

Compassionate God

Lesson 2

Jonah 1:6-16

July 25, 2021

God's Surprising Compassion

Introduction

“Jonah was asleep amid all that confusion and noise; and, O Christian man, for you to be indifferent to all that is going on in such a world as this, for you to be negligent of God's work in such a time as this, is just as strange. The devil alone is making noise enough to wake all the Jonahs if they only want to awake.... All around us there is tumult and storm, yet some professing Christians are able, like Jonah, to go to sleep in the sides of the ship.”—Charles Spurgeon

Indifferent: having no interest or sympathy. This word, when applied to the Christian existence, is the most depressing and humbling word. Sometimes we can be indifferent to those around us and indifferent to God's call. We can lose interest or sympathy for those who are perishing, of which there are many. We can drift into self-righteousness.

As you read the story of Jonah today, consider it in light of the word indifferent. Ask yourself how Jonah treats the word of the Lord, then put yourself in Jonah's shoes. How have you behaved similarly, and how can we as a collective body wake up from our sleep?

Memory verse: “As a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear him.” — Psalm 103:13

Pray and read Jonah 1:6-16. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

What does the passage say?

1. What was it the captain said to Jonah? (Jonah 1:6)
2. After the sailors cast lots, to whom did they fall? (Jonah 1:7)
3. What was the sailor's first question to Jonah? (Jonah 1:8)
4. What was Jonah's answer when the crew questioned him? (Jonah 1:9)
5. What solution did Jonah come up with to calm the sea? (Jonah 1:12)
6. To whom did the sailors cry out when the storm grew worse? (Jonah 1:14)
7. After throwing Jonah overboard, what were the actions of the crew? (Jonah 1:16)

What does the passage mean?

1. The sailors all cried out to their gods for help, with no answer. In the story of Jonah, it is the pagan gentiles, not the God-fearing Jew, that turns to the Lord for help. What has been God's plan for all people all along? (Acts 10:22-35)

2. In the same vein of thinking as question one, it is easy to view non-Christians as enemies or opposition, yet God desires for every person to be saved (2 Peter 3:9). Who is our enemy, and how should this knowledge shift our view of those outside the church? (Ephesians 6:12)

3. Jonah said that he feared the Lord and even credited God with the creation of the sea and dry land, yet running away from God's commands spoke the opposite of these professions of faith. What does the Bible say about faith in action? (James 2:14-26)

4. Mark 4:35-41 shows the disciples in the same boat (figuratively) as the sailors in the story of Jonah. Their fear of the storm changed to a healthy fear of the Lord. What does a healthy fear of God look like? (Exodus 20:20; Proverbs 9:10; 14:27)

Applying the passage

1. What “storm” or adversity might God be using to get your attention?

