



## Life Is Too Short To Be Little

**Jonah 4:1-4 KJV** But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. [2] And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, *was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country?* Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou *art* a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil. [3] Therefore now, O LORD, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for *it is* better for me to die than to live. [4] Then said the LORD, Doest thou well to be angry?

### I. THE STORY OF JONAH

#### A. Introduction

-The story of Jonah is one of the most famous of the stories in the Bible. It ranks up with Noah and the Ark, Daniel and the Lion's Den, Joseph and the Coat of Many Colors, and the Prodigal Son.

-Who can forget the disobedient prophet who specifically goes in the opposite direction that God tells him to? This story has everything in the mix:

- A rebellious prophet running from God.
- Godless and idolatrous sailors.
- Little boats and big storms.
- Big waves and a bigger fish.
- A deep ocean ride lasting three days.
- A prophet's hell without the fire.
- A sick fish and a humbled prophet.
- A mad preacher and a repentant nation.
- A big revival and a sullen evangelist.
- A hot sun and a shielding gourd plant.
- A worm and wind from God that wilted it all.

-That fish was sort of a school house for Jonah although he didn't quite learn as much as he should, it still became a classroom for him.

-A university of sorts that taught him some things and for most of us, we will attend a Fish University too. There are lessons of faith, virtue, humility, patience, obedience, and courage that we all will have to learn there.

-We may not be swallowed by a literal fish but there will be whales that go by other names to teach us things. Big fish called sorrow, failure, defeat, poverty, trial, and even bereavement. They are all meant for the education and improvement of our soul.

#### B. The Revival in Nineveh

-Jonah went in preaching a great message of judgment. "If this place doesn't repent, God is going to destroy it!" The king of Nineveh traded his royal robes for sackcloth and ashes and called for a total fast for the nation.

-God saw their humility and grief over their sin and He spared them. When Jonah sees this, it infuriates him. He really expected God to not give them much of a space to repent and he was anticipating getting to see God wipe them out.

-When God doesn't meet his expectations, it angers Jonah. So Jonah slips off into the wilderness and starts sulking. He is upset with the goodness of God. He is offended that God responds to the cries of a repentant nation.

-Apparently Jonah did not have a missionary zeal to see the salvation of men. No doubt he thought that good bread was being given to the dogs. The Pharisees were like this too. They objected to the gospel going to the publicans and sinners.

-Even Peter struggled with this. He couldn't see the Gentiles being saved until God showed him a vision and then used him to save Cornelius.

-Jonah had the elder brother spirit to get on him, he was angry when God saved the citizens of Nineveh.

-This is not the first time in the story of Jonah that we see him all out of sorts.

- We first find him in a state of disobedience and stubborn attitude toward the mission.
- On the ship, he is more senseless than the heathen sailors.
- He is in a state of desperate audacity toward God.
- His desire to be thrown overboard is not a great statement of faith but one of escape.
- Then he is almost reveling in the idea that Nineveh is going to be destroyed.
- Finally he is angry with God.

-Anger and selfishness will narrow a man's spirit as nothing else will. What a sad thing to be said of Jonah that he was irritable, testy, and had an uncontrolled passion called anger.

## II. LIFE IS TOO SHORT TO BE LITTLE

-Can I remind you that life is too short to be little? There is nothing like anger that whittles us down and makes us little men and women.

### A. Anger

#### 1. General

**Horace**—Anger is a short madness.

**Dean Goulburn**—Anger is like the manna that corrupts and breeds worms if kept overnight in the close chambers of the heart. Then it will appear in the morbid shapes of spite, malice, revenge.

**Thomas Manton**—A mad dog that bites another makes him as mad as himself; so, usually the injuries and reproaches of others foster up revenge and then there is no difference between us.

**Anonymous**—Anger is an acid that can do more harm to the vessel in which it is stored than to anything on which it is poured.

**Unknown**—People who fly into a rage always make a bad landing.

**J. K. Morley**—The size of a man can be measured by the size of the thing that makes him angry.

**Chinese Proverb**—The fire you kindle for your enemy often burns yourself more than him.

**Matthew Henry**—When passion is on the throne, reason is out the door.

**Jeremy Taylor**—Anger is a fever in the heart, a calenture (fever caused by heat) in the head, a fire in the face, a sword in the hand and a fury all over. It hath in it the trouble of sorrow, and the heats of lust, and the disease of revenge, the bodings of a fever, and the rashness of precipitancy (undue hastiness, rashness), and the disturbance of persecution.

#### 2. Biblical

**Job 5:2 KJV** For wrath killeth the foolish man, and envy slayeth the silly one.

**Proverbs 14:17 KJV** *He that is soon angry dealeth foolishly: and a man of wicked devices is hated.*

**Proverbs 15:1 KJV** A soft answer turneth away wrath: but grievous words stir up anger.

**Proverbs 16:32 KJV** *He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city.*

**Proverbs 17:14 CEV** The start of an argument is like a water leak-- so stop it before real trouble breaks out.

**Proverbs 22:24 KJV** Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go:

**Ecclesiastes 7:9 KJV** Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.

## **B. The Source of Anger**

-Anger can come out of anywhere and nowhere.

