



A Missions-Focused Series Through the Book of Jonah • Week 6 of 6

The Question That Won't Let Go

Jonah 4:5–11 | Pastor Bob Erbig | July 26, 2026

BIG IDEA: *God wrecks your fortress to reveal His heart.*

Key Question: *Does God arrange your circumstances to comfort you, or to transform you?*

Two Chairs: "Happy" Jonah (comfortable) and "Apoplectic" Jonah (angry). Which chair am I sitting in right now, and why?

I. THE PULL OF COMFORT (vv. 5–6)

- Jonah storms out and refuses to answer God's question in v. 4 — he heads EAST, echoing Adam & Eve's exile from Eden (Gen. 3:24).
- He builds a sukkah — a flimsy, self-made "fortress" — to watch, and still hope for, Nineveh's judgment.
- God "appoints" (Heb. manah — same word as the fish, 1:17) a plant to shade him. Jonah is "exceedingly glad" — the first time he is happy in the whole book.

Comfort is often a " _____ " idol — the issue beneath the issue.

➤ *Does my comfort supersede my concern for the spiritual well-being of others?*

II. THE PURPOSE OF DISCOMFORT (vv. 7–9)

- God appoints a worm to destroy the plant, then a scorching east wind (the "Sharav") — Jonah again begs to die.
- God asks a second time: "Do you do well to be angry — for the plant?" Jonah: "Yes... angry enough to die."
- God is not an abuser inflicting pain to control — He is a heart surgeon exposing the root disease.

➤ *Where might God be removing my comfort to reveal what I actually trust?*

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III. THE AWKWARD SILENCE (vv. 10–11)

- "You pity the plant... and should not I pity Nineveh?" Jonah mourns a plant he never labored for; God grieves for 120,000 people who don't know Him.
- Grace turned to entitlement is the pattern of every human heart (cf. Eph. 2:8–10) — we too have received by sheer grace what we did not earn.
- The book ends without Jonah's answer. The question is aimed at the reader: "Should I not care about these people?"

God says: "You pity the _____, I pity the _____."

➤ Who is my "Lucas" — the one person God is asking me to care about? Write one name below.

A ROADMAP TO MISSIONAL ACTION

- Develop the heart of an evangelist — pray for and pursue one person God has placed in your life.
- Find a way to serve those far from God (City Relief, Feeding Hands, Market Street Mission).
- Register for the 175th Missions Conference, October 2–4.
- Pray about how our church lowers the drawbridge to reach and welcome more people.

THIS WEEK'S BIBLE READING — Follow-Up to Jonah

Mon Genesis 3:22–24 — driven east, the direction of a hardened heart

Tue Exodus 34:5–9 — the mercy formula Jonah had memorized

Wed Ephesians 2:1–10 — grace, not entitlement

Thu Luke 15:11–32 — the older brother's resentment of mercy

Fri Romans 9:14–24 — God's sovereign right to show mercy

Sat Matthew 28:18–20 — the Great Commission, from Jonah to Jesus

Sun Jonah 4 (full chapter) — reread in light of this week's sermon

"And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city...?" — Jonah 4:11

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