

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

What Jonah grumbled in reproachful anger—“I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster”—I shout with a heart of joy! How glad I am to worship a God who reaches out to the lost and calls them to repentance. You had pity on Nineveh, that great city, and you also had pity on me. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

Today in Your Word

Today you told me about Jonah’s journey to the Assyrian city of Nineveh and Amos’ prophecy to Israel. The story of Jonah begins with him rebelling against your will, but it’s not until the end of the book that we learn what motivated him to flee to Tarshish. It was because *he knew that you were merciful* (Jon 4:2). Jonah was afraid the Assyrians would repent and you would forgive them. Thus it was no accident that you chose Jonah to be your messenger. You knew he hated the Assyrians, and you deliberately called him in order to expose his sinful attitude. This teaches me that your call on my life will bring me face to face with the true condition of my heart. If I find myself wanting to run away, it’s a sure sign that my will is not surrendered to you. Jonah did his best to get as far away from Nineveh as he could, but you brought him right back to where he started. I’m encouraged by your severe mercy to Jonah, for I never want you to let me go my own way! Please do whatever it takes for me to be humbled under your mighty hand! Jonah preached your message to Nineveh, and sure enough, the Assyrians repented. Jonah was furious. Everything he feared had come to pass. He fretted and fumed outside the city, and you finally had to use a plant to teach him an important lesson about love. The book of Amos begins with a series of oracles (prophetic statements of judgment) against eight nations. The first six were the pagan neighbors of Judah and Israel, and I can see Amos’ listeners nodding their heads in excitement as they heard of your coming judgment. But then Amos spoke out against Israel and Judah—what a shock that must have been! He condemned the Jews right along with the idolatrous Moabites and Edomites! Amos’ point is just as true today. Sin is sin, no matter who commits it, and everyone will be held accountable for their actions (cf. Rom 2:6–11).

Reflection

The question you asked Jonah comes down the ages to me: ‘Do you share my love for a lost and dying world?’ What will my answer be? Do I care enough about my fellow man to reach out in love and share the gospel?

Request

Father, give me a burden for the lost and a concern for those who have gone astray. Stir my heart to truly love the world around me, and may my light shine for you in the darkness of a wicked and perverse generation.

Thanksgiving

Thank you for caring enough to confront me with the truth. I’m grateful for your shepherd’s staff that reaches out to restrain me when I wander away from you. Keep me always by your side!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “[All Because We Do Not Love Them](#)” – Daniel O. Teasley.

Meditation Verse: Jonah 4:11.