

1. Jonah (Jonah is one of the most well-known characters in the OT. Most know of his story—one of God’s prophets—2 Kings 14:25 finds him sharing a favorable prophesy to Jeroboam II—in the belly of the big fish—and usually when speaking about Jonah, that is the focus; how he ran away from God; how God caused the storm that eventually led him into the water and into the fish. Lots of lessons there: how we can’t run from God; how God is ultimately in control; and how God rescues us. But there is another side of the story and that is what I want us to focus on)
2. The Others (in the book of Jonah. They not only play a pivotal role within the story—in one way it really is all about them—they having an opportunity to encounter the one true God and the ways in which they react—even though their encounters were with a reluctant, disobedient and angry prophet)
 - a. The sailors—Jonah 1:14 (Jonah brought big drama to their lives as he ran from God. Once the storm hit, they were stressing, trying to figure things out when all eyes turned to Jonah. Jonah did manage to give a witness to Jehovah—1:9—along with instructions to throw him overboard. The reaction of the sailors seems to be one of faith as they prayed to Jehovah, sacrificed to him and made vows to him)
 - b. Nineveh—Jonah 3:1-10 (Of course this vast city was the object of Jonah’s reluctance and anger. Nineveh was the capital of the great Assyrian empire—brutal, pagan, evil and Israel’s main enemy. No way Jonah wanted anything to do with it—much less for God to show compassion upon it. The belly of the fish did get Jonah’s attention and he ultimately did get spit out of it in Nineveh, but he wasn’t happy. He spoke just a few words to the city: **Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.** To his surprise they heeded those words and repented—from the king all the way down to the cows! Israel’s great enemy repented and turned toward the Lord! Jonah should have been happy, but he was not. He had no desire to see his enemy enjoying the compassion and mercy of the Lord. