

Jonah 4 “Learning from a Prophet Who Was Angry with God”<sup>\*\*1</sup>

Main Idea: In Jonah 4 the prophet Jonah became angry to the point of death two times, and in so doing presented us with a vivid portrayal of the tragedy of hoarding God. Since we too face this danger, this is an account to which we must give our utmost attention.

- I. We see Jonah’s anger when the Lord spared Nineveh (1-4).
  - A. Jonah lectured the Lord (1-3).
    1. He defended himself.
    2. He accused God of being too generous.
    3. He asked to die.
  - B. The Lord confronted Jonah about his anger (4).
    1. Our anger reveals what we think about ourselves.
    2. Our anger reveals what we think about God.
- II. We see Jonah’s anger when the Lord took away his shade (5-11).
  - A. Jonah acted like he was God (5).
  - B. The Lord showed Jonah that He is God (6-8).
    1. He provided a vine.
    2. He provided a worm.
    3. He provided a scorching wind.
  - C. Jonah said he wanted to die (8b).
  - D. The Lord again confronted Jonah about his anger (9-11).
    1. His values were mixed up.
    2. His view of the world was mixed up.
    3. His view of God was mixed up.

A Strange Ending: The book of Jonah forces us to take inventory...

1. What makes me angry?
2. What makes me happy?
3. What is my attitude towards the lost people of the world?
4. What needs to change so that my heart reflects our Father’s heart?

*Scripture Reading: James 1:19-25*

Anger is a revealer.

I remember a pastor telling me once that he was about to hire a staff person. The guy seemed impressive, very qualified. But before he finalized the decision, he invited the prospect to play some pick-up basketball. And he saw something on the court that you can’t see on a resume, and moved to another candidate.

You can tell a lot about a person by what makes them angry. Anger exposes a person’s desires. Of course, anger itself isn’t wrong, for anger is a God-given emotion. Ephesians 4:26 tells us, “Be angry and sin not.”

Most of the time, however, I get angry when things don’t go the way I want. I want a peaceful evening, but my kids have other ideas, so I blow up. I want recognition but the boss gives it to someone else, so I brood, which is the clam-up version of anger.

When do you get angry? If you’ll trace it back, you’ll see some desires fueling it.

Which brings us to today’s text, Jonah 4. I’ve entitled today’s message, “*Learning from a Prophet Who Was Angry with God.*” Like ours, Jonah’s anger was fueled by what he wanted. In short, He wanted exclusive rights to God. He was a hoarder of God.

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<sup>\*\*</sup>Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

<sup>1</sup> For an earlier development of this passage, see the Jonah series in 2007 at WBC.

What does God think about people who do that? He shows us in the book of Jonah. In Jonah 1 God told a prophet in Israel to go to the Assyrian city of Nineveh and preach against it. But Jonah didn't *want* "those people" to hear God's Word, so he went AWOL and sailed for Spain. The Lord, of course, didn't let him get away and used a great fish not only to bring Jonah back to land but also back to his senses. So in chapter 3 Jonah went to Nineveh, preached God's message, and saw the entire city turn from its evil and violence and call upon the Living God for mercy.

Now how would you expect a man of God to react if God just used him to initiate a moral and spiritual transformation of a city of 120,000+ people? In Jonah 4 we see Jonah's response to Nineveh's response, and it's quite shocking. The prophet became so angry with God that twice he said he wanted to die.

Brothers and sisters, we need this portion of God's Word, for we too are plagued with this ugly tendency to hoard God. Let's look at the two scenes, and then the implications.

#### I. We see Jonah's anger when the Lord spared Nineveh (1-4).

Verse 1—"But Jonah was greatly displeased [lit. 'it was bad to Jonah with a great badness']." To Jonah it was a *bad* thing that God spared Nineveh. Consequently, verse 1 says that Jonah "became angry." Angry? Yes, Jonah became angry. Literally, "it burned him."

Why in the world did Nineveh's repentance prompt Jonah to become angry? Some suggest it was because if his prophecy didn't come true, Jonah would be regarded as a false prophet (Deut. 18:21-22). I don't think that's the reason. For starters, Jeremiah 18:1-11 indicates that if a people repented at a prophet's prediction of destruction, God would not send the destruction.

