



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: **Jonah: Judging Jonah**
Speaker: **Sherin Swift, Connections and Equipping Pastor**
Scripture: **Jonah 4:5-11**

⁵ Then 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.

⁶ The LORD God appointed a bush,^[a] and made it come up over Jonah, to give shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort; so Jonah was very happy about the bush. ⁷ But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the bush, so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God prepared a sultry east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

⁹ But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the bush?" And he said, "Yes, angry enough to die." ¹⁰ Then the LORD said, "You are concerned about the bush, for which you did not labor and which you did not grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹ And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?" (NRSV)

Sermon Outline:

God is doing some of his best work coming after Jonah. God is not going to end this story until he gets to Jonah and his heart.

**Obedience is not enough to satisfy God.
God wants Jonah's heart.**

The God of the universe who is over everything wants to have this conversation with Jonah. God wants to use this plant to get his point across to Jonah that his attachment that what is good doesn't make sense. God wants to shift something within Jonah and is after a transformation in Jonah's heart.

Jonah puts himself in the judgement seat.

Jonah's posture is one of watching the city, as he sits under the booth that he has put together. Sitting was a sign of authority in the ancient world. We see this today in our world, where the President of the United States sits at his desk in the Oval Office. Jonah put himself in the judgement seat, judging Nineveh. Not only was he judging Nineveh, but he was also judging God because of his strong feelings toward the Ninevites, he is blinded by his opinion and prejudice.

We lack perspective and make poor decisions. We are not built to be on the judgment throne, God did not create us this way, but that doesn't stop us from offering our opinions to those around us.

God is doing a new thing, and Jonah is missing it.

What is new is that the center of God's work will be outside the borders of Israel. Jonah can't see this because of his own anger. God wants a deeper repentance that changes his heart.

God's agenda in the book of Jonah is transform us, to transform humanity. God is looking to move us from a place of anger and harm towards one another to a place of love and honor. There is a better way to live than doing this our own way.

Lent reminds us that we are not in the judgment seat and our way is not the best way. It is a reminder that the way of Jesus is the way of sacrifice and love. We need the rhythm of repentance and confession to keep us out of that judgment seat and to keep us in the way of Jesus.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Sherin Swift, Connections and Equipping Pastor, concludes our Lenten sermon series through the book of Jonah. Pastor Sherin explores Jonah's conversation with God and his reluctance to repent and what this might look like in our own lives.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, did you grow constantly being judging for what you did or did not do? Or did you grow up in a home where there was grace for those times when you didn't always measure up to your family standards? What was that experience like for you growing up? Journal your answers to these questions, offering them up to God.
3. God is not looking for more than obedience from Jonah, he is after Jonah's heart. Do you believe that God is after your heart, that God is looking to transform your heart? Are you able to hear the truth that you are God's beloved, made in his image? If you do believe this is true, are you currently running from God, or are you stepping closer to God? Share your answers with your small group or a trusted brother or sister in Christ.
4. Have you been giving into your anger and frustration, letting it trap you? Have you been taking a posture of sitting in the judgment seat? Or are you able to trust God's goodness, wisdom, and love for you? Take time to sit with God offering the answers up to him in confession and repentance.