



Believing Is Seeing: A Picture of Humility

Day 1—It's Not Fair!

How often have we heard someone say, “It's not fair!”? Perhaps it's a child who thinks another received something bigger or better, or an adult who feels cheated out of a much-deserved promotion, or a person who watches an unethical neighbor prosper, or a diligent student who fails a test, while another, who didn't study, gets the top grade... Does God view fairness from our perspective? If not, is that fair? Read the book of Jonah. Why doesn't Jonah want the people of Nineveh to repent? Why does Jonah resent it when the vine dies? Pause and consider your views of fairness, justice, grace, and God's eternal perspective. Pray for a teachable spirit.

Day 2—We Sing, 'Amazing Grace'; Do We Believe It?

Most of us have sung Newton's “Amazing Grace,” but do we really believe we're saved by grace, or do we live as if it is about our own worth or merit? Do we attempt to add our “goodness” to what Jesus has done as we ponder our salvation? How does our response to the question affect our view of ourselves, God, and others? Do we sometimes allow the thought that we deserve God's generosity and grace but another doesn't to creep into our thinking? Do we put limits on God's grace by measuring it against our understanding of fairness? Read Jonah 3:10-4:11 and Matthew 20:1-16. Pray for an enlarged vision of God's generosity, forgiveness, mercy, and grace.

Day 3—Do We Major in the Majors?

Jonah is concerned that the Israelites will disapprove of God's mercy toward their enemy, Assyria, of which Nineveh is the capital; Jonah also rues the loss of his comfort (the vine). Those who labored all day in the vineyard resent others receiving full pay for only a few hours work (Matthew 20). Read Luke 14:1-24. What concerns the Pharisees? Do Jesus' words in 14:11 help clarify Matthew 19:30 and 20:16? What do you learn about God's priorities and God's desire to bless people whom others might deem unworthy (Luke 14:21)? What does Jesus consider to be of utmost importance (Luke 19:10)? Pray you will have the same passions Jesus has.

Day 4—“For God So Loved the World”; Do We?

Meditate on John 3:16; Romans 5:8; and 1 John 4:9-10. Now read Genesis 12:3; 22:18; 28:14. In the call of Abram (Abraham), we see God's intentions to bless the world through Abraham's offspring (the Jewish people, and ultimately Jesus). Yet Jonah didn't want God to bless the people of Nineveh, and some laborers took offense at the landowner's (God's) generosity (Matthew 20). Are we ever like the pouting prophet or resentful workers? Do you know some who need to know God's love? Using Paul's prayer in Ephesians 3:14-19, pray for them.

Day 5—Think of the Harvest!

Our theme texts remind us how precious people are to the Lord. Jonah, the prophet who reluctantly announces that God will show mercy if the people repent, is precious; so are the Ninevites. The laborers who toil all day are precious, and so are those who work only an hour. And, yes, it's mixing metaphors (or parables), but consider that, in Scripture, the harvest often refers to people. Read Matthew 9:35-38. Many laborers are needed to share the story of God's goodness, love, and grace. What happens if we fix our eyes on the Master and on the harvest and forget ourselves and our silly notions of self-worth? Read Colossians 3:23-24 and Hebrews 12:1-3 and pray.

Day 6—How Good Are We at Rejoicing with Others?

Do we live our lives comparing, or are our hearts big enough to rejoice when others are blessed, regardless of our own circumstances? Do we resent the one who comes to Jesus on his/her deathbed or after a life of debauchery and/or cruelty, if we ourselves have served the Lord since our youth? Do our hearts overflow with amazement and joy as we see God's abundant goodness, grace, and love toward others, or do we dwell on the need for things to be fair according to our standards? Read Jonah 3:10-4:11; Matthew 20:11-15; Luke 15:25-32; John 21:17-23; Romans 12:15a; and 2 Corinthians 6:4-10. Pray you will rejoice in the things that make God's heart glad.

Day 7—“Take Me, Jesus, Way beyond Me, Jesus”

If we have attitudes of gratitude and are overwhelmed at God's extravagant grace in our own lives, won't we be filled with joy at the thought that others might also experience God's radical mercy and generosity?! We mustn't guard God's gifts, as if we deserve them; we must share them with abandon, passion, and great love. Read our theme texts and then sing/pray Handt Hanson's lyrics: “Take me, Jesus, way beyond me, Jesus; I will love you, Jesus, when I serve the ones you love.” (2000, Changing Church Forum). Worship Jesus; He loves you so much.