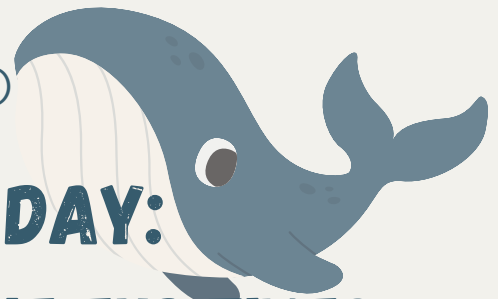




Lent 2024 - Week 5 (20 March 2024)



# THE COMING OF THE LORD'S DAY: THE GRACIOUS APOCALYPSE AS THE END TIMES

## THE DISGRUNTLED PROPHET JONAH – GRACE IS COMPASSIONATE

### *The Misconception of God*

The story of Jonah is one of the most remarkable and inspiring stories in the Bible, as it teaches us that God's heart is full of love, even when we behave badly. Jonah, a prophet of God, was instructed to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, to warn the people of their impending doom as they had become evil and wicked. However, Jonah mistakenly believed that God was angry with the Assyrians and that they didn't deserve His mercy.

In reality, God was heartbroken by their actions and wanted them to turn away from their evil ways. God approached Jonah out of love, wanting the best for the people of Nineveh. Unfortunately, the people of Nineveh failed to meet God's expectations, and He had to take action.

Throughout history, God has shown that He wants us to live in freedom and not in bondage. From Pharaoh in Egypt to the Ninevites, God has tried to teach us that our choices have consequences. God is not an angry God, but a compassionate God who always desires the best for humanity.

Jonah believed that God was not gracious to anyone except the Israelites, but this is not true. God would show kindness to the Israelites even when they misbehaved. Similarly, the Ninevites listened to God's warnings and repented, proving that they were more honouring of God than the Israelites.

We often have misconceptions about God based on our own experiences of Him. But God is loving and compassionate to all, and we should strive to follow His example. God wants us to be kind, patient, and compassionate to others, even when they don't deserve it. The story of Jonah is a reminder that God's love is unconditional, and His mercy is available to all who seek it.

WHO IS GOD



### *God Demonstrates Compassion*



It appears that Jonah is keeping his distance from the people who have embraced God, despite bringing them Good News. It's possible that Jonah is struggling with personal issues, as he seems to have developed a grudge against Assyria, which is now blinding him to the grace of God. It's important for us to remember that God's compassion can counter any grudges we may hold. In a kind gesture, God grows a plant in an open area with no vegetation to provide Jonah with some comfort. Jonah is grateful and feels safe overnight. However, God sends a worm to destroy the plant at dawn, which leaves Jonah feeling unimpressed and upset. It's important to understand that everyone deals with their emotions differently, and Jonah's reaction may be a result of his personal struggles.



**BEDFORDVIEW METHODIST CHURCH**

Society of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa

f bedfordviewmethodist

X bedfordview\_mc

bedfordview\_methodist\_church

mastodon.africa/@bedfordviewmc

Cnr van Buuren Rd & de Wet St,  
Bedfordview

011 455 2600

church@bedfordviewmc.co.za

www.bedfordviewmc.co.za



## Lent 2024 - Week 5 (20 March 2024)

We should try to approach such situations with empathy and understanding. These are some of the personal struggles for Jonah:

1. Jonah is a prophet, a well respected figure. He is expecting God to protect his image. Instead God is protecting the Ninevites and their animals.
2. It is every Israelite's desire for the Ninevites to be destroyed, Jonah could be afraid that when he comes home, he would be seen as a traitor. Why even in the first place go and warn the Ninevites when he knows God has a compassionate heart?
3. Jonah thought God could be domesticated to the Israelites and accessible to the Gentiles. It is the mentality of good things must only happen to me. Unfortunately, God's goodness is for all and it is God's grace that completes the fullness of humanity.
4. The idea of God being trustworthy seems problematic for Jonah. He knew from the beginning that God would love the Ninevites and indeed God loves them by not destroying them. God's heart cannot be altered even by the selfish desires of those who think they serve and worship God.

The story of Jonah gives us an important lesson that we should always praise God for His goodness. We learn that God is merciful and willing to forgive all who repent (2 Peter 3:9). Despite the Ninevites being Gentiles, God still extended His salvation to them. This illustrates the fact that God cares for all peoples of every nation. In His great love, God warns the Assyrians before sending judgment, giving them a chance to repent and turn to Him.



As we reflect on the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son in Luke 15, we see God's deep compassion for all those who are lost and in need of Him. These parables reveal the extent of God's love and His willingness to seek and save the lost. The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 emphasizes God's call to take His message of "good news" to all nations and make disciples of all peoples. Romans 1:16 also highlights the importance of sharing the gospel with both Jews and non-Jews, reminding us that God's love extends to all.

Furthermore, it is important to remember that God is concerned for those who have never heard the message of His salvation. When Jonah 4:11 mentions "more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left," it refers to those who know nothing of spiritual truth. These people are spiritually blind and cannot tell up from down or right from left concerning the things of God. Yet, God takes pity on their ignorance and desires to extend His salvation to all who repent and turn to Him.

Let us take comfort and find hope in the depth of God's love for us. May we praise Him for His goodness and grace, and be inspired to share His message of salvation with all those around us. Let us be eager to bring His love to those who have never heard and to make disciples of all peoples.

### PRAYER:

Teach me your compassion Lord,  
for your glory to be revealed  
through me.  
Amen.

### *Participatory work*

This last chapter teaches us a few things about God, our relationship with God, and our relationship with God's people. How can you sincerely and honestly reflect on these teachings? Think of a practical step you may take this week to illustrate God's love, compassion, and grace to those who least expect such actions from you. Commit to this and see how God will be glorified through you. I remind you to please read Chapter 4 of the Book of Jonah.



## BEDFORDVIEW METHODIST CHURCH

Society of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa



bedfordviewmethodist



bedfordview\_mc



bedfordview\_methodist\_church



mastodon.africa/@bedfordviewmc

Cnr van Buuren Rd & de Wet St,  
Bedfordview

011 455 2600



church@bedfordviewmc.co.za



www.bedfordviewmc.co.za