



GOD SHOWS HIS TRUE HEART

Week #13; Nov. 23, 2025



Presented by:
Solid Bread Community
Fort Collins, CO
www.solidbreadcommunity.com

Review:

- Today is our last lesson in the book of Jonah. This series has been an inspiring, revealing, practical (and at times, uncomfortable) study.
- It's been all those things at once because Jonah is so much like each one of us, and we don't always welcome an honest look in the mirror. The book of Jonah makes us do that.
- We've learned about Jonah - - and we've learned about God. In the process, we've learned God is sovereign and compassionate while we constantly struggle in our vices and sins.
- For example, last week, we saw God asked Jonah a very probing question, "*Have you any right to be angry?*" Jonah did not reply.
- Instead, Jonah demonstrated by his actions that he still hoped for Nineveh's destruction. Despite God's display of compassion, Jonah still wanted God's wrath.
- (And so) Jonah finds a vantage point near the city, and he builds himself a shelter so he can watch to see what happens to Nineveh.
- Since Jonah didn't respond to God's question, God then provides a series of object lessons. But predictably, Jonah slips back into his old habits of self-centeredness.
- It's a valuable observation up to this point in the story. Jonah had done what God had commanded him to do, and he'd said what God wanted him to say. He'd gone WHERE God wanted him to go.
- But Jonah had done **the right things the wrong way**. He'd done it all very reluctantly.
- God showed His grace and mercy to Nineveh, but that had nothing to do with Jonah – it had everything to do with God.
- And so, Jonah seems quite unchanged, and this book ends more or less the same way as it began, with Jonah being rebellious and upset.
- In between the start and the end, we saw that Jonah knew God was a God of mercy and grace. He had come to his senses inside the great fish.
- But Jonah became angry when God showed that mercy and grace to others that Jonah felt did not deserve it.
- Jonah also became angry when God interrupted his own personal comfort zone.

- We learned last week that it's impossible to be focused on God when we are consumed with the things we want.
- It's impossible to be a happy person when we are nurturing our justifications of anger and our rationales of self-entitlement.
- The truth is we can choose our attitudes – and in fact, we are instructed in **Philippians 1:27** to “conduct (ourselves) in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.”
- It doesn't matter what we're facing or what we're going through. We still have the option (and in fact, **the calling**) to conduct ourselves in a worthy manner.
- That's an issue of choice. We can choose our attitudes, and we can choose our conduct – in ALL of our circumstances.
- But Jonah failed this basic test. God supernaturally provided a vine, a worm, and a hot wind to teach Jonah something that the events of Nineveh did not teach him.
- But Jonah doesn't seem to get the point, and so we ended last week by noting Jonah's statement in **Ch. 4:8**, “It would be better for me to die than to live.”
- Here we see Jonah living by his feelings and not the facts. He's allowed his emotions to rule. He justified his views and his anger - - he thinks he has a right to show them.
- If he cannot have his way, Jonah wants no way at all. Learning the right lessons is too hard for Jonah - - that requires change and effort. Jonah's not up for that task.
- The bottom line is his anger has consumed him, and so he's controlled by his predictable and self-centered views.

NOTE: That brings us to **Ch. 4:9**, and the concluding passage in this book of Jonah.

A. Once again, God asks Jonah the same probing question, “Do you have a right to be angry? (except this time, God adds a subtle element “....about the vine?”)

NOTE: Notice the slight difference between this question and the same one in **vs. 4** of this chapter. In **vs. 4**, God simply asks, “Have you any right to be angry?” This second time, God adds the phrase “about the vine?”

NOTE: It's that same sort of subtle change we notice between the first and the second time that God gave a command to Jonah to go and preach to Nineveh.

NOTE: The first time, God tells Jonah to go. The second time, God tells Jonah to go, AND He'll give Jonah the message He wants Jonah to deliver.

NOTE: Little by little, God is bringing Jonah along a path that properly shapes Jonah's views, his responses, and his obedience.

1. This second time, Jonah DOES answer God – but it's not a good answer.

- Jonah replies, “Yes, I do have a right to be angry about the vine.” And then Jonah adds – as though to rub it in the face of God - “I am angry enough to die.”
- Jonah's answer is quite revealing. He had no reason – and he had no right - to be angry about a plant that he had nothing to do with bringing about.
- (But) he felt justified in being angry about a city and a population that God had created and had shown His compassion upon.

