

Prodigal Mercy! Prodigal God! (Jonah 4:9-11)

I. Introduction

- A. A story about my gardening woes and battles with critters
- B. Recapping the drama of Jonah's life
- C. Reading the text and setting the course for the message

II. Jonah's attitude toward the plant, Nineveh and God (Jonah 4:9)

- A. *Is it right for you to be angry?* (Jonah 4:4)
 1. God understands Jonah's weakened physical state and comforts him for a night by giving and taking away a plant
- B. *Is it right for you to be angry for the plant?* (Jonah 4:9)
 1. Jonah is at his lowest as he justifies his anger at the plant
 2. We can have some understanding for Jonah's circumstances
 - a. the trauma of a missionary's experience
 - b. the depression of missionaries upon return home
 - c. the spiritual attack that missionaries receive
 3. but none of this acquits him of guilt – so God confronts him (an us) for a self-righteousness and legalistic heart
 - a. Matthew 23:23
 - b. how can I tell if I'm a legalist?
 - c. 2 Corinthians 3:6
 4. Jonah had to learn of free and sovereign grace
 5. God is conforming Jonah (and us) to the image of Christ
 - a. Matthew 23:37

III. God's attitude toward Nineveh, the world and Jonah (Jonah 4:10,11)

- A. God is stressing the difference between His attitude and Jonah's
 1. The use of emphatic pronouns to compare
 2. Jonah had the ability to pity, but it was misdirected
- B. God's pity is directed to 120,000 Ninevites and much cattle
 1. Is it only Nineveh's children and cattle that God pities?
 2. I believe the 120,000 refers to the entire population
 - a. Their ignorance is based on not knowing God
- C. God's question is to bring Jonah to repentance for judging God
 1. John 10:32

IV. The challenge of Jonah's abrupt ending to our lives

- A. Do you care more for your comforts than for evangelizing the world?
 1. Jesus commanded you to GO! Why have you not obeyed?
 - a. *Everything under the sun is vanity!*
 - b. 1 Corinthians 7:31
- B. Should you not be concerned with the world around you?
 1. Will you "Go" with us when we "Go" corporately?
- C. Does evangelism really make a difference?
 1. God is still saving sinners, and the kingdom is still growing!
- D. The book of Jonah's conclusion stops our mouths as we consider the prodigal mercy of our prodigal God!