

BEAUTIFUL WORDS SAID BY AN ANGRY MAN (Jonah 4:2)

1. God is gracious (Jonah 4:2).

- a. One of the common misconceptions about the Old Testament's view of God and His attributes is that there is no grace in the Old Testament.
 - i. People will cite John 1:17.
 - ii. When they do so, they are showing their ignorance of God and His word.
 - iii. Genesis 6:8 shows God's grace.
 - iv. The verse before us does as well.
- b. The word translated gracious is defined as an expression "of His free and tender affection to those who have no merit or deserving, on whom God bestows freely the tokens of His love and pity, pardon their sin, and mercifully effects their deliverance from punishment or affliction".
- c. Jonah is saying that he knew God was a God of grace.
 - i. Remember who God spared: an enemy of Israel and a violent people.
 - ii. Jonah knew that God would graciously do what He said He would do despite the past sins of the Ninevites.
- d. Even in the Old Testament, God is pictured as being full of grace.
 - i. God didn't have to offer pardon to the people of Nineveh.
 - ii. They definitely had done nothing to deserve it, but He extended His grace to them despite that fact.
- e. May we ever be thankful for the fact that God is full of grace.
 - i. You and I don't deserve to be saved in the sense that we have done nothing to earn it.
 - ii. God extends His grace to us so that we can be saved (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- f. For the Ninevites to enjoy God's gracious offer, they had to repent, which they did.
- g. For us to enjoy God's grace, we have to access it by faithful obedience to God (Romans 5:1-2).

2. God is merciful.

- a. The word translated merciful carries the idea of tender love, compassion on someone.
- b. It is God seeing man in a terrible state and reaching out to man, not out of anything the man has done, but because the need of man is great.
 - i. God saw a city with more than 120,000 children in it that was headed for destruction (Jonah 4:11).
 - ii. In forty more days, they would have been destroyed (Jonah 3:4).
- c. God could have allowed them to be killed and the city destroyed but He was merciful to those in the city.
- d. God gave them what they needed, not what they deserved.
- e. God does the same for us today (Titus 3:5).
- f. The same passage that describes us being saved by God's grace also describes God's mercy (Ephesians 2:4).
 - i. God is rich in mercy.
 - ii. God does not simply bestow a small amount but more than we've ever

asked.

iii. Alexander the Great one day received a friend asking for money. The man asked for ten talents, but Alexander had fifty delivered to him. When the man returned and said that ten would be sufficient, Alexander replied: "Ten are sufficient for you to take, but not for me to give."

iv. This is the way it is with God's mercy.

g. The publican smote his chest and prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner".

h. That same prayer should be on our lips.

3. God is slow to anger (Jonah 4:2).

a. What a wonderful attribute for God to have.

i. Aren't you thankful that God does not burn hot at us every time we mess up in life?

ii. Surely we can see where He would have the right to do so.

b. Habakkuk said of God that God was of purer eyes than to behold sin (Habakkuk 1:13).

c. Think of all the times we have sinned and how God could have struck us down.

i. Jonah knew the sins of Nineveh, the whole world knew.

ii. They were an idolatrous people who were given to extreme cruelty.

iii. This was the nation that is credited with inventing crucifixion.

iv. If anyone deserved God's swift justice, this country did.

v. Despite that, God was merciful to this city because He is longsuffering.

d. God allowed His people to suffer in Egypt for over 400 years because the "iniquity of Amorites" was not complete (Genesis 15:16).

i. They were not so sinful yet as to deserve destruction.

ii. God was giving them an opportunity to repent, though we know they did not take it.

e. Our God is longsuffering, which is the meaning of this Hebrew phrase, and gives us opportunity to come to Him (2 Peter 3:9).

f. Have you ever watched a mother with her toddler who is having a bad time?

i. I am amazed at the patience of a good mother.

ii. She will gently deal with each emotional outburst or action that isn't what it should be.

iii. She could just blow up, but she is longsuffering.

g. God is that way with us.

i. We sin and we do stupid things.

ii. God patiently sees us through and desires for us to be right with Him.

h. Sometimes we hear men pray, and rightly so, for God to give people time and opportunity to obey the gospel or to come back home spiritually.

i. To what are they appealing in God with this prayer?

ii. We know they are appealing to His longsuffering.

4. God is of great kindness.

a. The Ninevites had been the recipients of the full flow of God's natural affection for His creation.

i. "Kindness" carries the meaning of full flow of natural affection.

ii. God created them, and despite their sinfulness, God had affection for them.

- b. Natural affection is the love of a parent for a child.
 - i. It should come naturally.
 - ii. Paul talked about the sinfulness of the Gentile world in Romans 1.
 - iii. One of the sins he listed was “without natural affection”.
 - iv. The sins Paul was listing went back centuries and were why God had chosen Abraham, and the Jewish race, to bring in the Messiah.
 - v. Sacrificing children to idols, throwing out unwanted baby girls, and other such similar deeds showed a lack of natural affection.
- c. God loves all His creation, even those in sin.
 - i. He wants all men to be saved by coming to a knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4).
 - ii. As we noticed in 2 Peter 3:9, God wants no one to be lost.
 - iii. A long time ago, God told Ezekiel that He took no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11).
- d. God wants us to be saved today and that is why He wants everyone to repent (Acts 17:30).
- e. God has a natural affection for all mankind because He created them (Genesis 1:27-28).
 - i. You look at what He has provided for all men.
 - ii. He gives great gifts even today through His providence to those in sin.
 - iii. He wants no one to die lost so He has made a way for them to live with Him.
 - iv. Sadly, not all His creation has the affection for Him that He rightfully deserves.

5. God is repentant of the evil.

- a. This in no way is implying that God is sinful.
 - i. The evil here is the harm that He was going to bring to Nineveh.
 - ii. The repenting is the change of heart God had because of their repentance.
- b. Jonah knew that if they repented God would relent from destroying them and that made Jonah angry.
- c. He felt that they deserved the punishment that was coming in forty days if they didn't repent, whether they repented or not.
- d. Again, not wanting to destroy people who would be lost for eternity, God changed His mind of what would happen to them because of their reaction to the preaching of Jonah.
- e. One thing we need to understand is that God won't change His mind if people remain in sin.
 - i. These attributes of God are found in Exodus 20 as well as Numbers 34:6.
 - ii. Notice, though, Numbers 34:7.
 - iii. God will not change His mind if people are guilty.
 - iv. He is a just God who will do what is right every time.