- In both cases, Jonah was infatuated with the things that HE wanted, and with the way HE wanted things to work out.
- Whether it was Nineveh's annihilation, or whether it was the shade from the vine, Jonah is all about himself here. He had no balanced view.
- Jonah, it seems, has an unreasonably high sense of his own importance, and so he chooses to not think beyond his own immediate gratifications.
- I think the case could be made that Jonah suffered from some narcissistic tendencies, and I think his anger played a big role.
 - We learned a couple of lessons ago that uncontrolled anger invites irrational responses. That's a Biblical principle.
 - We lose our sensibilities when we cultivate – and when we justify – our anger.
 - And sometimes (as is the case with Jonah here), we let our anger and our sense of entitlement get SO out of control that we even argue with God. We forget our proper place in the order of things.

2. Jonah's position here is – unquestionably - thoroughly irrational. (And so) God confronts him in the last two verses of this concluding chapter.

- Jonah gives God a poor explanation of the cause of his anger, but God gives Jonah an excellent explanation for the cause of His own compassion.
- Jonah receives four insights into **the heart of God** here:
 - a. God cares about the little details of life that we take for granted,
 - b. God cares about the lives of the innocent,
 - c. God cares about true repentance, and...
 - d. God cares about His creation.

NOTE: Let's briefly unpack each of these four things we learn about God in this closing part of the book of Jonah.

A. #1, God cares about the little details of life that we take for granted.

1. God was much more cognizant of the loss of Jonah's shade or the scorching heat of that east wind than Jonah was.
 - Not only did He allow these things to happen to Jonah, but they arrived as part of God's plan. They were fulfilling a purpose in Jonah's life.
 - Jonah had lost a vital 'big picture perspective,' and so God touched Jonah where Jonah's attentions were focused - - on the little details of his life.
2. We're no different than Jonah. Every day, when we wake up and go through our routines of daily living, there are myriad little details which we overlook and take for granted.
 - From the home we have and the bed we sleep in, to the food we eat, to the cars we drive, to the friends and jobs we have, and to the health we have.

- We don't think about the next breath we take - - or the next heartbeat that God graciously gives us.
 - We don't stop and consider the simple blessing of turning the faucet on and getting a drink of water, or of turning the heat up when it gets cold.
 - It's a long list, but it's true for everything that is on it - - we take the little details of our life for granted.
 - Most of us have never paused long enough to thank the Lord for these things He provides to us.
3. If one or more of those things were taken away from us, I dare say many of us would act the way Jonah did here.
- We'd be upset - - even angry. We'd be consumed with regaining what we've come to believe are our 'rights.'
 - Like Jonah, we want to be comfortable. We don't like it when our comfort zones are compromised or when we feel we're not being taken care of.
 - We feel justified in believing that these things are DUE us. It's a very selfish attitude.
 - Our problem here is we've forgotten the reality that God cares about the little details of our life - - and He knows about each one.
 - When we obsess and worry about these small issues – when we feel we have a **right** to them – when we spend a **major** part of our energies focusing on **minor** things - it shows we've lost a proper view of ourselves, and (more importantly) a proper view of God!

Luke 12:6-7 reminds us, *“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.”*

Matthew 6:25-26 expounds on this same theme even further. It's Jesus speaking once more, and He says, *“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air: They do not sow or reap or gather into barns—and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?”*

- Here are a few worthwhile things to consider:
 - God **absolutely** cares about the “little things” in our lives, because He cares about US.
 - Throughout the Bible, we see over and over that God is interested in **more** than the highlights or the big moments in our lives.
 - He cares about **every little element** of who we are and what's going on with us - - - because we belong to HIM.
 - We are His creation made in His image, and He has *“bought us with a price”* **1 Cor. 6:20** says.

- God loves us with an immeasurable love, and so He absolutely cares about the little details of our lives.

B. #2, God cares about the lives of the innocent.

1. Look at the first part of **vs. 11**. Most commentators interpret this to be a reference to Nineveh's children who are too young to know the basics.
 - Essentially, God reminds Jonah that He is watching out for the lives of these innocent children even when Jonah is not.
 - In **Matthew Ch. 19** we read where Jesus' disciples tried to discourage the crowds from bringing their children to Jesus.
 - In the culture of that time - as it was in cultures before, and it still is in some cultures today - children held little value.
 - In Jonah's time that was certainly the case. Children were not necessarily regarded as special or important, except to their own parents.
 - That's a very unfortunate issue, and it's very hard for me to fathom – but God picked up on this cultural element and used it to remind Jonah of His great care.
 - The children were innocent of Nineveh's great sins. They were unaware of the great calamity that could have fallen on them.
 - They were powerless and vulnerable - and to God, this was a significant factor in sparing Nineveh. God saw them as precious and valuable even when Jonah did not.
2. I want to draw your attention to a couple of related points concerning children. These things occur to me as I contemplate this passage:
 - The first point concerns 'the age of accountability,' and this may be a touchy matter for some of you.
 - The Bible does not explicitly teach the idea that there is an "age of accountability" – and just to be clear, that phrase is not found in Scripture.
 - There is no Scripture that shows there's a line in the sand - - a line where on one side, children up to a certain age are automatically ushered into heaven when they die, but on the other side of that line they are not.
 - Furthermore, there is no passage in God's Word that states children who – for one reason or another are unable to comprehend or think properly - make it into heaven.
 - However, this concept of the 'age of accountability' IS implied in Scripture, and I think the case FOR it is stronger than AGAINST it.
 - For example:**
 - In **2 Samuel Ch. 12**, we read of the death of the baby that resulted from the adultery between Bathsheba and King David.

