

“The Jonah Cycle”
Jonah 4:1-4

Introduction:

1. This Morning - I Would Like For Us To Return To Our Study:
 - Of The Book Of Jonah!
 - And I Would Like For Us To Go Back To:
 - Where We Last Saw Jonah:
 - In Chapter 4:
 - Where - After One Of The Greatest Spiritual Awakenings:
 - Probably In The History Of The World!
 - We Saw That Something Was Still Missing:
 - In The Heart Of Jonah!
 - What Was Jonah’s Reaction:
 - To All OF This?
 - 4:1 - “But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry!”
 - We Read These Words:
 - With Wonder & Disbelief!
 - Jonah:
 - How Can You Feel This Way?
 - How Can You Say These Things?
 - To God?
 - After All That You Have Been Through?
 - Even After All That You Have Seen?
 - It Is Just So Incredible!
 - To See & Hear Jonah So Angry About Something So Miraculous & Wonderful!
2. But - Before We Condemn Jonah:
 - As Such A Hard & Heartless Person!
 - I Think It Would Be Helpful For Us:
 - To See Ourselves In Jonah!
 - See - This Is Another Great Theme:
 - In The Book Of Jonah!
 - A Theme We Can Call:
 - “The Jonah Cycle!”
 - A Cycle: Is Something That Happens Over & Over Again!
 - And I Believe That We Can See:
 - The Attitudes & Actions Of Jonah!
 - In Our Lives - More Often Than We Would Like To Admit!
 - So - This Morning - We Are Going To Look:
 - More Closely At: “The Jonah Cycle!”
 - And Perhaps - You Are Somewhere In This Cycle Yourself!
 - And Through This - You Will See:
1. ***The Great Changeability Of Believers!***
 - One Of The Great Lessons From Jonah:
 - Is That People Change!
 - And Even God’s People Change!
 - Let’s Look At Some Of The Great Changes:
 - In The Life Of Jonah!
 - Changes In Which You May Even Find Yourself Today!
 - For In Jonah’s Life, There Was:
 - A Time Of Great Faithfulness!
 - Remember Where We First Met Jonah:
 - In This Series? It Wasn’t In The Book Of Jonah!
 - No - It Was In 2 Kings!
 - 2 Kings 14:25 - Referring To King Jereboam 2 - “He restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain, according to the word of the LORD God of Israel, which he spake by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet, which was of Gathhepher!”

- Here We First Meet Jonah:
 - As God's Prophet To His Own People In Israel!
- And It Was Here:
 - Where Jonah Experienced His First "Mountain-Top" Experience!
- He Was Serving!
 - And He Was Serving The Lord Faithfully!
 - The Word That God Had Given Him To Speak, He Spoke! He Obeyed!
 - He Is Even Called God's Servant!
- He Was Successful!
 - The Lord Blessed The Word He Gave To Jonah!
 - And Jereboam The King Was Able To Restore Much Of The Land They Had Lost!
- This Was A Time Of Great Faithfulness In Jonah's Life!
 - And, I'm Sure, He Felt Great!
 - Serving The Lord!
 - Success Given By The Lord!
- Perhaps You Remember A Time Like This In Your Life!
 - Or Perhaps You Are Living In A Time Like This Now!
 - You Feel As If You Are Enjoying The Lord & Serving Him With All Of Your Heart!
 - And It Seems That God Is Blessing You Beyond Measure!
 - Success In The Lord's Service:
 - Is A Great Experience!
 - But You Must Never Forget The Lord During Those Times!
 - Because All Too Often:
 - Those Spiritual Mountain-Tops Can Quickly Lead To Spiritual Valleys!
- Which Is Exactly What We See Next:
 - In The Jonah Cycle!
 - For There Also Came:
- A Time Of Great Failure!
 - And We Are Reminded Of This Great Failure:
 - In The Book Of Jonah!
 - Even Though Jonah Had Experienced:
 - Great Success In The Lord's Service!
 - And Had Been Faithful To The Lord!
 - What Happened?
 - He Sinned Against The Lord!
 - He Fell! Hard & Far!
 - See The Disobedience Of His Fall:
 - In 1:1-3!
 - Jonah Fell Through A Great Sin Against The Lord!
 - Which Is Why We Are Constantly Warned:
 - 1 Corinthians 10:12 - "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall!"
 - When You Are On A Spiritual Mountain-Top:
 - You Need To Remember Who Put You There! And "Take Heed Lest You Fall!"
 - Because Even Believers Can Fall!
 - Hard & Far!
 - See The Depth Of His Fall:
 - Jonah's Sin Kept Getting Deeper & Deeper In His Heart & Life!
 - Until The Lord God His Attention, By Using The Sailors On The Ship To Point Their Fingers Right At Jonah!
 - In 1:7 - "And they said every one to his fellow, Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this evil is upon us. So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah!"
- This Was A Time Of Great Failure In Jonah's Life!
 - Believers Still Sometimes Fail & Fall:
 - In This Way Too!
 - Perhaps, You Have Failed & Fallen:
 - Through Disobedience!
 - You Should Not Be There – In This Valley!