Actually, Jonah *wanted* Nineveh to perish, and that's why he's ticked. Leslie Allen observes, "Jonah finds that the time-fuse does not work on the prophetic bomb he planted in Nineveh."<sup>2</sup> So he became angry. At God. And what did his anger cause Jonah to do?

Verse 2—"He prayed to the LORD." What follows is, on the surface, a prayer, but in reality it's a lecture.

**A. Jonah lectured the Lord (1-3).** Here's what he said, verses 2-3: 'O LORD, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.'"

Jonah vented three things to God...

1. *He defended himself.* Lord, here's why I didn't obey You in the first place. I knew what would happen if I went to Nineveh. I could see this whole mess coming.

Notice the pronouns in this ego-centric prayer. "I...I...I..." When we looked at Jonah's prayer in chapter 2 I raised the question as to whether Jonah truly repented. Granted, he asked God for help, but from what? Did he ask for deliverance from his sin? No, he didn't even admit he was wrong. He just didn't like the consequences of his sin, and he wanted out of that fish and back home in the Promised Land!

And what specifically is it that irritates Jonah about God? It's this...

2. *He accused God of being too generous.* He puts it bluntly in verse 2, "I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity."

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<sup>2</sup> Leslie Allen, p. 227.

Does that sound familiar? If you've read the rest of the Old Testament, it should. This description of God appears about ten other times, in Exodus 34:6-7; Numbers 14:18; Joel 2:13, etc. Jonah is basically citing a creed, a well known doctrinal statement about God. He's acknowledging that God is gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, loving, and willing to pardon sinners. But he's criticizing God for these attributes, particularly the last one, that He is "a God who relents from sending calamity."

You say, "I don't get it. Why is Jonah criticizing God for being those things?" The answer is that Jonah doesn't mind that God acts this way *towards him* and *towards his people*. But he doesn't want God to do the same *with those pagan Ninevites* because they *don't deserve it*.

Jonah's problem is that God is too indiscriminate in His exercise of mercy. He's too lenient. He's like an indulgent father who spares the rod and spoils the child. "You can't be soft with sinners, Lord," says Jonah. "You've got to punish sin, not overlook it."

Jonah's problem, of course, is that he has forgotten what grace is. Grace is *unmerited* favor. Jonah fails to remember how undeserving he was when God spared him.

3. *He asked to die.* Verse 3 again, "Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live." Jonah reminds us of Elijah in 1 Kings 19:4, who also prayed that he might die. "I have had enough, LORD," he said. "Take my life; I am no better than my ancestors." But, as Terrence Fretheim points out, "The difference between Jonah and Elijah is striking. Elijah was in despair over his *failure* to turn the hearts of the idolatrous people in Israel. Jonah was in despair over his *success*."<sup>3</sup>

Jesus told a parable about a man like Jonah, in Matthew 18. There was a servant who owed his master an enormous debt, one so large he could never repay it. Yet his master graciously cancelled his debt. Shortly thereafter, the forgiven servant turned around and demanded that a fellow servant pay back a smaller debt owed to him. When he didn't do so, the forgiven servant chose to throw his fellow servant in prison. He'd forgotten how much he'd been forgiven.

I read a story about an ambitious farmer. This fellow was unhappy about the yield of his crops, and heard of a highly recommended new seed corn. So he bought some and produced a crop that was so abundant his astonished neighbors asked him to sell them a portion of the new seed. But the farmer, afraid that he would lose his competitive advantage, refused.

The second year the new seed did not produce as good a crop, and when the third-year crop was still worse it dawned upon the farmer that his prize corn was being pollinated by the inferior grade of corn from his neighbors' fields.<sup>4</sup>

One of the sinful traits we inherited from Adam is our propensity to be selfish. Our parents didn't have to teach us how to be self-focused. It comes standard-equipment in the human package.

Frankly, hoarding is an ugly thing. Who likes to be around self-absorbed people? Yet the reality is, we all struggle with the tendency to *want*, to *get*, and to *cling*. We do it with the last piece of cake, the best seat at the ballgame, the television remote, the clothes we don't want our siblings to touch. And...we do it with *God*.

There are 7.47 billion people in the world today, and 3.15 billion of them live in unreached people groups with little or no access to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. According to Joshua Project, there are approximately 16800 unique people groups in the world with

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<sup>3</sup> Terence Fretheim, p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> C.R. Gibson, *Wellsprings of Wisdom*.

about 6900 of them considered unreached. The vast majority (95%) of these least reached groups exist in the 10/40 window and less than 10% of missionary work is done among these people.<sup>5</sup>

So while we celebrate the good news of Jesus Christ this morning, over 3 billion people do not. They don't celebrate it because they've never heard it. Ponder that number for a moment.

If you were to travel 3 billion miles, you could fly around the world 120,477 times or take a round trip to the moon 6,279 times.

If you had 3 billion dollars, you could buy 100,000 cars at \$30,000/each.

If you could live for 3 billion minutes, you would live until you were 5,708 years old.<sup>6</sup>

Friends, over 3 billion people have never heard a clear presentation of the hope-giving gospel message of Jesus Christ. They don't know what we know, that Jesus Christ died in the place of sinners, rose again from the dead, and that God offers forgiveness and eternal life to those who will believe in His Son.

But the question is this. How are we responding to this reality? What difference is it making in the way we raise our kids and spend our time and money and think about retirement? The sad fact is that we can *hoard God* and not even realize we're doing it.

So if you were God, how would you have responded to Jonah after he lectured you and asked to die? Jonah, you've got it!

But not God. Rather than incinerate His grace-hoarding prophet, the Lord proceeded to help him. And here's how He did it...

**B. The Lord confronted Jonah about his anger (4).** "But the LORD replied, 'Have you any right to be angry?'"

What a great question! God, of course, is the perfect counselor. Here He asks the perfect question for an angry, self-absorbed person, a question He will repeat in verse 9. It's worth noting that God probed angry Cain with a similar question back in Genesis 4. As the KJV puts it, "Doest thou well to be angry?"

The Lord doesn't ask the question for His sake. He's teaching something to Jonah, and to us, for our anger reveals two things.

1. *Our anger reveals what we think about ourselves.* When I'm watching the fourth quarter of an Ohio State football game, and the phone rings, and my wife says, "It's for you," and I become angry, my anger is revealing something in my heart. There's a thought lodged there that says, "This is *my* time. I've got a right to some uninterrupted leisure time, don't I?!"

And God asks, "Have you any right to be angry?"

Or I'm waiting in line at the bank, and somebody cuts in front of me and ties up the teller's time for what seems like ten minutes. I feel my anger beginning to churn. And what does my anger reveal concerning how I view myself? That I'm thinking, "Don't you realize who I am?! My time is important and you are wasting it!"

Again God asks, "Have you any right to be angry?"

The fact is, I get angry when I fail to see myself correctly, as a *steward*. This is *not* my world. It's not my time. It's not even my life. It's all from God and belongs to Him.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://globalfrontiermissions.org/gfm-101-missions-course/the-unreached-peoples-and-their-role-in-the-great-commission/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://researchmaniacs.com/Numbers/Billions/How-much-is-3-billion.html>

We tend to excuse our anger, “Well I’ve got a right to such and such!” But the Bible takes anger very seriously. Jesus said that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment, and anyone who says, “You fool!” will be in danger of hell (Matt. 5:22). Anger is serious business. Its presence reveals what we think, first of all, *about ourselves*.

But that’s not all. Fundamentally...

2. *Our anger reveals what we think about God.* Like a spoiled child who wants to keep his toys all to himself, Jonah can’t stand the thought of sharing God’s mercy with these Ninevites. That’s why he’s angry. “God belongs to me and my people,” thinks Jonah, “And you don’t deserve to have any part of Him!”

“Have you any right to be angry?” How did Jonah respond to God’s question? Here’s a shocker. He *didn’t*. He just ignored God and walked away. Yet his silence speaks loudly we can’t miss what he’s saying.

So ends anger scene number one. Jonah became angry because the Lord spared Nineveh.

