

His mercy prevails

July 6, 2020

JONAH 4:6-11 NKJV - (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?" "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 provided a great fish (**chapter 2**) and now he provided a plant. Jonah was glad of the extra shade that the plant gave him against the fierce sun. But the plant lived for only one day. God intended to teach Jonah a lesson about kindness. So, as God had provided a fish and then a plant, so now he provided a worm. That night the worm attacked the plant, and the plant died. So Jonah lost its shelter.

Next day, when the sun grew hot, God also provided a hot east wind to blow upon Jonah's head. Jonah felt so weak and miserable, he wanted to die. Jonah's words were like Elijah's words in the desert. Elijah, too, had run away. But he really wanted to do God's work, and thought he had failed. Jonah still did not understand how wrong he was. God has no pleasure in seeing evil people die. He told Jonah that he was wrong not to pity the people of Nineveh. God knew that they were like children. They needed God to be like a good father to them.

God cares for everything that he has made. He cares for every person and he cares for every animal (**Psalms 145:9**). He is very patient. He will go to great trouble to try to persuade every person in every nation to trust in him and to follow him. God is known to be a God of mercy and grace. Understanding mercy is often difficult for people as we tend to be a generation of "I'll get him for that" and "I hope they get what they deserve." Many have developed a nature of harsh criticism and want others to get what they have coming to them and then some.

God, however, is merciful to even the worst offenders, sinners, and law-breakers. This means that even though He knows of our guilt, He doesn't always issue the punishment deserved. Simply, we are all sinners and do not meet the standards of righteousness that God intends us to have. But just like the Ninevite people who also repented, God's love, compassion and mercy is extended to the fullest.

SCRIPTURE READING: JEREMIAH 3:12b

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: The next time you wish bad on someone, 'Include yourself.'

"A JOURNEY OF THE HEART"