- And You Do Not Need To Stay There:
 - In This Valley!
- Proverbs 24:16 - “For a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again!”
- What We See Happen Next In Jonah’s Cycle, Can Happen In Your Heart & Life As Well!
- A Time Of Great Faith!
 - As The Lord Got The Attention Of Jonah:
 - Through The Storm & Through The Sailors!
 - Jonah Finally Returns To The Lord:
 - In 1:8-10!
 - Jonah Remembered That He Belonged To God!
 - He Said - “I Fear The Lord!”
 - If You Have Sinned Against The Lord:
 - And Have Failed Him!
 - You Too Can Return To The Lord!
 - Remember That You Belong To Him!
 - And Trust / Believe In Him!
 - Jonah Finally Repents Before The Lord:
 - In 1:11-12!
 - Even Though Jonah Returned To The Lord In Faith:
 - He Knew That His Sin Against The Lord Was Great!
 - And He Was Willing To Suffer:
 - Whatever Punishment / Whatever Consequence Came His Way!
 - Even If It Was Death By Drowning In The Sea!
 - This Is True Faith & Repentance!
 - As Job Said In Job 13:15 - “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him!”
 - Even Though Your Fall Has Been Hard & Far:
 - You Too Can Return To The Lord:
 - Once Again!
 - Through Faith & Repentance!
 - And - When That Happens - You Can Enjoy:
- A Time Of Great Fellowship!
 - Jonah Enjoyed Fellowship With The Lord:
 - In The Most Unlikeliest Of Places!
 - In The Belly Of A Fish!
 - Read 1:17!
 - There Was A Renewed Communion With The Lord!
 - Through Prayer!
 - In 2:1-7!
 - There Was A Renewed Commitment To The Lord!
 - In 2:8-9!
 - What A Great Time Of Fellowship:
 - Jonah Had With The Lord:
 - Even In The Belly Of That Fish!
 - And Even Through This:
 - God Was Preparing Jonah For Something Greater!
 - This Time Of Fellowship:
 - Is What God Desired With Jonah!
 - Desires With You!
 - Even More Than Great Spiritual Feats!
 - He Desires Fellowship With You!
 - And Through That Fellowship:
 - He Is Often Preparing You For What Follows! Like:
- Another Time Of Great Faithfulness!
 - Another Mountain-Top Experience:
 - Came To Jonah!
 - Because God Was Not Through With Him Yet! For We Read In:
 - 2:10!

- And Jonah Was Ready Once Again To:
- Listen To The Word Of God!
 - In 3:1-2!
 - Even That “Second Time!”
 - But This Time, He Was Also Ready To:
- Live Out The Word Of God!
 - In 3:3-4!
 - And The Rest Of Chapter 3:
 - Shows What God Can Do Through Even One Of His Servants Who Faithfully Proclaims His Word!
- And After Seeing & Hearing This Great Awakening:
 - In Nineveh Itself!
 - You Would Think That Jonah Would Stay Up On That Mountain-Top!
 - But - Where Did We Leave Jonah:
 - In Chapter 4?
- A Time Of Great Fickleness!
 - Read 4:1 Again!
 - What A Fickle Man, Jonah Was!
 - Unstable & Erratic!
 - And Unfortunately - This Is Where We Will Leave Jonah When We Come To The End Of The Book!
- But: Have You Seen This Kind Of Cycle:
 - “The Jonah Cycle” – In Your Life?
 - Even As A Christian?
 - From Faithfulness:
 - To Failure! From A Mountain-Top To A Valley!
 - From Failure – After God Gets Your Attention Again:
 - To Renewed Faith & Fellowship!
 - From Faith & Fellowship:
 - To Faithfulness Once Again!
 - And Then - From Faithfulness:
 - To Fickleness & Failure & Sin!
 - How Often We Change - Don’t We?
 - Don’t Be Discouraged!
 - Because There Is Something / There Is Someone That Is Greater Than Your Failures & Your Fickleness!
 - And The Solution For Your:
 - Changeability Is:

2. ***The Constancy Of God!***

- As God Himself States In:
 - Malachi 3:6 - “For I am the LORD, I change not!”
 - Even Though The Book Of Jonah Highlights This Cycle Of Jonah – Yet It Displays In An Even Greater Way The Immutability & The Constancy Of God!
 - Even When We Are So Unstable & Unfaithful To Him!
 - We May Change & Cycle Over & Over Again!
 - But God Remains Constant!
 - And In Him Our Hearts Can Trust & Rest!
- The Character Of God Never Changes!
 - His Character Of Holiness!
 - God Is A Holy & A Righteous God!
 - The Angels In Isaiah 6:3 Tell Us - “Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory!”
 - God Is A Holy God!
 - And He Cannot Tolerate Nor Condone Sin!
 - And His Constant Character Of Holiness Is Clearly Seen In Jonah!
 - God Cannot Tolerate Sin In The World!
 - Which Is Why God Sent Jonah To Nineveh In The First Place!
 - 1:2 - “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is

