

# Be Grateful

But 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." But the Lord replied, "Have you any right to be angry?" (Jonah 4:1-4)

When Jonah went into Nineveh (a godless nation) with his message, "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned" (Jon. 3:4), the eventual result was that the king himself proclaimed a fast.

Is this because the king invited Jonah to his palace? No. Is it because the king left his palace to hear Jonah? No. It was because "the Ninevites believed God. They declared a fast, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth" (v. 5). It began with the people. Today we use the expression "grass roots"-what ordinary people think and do. It was the people who "believed God." (It doesn't say they believed Jonah.) The consequence was that the news reached the king of Nineveh, and he got involved (v. 6). The fast in turn moved the heart of God, who had sent Jonah to Nineveh in the first place!

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened. -Jonah 3:10

The whole scenario, then, was God's idea. He had looked upon a godless nation with graciousness by sending Jonah to them. The only ungracious person was Jonah himself who lost face because of his unvindicated prophecy.

God hates ingratitude. His undiluted wrath was displayed in

ancient times because people who knew God did not glorify Him as God, “nor gave thanks to him” (Rom. 1:21). God notices our gratitude happily, but He also notices our ingratitude and our not remembering to thank Him.

*Excerpted from Just Say Thanks! (Charisma House, 2005).*