

## Jonah: Missionary God

### Jonah IV

Our reading is Jonah 4:5-11

What is lesson number 4 in chapter 4?

Jonah continues in relative unconcern for the Ninivites. God provided a vine to grow up and give Jonah some shade from the sun. He enjoyed the comfort. He took it on board, as though it were his. He became very possessive of that vine. Then God took the vine away. The wind and sun beat down on Jonah and he felt faint. So faint he wished to die.

This was the second time Jonah said he wanted to die. He didn't like God's game plan-his mercy on Nineveh when they repented. If Nineveh repented. If Nineveh is not punished for their sins then all I want to do is die! That's how Jonah felt.

If Jonah was repelled by Nineveh's wickedness then he was put off even more by the idea that God in his graciousness and compassion would show that city His mercy. This is what chapter 4 verses 1 to 4 is all about.

As we continue reading chapter 4 we find Jonah enjoying the shade of a vine as he watched the city of Nineveh. It's very clear from the text that God does not condemn Jonah for enjoying the shade of the vine. But God does question Jonah

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when he shows more concern for the loss of his shade than for the salvation of Nineveh.

There are many things God gives us to enjoy, physical, material and emotional things! I used to be so much more uptight about these things. It was so easy to judge others who seemed to have so much materially. I'm a slow learner but I'm learning. Last weekend I was in a missions conference at another church. One of the highlights of that weekend was meeting some of the guys who fly radio-controlled model airplanes. I started getting excited when I heard someone tell us about his model airplane hobby. My brothers and I did and still build them. Anyway last Saturday morning we went flying those RC planes. Let me tell you, actually flying those things is 1000 times more fun than just watching.

What the Lord is concerned about is when our hearts are thrown into turmoil at the loss of one of our comforts or enjoyments, and when people are lost our hearts remain cold or even response in anger.

I enjoyed so much the testimony of a man by the name of McClellan, the president of Sun-Life Insurance in Memphis, and director of McClellan Foundation. Here is a man who is making a lot of money and who is interested in the Lord's work and world missions. The Lord laid on his heart and that of his wife the importance of giving according to how the Lord has prospered him. They decided they could give

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70% of their income to the Lord's work. They would still have plenty left over. They encourage everyone to give but also realize that someone under much financial pressure might only be able to give 5% of their income.

It was a challenge I took up. I wanted to see the Lord work. Our pastor had just challenged us to take a 3 by 5 card the ushers were handing out. He asked us to take it home and pray about how much we would give towards missions that year. We were to put the amount on the card and bring it back to church the following Sunday.

I took it home proud of the fact that I was probably the only teenager in the church to take the card. I prayed about it and decided to put \$50 on that card. Remember I was only 15 years old. The next Sunday I went to church ready to put my card in the offering plate.

To my surprise and shock our pastor asked us to keep the card another week and consider the possibility of doubling the amount we had put on the card! I nearly fell off the pew. Where in the world would I get \$100! It was beyond me and left me feeling numb.

I returned home a bit more humble, but I began to pray, and did I pray hard! The Saturday night before turning the card in I didn't even go to our normal youth activity. I stayed home and labored over the decision to change the \$50 to \$100. Finally I changed it.

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I returned to church and placed the card in the offering plate with a much more humble attitude than I had had the first Sunday. I began to look for every odd job I could find. I mowed lawns. In the winter I shoveled snow off peoples' walks. I even prayed for more snow.

One Saturday I was out shoveling snow until 9 at night. I think my parents were about to call the police. But I returned home with pockets full of dollar bills to give to missions. Was I determined!

The Lord blessed and at the end of the year I actually made \$200. I gave \$150 into missions and kept \$50 for ice cream cones, cokes and a date. The Lord helped me put into missions not \$50 but 3 times as much, \$150!

Let's go for it with a positive attitude. Let's get rid of the Jonah complex and give our lives, our time and our money cheerfully! Thank you for giving so willingly and cheerfully to us missionaries. Keep up the good work. Paul reminded the Philippians that, whatever they gave him for the ministry, would be counted by God to their account before Him.

God bless you.