- ✓ David was told by the prophet, Nathan, that the child would die because of this sin, and so David grieved, fasted, and prayed – hoping to avert this outcome.
- ✓ But the baby did die – and David states of that baby in **vs. 23**, *“I shall go to him, but he will not return to me.”*
- ✓ David’s words may indicate that infants who die are safe in heaven with the Lord.
- ✓ David seemed to be comforted by this knowledge that he believed he would see his baby son again.
- Now, children are not sinless, because David also recorded in **Ps. 51:5**, *“Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”*
 - ✓ David properly recognized that we are born into sin.
 - ✓ **Romans 5:12** teaches us that, *“Sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people.”*
 - ✓ We are ALL born with a sin nature. It doesn’t matter that liberals or liberal theologians disagree with this. It is still true.
 - ✓ So this ‘age of accountability’ issue is NOT whether babies or children have a sinful nature or not; they do!
- This ‘age of accountability’ issue seems to be dependent – in part – on the idea that we have a responsibility to make a right choice.
 - ✓ (And) if we have no means or ability to make a right choice, then the whole matter is defaulted to God’s great grace and mercy.
 - ✓ And I think this is generally true – and **Romans 1:20** seems to reinforce this. It reads:

*“Since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—**have been clearly seen**, being **understood** from what has been made, so that people are **without excuse**.”*

- ✓ Taken all together, mankind’s guilt is partly based on rejecting those things that can be “clearly seen” of God’s existence, eternity, and power.
- ✓ Therefore, if babies and young children have no faculty for “clearly seeing” or no ability to properly reason concerning God— then wouldn’t their inability to do these things excuse them from judgment?
- ✓ I think it’s most reasonable to assume the answer is ‘Yes, they are excused.’
- ✓ But again, this is my conclusion; the Bible does not explicitly state this.

- ✓ Now, that means the so-called 'age of accountability' is a flexible matter insofar as age is concerned (Jewish tradition: 13 years of age).
- The second point concerning children that occurs to me with these matters is the issue of abortion - - and some of you are already ahead of me with what I'm about to say.
 - I personally believe all aborted babies are in heaven. I think this is the most sensible conclusion from everything we see in Scripture.
 - For all the reasons we just reviewed, I think heaven is populated with millions of souls who left this world before they actually had any chance to be in it.
 - Abortion is one of the greatest tragedies (perhaps THE greatest) of our times and culture – and let me be **perfectly clear**:
 - ✓ Abortion is NOT an issue of any woman's choice. That's a pathetic humanistic deflection from the truth.
 - ✓ It is murder. It is infanticide, plain and simple. It always has been, and it always will be.
 - ✓ Those who are MOST supportive of abortion are also those who have most evidenced that they've rejected God and His values and laws.
 - ✓ Moreover, abortion is a clear indication of widespread demonic influence – of a culture that has willfully abandoned God, has departed from what is right and proper, and has consciously turned to the dark side.
 - ✓ The OT is full of examples where pagan cultures routinely engaged in child sacrifice. Heathen cultures today – cultures where demonic worship is overtly rampant – continue to do the same thing.
 - ✓ The Bible makes it clear that God has zero-tolerance for child sacrifice, and that is fundamentally what abortion is.
 - ✓ We need to pause here and consider that America – and other western civilizations today – are much more heathen in this respect than we'd like to admit.
 - ✓ The Bible says in **Prov. 6:17** that God hates "*hands that shed innocent blood.*"
 - ✓ God judged the Canaanites and the Ammonites and other pagan nations in the OT for this pagan ritual. We're only fooling ourselves if we think God will not judge this nation for this horrendous sin.

C. #3, God cares about true repentance.

NOTE: We've covered this issue of Nineveh's repentance a fair amount in previous lessons in this series, but let me underscore a couple of points.

