

# *Jonah*

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## What Jonah Had To Do

Do you realize that God gives each person his own task to perform? The Providence of God is involved in the day by day experience of each person and especially of the believer. Would this be true even of the unbeliever? We have nothing in Scripture to guide us about this, because the Bible primarily talks to people who believe in God. It is after they have turned to Him that He talks to them. I am disposed to think that this is true for anyone. Naturally, there will be far more for the believer because he is minded to do the will of God. Such verses as: "Thou God seest me." That would be true for everyone. "He knoweth the way I take." Yes, He does! The strongest argument that I can offer for this, is that passage that will tell me, God sees each sparrow falling to the ground. If He sees a sparrow falling to the ground, I expect He sees each human being. When He says the hairs of your head are all numbered that is enough to quiet your soul. God knows all things, and He holds all things in His hand. And He has His will about each person. God lets the situation develop in which a believer can serve Him.

This can be seen in the book of Jonah. Jonah is the name of the book because the book is the story of a man called Jonah. We oftentimes call him a prophet, and I expect he was. Jonah was a preacher, although there is nothing to indicate that he was a priest. We might call him a lay preacher. He was not a preacher as we understand them, as there were no congregations then as there are today, nor was he one of the tribe of the Levites. The story of Jonah is the story of a man that was given a task to perform. It is a simple story, widely known. Because of its unusual features, it is often distorted. At times people stress one aspect, without getting the story as a whole.

The story comes to us as a narrative, simple and clear. We know that Jonah preached in Nineveh, but there is not a single sermon of his listed. We do not know how long he spent there, possibly forty days. We know that he was there, that he preached and had a powerful affect upon them. We are told the story in the simplest fashion.

The reader is not told what kind of a man Jonah was, nor how he performed his task. Jonah's assignment was not given to a whole class of people, one of whom was Jonah. No, it was specific. "Jonah, you do this." One man, under God, facing his life. He had a task to do. "Go to Nineveh, (which was a great city) and tell them what God is going to do." God was going to destroy them in forty days. The point is, Jonah was given a task. You might have in mind the people would not want to hear it. It was not a pleasant word he was to take.

The Christian in his daily living may face a situation that if he were to do the right thing other people would object. Just imagine a man getting up in your city and openly taking the best opportunity he had to say that the people in that city are wrong: not just a special group, but all of them. Or take the example of a woman in her home; how many times a woman quietly in her heart has to turn to God and trust in Him. The things that she can see about her are wrong. However, if she were to speak out about it, she would offend. She has to live with her people. It is a great sense of responsibility. Or take a young person who wants to be a Christian. What a difficult thing for her to witness! I remember so well a girl in Alabama writing to me. She was at that time about 14 or 15 years old, and I remember one sentence in her letter that just stuck in my heart, "It's so hard to be a Christian in high school." Incidentally, she was a Christian and we were glad to think we had some share in helping her with her witness and testimony.

This is the way it is with many of us.

It is difficult to bring a message to people urging them to change their ways. This is what any witness for Christ faces, and the believer can expect objection. This is the way it was with Jonah. God said, "You do this," and Jonah went the other way. This is not unusual. The road he was asked to go was hard, so he went the other way. There are no particulars given. We know that he got into a ship going in another direction. The situation is kept simply before us. Jonah did not do as he was told. He disobeyed God. Perhaps many people today could sympathize with Jonah and say: he did not want to be involved, so he went the other way.

The next thing we notice is that God blocked the course of Jonah's disobedience. The reader is not told what Jonah was going to do when he went to Tarshish, nor what God was thinking when He sent the storm. God prepared a storm that threatened the ship that held Jonah. The sailors were mortally afraid and sought to discover who was at fault to cause this judgment from Almighty God. Jonah himself came forward and told them. "I am the man." Then they had in mind, "what in the world are we going to do with you?" He said, "There's just one thing to do with me. Get rid of me. Throw me overboard."

