



## Discussion Questions

"The God Jonah Could Not Forgive" — Jonah 4:1–4

Pastor Bob Erbig // July 19, 2026

### Getting Started

1. Before looking at the text: what makes you angry — not at circumstances in general, but specifically at someone else? Is it easier or harder to name what makes you angry at God's mercy toward someone else?

### Theological Reflection

2. Jonah 4:1 uses the same Hebrew word (ra'ah, "evil") to describe both Nineveh's wickedness in 1:2 and Jonah's reaction to their salvation in 4:1. What does this wordplay suggest about where the real moral problem in the book has shifted by chapter 4?

3. Jonah's prayer in 4:2 quotes Exodus 34:6–7 almost word for word — one of the most repeated confessions of God's character in the Old Testament. How is it possible to know true, accurate theology about God and still be at war with Him? Have you seen this in your own life or in someone else's?

4. Jonah's confession was theologically global ("you are gracious and merciful") but his heart was theologically local (he only wanted it true for Israel). Where might a church or a believer be tempted to let "local" become a wall instead of a base camp for God's mission?

5. God's question in verse 4 — "Do you do well to be angry?" — is left open rather than answered in this passage. Why do you think the text leaves it unresolved? What does it mean for God to ask a genuine question rather than issue an immediate rebuke?

6. Jonah 4:3 shows a prophet who was outwardly obedient (he went, he preached, he watched it work) but inwardly unsubmitted. Can someone be fully obedient to God's commands and still be in rebellion against God's character? What might that look like today?

### Personal Application

7. Is there a specific person whose conversion — or whose reconciliation with God — would test your heart the way Nineveh's repentance tested Jonah's? What would your honest first reaction be if you heard that news this week?

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**8.** The sermon described the difference between honestly bringing anger or disappointment to God in prayer versus "leaving God on read" — going quiet and staying politely unresolved. Which one more often describes your own prayer life when you're upset with God?

**9.** 1 Corinthians 6:9–11 reminds us that "such were some of you" before Christ washed, sanctified, and justified us — we were all, in some sense, former Ninevites. How does remembering your own rescue change the way you respond when someone you'd rather not forgive receives grace?

**10.** The sermon closed with two concrete steps: naming your resentments before God, and identifying one specific person to show mercy to this week. Who is that person for you, and what would showing them mercy actually look like this week?

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*For further reflection: read Luke 15:25–32 (the older brother) and Matthew 20:1–16 (the workers in the vineyard) — two other stories where God's grace toward someone else provokes resentment in someone who received grace first.*

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