

## The Lord Comforts Us Even In The Midst of Our Tantrums

One last word this year about Jonah. The last chapter of the book illustrates how the Lord can comfort us even when we become self-centered and act like spoiled Spiritual brats.

Brief Background: One day, the Lord told His Prophet Jonah to go to the Ninevites to preach to them and let them know that, despite all their sinful and corrupt ways, they could still be saved for all eternity if they would repent, renounce their evil ways, and come to the Lord humbly. Well, Jonah hated the Ninevites, so he attempted to run away from the Divine assignment. Long-story-short, Jonah ended-up in the belly of a whale (a great fish as the Bible puts it), and while in there he changed his mind and decided to go ahead and do what the Lord had asked him to in the first place. So the Lord had the whale spit Jonah out, and Jonah then went to the Ninivites. He preached to them and they repented, much to Jonah's displeasure. And that brings us to today's inspiration.

Notice in the chapter below how the Lord sent comfort to Jonah, and then took it away to prove a point, right in the midst of Jonah's discomfort and complaining.

### Jonah 4 (MSG)

#### “I Knew This Was Going to Happen!”

<sup>1-2</sup> Jonah was furious. He lost his temper. He yelled at GOD, “GOD! I knew it—when I was back home, I knew this was going to happen! That’s why I ran off to Tarshish! I knew you were sheer grace and mercy, not easily angered, rich in love, and ready at the drop of a hat to turn your plans of punishment into a program of forgiveness!”

<sup>3</sup> “So, GOD, if you won’t kill them, kill *me!* I’m better off dead!”

<sup>4</sup> GOD said, “What do you have to be angry about?”

<sup>5</sup> But Jonah just left. He went out of the city to the east and sat down in a sulk. He put together a makeshift shelter of leafy branches and sat there in the shade to see what would happen to the city.

<sup>6</sup> GOD arranged for a broad-leafed tree to spring up. It grew over Jonah to cool him off and get him out of his angry sulk. Jonah was pleased and enjoyed the shade. Life was looking up.

<sup>7-8</sup> But then God sent a worm. By dawn of the next day, the worm had bored into the shade tree and it withered away. The sun came up and God sent a hot, blistering wind from the east. The sun beat down on Jonah’s head and he started to faint. He prayed to die: “I’m better off dead!”

<sup>9</sup> Then God said to Jonah, “What right do you have to get angry about this shade tree?”

Jonah said, “Plenty of right. It’s made me angry enough to die!”

<sup>10-11</sup> GOD said, “What’s this? How is it that you can change your feelings from pleasure to anger overnight about a mere shade tree that you did nothing to get? You neither planted nor watered it. It grew up one night and died the next night. So, why can’t I likewise change what I feel about Nineveh from anger to pleasure, this big city of more than 120,000 childlike people who don’t yet know right from wrong, to say nothing of all the innocent animals?”

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Jonah, begrudgingly, did the right thing; he brought God's Word to the Ninevites, even though, in his mind, they waaaaay didn't deserve to hear it, or to have a chance at repentance. Consequently, the Ninevites responded beautifully, but Jonah didn't expect this to be the result. So then Jonah, who more than anything wanted the Ninevites to die and be wiped-out of human existence, had a fit because the Ninevites chose to do what was right in God's eyes. Jonah even yelled at the Lord over the matter.

You'd think that Jonah would have been grateful to the Lord for having allowed him to be the instrument who brought Salvation to the people of Nineveh, but he was anything but pleased at the results, even though they were incredibly great from a Godly perspective. Jonah had no right to judge these people. But don't we do the exact same thing all the time. And yet, in spite of our own Spiritual immaturities, the Lord continues to work with us. I'm so thankful I could holla!!!

I hope you have an amazing day!!

- Jack