The storm was no punishment. God did not send that storm to punish Jonah or the sailors. This was His way of getting a man turned around who was going in the wrong direction. Jonah admitted his responsibility, and yielded into this new situation; he told them what to do. It was very simple, "Take me up, and cast me into the sea." It was not easy for those sailors to do that. They came and asked Jonah to forgive them. They even asked Almighty God to forgive them.

Now comes the part that fascinates people so much and causes many to stumble. God arranged for Jonah to be swallowed by the great fish. All He had to do was to prepare the fish and have him there on time. When I say "all", I remember only God could prepare that fish. That implies that God knew years before that Jonah was going to do just as he did and He had the whale there at the right time, so that the whale swallowed Jonah.

God is infinite, infinitely great. He knows all about everyone. This is of great comfort to the Christian as he lives his life. There will be no sudden surprise that will catch God off guard. If we are turning to Him to pray, He knows what we have need of before we ask it.

We find that Jonah now was swallowed by the whale, and even more amazing, he was still alive. A great many people have trouble about that. This is not necessary. Simply take God's Word as it is! This man Jonah was conscious there in the belly of the whale, and then in that extremity, Jonah prayed to God. A believer can understand that. When a person gets down to the very bottom, and everything is falling in on top of him, a person will pray like he has never prayed before. This was Jonah's experience.

There is no prolonged reasoning. We might think of this: to be sure, he had disobeyed God. Don't you think Jonah knew that? Certainly Jonah knew he had been disobedient, and don't you think that Jonah knew he was in the plight he was in because of what he had done? Of course! But Jonah believed in God nonetheless. This reminds us of the prodigal. Remember when the prodigal went away from home and he had spent everything. He finally got down to where he was tending to swine. As he tried to feed himself with the food that he was giving to the pigs, the truth suddenly struck him. He came to himself. "In my Father's house there is plenty. The servants have enough to eat in my Father's house." When one reads the story of the prodigal in the book of Luke, chapter 15, notice it never entered the prodigal's heart and mind to doubt that his Father would listen to him. He knew he was unworthy. But he never questioned that his Father would hear him. He was right.

Jonah had in mind the God he worshipped and believed in, and Jonah cried out to God for help. In that moment Jonah realized his complete dependence upon God. What he needed now was help. And he

found it. Salvation is of the Lord. God can hear, and does. Jonah was ready to thank God for the deliverance and to praise God for His goodness and so Jonah is put on the dry land.

A person would almost think that was the end of the story. But that is just part one. Now we come to part two. Jonah was given another chance to do the very thing he had not done: nothing added, nothing taken away. Nineveh was still there, and Nineveh needed the message. God had chosen Jonah, and now Jonah is ready to follow the Lord's command. Jonah is different now, a chastened servant, and he did as he was told.

There is no description of his manner of preaching. There is no description of his frame of mind, but I must confess that I am impressed by the fact that when Jonah preached those people listened and repented in sackcloth and ashes. They turned to God. No doubt Jonah's preaching had an extra dimension after that whale experience. This would be true for any of us who either preach or teach or witness to other people about the Lord; if we have ever been through any real close experience with God, we have a deeper understanding about all these things.

Some of you may have noticed how sometimes I refer to "the great fish" and again to "the whale". In the book of Jonah it is called a great fish and in the book of Matthew it is called a whale. While the book of Jonah talks about the great fish, the Lord Jesus in speaking about it said that "when he was in the whale's belly." You know, a great fish is a whale and a whale is a great fish. Now when he had so preached and these people had so believed, Nineveh repented; which was a wonderful thing. Then God changed His plans. So far as Jonah was concerned, it looked like God changed His mind. The message that Jonah gave was from God. It was not that Jonah was such a smart man, or such a clever man, but that he was a faithful man. He preached God's message, and it was effectual. Jonah had been disobedient but his disobedience did not hinder his usefulness. In your experience have there been times you did things which you should not have done? Do you think that is going to hinder you in the future? Not at all. I know that some foolish thing I may have done may put me at a disadvantage. I may have spent my money foolishly and now I do not have any money. But I can turn to God, forgetting the things that are behind. That is what Jonah did. He went to Nineveh and preached. God blessed his preaching and Nineveh repented.

