



Rebel Without a Clue: “I Have a Question For You”
The Sermon Study Guide
Jonah 4:1-11
February 7, 2010
Fifth Sunday After Epiphany

Opening Scripture

From the rising of the sun to its setting my Name shall be great among the nations, and in every place incense shall be offered to my Name, and a pure offering; for my Name shall be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts (Malachi 1:11).

Opening Prayer

Leader The Lord be with you.
People And also with you.
Leader Let us pray.

Almighty God, you have built your Church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone: Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple acceptable to you; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Reflecting on the Passage: Jonah 4

1. What do we learn in this passage about Jonah’s actions in chapter 1?
2. How would you characterize Jonah’s response to God at the beginning of the chapter (4:1-3)? What would cause a man to have that kind of response?
3. God provides an object lesson for Jonah (4:6-8). What is the lesson and what is God trying to convey to Jonah through this lesson? What is Jonah’s response initially . . . and then later after the worm destroys the plant? What do you think is going on with Jonah?
4. God asks Jonah the same question twice (4:4; 4:9). How is Jonah’s response different between the two? Why do you think they are different? What was God looking for in asking this question two times to Jonah?

5. Timeline Puzzle

- a. Does verse 5 seem out of place at all? Think about the timeline. We know about five different events that occur between the end of chapter 3 through chapter 4:
 1. God shows compassion and does not judge Nineveh (3:10)
 2. Jonah gets very angry the first time (4:1)
 3. Jonah goes out on a mountain and makes a makeshift shelter and waits (4:5 . . . what is he waiting for?)
 4. God gives Jonah an object lesson (4:6-8)
 5. Jonah gets angry again (4:8)

- b. The question is: “When did Jonah go out and sit on the side of the mountain?” Consider the following:
 - i. How long did Jonah preach (3:3)?
 - ii. How many days would have to pass before Jonah knew for sure that God would not judge Nineveh (3:4)?
 - iii. What was Jonah doing during those days if the preaching was over?

- c. What if verse 5 is a flashback? Then where would it fit? Try putting the 5 events in the most logical order. What does this scene then look like? What does that further tell you about Jonah?

Reflection #1

“It’s good that God is so bad at math”

Father David spent time reflecting on God’s math skills and coming to the conclusion that God is truly atrocious at mathematics. He showed us a number of examples where God’s math and economic decisions should be questioned (Matt 20:1-16; 26:7; Luke 15:4; 21:3). Yet, unlike school, Father David said that God’s bad math is an amazing thing for us.

Going Deeper

1. In the passages cited above, why might we consider what happens as bad math?
2. How can that bad math be such a good thing for us?
3. Consider the following two passages: 2 Cor 5:16-21 and Romans 6:23. When you think about your own life, how are these two passages encouraging? How might these two passage impact our love for God and desire to serve God?

Scripture meditation

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Reflection #2

“The Movement To Grace”

Father David shared his personal story of learning about grace out of Ephesians 2 that so impacted his life he has not been the same since. For 30 years he tried to be good. This led eventually to pride, which in turn led to a sense of entitlement as if God owed him. When things did not turn out the way Father David wanted it finally led to resentment and even to disappointment with God. This sequence of events is one that so many can relate to. It is a journey that never ends well because it started off from the wrong place. For Father David, he came to realize grace in a whole new way that profoundly changed his pattern of living the Christian life. His movement to grace changed everything and broke this terrible cycle of . . .

Good . . . Pride . . . Entitlement . . . Resentment . . . Disappointment with God

Going Deeper

1. Have you experienced this cycle in your life or something similar?
2. Why do we want to do so much on our own? Why do we ever think that it is all about doing good and lose sight of the grace of God?
3. Have you had a similar experience to Father David where you came to deeply understand the grace of God in your life?
4. How might embracing God’s amazing grace be able to utterly transform the areas of our lives where we live in rebellion to God?

Scripture Reflection

1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by^[a] the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? 5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith— 6 just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? (Gal 3:1-6)

Reflection #3

“The Overwhelming Love of God to all people . . . And NONE deserve it”

God is trying to teach Jonah not only about his amazing grace, but also about his great love that comes from his great grace. Father David quoted a sermon by Bob Glenn, where Bob said: “Until you are outraged by God’s love you will never think it is outrageous; until you are offended by his love, you will never be overwhelmed by it”¹ God’s love is so vast that nothing we ever do can overcome it, and it stretches to people and situations that we may think are beyond love, but we find God is there.

Going Deeper

1. In what ways have you experienced the depths of God’s love? In what circumstances? What was it like? How did it make a difference in your life?
2. Has God’s love ever offended you? Explain.
3. How might understanding and experiencing God’s love in our lives shape our view of others? How might it impact our own desire to share Christ with others?

Scripture Reflection

14For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, **15**from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, **16**that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17**so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, **18**may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, **19**and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:14-19).

¹ <http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justintaylor/2010/01/22/gods-outrageous-love>

Closing Prayer

The General Thanksgiving

Almighty God, Father of all mercies,
we your unworthy servants give you humble thanks
for all your goodness and loving-kindness
to us and to all whom you have made.
We bless you for our creation, preservation,
and all the blessings of this life;
but above all for your immeasurable love
in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ;
for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory.
And, we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies,
that with truly thankful hearts we may show forth your praise,
not only with our lips, but in our lives,
by giving up ourselves to your service,
and by walking before you
in holiness and righteousness all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord,
to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit,
be honor and glory throughout all ages. Amen

(Please offer your own prayers and supplications here.)

Leader: Let us bless the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all ever. Amen. *2 Corinthians 13:14*

Amen.