipt so that Laura could enter it into our check registry, only to discover you couldn't read the numerals along the right side of the receipt.

It was I who didn't open my eyes. It was I who had been in the wrong. I thought I had the whole picture, but I didn't. Jonah thought he had the whole picture but he didn't. You may think you have the whole picture when it comes to God, but you don't.

God eventually revealed the big picture in **verses 6-11**. It reads, "*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*

But that's exactly what we are doing when we hold an elevated view of self. The elevation of self is the greatest of all sins. It's the foundation of all sins. The idea of sin is more than do's and don'ts that we fail to obey, it's all about the "I" aspect of sin. What I mean is that just as the word "sin" has the letter "I" in its center, so does putting "I" at the center of our life, bring sin into our lives.

The more we accomplish, the more we know, the more we succeed, the more dangerous it becomes for us. This is true because we begin feeling superior to others and eventually even to God.

The Bible warns us about pride. "*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall*" (**Prov. 16:18**).

The third reason we find ourselves angry with God is our view of God.

3. Our View of God

When we have an elevated view of self, we have a deflated view of God. Jonah viewed God as a person who could make mistakes and be unaware of certain factors. From Jonah's perspective, God was wrong about wanting to save the Ninevites. Either God doesn't know how evil these people are, or He doesn't care what they do to others.

How do you view God? What is your view of Christ? That's the key to accepting the things you cannot change. That's the key to trusting God, even when you can't see His hand at work in your situation or in the circumstances taking place in the world.

But let's give Jonah a little slack. Although he was a prophet, he didn't have the complete Bible, in which God has revealed Himself. We can know much about the God of the Bible. We can know much about the God who sent His Son to die for us. We can know much about a Savior who lived, died, and rose from the grave.

My view of God is that He's too great for me to understand, too powerful for me to resist, too wise for me to fool, and too real for me to deny. To want a God that I can understand completely is to want a God on my level, which means that He's no God at all, or it means I view myself as being on God's level, which would make equal with God.

Is He the great God, "I Am." Or is He the God of my equal? Jonah brought Him down to be his equal.

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?"*

God raised up a plant that would give Jonah some relief from the hot sun, but then sent a worm to kill it. Jonah mourned its death to the point that he wished he would die.

But on the other hand, there were 120,000 persons who did not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle. The 120,000 most likely refers to very young children. Should God not have pity and compassion for these children? Jonah knew about the plant and wept over its demise, but he was unaware of the big picture concerning Nineveh. Should God not have pity on thousands of innocent children?

Conclusion: No matter how much we know about our environment, our world, and our God, we will never be able to see the big picture. Only God sees the big picture. Only God has the right to determine the fate of nations, and people.

My view of God comes from the Scripture? My view of self comes from the Scriptures. This helps me to accept my limited capacities and God's enormous abilities to get it right. I trust God because I know God. And although I may get angry with God at times, I know He loves me, and He knows I love Him. Is this true of you? Do you know God? Do you love God? Do you know God loves you?



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