

God's Concern for Others

Scripture Reading — Jonah 4

"Should I not be concerned about that great city?" Jonah 4:11 —

If you're a fan of World Cup soccer, you know how strong loyalties to national teams can be, and you know how strong contempt for opposing teams can be. When God told Jonah to preach to the people of Nineveh, it was like asking him to cheer for the opposing nation's team. In Jonah's day Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire, a great threat to Jonah's people Israel. In God's view, however, it was a city full of people who needed to be saved.

The key to understanding the heart of God is in the last sentence of Jonah 4. "Should I not be concerned about that great city?" God asks. And of course the answer is yes. God loves all the people of the world, wanting them "to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

Today there are many cities bigger than ancient Nineveh was. Megacities are literally teeming with millions of people of all different shapes, sizes, and backgrounds--all in need of the same salvation in Jesus. Of Manila, Moscow, or Miami God also asks, "Should I not be concerned about that great city?"

Wherever you bump into people today, try to see them from God's point of view. Ask how concerned you are for their salvation, and ask God to make your heart like his. Should you not be concerned for them too?

Prayer

Dear Lord, too often our hearts want to go west when you are headed east. By your grace turn us, like Jonah, into your paths for the salvation of the nations. In Jesus, Amen.

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Printed on October 25, 2020

