Jonah's Anger at the Goodness of God
Jonah 4:1-4

Introduction
Jonah's anger at the goodness of God reveals a deep-seated sin problem.

The Aim
(1) To affirm the goodness of God, and (2) To understand the factors that play into our anger.

The Text: Jonah 4:1-4
But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. [2] And he prayed to the LORD and said, "O LORD, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. [3] Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live." [4] And the LORD said, "Do you do well to be angry?"

Outline:
A. Introduction:
  a. Chapter 4 may be called "The Lost Chapter of Jonah". Many of us learn about Jonah either as children or as adults reading to our children. The problem is, most children's story books end at Chapter 3.
  b. Needless to say, we have more to learn.
     i. When we confront Scripture, we receive (2 Ti. 3:16):
        1. Teaching: instruction
        2. Reproof/Rebuke: "blame expressed to the face" (Webster)
        3. Correction
        4. Training: rearing, nurturing
     ii. Scripture does not always comfort. It's meant to convict us and to correct us. We need to "keep the main thing the main thing", and be willing to be corrected. How do we do this? By following a Grammatical-Historical-Literary Interpretation method that honors the rules of written language (verb tenses, word repetition, historical and textual context, figures of speech, etc.).
B. We must not miss these two truths:
  a. God is Good.
     i. "Good is good all the time. All the time God is good." What do we mean by good?
        1. Exodus 34:6-7 defines the essential goodness of God.
        2. Notice how often repeated in OT: Nu. 14:18; 2 Ch. 30:9; Ne. 9:17, 31; Ps. 86:15; 103:8; 111:4; 116:5; 145:8; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2.
        3. Incarnate in Jesus. (John 1:14; 14:9; 17:6; Heb. 1:3)
     ii. Meditate on the wonder that Jesus is Exodus 34:6-7 incarnate! What does this mean to you?
  b. Anger is a symptom of sin.
     i. Definition of Anger: Anger is an emotion characterized by antagonism toward someone or something you feel has deliberately done you wrong. (apa.org)
     ii. Dynamics of Anger: "Jerry Deffenbacher, posits that anger results from a combination of the trigger event, the qualities of the individual, and the individual's appraisal of the situation." (psychologytoday.com)
     iii. Consider the following grid:

	Analyzing Anger "Righteous" versus "Unrighteous" Anger	
1. Trigger	*What event triggers my anger?*
2. Appraisal	*Is the trigger a moral, ethical, or safety concern? Must I respond, or will I trust God to avenge (Ro. 12:19)?*
3. Personal Qualities	*How are my physical, spiritual, mental, psychological, emotional, and relational qualities affecting my response?*

    iv.   Analyzing Anger
        1.   General: Prov. 19:11 and Ecc. 7:9 give general wisdom on the value of having good sense and being patient.
        2.   Jesus: Mark 3:5 and 10:14 show examples of "righteous" anger. Identify the Trigger, Appraisal, and Personal Qualities in these verses.
        3.   Jonah: Identify the Trigger, Appraisal, and Personal Qualities in Jonah 4:1-4. Consider also the following commentary regarding Jonah:

"The egocentricity sets a keynote for the prayer as a whole: "I" or "my" occurs no fewer than nine times in the original. Jonah's prayer is reminiscent of the expostulation of the Elder Brother with its similar selfish emphasis and tone of bitter complaint (Luke 15:29)." (*New International Commentary on the Old Testament*)

"When Christian believers care more for their own interests and security than for the good and salvation of other races and ethnicities, they are sinning like Jonah. If they value the economic and military flourishing of their country over the good of the human race and the furtherance of God's work in the world, they are sinning like Jonah. Their identity is more rooted in their race and nationality than in being saved sinners and children of God. Jonah's rightful love for his country and people had become inordinate, too great, rivaling God. Rightful racial pride can become racism. Rightful national pride and patriotism can become imperialism." (Timothy Keller, *The Prodigal Prophet*, 104)

"As long as there is something more important than God to your heart, you will be, like Jonah, both fragile and self-righteous. Whatever it is, it will create pride and an inclination to look down upon those who do not have it. It will also create fear and insecurity. It is the basis for your happiness, and if anything threatens it, you will be overwhelmed with anger, anxiety, and despair." (Keller, 110)

"Jonah knew that if he preached in Nineveh, the people might repent and as a result, God might more than likely relent from sending judgment. Hoping to seal their fate, Jonah had originally refused to preach so that the Ninevites would not have an opportunity to repent. Apparently Jonah hoped that God would have therefore judged them without advance warning. Or perhaps he was afraid he would betray his nationalistic self-interests by functioning as the instrument through which the LORD would spare Israel's main enemy. Jonah probably wanted God to destroy Nineveh for three reasons: (1) as a loyal nationalist, he despised non-Israelites (cf. 1:9); (2) he believed that idolaters had forfeited any opportunity to be shown mercy (cf. 2:9-10); and (3) the prophets Amos and Hosea had recently announced that God would sovereignly use the Assyrians to judge unrepentant Israel (Hos. 9:3; 11:5) and take them into exile (Am. 5:27). If God destroyed Nineveh, the Assyrians would not be able to destroy Israel. The better solution would have been for Jonah to work for the repentance of Nineveh and Israel." (NET Bible)

        4.   Yourself
            a.   Consider James 3:13-18 as a measure of godly wisdom. How is this helpful to you?
            b.   Peter gave a good confession, but was immediately rebuked in Matt. 16:13-23. What does this teach us about our beliefs and identity?