



When God Isn't Fair

Jonah 4

This change of plans upset Jonah, and he became very angry. So he complained to the Lord about it: "Didn't I say before I left home that you would do this, Lord? That is why I ran away to Tarshish! I knew that you were a gracious and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. I knew how easily you could cancel your plans for destroying these people. Just kill me now, Lord! I'd rather be dead than alive because nothing I predicted is going to happen."

The Lord replied, "Is it right for you to be angry about this?"

Then Jonah went out to the east side of the city and made a shelter to sit under as he waited to see if anything would happen to the city. And the Lord God arranged for a leafy plant to grow there, and soon it spread its broad leaves over Jonah's head, shading him from the sun. This eased some of his discomfort, and Jonah was very grateful for the plant.

But God also prepared a worm! The next morning at dawn the worm ate through the stem of the plant, so that it soon died and withered away. And as the sun grew hot, God sent a scorching east wind to blow on Jonah. The sun beat down on his head until he grew faint and wished to die. "Death is certainly better than this!" he exclaimed.

Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?"

"Yes," Jonah retorted, "even angry enough to die!"

Then the Lord said, "You feel sorry about the plant, though you did nothing to put it there. And a plant is only, at best, short lived. But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, not to mention all the animals. Shouldn't I feel sorry for such a great city?"

When God Seems Unfair

1. I _____ "Jonah became very angry. So he complained" (4:1,2)
2. I _____ "Just kill me now, Lord! I'd rather be dead...because nothing I predicted is going to happen" (4:3)
3. I _____ "Then Jonah went out and...waited to see if anything would happen to the city" (4:5)

When I complain God asks:

"Is it right for you to be angry about this?" (Jonah 4:4)

"Where'd you get the idea I would make _____?"

"Here on earth **you will have many trials and sorrows**. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)

"Do you have the perspective to know _____?"

"You feel sorry about the plant... But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness...Shouldn't I feel sorry for such a great city?" (4:10-11)

"Your life isn't a competition, but a mission. On your mission you'll experience _____."

"don't be surprised at the fiery trials you are going through, as if something strange were happening to you. Instead, be very glad—because these trials will make you partners with Christ in his suffering, and afterward you will have the wonderful joy of sharing his glory when it is displayed to all the world." (1 Peter 4:13,14)

"Brokenness is the place where I fill you with _____."

"(God) said, 'My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness.' So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me."
(2 Corinthians 12:9-10)

"We can rejoice, too, when we run into problems and trials, for we know that **they are good for us**—they help us learn to endure. And endurance develops strength of character in us, and character strengthens our confident expectation of salvation." (Romans 5:3-4)

"So do you want "fair" or do you want grace?"

"I knew that you were a gracious and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love." (Jonah 4:2)

"_____ your broken heart."

"My suffering is bitter beyond words. I will never forget this awful time, as I grieve over my loss. Yet I still dare to hope when I remember this: **The unfailing love of the Lord never ends!**...**Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each day...** The Lord is **my inheritance; therefore, I will hope in him!**" (Lamentations 3:19-24)

"Even though the fig trees have no blossoms, and there are no grapes on the vine; even though the olive crop fails, and the fields lie empty and barren; even though the flocks die in the fields, and the cattle barns are empty, **yet I will rejoice in the Lord! I will be joyful in the God of my salvation...**" (Habakkuk 3:17-19)