

PLANTS OR PEOPLE? Jonah 4:5-11

What Did Jonah Love? Jonah 4:5-8

Jonah 4:6 – *“And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant.”*

- Jonah becomes a spectator outside the city (4:5)
- God appointed: a plant (4:6); a worm (4:7); a scorching east wind (4:8) and a fish (1:17)
- Jonah was “extremely happy” - in Hebrew, the word can also mean praising out loud; joyful; merry (4:6)
- When the plant died Jonah wanted to die (4:7-8)

What Does God Love? Jonah 4:9-11

Jonah 4:11 – *“Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between their right and left hand, as well as many animals?”*

- God’s Divine Conversation with Jonah (4:9)
- You (Jonah) have compassion for the plant (4:10)
- I (God) have compassion for people (4:11)
 - Hebrew word for Compassion: “Grieve, Weep, Heartbroken”
- God weeps, grieves and is brokenhearted for lost people
- God loves people not because of their goodness, but because of His goodness (4:11)
 - Romans 5:8

We Should Love What God Loves Jonah 4:11

- God loves the nations and people groups of our world (John 3:16-17)
- God loves to be generous and loves generous givers (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- God loves righteousness (Psalm 11:7)

Digging Deeper + LifeGroup Discussion:

Hound of Heaven is a 182-line poem written by English poet Francis Thompson, first published in 1893. It was a poem loved by great British writers like GK Chesterton ("Father Brown Mysteries") and JRR Tolkien ("Lord of the Rings") and British theologian, John Stott. Stott uses the poem title "Hound of Heaven" as the first chapter of his book, "Why I am a Christian." Stott writes, "It is a striking expression invented by Francis Thompson. Thompson spent a lonely and loveless childhood, and failed successively in his attempts to become a Roman Catholic priest, a doctor (like his father) and a soldier. He ended up lost in London until a Christian couple recognized his poetic genius and rescued him. Throughout these years he was conscious of both pursuing (God) and being pursued (by God), and expressed it most eloquently in his poem." Here is its beginning:

"Hound of Heaven" by Francis Thompson

I fled Him, down the nights and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter.
Up vistaed hopes I sped;
And shot, precipitated,
Adown Titanic glooms of chasmèd fears,
From those strong Feet that followed, followed after.

But with unhurrying chase,
And unperturbèd pace,
Deliberate speed, majestic instancy,
They beat—and a Voice beat
More instant than the Feet—
'All things betray thee, who betrayest Me.'
'All which I took from thee I did but take,
Not for thy harms,
But just that thou might'st seek it in My arms ...
Rise, clasp My hand, and come!'

LifeGroup Q's:

Q1: God loves lost people. We like Jonah often love our comforts ("plants") more than people. Why do we struggle to love people more than our own comforts?

Q2: Tell your story of being pursued by Jesus aka "The Hound of Heaven." How does reminding yourself of how God rescued you from sin and death, give you a greater heart to love lost people in your neighborhood and the nations?

Q3: What are some action steps you can take this week to love people and point them towards Jesus?

In Response:

COMMUNION: Communion is a "meal" for believers in Jesus to help us give thanks and remember His death on the cross for the forgiveness of sins. The matzah bread represents the body of Christ given for us. The cup of juice represents the blood of Christ that was shed to pay the price for our sins. We are called to examine ourselves before taking communion (1 Corinthians 11:23-34). We typically pass communion elements the first Sunday of the month. Most other weeks, communion is available at tables around the room after the sermon.

PRAYER POINTS: These locations at the front right and left of the Worship Center will have people available to pray with you after the sermon and after the service as well.