

**The Book of Jonah/ Lesson 4
Jonah Is Humbled by God**

Jonah 4:1-11



The Book of Jonah- Lesson 4 -Jonah Is Humbled by God

Chapter 4

Note to servants: -

Always review the introduction Lesson at the beginning of each new chapter in the form of question and answers with the children/refer to the Introduction included in lesson 1 and its content.

MEMORY VERSE

"For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him." PSALM 103:11

Summary of the last Chapters:

Jonah was called to go to Ninevah the great city, he escaped the mission by going to the other side of the world; Tarshish [which is currently Spain] the ship he rode faced a deadly storm; he was thrown into the sea and swallow by the whale; during the time inside the whale Jonah repented and prayed, God Accepted his repentance and the Whale dropped him off at Ninevah; He went to the city and preached that it would be destroyed in 40 days a dry message that does not carry hope of salvation yet the People humbled themselves, repented, prayed, fasted; them and their animals for 3 days; God accepted them and did not punish them, what happened next?....

Let's see

Using Small Things

Sometimes God uses small things to get our attention. In our story, today, we are going to learn about a time when God used a little worm to get the prophet Jonah's attention. Let's look at the small things in our lives to see what lessons God may want to share with us.

Activity and Craft for this Lesson: **Worm**

To be done at the time a servant decides:

Materials: Several scraps of various colored construction paper, a cup, scissors and markers. / A jump rope. / Egg cartons (enough for 4 – 6 "worm" sections) per child, 2 wiggle eyes per child, pipe cleaners, and glue.

You will need several scraps of various colored construction paper, a cup, scissors, and markers. Have each child use a cup to trace a circle onto a piece of construction paper. Next, ask all the children to write their name in their circle. After the children have written their name on the circle, cut the circle out of the paper and tape or staple each circle onto the wall, just having the edges touching. This will make a colorful worm. Cut out one circle for the face. Write the scripture reference from Jonah on the finished worm

LESSON TIME!

Lesson Goal: **God is gracious and compassionate**

Jonah 4:1-3

4 But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. ² So he prayed to the Lord, and said, "Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore, I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You *are* a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. ³ Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for *it is* better for me to die than to live!"

Jonah was angry, very angry. He had taken pleasure in the fact that the people of Nineveh might receive the judgment they deserved. Remember; Nineveh were Gentiles and Jonah was from the Jews; And the Assyrians were enemies of the Jews. But God Himself said that any nation on which He pronounce judgment would be saved if they repented (Jeremiah 18:7-10). **God is gracious and compassionate**

St. John Chrysostom says: [Truly, the Prophet was embarrassed that what he foretold did not come true, but God is not embarrassed because all He really wants is the salvation of Humanity and the good of His servant].

What an attitude! Jonah was certainly quick to forget God's mercy on him when he was in the belly of the fish. The Bible says, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7). It is clear God needed to deal with the attitude of his prophet.

It is certain; however, Jonah knew the character of God. He Knew God was gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness; which indicates a true relationship with God; God's actions did not surprise Jonah. They just made him angry, so angry he wanted to die!

Therefore, God will now work on His own profit to fix his weakness and help him.

Jonah 4:4-8

4 Then the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

5 So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. 6 And the Lord God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah [b]was very grateful for the plant. 7 But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. 8 And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

God once more needed to deal with his prophet, "Is it right for you to be angry?" Jonah was so upset he did not respond but went out and pouted. He made a small lean-to shelter in which to sit and watch what would happen to the city. It would seem he was still hoping God would change his mind and bring judgment. [does this remind you of some other event? Remember the prodigal son when he came back to his father; what did the older son do? He stayed outside and did not want to go and celebrate inside. Jonah was not happy that God accepted Ninevah's repentance the same as the older son was not happy that his father accepted the prodigal son's repentance; they all forgot that God's goal is that all would return to Him and be saved.

Now God wanted to work on Jonah; So, He decided to use an object lesson to:

1: Reveal God's Compassion and Mercy over Jonah when he felt the hot temperature of the sun.

2: Use that Plant as an example to refer to His love to His creation; If Jonah Loved that plant that much; how much more would God Love people that He made with His own Hands.

3: Reveal Jonah's selfishness. God prepared (or appointed) a plant to give the prophet the shade that his crude shelter could not provide. Jonah was thankful for the shade from the burning sun. But then, God prepared (or appointed) a worm that destroyed the plant that had brought comfort and relief to Jonah.

When the sun rose, God prepared a strong wind, and the sun beat down upon Jonah's head. Now, Jonah was so miserable, again, he proclaims, "It is better for me to die than to live."