Jonah was upset. Jonah was disturbed because God changed His plan and spared Nineveh. Jonah understood what God had told him He would do. In forty days He would destroy Nineveh. Jonah now saw that God did not do it. That shook Jonah. It was not what happened to Nineveh. It was what God had done. God did not do what He said He would do. This upset Jonah. It is strange when you stop to think about it: the man who failed to do as he was told, the man who disobeyed God, was the man who could not stand for God to change His way.

Now comes a wonderful thing. Instead of God rebuking Jonah and exposing him before the whole world as being such a limited person, God arranged a situation in which Jonah could learn. God prepared a gourd that grew up and gave Jonah shade. Then a worm ate into the gourd and caused it to die so that the shade was gone. Jonah was upset about that. God came to him and asked him, "Have you any reason to feel badly because that gourd withered up?" "Yes, I have." Now the shade was gone. Yes, he had reason to be upset. He was unhappy. God said, "You're unhappy because with the gourd gone you are exposed now to the sun and you are hot. Should not I have been unhappy to think about all those people in Nineveh that would have been destroyed? Think of all the children that were there, who did not know their right hand from their left: just youngsters, innocent people. And all the cattle, the beasts that were there. Don't you think that I should be conscious of their need?"

It is interesting that the record does not tell what Jonah thought. There is no further record about

Jonah. We must remember this book is not about Jonah, nor Nineveh. This book is about God, and how God deals with His people.

When the Word of God is declared it will affect people. It will lead them to repentance. When people repent, they will be spared because God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should have everlasting life. The purpose of the book of Jonah is not the history of Jonah, not the character of Jonah, not the history of Nineveh nor the fate of Nineveh. The purpose of the book of Jonah is to reveal the truth about our great God who is merciful, and compassionate and not willing that any should perish.

## What Jonah Had To Learn

Can you see how assuring and reassuring it would be to a believing person to remember that God knows all about everything? A person could rest in peace knowing that God knows all. Perhaps it would seem that guilt and the feeling of sin would bother the conscience. Here the wonder of the Gospel comes in. The Gospel of Jesus Christ tells everyone, any sinner, that his sins are forgiven, they are taken away. His guilt is pardoned and the believer is reconciled to God. This is a wonderful thing. There is no reason at all to hide anything from God. He knows and the believer can rest and trust in Him.

Jonah is one of the best known of the Old Testament prophets. But he is known as the disobedient prophet. One is inclined to think about Jonah in the Old Testament somewhat as one does about Peter in the New Testament. Probably the first thing Jonah needed to learn was that God is sovereign. God is in control. In everyday language we would simply say that He is "Boss." We are reminded of the Scripture that says "it is not in man to direct his steps." God will accomplish His purpose. His hand is on all things and He is over all and God will bring His will to pass. This world was created by God, and is being sustained by God. This world is being controlled by God. God is in charge!

It is one of the tragedies of human experience that man finds it so easy to think he can do as he pleases. He goes out here and acts any way he wants to and thinks he should be allowed to get away with it. That is foolish. God is sovereign. He is on the throne, and He is alive and active. Anyone would be wise to remember this.

This is the first thing that Jonah needed to have in mind. He could never get away from God. What God wanted to have done would be done.

The second thing Jonah is going to learn is that God directs His servants. We speak of God's permissive will, what God allows; and His directive will, what God wants. God has a way of overruling and bringing His will to pass whether His servant wants to or does not want to obey Him. Life as a whole is primarily a matter of obedience. It is surprising how many people have the idea that living depends upon intelligence, reasonableness and logic. But this is His world. It is not what I wish or do not wish. It is what God wants me to do. Contrary to common opinion a man really is not free to do as he pleases. On the surface, it may appear that a man may be free to go out and make a fool of himself. There is a limit even to this.

God has a way of overruling. Jonah needed to learn this. He needed to learn that if God wanted him to do something, he would have saved time and trouble if he had done as God wished. That is why you read in the New Testament in the writing of the Apostle Paul: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17). Everything that comes before you, take it as from God and do it for God's sake and you will be blessed.