1. Nineveh turned away from its wickedness – its citizens ‘gave up their evil ways and their violence’ in **Chapter 3**.

- This was a choice that was individual (in **vs. 5** of that chapter), AND it was also a decision by order of the king (in **vs. 8** of that chapter).
- But I want you to see – in quick review here – the steps of true repentance:
 - First, it’s encountering the truth about our sin – in **3:4**, the Ninevites received God’s message.
 - Second, it’s then believing the truth about our sin – in **3:5**, the Ninevites ‘believed God.’ They saw their true condition.
 - Third, it’s showing regret and remorse – in **3:5-6**, the Ninevites mourned, fasted, put on sackcloth, and sat in ashes.
 - Fourth, it’s turning to God and depending on His mercy and grace – in **3:8-9**, the Ninevites ‘called urgently on God,’ and trusted in His compassion.
 - And fifth, it’s giving up that which is wrong – in **3:8**, the Ninevites ‘gave up their evil ways and their violence.’

2. All to say, there are clear steps here to true repentance, and we cannot afford to overlook them.

- I fear we have diluted the understanding and the importance of true repentance in the church today - - particularly with respect to the Gospel.
- We’ve reduced repentance and the Gospel to ‘raising your hand,’ ‘coming down to the front,’ ‘filling out a card,’ or feeling some sort of vague shiver in your liver.
- In many cases – perhaps most - we’ve tried to limit repentance to something private, tame, and unseen.
- Repentance, in the Bible, means to “to change one’s mind,” resulting in an evident ‘change of actions.’
- This is clear in several passages, including **Acts 26:20** where Paul writes:

*“I preached that they should **repent** and **turn to God** and **demonstrate** their repentance by their **deeds**”*

- In this passage, we see these elements of true repentance summarized, and they are public – not private. Others can see the change.
- True repentance is recognizing that you have thought and done wrongly in the past, and you are determined to think and do rightly in the future.
- These are sobering matters to consider in these days and times, and we are wise to reflect on them and pray about them concerning ourselves.

D. #4, God cares about His creation.

1. I don’t need to say much here, but in **vs. 11 of Jonah Ch. 4**, God says He is concerned about ‘the cattle.’

- Recall, the king of Nineveh had his citizens deny their livestock food and water. He even had them clothe their livestock in sackcloth.
- I doubt very much that God looked down and saw the cattle clothed as such and that is why He relented from bringing destruction on them.
- Cattle have no souls and no conscious awareness of any sinful situation they are passively part of. But that's not the point here...
- The bigger point is God looked down on Nineveh's dilemma, and He had compassion on His created creatures too.
- This is affirmed elsewhere in Scripture too. **Matthew 10:29** says "*not one (sparrow) will fall to the ground outside your Father's care.*"
- The true heart of God not only shows compassion to human beings, but it is displayed in other ways to His creation as well.

LET ME CONCLUDE WITH THREE BIG PICTURE TAKEAWAYS FROM THIS SERIES IN THE BOOK OF JONAH:

1. God is sovereign. He is Master, and we are not.

- The book of Jonah shows the absolute sovereignty of God.
- He prepared the hearts of the Ninevites to receive His message, and He employed various elements of His creation to accomplish His plan.
- God controlled the storm and the scorching east wind. He even provided a great fish, a vine, and a worm to do his bidding.
- The book of Jonah teaches us that we are not the masters of our lives, nor the situations and the world we find ourselves in. God is.

2. God displays His interest and His compassion to all people.

- The book of Jonah is an OT divinely inspired document.
- And during this period of history - even though God was working primarily through the Hebrew nation to fulfill His promise of sending the Messiah, Jesus Christ - nevertheless, God's compassion for all people groups was clearly manifested.
- God sent Jonah, the reluctant prophet, to the sinful Gentile Ninevites. God's interest in the salvation of all people was demonstrated.

3. God can change even the most wicked among us.

- God's Word is powerful, and when it is clearly proclaimed and honestly received - it will produce the effect of changing lives for all eternity.
- Jesus Himself said in **Matt. 12:41**, "*The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah....*"
- There should be no doubt that Nineveh experienced a true revival, just as there should be no doubt God's Word can accomplish the same results today.

- No one is so far gone that they cannot be reached with the truth. We need to boldly and properly proclaim God's Word and leave the results to Him.

NEXT TIME: "The Lord's Supper" (And then, the week following, we begin our new series in 1 & 2 Thessalonians).



**SOLID
BREAD**

Solid Bread Community was started with a passion to teach the truth of God's Word – every part of it, as it was divinely inspired to be understood.

The rules are simple. First, teach what IS there. Don't pretend the Bible is not saying what it is saying.

Second, don't teach what is NOT there. Don't force a passage to mean something it really doesn't.

And – number three, if the Bible states it plainly, we should too.

Contact Solid Bread Community at:

PO Box 431

Windsor, CO 80550

www.solidbreadcommunity.com

Email: connect@solidbreadcommunity.com