

**Series:** *A Moody Missionary Meets the Merciful Master*

**Lesson:** *God's Compassionate Control*

**Text:** *Jonah Overview (L1)*

**Date:** *Sunday, September 4, 2011*

*Colonial Hills  
Baptist Church*

As the book begins, we immediately find Jonah in rebellion running from God. What would make him run from God? Had God been overbearing? Had He asked Jonah to do something too hard? No! In actuality, Jonah was just coming off a very successful time of ministry (cf. II Kings 14:25). Now, God had given Jonah an opportunity to preach a revival service. But Jonah fled!

Understand the tragedy of this! According to Isaiah 49:3 and other passages, God's chosen nation of Israel was supposed to be the channel through which His compassion was preached to the gentiles so that they might believe and repent. Jonah, one of Israel's leaders and preachers, is flat out resisting, rejecting, and rebelling against that responsibility.

Likewise, we, too, have been given a missional responsibility in this world (cf. Matthew 28:19-20; I Peter 2:9). Our is the responsibility, as recipients of grace, to be channels of grace to those around us who know nothing of the forgiveness of God and a relationship with Him. Yet, like Jonah, we often reject that responsibility or stubbornly insist on doing it in our timing, in our way, and only to those to whom we want to minister. We are naturally selfish and disobedient to God's will in our ministry toward others.

The book of Jonah is a call to such people who are resisting surrendering their ministry with others to God. Through the negative example of Jonah and the clear expression of God's character, we are motivated to surrender and obedience. In particular, it is the *compassion* and *control* of God that compell us to surrender our ministry to Him. And that really is the **theme** of this book: *the compassionate control of God at work to accomplish surrender in the lives of people*. Our goal this morning is to do a brief survey of the book, tracing this theme of God's compassionate control and learning with Jonah that *you must surrender to God's ministry because of who He is*.

**YOU MUST SURRENDER TO GOD'S MINISTRY  
BECAUSE HE IS IN CONTROL.**

God teaches Jonah that God will have His way through seven specific demonstrations of control.

1. *God "sent out" a storm (1:4)*
2. *God controlled the lot (1:7)*

3. *God "prepared" a fish (1:17)*
4. *God "spoke" to the fish (2:10)*
5. *God "prepared" a goard (4:6)*
6. *God "prepared" a worm (4:7).*
7. *God "prepared" a wind (4:8).*

Jonah learned three lessons relating to the sovereign control of God and his required response to it:

1. ***He learned that He couldn't run from God.***
2. ***He learned that He couldn't be God.***
3. ***He learned that He couldn't stop God.***

**YOU MUST SURRENDER TO GOD'S MINISTRY  
BECAUSE HE IS COMPASSIONATE.**

Consider three expressions of kindness that God displays towards His own wayward servants:

1. ***God extends forgiveness when we fail Him (2:1-11).***
2. ***God gives grace when we fail Him (3:1-3).***
3. ***God patiently teaches us when we fail Him. (4:1-11)***

**CONCLUSION**

God's compassionate control is always at work in your life, believer! You must, therefore, surrender to God so that He can use you to further demonstrate those attributes toward the unsaved. Do you find yourself in Jonah's sandals, knowing that you need to give your life to minister to people—your family, your neighbor, your boss, your students, your brother, your parents, your church—but you aren't willing to give up your excuses or preferences? God will target your rebellion, either with His compassion or His control, and He will accomplish His will in bringing you to surrender and channeling His grace to His enemies.