Jonah's disobedience was human; it came naturally. But what he needed to learn was that disobedience brings distress. A person cannot get away with it. Providence is under God's control. God is too faithful

to let a person get away with such foolishness. In the Scriptures it is written: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him" (Proverbs 22:15). If I think of myself as a child of God, I can understand this: "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child." I am just as liable to do things contrary to the will of God, and just as natural as the rain falling down to the ground. But "the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." God can change that, and disobedience brings distress. God has a plan for each one.

Jonah, in distress, in *real* trouble, learned to pray. He was thrown overboard and a great fish swallowed him, so that he was in the belly of the whale. Now that was real trouble. In Jonah 2:7 it is recorded: "When my soul fainted within me I remembered the Lord: and my prayer came in unto thee, unto thine holy temple." Jonah was not hindered at this time by any feeling of guilt, or personal pride. He was in such a state he did not have time to think about anything else. His time was short. He was still alive but not for long. He cried out to God and learned that God would hear him. In distress, prayer is the way out.

When he was put on the shore, Jonah discovered something else. God's purpose does not change. Before the experience of being thrown into the sea, Jonah had a commission to go to Nineveh and preach. The commission was unchanged. The people in Nineveh could be saved, and God's Word needed to be taken to them. They were going to be told they were wrong. The way they were living was wrong and God would judge. This is what they were to be told, and Jonah was to go and tell them this truth: God will judge you. And in judgment, God will destroy. This was the commission and Jonah had run away from it. Now he is there a changed man, he is told to do it! He must do the same thing, not added to, not taken from, not revised. God's purpose does not change.

Jonah also learned God's Word is powerful; regardless of the messenger. In this case the messenger was disobedient Jonah. Jonah was a man that walked away from God and went the other way. But now he was turned around, he was changed; and when he came to give the message, the Word of God was unchanged. When it was expressed, it was powerful.

We are reminded of Peter on the day of Pentecost. On that wonderful day when the Holy Spirit came to be in the hearts of the believers, they experienced that which became a great demonstration in the city of Jerusalem. Peter got up to preach, to explain, to interpret. Who was Peter? Among other things Peter was the man that denied his Lord, just a matter of days before. Peter, changed now by the grace of God, standing up declares the Word of God with such power that 3,000 people are converted and added to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Man will say what a marvelous man Peter was. But it was not that Peter was so wonderful. It was a demonstration of how powerful God's Word is. Power belongeth unto God, regardless of the messenger. Here is a wonderful thing. Although the messenger had been unfaithful, the Word was faithful. The message was true and powerful.

When Jonah delivered that message to Nineveh the people were profoundly affected. They all repented before God, from the king on down to all the people, in sackcloth and ashes. They mourned before God because of their evil deeds and repented because of their sins. We can rejoice in the power of the Word of God. We can rejoice as we read how those people changed their ways. God changed His plan and this shook Jonah. Jonah was troubled that God seemed to have changed His mind. He expected God to be faithful. He expected God to be permanent, that there would be no change in Him. Jonah had the message from God: "In forty days Nineveh shall be destroyed," and that was the message he had preached and that message was so powerful it affected the people. Now when the people changed, God did not destroy the city. And that upset Jonah. We, like Jonah, are to learn that God is quick to forgive.

We can praise His Name for this.

Another general truth that Jonah was to learn: God is compassionate. One is reminded of the wonderful words from the 103rd Psalm:

*"The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psalm 103:8-14).*

That is wonderful! God is compassionate. He is of great mercy and here is a very important thing to learn: the heart has reasons the mind knows nothing of. It is far more important to go by the heart than to go by my own thinking.

Another truth Jonah was to learn is God is not bound. Actually God is consistent and He is faithful. He may not perform His will in the same way each day. We do know however God cannot lie, and God is holy and just and true. He will not condone that which is sin, which is evil. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil. The one simple statement is made that God cannot lie. But when it comes to acting out His will, according as He pleases, nobody can draw up any pattern for God. There is no one who can lay out the ground rules by which God is going to have to move. There is no situation can happen or be developed; nothing and no one is ever out of the reach of His mercy. He can deal with us regardless of what we have done. Now Jonah needed to learn these things, and looking over his shoulder we can learn so much.

