

P326

Grace Notes Radio Program

SERIES: Jonah

THEME: God's Provision (SHORT 13:35)

**SONGS: HE COULD HAVE WALKED ON BY
NINEVEH 2:00**

INTRO: Welcome to Grace Notes. The book of Jonah is a book about God's provision. It was evidenced when He sent a great wind on the sea to get the rebellious prophet back on the right track, and again when He prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah and safely deliver him onto dry land. God also provided salvation for the sailors who prayed to Him for help, and the heathen Ninevites who repented. On our program today, we'll conclude our study of Jonah and once again see God's provision as he teaches Jonah an object lesson about His mercy.

God's first command to Jonah was to preach AGAINST the city of Nineveh because of their wickedness. But when the call came the second time, the command changed a bit to "Preach UNTO it the message I will give you". The message Jonah proclaimed was...

"Forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown".

It's not certain if there was more to the message, but as usual, God provided an escape clause, so to speak, and spared the people when they repented.

Was Jonah happy about their change of heart? Let's read the text which tells the story so well. Jonah chapter 4 reads...

**Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. He prayed to the Lord...
"O Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live".**

The Lord responded..."Have you any right to be angry?"

Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. Then he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. Then the Lord God PROVIDED a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine. But at dawn the next day, God PROVIDED a worm, which chewed the vine

so that it withered. 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".

But God said to Jonah, "Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?

Jonah said, "I do. I am angry enough to die."

But the Lord said, "You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight.

But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

God provided a vine, a worm and a scorching wind, to teach Jonah a greater principle - that He is not just a God of the Israelites - they do not have exclusive rights to salvation. Though the Israelites were chosen to preserve God's Word throughout the years, they were also called, according to Genesis 22:18, to be a blessing to ALL nations by sharing God's word. Jonah seemed to have forgotten that. He was more concerned with his discomfort than peoples' souls.

Jonah had forgotten - or never quite realized - that he, too, had already been the unworthy object of God's mercy.

Maybe we've not realized it, either. How do we feel about our enemies?

The only enemy I can remember ever having was my last boss. He gave me a hard time my entire career at that company. In an effort not to hate him, I prayed for him daily, because I learned that you can't hate someone you pray for. I had tried to witness to him of Christ, but he always cut me short. It was my last day there and I was getting ready for my exit interview with him. He said he would give me ten minutes of uninterrupted time to tell him how I would have run the department. I realized that this was my last opportunity to deliver the entire Gospel message, but debated for a moment as to whether I wanted him to know the way after the way he had treated me. Thank God, I did tell him, and while I don't know if he ever received Christ as his Savior, his attitude toward me changed dramatically after that and he even hired me later on as a contractor.

Romans 12:20 says that we're to feed our enemy if he is hungry and give him something to drink if he is thirsty.

Jesus did that for Judas - even when he knew he would betray him.

Matthew 5:44 says...

LOVE your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.

Now that's a hard bill to fill, but Jesus did that for us on the cross as He paid the penalty for our transgression against God. God's statement to Jonah that He had compassion on people 'who cannot tell their right hand from their left' was very much like what Jesus said as He hung on the cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do".

Oh, that we might pray this prayer...

"When I'm having a hard time forgiving someone, help me Lord to remember all the times You've forgiven me."

Jesus could have walked on by the cross but He didn't...and how glad I am that He changed me from His enemy to His friend through His mercy!

***** **WRITERS: Wanda Mallette/
Ann McNair Abercrombie**
*** **HE COULD HAVE WALKED ON BY** ***
***** **LENGTH: 4:26**

Verse 1

***He didn't have to save His life
He could have saved His own
He didn't have to walk that hill
And suffer there alone
He didn't have to carry my cross
Or pay a price so high
He didn't have to die for me
He could have walked on by***

Chorus

***A band of angels stood nearby
To save God's only Son
Ten thousand waited for a word
But His lips uttered none
He bought my freedom with His life
And I can't tell you why
He didn't have to set me free
He could have walked on by.***

Verse 2

*I didn't earn His precious love
This gift he gave to me
I'd never done a thing for Him
But still this gift was free
He didn't have to walk through the dark
So that I could see the light
He didn't have to love me so
He could have walked on by
(Repeat chorus)
Tag: He didn't have to die for me - die for me
He could have walked on by!*

Jonah's poor attitude reflected his unchanged heart. He would rather die than be the instrument through which Israel's chief enemy was spared. He was saved to do a job, but he would not receive the joy and blessing he could have felt in seeing people changed through his work. I believe God spared his life because he had chosen him as the prophet for that time, and He wanted the Ninevites to have a chance to repent, but you'll not find Jonah's name mentioned again after this episode.

The story ends here. God's final question ..."Should I not be concerned about that great city?" waits to be answered by all who read the book, who dare to see themselves as Jonah, and who complete Jonah's story in their own journeys through life.

Like Jonah, each of us is a prophet – 'One who speaks in behalf of another'. 2 Cor. 5:20 says...

We are AMBASSADORS for Christ as though God were making His appeal through us.

There may be an enemy in your life that God has placed there for you to lead to Christ. I end now with a song I wrote as a challenge to myself and to all who claim the Name of Jesus.

******* WRITER: Barbara Sandbek
*** NINEVEH *** LENGTH: 2:00

NINEVEH

by Barbara Sandbek/ASCAP

VERSE 1

**God's word came to go and tell
"repent or be destroyed"
But the Ninevites were enemies
their conduct was no good
So Jonah fled and took a trip
to the other side of town
thought he'd have a 'whale of a time'
and bring the whole house down.**

VERSE 2

**But instead of partying and fun
the way he thought it would be
He spent his time inside a whale
at the bottom of the sea.
Jonah learned he couldn't hide
from the presence of the Lord
God's commands can't be ignored
We must obey His word.**

VERSE 3

**Duty calls for us to share
God's message with the lost
Jesus gave his life for them
He died to pay the cost.
ALL people need to hear the plan
We've no right to choose
Even if we think they're bad
they need to hear GOOD news.**

CHORUS

**(There's a) Nineveh - calling out to you
Nineveh - there's a work to do
You've no right to pick and choose
Go and tell - there's much to lose
Nineveh - you've got work to do.**

CHORUS 2

***Nineveh - is calling out to you
Nineveh - there's a work to do
Don't run and hide like Jonah did
You might end up inside a fish
Nineveh - you've got work to do
Nineveh.....
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Join us on our next program. Until then, let your grace notes be a song of praise!