- When we are delayed in traffic.
- When someone cuts us off in traffic.
- When someone is tailgating us.
- When you are around someone who think they are always right.
- When we find out about someone criticizing us.
- When some appliance or vehicle breaks down.
- When a job you have paid for does not meet your expectations.
- When you feel like your employer is abusing you and numbers are the only thing that matters.
- When the food and the service at a restaurant is very poor.
- When you are accused of something you did not do.
- When kids go through the house like a hurricane.
- When you have to change your plans to accommodate someone who refuses to work with the situation.
- When we have to wait at an appointment much longer than anticipated.
- When we feel like our insurance company is getting the best of us.

-Life is full of exasperations and if you are not careful they can turn you into a very small person. The Bible is full of men who allowed their anger to get the best of them and they pursued others to literally take their life from them:

- Saul pursuing David.
- Succoth after Gideon.
- Korah after Moses.
- The Pharisees after Jesus.

-Don't think you will be immune from that trap either. Anger can destroy ever relationship that you have around you.

## **III. CONCLUSION—LIFE IS TOO SHORT TO BE SMALL**

-Don't spend your short life living to be short! Life is too short to be small!

-There are some things that you can do when it all storms in on you. What can we do to keep from falling into the trap of anger?

## A. Avoid Chronically Angry People

-There are people that when you get around them, they tax your spirit. It is not too long before they say things that can set you off in a direction that you wouldn't normally go. Most of the time those people need to understand the difference between problems and inconveniences.

In his book, *Uh-Oh*, essayist Robert Fulghum wrote of the summer of 1959 when he was working at the Feather River Inn near Blairsden, California. He was just out of college and had a tendency to be a little hot-headed and free with his opinions. One week he grew extremely angry because the employees were being served the same thing for lunch every single day—two wieners, a mound of sauerkraut, and stale rolls. Furthermore, the cost of the meals was deducted from the employees' checks. On Friday night he learned that the same fare would be on the employee menu for two more days.

Fulghum, who had already taken a strong dislike to the hotel's owner, vented his anger to the night auditor, a man named Sigmund Wollman. *I declared that I have had it up to here; that I am going to get a plate of wieners and sauerkraut and go and wake up the owner and throw it on him. I am sick and tired of this and insulted and nobody is going to make me eat wieners and sauerkraut for a whole week and make me pay for it and who does he think he is anyway and how can life be sustained on wieners and sauerkraut and this is un-American. . .*

*The whole hotel stinks anyhow. Fulghum continued his tirade, and the horses are all nags and the guests are all dumb and I am packing my bags and heading for Montana where they never even heard of wieners and sauerkraut and wouldn't feed that stuff to pigs.*

Fulghum raved on for about twenty minutes, delivering his monologue at the top of his lungs and with much profanity.

Sigmund Wollman, who had spent three years in a German death camp during World War II, just sat, watching and listening. Finally he said, "Fulchum, are you finished?"

"No. Why?"

"Lissen, Fulchum. Lissen me, lissen me. You know what's wrong with you? It's not wieners and kraut and it's not the boss and it's not the chef and it's not this job."

"So what's wrong with me?"

"Fulchum, you think you know everything, but you don't know the difference between an inconvenience and a problem. If you break your neck, you have nothing to eat, if your house is on fire—then you got a problem. Everything else is an inconvenience. Life *is* inconvenient. Life is lumpy. Learn to separate the inconveniences from the real problems. You will live much longer. And you will not annoy people like me so much. Good night."

And with those words he waved the young man off to bed. Before we lose our cool, it often helps to ask: Problem or Inconvenience?

## B. Take Time to Cool Off

-Thomas Jefferson once said that if you are angry count to ten, if you are real angry count to one hundred. In other words, there is something important about just cooling off.

-Ask yourself some questions:

- Is this anger really worth what it's going to do to others and me emotionally?
- Will I make a fool of myself?
- Will I hurt someone I love?
- Will I lose a friend?
- Am I seeing this event from the other person's point of view?

-If we are not careful in situations where we are terribly angry, we can say things that will torch a friendship to the point of being irreparable.

### **C. Choose to Forgive.**

-There used to be statements in bygone years that I have heard some elders say; one of them was, "I try to keep short accounts." That meant that they did their best to pay off their debts of any sort as quickly as they could.

-You will have to live your life in that way. People will make you angry, disappoint you, and hurt you but at the end of the day, there must be some forgiveness that you extend to them. Perhaps I could say not so much for their sake, as for yours.

**Matthew 6:12-15 KJV** And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. [13] And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen. [14] For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: [15] But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

### **D. How Long?**

- How much longer are you going to live with that soul-killing anger that you have?
- How much longer are you going to let that anger get the best of your relationship with God?
- How much longer are you going to let your angry words keep beating down your spouse and children?
- How much longer is it going to be before your anger turns into physical violence that hurts someone you love?
- How much longer before the lid comes off and you explode and your life changes forever?

-There is only one solution for it. . . Repent and be healed. . .

**Matthew 8:7 KJV** And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him.