## What We Can Learn From Jonah

We are studying the book of Jonah in the Old Testament for spiritual guidance for us as Christians. The Old Testament was written for our sake. If anyone should gain the impression that the Old Testament is a series of historical documents that were written as a matter of history, he would be missing the whole truth of the Old Testament. Peter makes it clear:

*"Of which salvation the prophets" (they were Old Testament men) "have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you" (in the New Testament times) "searching" (those Old Testament men) "what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into" (1 Peter 1:10-12).*

Notice the word of the Apostle Paul as he writes to the Corinthians: "Now these things" (he has just been writing about the exodus of Israel referring to that Old Testament material), "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (1 Corinthians 10:6). Also: "Now all these things happened unto them for examples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11). Could it be any plainer than that?

These experiences happened to them for examples, and they were written up for us. Another passage, Romans 15:4 reads: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime (that is in Old Testament time) were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope". What can you have more than that? The Old Testament was written for us. I do not think a person can be very intelligent about studying the Bible and seeking the truth of Scripture and fail to study the Old Testament. Those things were written for us.

Jonah is such a book. It is included in the list of the Minor Prophets. A small book, but notice that this book is not about Nineveh. We are not told much beyond the fact that it was a wicked city. Nor is the book about Jonah. He was the principal character but there is no data about him as a person. The book of Jonah is about God and His dealing with His people and with His servant. Jonah can be taken as typical of any believer and Nineveh is typical of the unbeliever.

We can learn from the book of Jonah. First, God wants His message taken to Nineveh for God cares about Nineveh. Sometimes it is felt that those who preach about the Christian life have no interest in other people. Oh no! The truth of the matter is, we are involved in a great mission to other people. There is an unfinished job on the face of the earth. The Christians are to tell the world about Jesus Christ. That is our commission.

God cares about unbelievers. There are men, women and children over the world suffering from just living here. It is hard to live in this world. The frustration, the troubles, and the hurt, make life miserable and hard. God cares. He sent His Son to die for us. He sent His believers to go out and tell the message of salvation. It is an unfinished job that needs to be done. God cares about the unbelieving world.

Now it is just the nature of God that He cannot overlook their sin. He can take care of their sin. Christ Jesus died for them; for the sins of the whole world. This is the truth He wants the world to know. God had no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

He sent His Son into the world to become incarnate as the Son of God, Jesus of Nazareth, and in Him are all the promises of God "Yea and Amen." He is the express image of God. "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). God has revealed the truth in Jesus Christ and that message is to be taken to the ends of the earth.

*"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:19-20).*

That is what God wants done even to this day. The message of God's saving grace must be taken around the world and across the street. The glorious message should be taken into our homes and to our children.

God wants every human being on earth to be told that the ways of sin are abominable in His sight. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." But also they should be told that "whosoever will may come; whosoever cometh he will in no wise cast out."

It was a notorious thing that Israel accepted the status of God's chosen people and then they rejected their mission. They failed to tell anyone else. That never was intended. Jonah was an example of this. Jonah was sent out to a Gentile city.

Let us not be too critical of Israel of old times. Let us look at ourselves and the church of today. Those of us who are real believers rejoice in our church. One may feel his own denomination is probably the best one. It is an amazing thing how people gather in one congregation and shun all others.

God wants the message taken to the unbelieving, to the blind, the ignorant, the lame, the halt. They

could be saved. They could be healed. God is not pleased with our attitude, if we fail to do this. Sometimes my heart hurts when I listen to what is said in public today and the general common acceptance of the idea that times are different, times have changed and things that our forefathers would not permit, we allow today. This permissiveness – wait a minute! It is not up to man to decide what will and will not be alright. God is the Judge, and the Law of God is eternal: far more eternal than the stars in heaven. God has given you an idea of where He stands. People need to be told. They may not listen, but they need to be told.

