

## Articles and Sermons :: Having God's Compassion And Mercy For Others

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I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. - Jonah 4:2

We all know the story of the prophet who was swallowed by the fish. Children are amused and enough the thought of it! Yet as adults when we take time to read through the details we realize a much more serious and importance message is being given to us. Jonah was a holy prophet and admired by the people of Israel. He heard the voice of God many times and obeyed in sharing the truth with the people of God. But when the voice of the Lord told him to go to a very wicked people who worshipped the fish god, Jonah said no. He went the opposite direction in a boat but the Lord had a way of getting his attention and encouraging him to obey and speak repentance to those people. Jonah had seen time and time again God show mercy to Israel when they did not deserve it and it turned his stomach to think he would show mercy to the very wicked people of Nineveh. Even after preaching and seeing the peoples repentance Jonah still felt that God should judge them in some way (Jonah 4:1).

We all can be like Jonah at times, especially if we are the people who have been hurt by others. The people of Nineveh enslaved and caused great harm to Israel before so the thought of forgiving them and even God showing mercy to have them become believers was too much for Israel or their prophet Jonah to accept. Have we been hurt by others in the world who we have not forgiven? Maybe we have forgiven them but do we want them to be saved? St. Benedict of Nursia says, "To hate no one. Not to be jealous or envious. To hate strife. To evidence no arrogance. Never despair of God's mercy." God's heart is full of grace, meaning he wants to extend his love and mercy to those who do not deserve it especially. God is compassionate and very slow to anger against those that we feel deserve it. We are never called to hate anyone, desire evil for anyone, if we shared the true Spirit of Christ we will seek the mercy of the love for all of humanity. This also extends to the body of Christ that we would seek the good of all those who call upon the Name of the Lord.