

Sermon: A Mercy More Than Me

Text: Jonah 4

Discussion Questions:

- Read through these short 11 verses. Discuss your initial reactions and feelings. Does it disappoint you to see Jonah responding this way? Does it give you a glimmer of hope that even a great prophet of the Lord has these kinds of inner struggles?
- What do you think was at the heart of Jonah's anger and frustration? Dig a bit deeper to discuss some of the motives that might have been driving Jonah's hatred for the Ninevites and his anger toward God.
- We can't escape the fact that Jonah comes off as being a deeply prejudiced man (v.2). Do you think that Jonah simply didn't fully comprehend how God's grace and mercy works—or did his hatred just run too deep? Do you think that this kind of deep prejudice still exists in America today?
- How does God's description of Himself in Exodus 34:6-7 factor in to this narrative?
- Jonah gets pretty "dramatic" in verse 3 when he asks God to kill him. Do you think he was serious?
- Jonah's actions in this chapter go further than prejudice—and really get to the heart of unforgiveness. Who do we (you) have the hardest time forgiving?
- I know this is a deeply personal question—but has there ever been a time in your own life when you got angry with God for not doing what you wanted Him to do?
- By positioning himself in "a place east of the city"—with an overlook of Nineveh—what do you think Jonah was really hoping that God would do? (Take a look at Genesis 19 for some help on this question.)
- What do you think God was doing by sending the leafy plant, the worm, and the scorching east wind? Do you think Jonah got the message?
- God asks Jonah a deeply penetrating question in verse 11: "Should I not be concerned about this great city?" Let's ask this question of each other: "Should we not be concerned about _____?" What are some things that we ought to be concerned about (but might not be)?