Jonah is so annoyed that he chooses to die for the wrong reasons; yet God is not giving up on him and wanted to work on him to keep on fixing him; **God is gracious and compassionate**

Jonah 4:9-11

9 Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

And he said, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!"

10 But the Lord said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. 11 And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?"

In this passage, God is having a conversation with Jonah; reasoning with him, explaining to him; the reason for His mercy over His creation and pointing to a simple feeling of compassion that Jonah felt towards a plant that he did not even create or worked on; let us see:

God questioned Jonah. "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" Jonah still had quite an attitude. He responded, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!"

God pointed out that Jonah had a lot of mercy for the plant—he wanted it to live, though he did not labor over it (plant it, water it, or make it grow) and though its life was so short.

God then reasoned with Jonah. "And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left--and much livestock?" God created the Ninevites—their existence was not just overnight; they were not plants. The Ninevites were people whom God loved; among them lived 120 thousand persons; including little children who were not old enough to know their right hand from their left hand as well as livestock. Note, God reveals His great compassion on the children, and even His mercy toward the animals.

Formerly, **God spoke to Jonah through the elements**: the wild winds, the rocking ship, the Gentile sailors, the draw and the whale; then God spoke to him through the feeble Plant, the easterly wind, and the destructive worm. God converses, at different stages, in a different manner, according to what the person would react and comprehend most.

So when Jonah was rebellious in his heart and decided to run away, God spoke to him in a language full of fierceness, which was equivalent to a fierce heart. He spoke to him through the wind, to show him the storm within him; the Gentile sailors, to show him that he had deviated from the spirit of faith; the rocking ship which was shifted around by the winds, to find his heart which he almost lost in the midst of the sea of this world; and the whale, to realize the chasm which drew him, the depths which swallowed him and the prison which he set up for himself... Then, when Jonah came out weak, exhausted and unable to resist, God talked to him through the weak plant and the corruptive worm, to realize that he was but a weak plant that could be destroyed by the worm of ungratefulness and resistance.

In short, we can say that God speaks to us in the language, which would help us discover our most obscure inner self. **[Fr. Tadros Yacoub Malaty]**

It appears that Jonah did not know how to respond. God had confronted Jonah on his self-centered values and lack of compassion. Hopefully, Jonah had a big change of heart.

What insight we gain into God's character through the book of Jonah!

- 1**-God is indeed a gracious and loving God, full of mercy and slow to anger.
- 2**-He does not want to bring judgment on evil people.
- 3**-Woven throughout the book of Jonah, we see examples of the grace and compassion of God.
- 4**-He spared the sailors when they pleaded for mercy.
- 5**-God saved Jonah when he prayed from the belly of the fish.
- 6**-He saved the people of Nineveh when they responded to Jonah's preaching.
- 7**-God always answers the prayers of those who call upon Him. He extends His mercy and grace to all men.
- 8**- God Cares also for His sons and Daughters [His servants like Jonah] He works on them to fix them and corrects them; He does not give up on them or leave them to their weaknesses to destroy them.

Remember, **God is gracious and compassionate.**

Game: Optional:

Wiggle Worm

This game is just to release some energy. Use a jump rope and have one student on each end. Have them wiggle the rope on the floor. Have the other children jump over the rope (worm) without stepping on the worm and squashing it. Keep playing until the children tire of the game.

Egg Carton Worm

You will need egg cartons (enough for 4 – 6 “worm” sections) and 2 wiggle eyes per child, pipe cleaners and glue.

Cut your egg carton to make a 4 – 6 section piece (your choice on how long it is based on egg carton availability).

Have the children glue the two wiggle eyes onto one end of the egg carton.

Next, have them take the pipe cleaner and cut two pieces for the antennae. They are ready to decorate.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanking God for His heart of love, mercy, and compassion. And ask God that we would not be blinded on His mercy or love to all people and that He would always work on us to cleanse us and purify us

Activity:

<https://calvarycurriculum.com/pdf/Curriculum/Original/Curriculum/CURR163.PDF>

Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0BJacsgTjfg&t=35s>

Optional: Jonah Song

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1pu_b3m5ZWk

Email to Parents:

We have learned how was Jonah humbled by God in Jonah Chapter 4 as God led Jonah through the understanding and a conversation with Him to understand His mercies; God created people and is merciful overfull and used a comparison of when Jonah was sad over the tree that died while he did not labor for it, he did not plant it, water it or watch it grow, while God created people and cares for their salvation and eternal life. Please read Jonah chapter 4 with your children.