

More Than a Fish

LESSONS FROM THE PROPHET JONAH

Jonah 4: A Question Left Hanging...

THE CHALLENGE OF LOVING YOUR ENEMY



Jonah 3:10-4:11

^{3:10} When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

^{4:1} But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. ² He prayed to the Lord, “Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. ³ Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

⁴ But the Lord replied, **“Is it right for you to be angry?”**

Jonah 3:10-4:11

⁵ Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. ⁶ Then the Lord God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. ⁷ But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

⁹ But God said to Jonah, **"Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"**

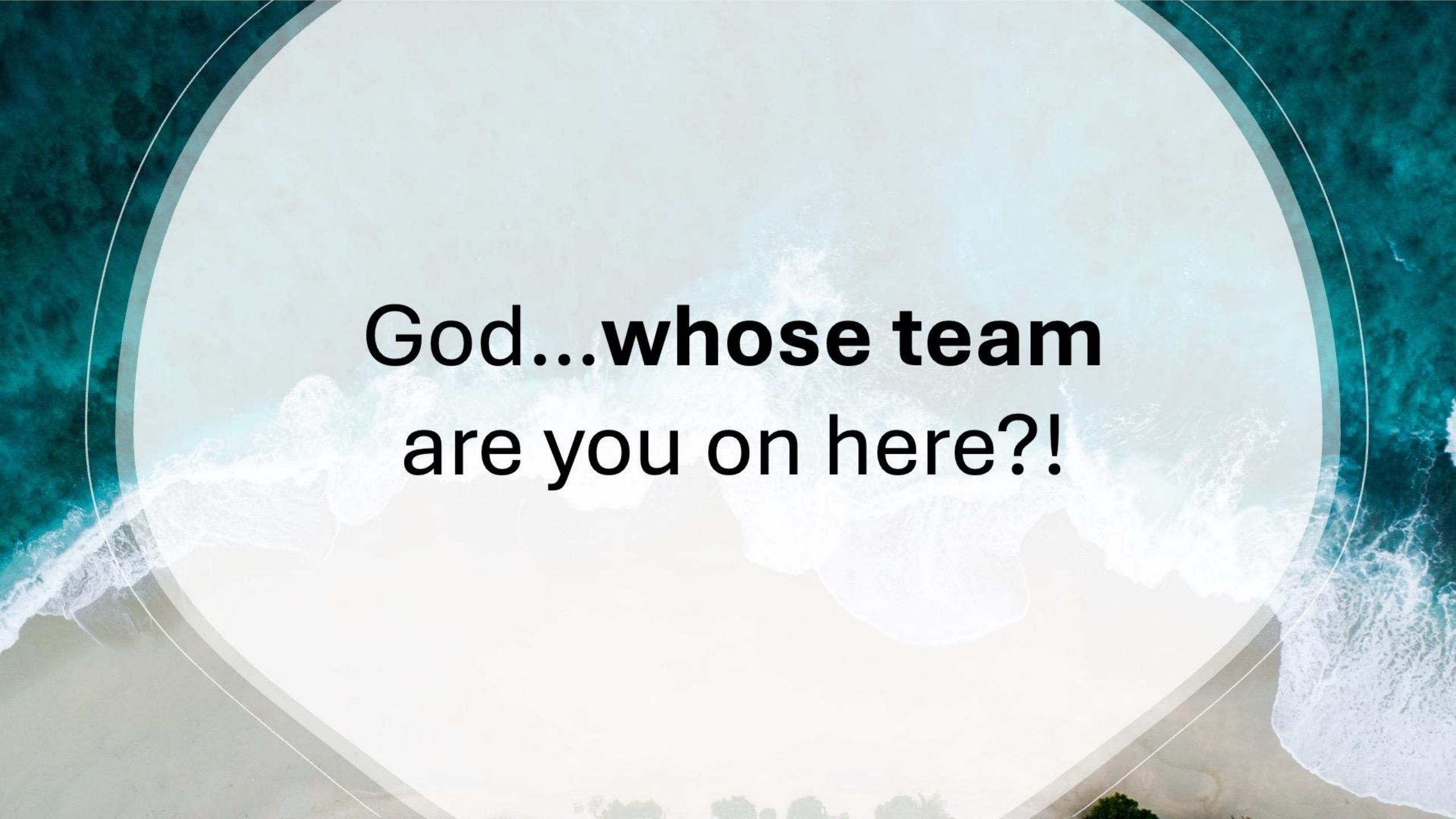
Jonah 3:10-4:11

^{9b} “It is,” he said. “And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.”

¹⁰ But the Lord said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. ¹¹ And **should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”**

God's Three Questions

1. **Is it right** for you to be angry?
2. **Is it right** for you to be angry about the plant?
3. **Should I not have concern** for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?

An aerial photograph of a beach with turquoise waves crashing onto a sandy shore. The entire scene is framed within a large, semi-transparent white circle. The text is centered within this circle.

**God...whose team
are you on here?!**

QUESTION 1 (Jonah 3:10-4:4)

3:10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

4:1 But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and **he became angry.** ² He prayed to the Lord, “Isn’t this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. **I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.** ³ Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.”

⁴ But the Lord replied, “Is it right for you to be angry?”

Jonah 3:7-9

“By the decree of the king and his nobles:
...Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. **Who knows?** God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”

Jonah 3:7-9

“By the decree of the king and his nobles:
...Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. **Who knows?** God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.”

Jonah knows!



Jonah hates God for loving
his enemies.

“Now, Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.” (Jonah 4:3)

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You are angry at God because:

**You want God to do what
you would do.**

Deuteronomy 5:9-10

“I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, **punishing** the children for the sin of the parents to **the third and fourth generation** of those who hate me...

Deuteronomy 5:9-10

“I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, **punishing** the children for the sin of the parents to **the third and fourth generation** of those who hate me...
...but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”



You are angry at God because:

**You want God to do *what
you would do.***

QUESTION 2 (Jonah 4:5-9a)

⁵ Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. ⁶ Then the Lord God **provided** a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. ⁷ But at dawn the next day God **provided** a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God **provided** a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."

⁹ But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

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You are angry at God because:

**You are living for the
temporary, instead of the
eternal.**

Matthew 5:43-48

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. **He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.**

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You are angry at God because:

**You are living for the
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eternal.**

QUESTION 3 (Jonah 4:9b-11)

^{9b} **“It is,”** he said. **“And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.”**

¹⁰ But the Lord said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. ¹¹ And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”

QUESTION 3 (Jonah 4:9b-11)

^{9b} “It is,” he said. “And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.”

¹⁰ But the Lord said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though **you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight.** ¹¹ And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”



The person you hate is
**precisely the person God
wants you to love.**

⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray
for those who persecute you (Matthew 5:44)

Mark 1:40-42

⁴⁰ A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.”

⁴¹ Jesus was **indignant** *(or)* **moved with compassion**. He reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” ⁴² Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

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Is it right for **you** to
be angry at Him?