

DEVOTIONS FOR LENT

April 6th, 2020

The Deal

Bible Reading

Jonah 4 But this was very displeasing to Jonah, and he became angry. ²He prayed to the LORD and said, “O LORD! Is not this what I said while I was still in my own country? That is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing. ³And now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.” ⁴And the LORD said, “Is it right for you to be angry?” ⁵Then Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city, and made a booth for himself there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would become of the city.

Context

Did you think the story ended with the fish spitting out Jonah? Did you think Jonah’s preaching to Nineveh and the surprising repentance of the great city ends the story? Considering the evil of Nineveh the story is nothing but short of astounding. This is a Cinderella story of a comeback victory of epic proportions – The Mighty Ducks! First Jonah protests that Nineveh will never repent and now that they have, he protests God’s mercy. Apparently, God’s mercy only extends to the chosen.

Devotion

The *good* son in the prodigal son parable makes a similar complaint...I deserve...I am entitled... It is fine to be merciful Lord, but not to my nemesis, my enemies. That of course is the problem of grace. We have been accepted for who we are by our merciful God through Jesus, but we are not too happy when the mercy extends to those who hate us, disagree with us, and hurt us.

Jonah is truly angry. So God you go ahead and be merciful to them, and I won’t serve you. It might sound childish at first, yet we know we want a God who smites our enemies like the old cliché, “My enemies are your enemies, my friends are your friends.”

Reflection Questions

Do you believe Jonah’s anger is justified?

Who would you like least to see in heaven? Or who is someone who is difficult for you to forgive because they personally hurt you.

Prayer

Merciful Savior, You save not according to our deeds, but according to your justice. Color our eyes so we see in every soul your face. In Jesus name. Amen.