

Do You Love All Men?

Scripture

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You [are] a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for [it is] better for me to die than to live!" Then the LORD said, "[Is it] right for you to be angry?" So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. And the LORD God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it [so] damaged the plant that it withered. And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, "[It is] better for me to die than to live." Then God said to Jonah, "[Is it] right for you to be angry about the plant?" And he said, "[It is] right for me to be angry, even to death!" But the LORD said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. "And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?" (Jonah 4:1-11 NKJV)

Commentary

This is a rather bizarre response from Jonah. Most ministers would be thrilled to have success in their ministry. However, Jonah is angry that the Lord is merciful to the people of Nineveh. Apparently this was his motive for running to Tarshish in the first place. He did not want to see Nineveh repent and find favor with God.

This reveals a deep hatred for people, a sinful desire to see the wicked perish. My dear friend, keep your soul from such evil. God is not pleased with the death of the wicked (Ezekiel 33:11).

It is amazing that Jonah would have such a mindset since he had just been given great mercy. God reveals his hypocrisy with the example of the plant. Jonah was glad for the plant and sorry to see it wither, but he was unconcerned with the souls of more than one hundred and twenty thousand people and much livestock.

The question we each need to ask ourselves is, "Do I love all men?" I know we all want to say yes. However, before we flippantly dismiss this question we need to look at our enemies. What is your attitude toward those who seek your demise?

Jesus said, ". . . love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet your brethren only, what do you do more [than others]? Do not even the tax collectors do so? Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:44-48 NKJV)

Do not act like Jonah. You have been given great mercy so be merciful. Follow the Lord's example and obey His commands to love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. You will have your reward in due time.