- come up before me!”
- And Because Of Their Sin / Wickedness:
 - God Was Going To Judge Them & Even Destroy Them, If They Did Not Repent!
- God Cannot Tolerate Sin In His People!
 - Which Is Why God Sent The Storm After Jonah!
 - 1:4 - “But the LORD sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken!”
 - And Because Of Jonah’s Disobedience:
 - God Was Going To Chasten & Correct Jonah!
- God Is Holy! His Character Never Changes!
 - And God Must Deal With Sin!
 - But - We Need Not Despair!
 - Because Something Else About God Is Constant As Well!
- The Compassion Of God Never Changes!
 - Lamentations 3:21-26 - “This I recall to my mind, therefore have I hope. / It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. / They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. / The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. / The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. / It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD!”
 - God’s Compassion Is Constant!
 - Compassion To His People!
 - Back In 2 Kings!
 - When He Used Jonah & King Jereboam To Restore Their Land!
 - Even Though They Had Strayed Far From The Lord!
 - Compassion To The Sailors!
 - In Jonah 1:15 - When “They took up Jonah, and cast him forth into the sea: and the sea ceased from her raging!”
 - Even Though They Were Idolaters, And Were Praying To Their False Gods In The Middle Of The Storm!
 - Compassion To His Prophet!
 - In Jonah 1:17 - “Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights!”
 - The Fish Was Sent:
 - Not To Punish Jonah!
 - But To Save Jonah!
 - Even Though Jonah Had Disobeyed The Direct Command Of The Lord!
 - Compassion To The Ninevites!
 - In Jonah 3:10 - “And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not!”
 - Even Though Their Wickedness Was Great Before Him!
 - None Of These People Deserved:
 - The Compassion & Mercy Of God!
 - But God Chose To Grant Them His Compassion, Because This Too Is Part Of His Character!
 - God Is Merciful! His Compassion Never Changes!
 - Even Jonah Recognized This In 4:3 - “For I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil!”
 - We Further See That:
 - The Calling Of God Never Changes!
 - As We Learn From Romans 11:29 - “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance!”
 - After Everything Jonah Had Done:
 - Why Would / Why Did God Show His Compassion To Jonah?
 - Because Jonah Was God’s Man!
 - God Had Chosen Jonah!
 - God Had Called Jonah!
 - God Would Chasten Jonah!
 - God Would Show Compassion To Jonah!
 - Not Because God Saw Anything Good In Jonah!

- But Because God Wanted To Show His Goodness:
 - To Jonah!
 - And That Is Grace!
- You Can Be Encouraged:
 - If God Has Called You:
 - “Out of darkness into his marvellous light!”
 - Because That Means That You Too:
 - Belong To Him!
- And No Matter Where You Are At In:
 - “The Jonah Cycle!”
 - He Will Not!
 - He Cannot Let You Go!
 - God’s Calling Upon A Believer’s Life:
 - Never Changes!
 - Why Paul Says In Philippians 1:6 - “Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ!”
- But We Also See In Jonah That:
- The Course Of God Never Changes!
 - God’s Course Is One Of Deliverance!
 - Isaiah 45:21 - God Tells Us That - “There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me!”
 - God Sent His Prophet - Jonah:
 - To Deliver The Ninevites!
 - And His Course:
 - Would Not Be Thwarted Or Frustrated:
 - Even By The Failures Of Jonah!
 - And God Sent Jonah:
 - To Nineveh - Because Of His Grace!
 - God Sent A Fish:
 - To Deliver His Wayward Prophet, Jonah!
 - Even When Jonah Had Failed & Sinned Against Him!
 - God Sent The Fish:
 - To Jonah - Because Of His Grace!
 - And God Sent His Only Begotten Son:
 - To Deliver You & Me:
 - From Faithlessness!
 - From Failure!
 - From This “Jonah Cycle!”
 - And He Alone Could Do So Perfectly!
 - Because He Is Faithful!
 - Hebrews 13:8 - “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever!”
- This Course Of God To Deliver:
 - Never Changes!
 - Because The Lord Jesus Never Changes!
 - Even The Fish:
 - That God Sent To Deliver Jonah:
 - Could Not Hold Jonah In Its Belly Forever!
 - But If You Are In Christ:
 - No Matter Where You Are At:
 - In “The Jonah Cycle!”
 - He Will Never Let You Go!
 - John 6:37 - “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out!”

Conclusion:

1. When You See Yourself In Jonah:
 - And When You See How Often You Change:
 - And Go Through This Cycle Yourself!

- What You Must Do:
 - Is Look At Your Unchanging / Constant God!
- 2. Does He Have Your Gaze?
 - Does He Have Your Trust?
 - No Matter Where You Are At In “The Jonah Cycle!”
 - Look To The Lord!
 - Who Never Changes!

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