This is one thing we can learn from Jonah. A message needs to go to Nineveh. And secondly, as in the case of Jonah, each believer's individual assignment will be given to him. By the word "given" I mean it will not be his own idea. No, the person will have his call from God. He wants us to work with Him. The person's response will be primarily a matter of obedience!

It is as though one were walking along the side of a canal and saw a four year old child stumble and fall into the water. Whose business is it to get the child out? Mine. Why? I was there. It is not my child. That does not make any difference. A child is drowning – that is my business! When the good Samaritan came along that road and saw that man in the ditch he did not know who he was. He did not know the man's name or his pedigree. That man was hurt. That man was in trouble and that man was the Samaritan's business. He went over and tended to it. Each person has a call from God. It is right there at my hand, and my commission is "whatsoever your hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might."

Next in Jonah it appears that disobedience brings chastisement. Even if the believer is unaware of what God wants him to do, he should be careful. God will stop him in his tracks. God is too faithful to let him go on with his foolishness.

It is surprising how easily a human being can miss the very things that he ought to be doing for God. God is faithful. He does not necessarily strike us dead. He has ways of bringing things to pass. In Jonah's case you remember He brought up the storm, had him cast into the sea. He brought up the fish, had him swallowed. He stopped Jonah in his tracks. Disobedience brings chastisement.

This is noted in Hebrews.

*"And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth" (Hebrews 12:5-6).*

This is something that can be learned from Jonah. In distress when a person is being chastised, the way to God through repentance is always open. A person can always come to God. Even if the person is at fault, he can turn to God. Even if a person is surrounded by distress and cannot see a way out; he can look up!

This is a marvelous truth. Praying should include praise, thanksgiving and committal. If one is in deep trouble, he can cry out to God and praise Him. Consider how great He is. Thank Him for what He has done. Trust Him. Commit himself for service. "I will from henceforth do His will." This should always be included in praying. Praying is never a matter of asking God for a great advantage so that one can go out and do as he pleases. In Christ, a person can be restored.

However, as in Jonah, the assignment may not be changed. If the believer failed to witness to his neighbor, he may need to go and talk to that neighbor. What of the parent who has ignored or neglected his children, failed to tell them about the Lord? A parent can humbly call on Him, and be set free. Now what? He should go, talk to his children. The assignment is not changed. That is what he was supposed



to do. Obedience can replace disobedience. One can be changed completely. "Once you were blind, now you can see."

The Word of God is powerful. Jonah told the people in Nineveh what God said, and they changed their way. And so it is with a believer's witness today. We should set it before the person. We should not take time to explain things. You don't know enough. Don't take time to justify it. You couldn't do it if you tried. Don't argue. If a person is not willing, you can't show him. Set out the truth before them. God can do it. The Holy Spirit can do it. His Word is powerful. Simply say it. Christ Jesus came into the world to seek and to save the lost. He is the Son of God who came to give His life a ransom for many. He died for others; He died for you. Tell them that. Tell them that you have a Living Lord in Heaven interceding on your behalf. Tell them of the exhilarating joy that comes from belonging to God and that you are going to Heaven.

I remember one of our farmer neighbors said to me, "Manford, I understand that you feel that you are sure you are going to Heaven." I said, "Yes sir!" He said, "What makes you so sure?" I said, "The Lord told me. I have it in His Word." Then he said, "You must think you are pretty good." When he said that, my blood ran cold. I said, "Oh, no. I'm not good. He is good." I remember how that man just looked at me. And then I tried to tell him. "I'm not any better than you are. It isn't because I think I am better than other people. It is because I think Christ Jesus is wonderful. 'Where sin abounds, grace does much more abound'." His Word is powerful. Tell it! God is quick to forgive.

Do not ever forget that when that wicked city of Nineveh repented, God forgave. That day, right then. The people were wrong. They confessed their sins. *Immediately*, God received them. At once He forgave them. God is quick to forgive.

God is meek, long suffering, patient with His willful servant. When you consider all He had done for Jonah, then Jonah criticized God for being kind to those Ninevites. To Jonah God seemed to change His mind. God never explained that to Jonah. God showed Jonah He cares about the lost. God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and to everlasting life. Praise the Lord!