

The main points again...

Tales of the Unexpected

A good ending:

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.

BUT not God's ending...

TYPICAL! Jonah is angry at God for acting like God
Above all [Jonah] is a person struggling to understand a God who is far bigger than he ever conceived. [Jonah] is a finite being caught in the tension between justice and mercy, the paradox of a sovereign God who gives way before prayer, the reality of a God who asks of us outrageous things

God changes his mind?

God aims to redeem creation...

by judgement or preferably by forgiveness

Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, house of Israel?'

- Ezekiel 33.11, cf. 2 Peter 3.9

God is unfair

Christ came for the sin-sick not the spiritually-fit

Getting more than you deserve

Oh it's not as bad as that. I haven't got my rights, or I should not be here. You will not get yours either. You'll get something far better.

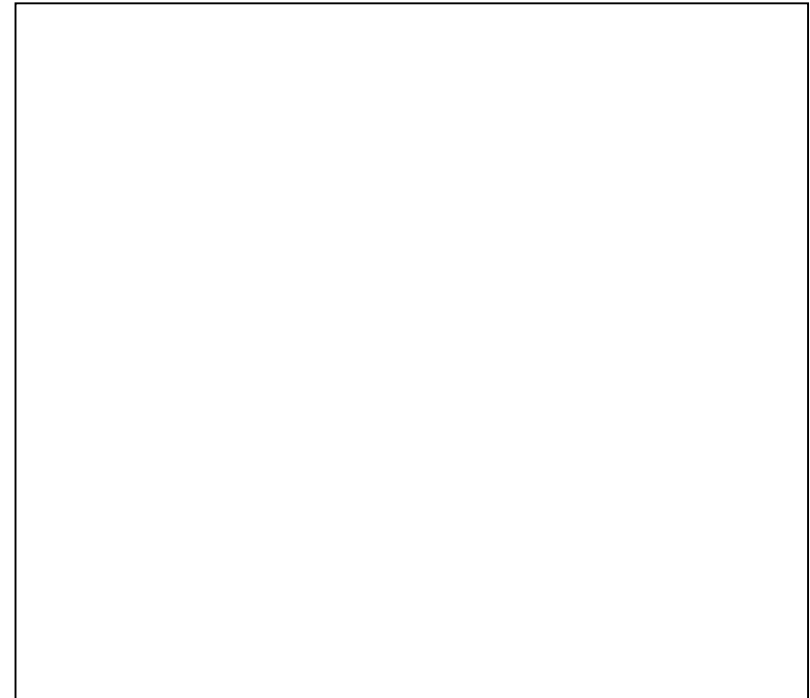
Never fear - CS Lewis, *The Great Divorce*.

Something better than being fair...

I'm don't feel special

New brothers and sisters...

Israel was not meant to be God's only child



Is it right for you to be angry?

Are we prepared to show offer acts of pro-active forgiveness?

OR

Are we concerned to limit the community of the forgiven to our own kind on our won terms?

"You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbour'¹ and hate your enemy.' But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.

- Matthew 5

So what...

If you have time, read the whole of Jonah again. Try to do so as if you were hearing it for the first time.
Individually write down what you think the book is about...
Share your answers...

Is it a surprise that Jonah does not finish at 3.10?

What do you think Jonah's reason for running away from Nineveh in the first place was?
Read Jonah 1.1-3 and Jonah 4.1-3

Look at Exodus 34.1-9

What does God say about himself as Moses descends from the mountain?

Why do these qualities make Jonah angry?

Do you find the desire for God to forgive, to embrace and not to exclude annoying?

Consider

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AND

Oh it's not as bad as that. I haven't got my rights, or I should not be here. You will not get yours either. You'll get something far better. Never fear

Does God change his intentions when we pray or does he merely change the way in which he will realise his intentions?
Does God treat us unfairly in that we get more than we deserve?

Read Luke 15.11-31

What parallels can you find with Jonah's anger in the unexpected end of this story?

Sunday March 9th 2008



Unfair God -Jonah 4

Devoted to Christ, people, mission