

A Community to Redeem – Teaching Notes

(Jonah 3:10-4:5; 3/14/10)

Introduction: A key idea in today's lesson is that God is willing to show grace on those who obey His will. Prayerfully, we will be challenged to obey His will and then trust His distribution of grace.

Body:

Read Jonah 3:10

I. God's Gracious Compassion. God saw the Ninevites' fruits of repentance. God turned from His intended actions. He repented of evil that He said He would send.

Applications –

- **Real repentance.** Notice in vs. 10 that the Ninevites had a change of heart and behavior. Talk is cheap. There are too many who claim to be so in love with Jesus, but their behavior doesn't say so. Loving God includes obeying God. *Let's strive to make sure our hearts and behavior are in line with God's will.* A truly repentant heart not only moves babies in Christ to join a church. It also moves those who claim to be so mature to study, serve, and give.

- **God's repentance.** Notice in vs. 10 the strange language of God repenting. At the heart of this matter is God changed what He intended to do because of His unchanging commitment to bless those who obey and punish those who don't. In other words, in spite of what the text says, God never changes in His character. Instead of playing games with God, trying to see how far we can test His limits and trying to figure Him out, *let's focus on obedience.* The more we obey God, the more He will bless us. The more we disobey God, the more we can expect to be punished.

Read Jonah 4:1-3

II. Jonah's Ungracious Response. Jonah was very upset. He knew that God was subject to turn from evil to grace. Jonah went so far as to ask God to take his life.

Applications –

- **Real prayer.** Notice in vss. 1-3 that Jonah shared with God what was on his heart. What was on Jonah's heart was contrary to God's will, but Jonah was yet able to share it with God. We don't have to worry about God being hypersensitive or hurting His feelings. We can be real with God. It is often therapeutic for us to simply vent and share what is on our hearts with God. *Let's work on improving our prayer lives.* We should learn to pray more and engage in negative behaviors less (e.g., cursing, getting drunk, emotional eating, etc.).

- **God's grace.** Notice in vs. 2 that God is gracious and merciful. The grace of God can be a tricky matter. On one hand, we love for God to have grace and mercy on us. But when He shows

grace and mercy on our enemies, it can leave us unhappy. *Let's learn to trust God's distribution of grace and mercy.* This is a much healthier posture than to ask God to take our lives, because of our frustrations with His grace. Taking our lives suggests that we have given up hope. We can always have hope in God. Even when we don't understand, we can hope and believe that God is working things out for the good of His people.

Read Jonah 4:4-5

III. God's Penetrating Inquiry. The Lord responded to Jonah's angry disposition. God asked about the soundness of Jonah's anger. Jonah sat under a booth and observed the city. He wanted to see what would happen.

Applications –

- **Taking a seat.** Notice in vss. 4-5 that God inquires about the soundness of Jonah's anger. God urged Jonah to do some self examination about his emotional state. It is good for us to sit and exam the soundness of our emotional state, especially when we are out of balance and very angry. We can make some bad mistakes when we are ruled by anger, depression, or even unfounded joy or confidence. *Let's learn to take a seat and ponder our hearts, the circumstances of our lives, and most importantly the will of God.* Many of us can see how things would have been different, if we would have given ourselves a little more time to work through our emotions.

Conclusion: Let's work on obeying God and trusting His distribution of grace. God has much for those who obey His will.