## II. We see Jonah’s anger when the Lord took away his shade (5-11).

Verse 5—“Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city.”

What’s going on here? In short...

**A. Jonah acted like he was God (5).** The text says he set up camp on the *east* side of Nineveh. We can presume he approached the city from the west, preached his way through the city, and then exited on the east side. He there built a temporary dwelling place, and since timber was scarce in Mesopotamia, he probably used common, local materials, starting with stones and clay to form the walls. The roof would have been a challenge since any decent size branch would have been confiscated already by the Ninevites for firewood. We can also presume that Jonah built the roof out of the leftover spindly brush. In other words, this shelter didn’t have much of a roof on it to protect Jonah from the blazing sun. That point will become significant in a moment.

So having finished his building project, Jonah took a seat, looked over the city, and waited. He’s trying to force God’s hand into doing the just thing, the *right* thing. “He still hoped that he might be able to witness a Sodom-Gomorrah style destruction,” says Douglass Stuart.<sup>7</sup>

Listen to the following words. Who said them, and when?

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven; we have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity; we have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us, and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us.<sup>8</sup>

Abraham Lincoln said that in 1863, as he proclaimed a day of national humiliation, fasting, and prayer. We’re in serious trouble when we, as Lincoln put it, “vainly imagine,

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<sup>7</sup> Douglass Stuart, p. 504.

<sup>8</sup> A. Lincoln, Proclamation of a day of National Humiliation, Fasting and Prayer, 1863.

in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own.”

In a sense, that’s what Jonah did (and Jonah just represents what the nation of Israel was doing). He acted like he was God. In response...

**B. The Lord showed Jonah that He is God (6-8).** And He used three visual aids to get His lesson across to His pouting pupil. First...

1. *He provided a vine.* Verse 6—“Then the LORD God provided a vine [KJV ‘gourd’] and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort...” Scholars suggest it was the ricinus or castor oil plant. In hot climates this plant grows like a tree, reaching to over twelve feet, with palmate leaves that provide ample shade.

Notice God’s intent in providing the vine, to “give shade” to Jonah and thereby “ease his discomfort.” That’s amazing. Jonah put himself in this ‘uncomfortable’ situation. He challenged God. He foolishly chose to build this insufficient hut and expose himself to the life-sapping rays of the sun.

We have a saying for how to handle people who do foolish things like that. “He made his bed. Let him sleep in it.”

Yet God didn’t follow our saying, did He? In fact, the Hebrew word for “discomfort” in verse 6 is the same word back in 3:10 translated “destruction.” There God shielded the Ninevites from the *destruction* they deserved, and here He shielded Jonah from his *discomfort*, which ironically he also deserved. In both cases God chose to help the undeserving.

Notice Jonah’s reaction at the end of verse 6, “And Jonah was very happy about the vine.” The text is quite descriptive. Jonah wasn’t just happy. He was ecstatic! Quite a man of extremes, isn’t he? He’s ready to die one minute, and singing the praises of a gourd the next.

But God’s not done. He used a second visual aid to teach Jonah who is God.

2. *He provided a worm.* Verse 7—“But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered.” In chapter one God used a huge fish, and here it’s a tiny worm. The Creator God has infinite resources to accomplish His purposes.

By the way, notice the shift from the divine name “LORD” to “God” (Elohim). Until now in the book Elohim is the name used in God’s dealings with Nineveh. Now it’s used in connection with Jonah, as another subtle reminder that Jonah has more in common with the Ninevites than he wants to admit.

Then came a third visual aid.

3. *He provided a scorching wind.* Verse 8a—“When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah’s head so that he grew faint.”

In the hot season, the temperature in Mesopotamia reaches 110 degrees Fahrenheit.<sup>9</sup> It gets even more unbearable when a sirocco hits, a dust-laden, furnace-like blast of heat that parches the body.

When a severe wind-storm hits the Middle East, everyone takes off to find shelter. “But,” as H. L. Ellison observes, “for Jonah there was no shelter, unless he was willing to reenter Nineveh.” Jonah’s make-shift shelter can’t protect him, and he’s not about to go back into the city he wants demolished. His only remaining option?

