

JONAH 4:1-2

Think of times in your life when God has provided for you. How did you respond? Has God ever provided for you in a different way than you wanted or expected? How did you respond then?

Jonah 4:1

At the end of Jonah 3, we see that God heard and saw the reaction of the Ninevites and relented in His destruction of them. Verse 1 of Chapter 4, reveals Jonah's heart in this matter. Much like Jonah we often obey God for the sake of obeying and not really wanting the outcome to be successful. We pray "thy will be done" but are we truly praying that from the bottom of our heart. In our heart, we say "Thy will be done as long as it's my will". We sing "All to Jesus I surrender", but are we willing to fully surrender to God? Are we genuine when we pray?

Luke 22:24, shows us a sharp contrast to this attitude. Jesus praying in the Garden, knowing what was to take place, did not ask for the cup to be moved but rather to be given strength through the Holy Spirit to achieve God's true will. How can we achieve what is God's will in our lives if we do not submit to the direction of the Holy Spirit within us? Ask yourself to take time to let God talk through His Word to you, allowing for a deeper understanding and appreciation of His perfect plans for your life.

A similar story is seen in Luke 15:28, in the story of the prodigal son, the elder son was upset that his father welcomed his younger brother and celebrated his return. He felt it was unjust of his father, because he was obedient and did everything His father expected of him. But here, although the elder son was obedient, he didn't understand his father's heart. Even though we "do" everything that God wants us to do, do we really know His heart? When we pray can we surrender our hearts to him, totally or are we stuck with our own desires taking prominence?

Jonah 4:2

We continue to see Jonah heart revealed. He admits his understanding of God's nature. He knew that He is a gracious and compassionate God but he did not want the Ninevites to be forgiven. That's why he tried to run away from God. Are we behaving just like Jonah towards other believers and non-believers? Do we feel they don't deserve mercy and love? We should not forget the extent of His love to us, not because of anything we have done, but rather what He has and continues to do in our lives.

Application for Life:

1. When we pray and do things for others, let us not decide how grace and mercy should be given. Rather let us remember that Jesus Christ is our measuring stick, who humbled himself for us to give us the ultimate gift of salvation and re-union with the Father.
2. Spend time with God everyday, through reading the Word, meditating on it and asking God to reveal HIS plan for our lives, rather than our own recommendations.
3. Make a list of things you feel are important. Do your daily concerns focus on the well being of others or yourself? How many of your priorities would also be God's priorities.

Verses to consider:

Merciful God: Deuteronomy 4:31, Psalms 103:8

God's mercy to those who call Him: Exodus 22:26-29, Psalms 86:5

Prodigal Son: Luke 22: 39-44

Jesus at the Garden of Gethsemane: Luke 22: 39-44