

Read: Jonah 3:10-4:11

Is it right for you to be angry?

Jonah 4:9

God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

"And now you know... the rest of the story." That's how a famous radio show from long ago ended its broadcast. Paul Harvey would share fascinating facts or forgotten bits of history but keep out key names and parts in order to create a "surprise." After a brief pause, Mr. Harvey would conclude, "Now you know... the rest of the story."

Jonah was called by God to preach against the evil people in a city called Nineveh. But Jonah ran away on a boat. The boat began to sink in a big storm. Jonah was swallowed by a large fish, learned of God's grace, and went to Nineveh. The evil people repented, and asked God not to destroy them.

The end? Not quite. Here's the rest of the story.

God changed his mind and did not destroy them. And what is Jonah's reaction? Joy and thanks? Amazement how God used him as part of his saving plan? Nope. Jonah became angry. What? Jonah is angry that God saved people and didn't destroy them? Yes, that is correct.

Jonah was angry because he knew God was gracious and forgiving, and that he loved saving people who talked and acted terribly. In fact, Jonah set up a little viewing area to see if the people or God would change their minds and destruction would still come.

While Jonah is waiting in the red-hot heat, God provided a plant that grew so tall it provided shade over his head. But the next day, a worm attacked the plant and it died. Boy, was Jonah mad about that! God scolded him. "You cared about this plant, but not about the hundreds of thousands of people in Nineveh?"

And now you know the rest of the story. So what do we learn? While Jonah knew God and experienced for himself God's grace and mercy, Jonah didn't think the people in Nineveh deserved God's grace and mercy. Jonah's story shows us what a lack of love for others can do. But the rest of the story also shows how much God loves the world, even people we don't like because they have been terrible. That's why Jesus died for them like he did for us. He wants all of us to be saved. That's the story of the gospel.

Now *you* can share the rest of the story!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Why was Jonah angry at the end of the story?
- What did God tell Jonah about Nineveh?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Agree or disagree. When someone is not Christian or is mean to me, it is okay to not show them love.
- Who does God want me to share forgiveness with? Why?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Think of a time when someone has hurt you or been mean to you. What do you want to happen to them and why?
- It isn't easy to love and forgive someone you don't get along with. Yet God does and wants us to. What does this show other people about our God and his mercy?

Closing Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we often struggle to love people in this world. Yet you sent Jesus to be the Savior of the whole world. Let us see every person you created as someone you love and want to give your grace, mercy, and forgiveness, just like me. Amen.