Death. Yes...

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<sup>9</sup> H. L. Ellison, p. 387.

**C. Jonah said he wanted to die (8b).** “He wanted to die, and said, ‘It would be better for me to die than to live.’”

As Leslie Allen puts it, “The shoe Jonah wanted Nineveh to wear was on his foot now, and it pinched.”<sup>10</sup> The irony is that Jonah believes he is suffering for a just cause. He doesn’t even begin to grasp how foolish he looks sitting in that shelter. He’s on a mission to hold God accountable to do what God is *supposed* to do, incinerate this wicked city. Jonah still doesn’t have a clue that he’s in the wrong, that his prideful attitude is offensive to God and destructive to himself.

This is the third time in the book Jonah wanted to die. Why does he want to die? Because he’s fed up with life. That’s what he would tell you. But that’s not the real reason, the root reason. Jonah’s problem isn’t life. It’s not what’s going on around him. It’s what’s going on *inside him*. And that’s why...

**D. The Lord again confronted Jonah about his anger (9-11).** “But God said to Jonah, ‘Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?’”

According to God, Jonah has an anger problem. And his anger problem is rooted in a more fundamental heart problem.

Too often we miss it. We think that the man who flies off the handle and slaps children has an anger problem, and he certainly does. But so do the Jonah-types, according to God.

Again, anger itself isn’t sin. But anger quickly becomes sin when it’s fueled by selfish desires. Like the rage-filled woman I saw recently screaming at her kids in the store. That’s sinful anger.

But blowing up is only one manifestation of sinful anger. So is sulking, and running from problems, and blame-shifting, and wishing God would burn a city to smithereens.

In response to God’s question, “Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?” listen to Jonah. “‘I do,’ he said. ‘I am angry enough to die.’” Jonah sounds like a pouting three-year-old, doesn’t he?

I can still remember a scene from over forty years ago. Our family was vacationing and staying with another family. There was a little boy in that family who came to breakfast and was not pleased by the food options his mother put on the table.

“I want bacon!” he insisted.

His mother tried to pacify him. “Honey, you can eat this instead.”

He just got louder. “I want bacon! I want bacon!!”

And his mother couldn’t hide her frustration. She didn’t seem to know what to do with her son who was ruining the pleasant experience for everybody.

I was only a kid myself, but I had a pretty good idea what might help.

Now answer this. Why would a six year old boy erupt over what he *didn’t get to eat* rather than being grateful for what he did have? What did his anger reveal? It reveals a very fundamental problem, a heart problem, and it doesn’t go away when we grow up. That’s why a 16-year-old will blow up at his parents for failing to give him a new car, like “everybody else’s parents do.” It’s also why a 46-year-old breaks a vow he made to his wife, insisting, “I deserve a better wife that will make happy.” It’s also why a 66-year-old breaks a vow he made to the Lord and drops out of church, asserting, “I deserve a better church.”

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<sup>10</sup> Leslie Allen, p. 233.

This is the universal problem, my friend. It's called *sin*. Our problem isn't merely that we do wrong things. It goes much deeper. Our problem is that we are enslaved to our own desires, both sinful desires but also desires for legitimate things.

That's why "anger management" classes miss the mark. They're too superficial. If you want to get your anger under control, you need someone who can transform your heart and break your enslavement to your self-promoting heart.

And that, of course, is yet another reason why you and I need Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ died on a cross, not only to pay the penalty for sin, but also to set the sinner free from his bondage, not just from sinful expressions, but from his bondage *to himself*.

That's what Jonah's problem was, and that's what God has been seeking to help angry Jonah overcome throughout this book. And now He comes to the punchline.

Verses 10-11—"But the LORD said, 'You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?'"

You see, Jonah, like every other sinner, was a slave to himself. And it showed up in three concrete ways.

1. *His values were mixed up.* Look at Jonah. What makes him *happy* and *sad* are turned around. The thought of God destroying a city makes him happy. God spares that city, and he's sad. God gives him a vine, and he's hilariously happy. God kills the vine, and he says he wants to die. Jonah's problem? His values were all mixed up.

2. *His view of the world was mixed up.* Take a good look at the average world-map printed in America. What's at center of the map? It's not China, for sure. Why is it we think the world revolves around us?

In Jonah's map, Israel was center-stage. He didn't even have a place for Nineveh. "It can burn as far as I'm concerned," was Jonah's sentiment. And thirdly...

3. *His view of God was mixed up.* "He's *our* God, and as long as He makes life good *for us*, who cares what happens to the rest of the world?"

The answer to that question is, *God cares*. "I care about Nineveh, Jonah. I know they are sinners, and I know that better than you do. But I care about the 120,000 people who are perishing in ignorance there."

And notice God's reference to the cattle. The point isn't that animals have the same intrinsic worth as humans (sorry animal lovers!). Rather, it's this, as Douglass Stuart explains, "God would have every right to spare Nineveh...if only because of the dumb animals in it! They *alone* would be worth more by any accounting than was the gourd Jonah had become so attached to. If it was unfair in Jonah's thinking that the poor innocent gourd should die, how could he relish the death of countless cattle just because it was Assyrians who happened to be their owners?"<sup>11</sup>

And so the book ends. What happened to Jonah? Did he get the point? Did he deal with his anger problem? Did he confess his sins of pride and prejudice? Did God's concerns become his concerns?

We're not told. And that's intentional.

### A Strange Ending: The book of Jonah forces us to take inventory...

It behooves us to ask ourselves four questions.

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<sup>11</sup> Douglass Stuart, p. 508.

1. *What makes me angry?* Most of us became angry in the past week. But the question is, “Over what?” We’ve got a problem, beloved, when we get irate over having to spend an extra sixty seconds in a line at the bank, when the fact that our unsaved neighbors are heading for eternal torment in hell doesn’t even seem to phase us. The next time we get angry, we need to ask ourselves what it reveals about us.

2. *What makes me happy?* The answer to this question, as with the previous one, says tons to me about the condition of my heart. Jonah was the instrument God used to bring pardon to 120,000 people, and yet that didn’t make him happy. Conversely, a fast-growing vine thrilled him to pieces. Indeed, you can tell a lot about the condition of your soul by what makes you happy.

Leo Tolstoy once wrote a story about a successful peasant farmer who was not satisfied with his lot. He wanted more of everything. One day he received a novel offer. For 1000 rubles, he could buy all the land he could walk around in a day. The only catch in the deal was that he had to be back at his starting point by sundown.

Early the next morning he started out walking at a fast pace. By midday he was very tired, but he kept going, covering more and more ground. Well into the afternoon he realized that his greed had taken him far from the starting point. He quickened his pace and as the sun began to sink low in the sky, he began to run, knowing that if he did not make it back by sundown the opportunity to become an even bigger landholder would be lost. As the sun began to sink below the horizon he came within sight of the finish line. Gasping for breath, his heart pounding, he called upon every bit of strength left in his body and staggered across the line just before the sun disappeared. He immediately collapsed, blood streaming from his mouth. In a few minutes he was dead.

Afterwards, his servants dug a grave. It was not much over six feet long and three feet wide. The title of Tolstoy's story was: *How Much Land Does a Man Need?*<sup>12</sup>

3. *What is my attitude towards the lost people of the world?* Last time I mentioned that there are 3,400 cities in today’s world in excess of 100,000 inhabitants, such as Aachen, Aba, Abaeteluba, Abakan, Abeokuta, Aberdeen, Abijan, Abiko, Abilene,...<sup>13</sup>

The book of Jonah makes it clear that God sees the cities. Do we? Do we *see* the teeming masses of lost people? Furthermore, what’s our attitude towards them? What are we doing to take the precious message of Jesus Christ to the perishing multitudes with whom we share planet earth?

4. *What needs to change so that my heart reflects our Father’s heart?* “I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love,” said Jonah to God. And He is. Do those words describe us: gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, loving? What needs to change so that we more accurately reflect Him?

*Rescue the Perishing (#299)*

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<sup>12</sup> *Bits & Pieces*, November, 1991.

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.travelgis.com/default.asp?framesrc=/cities>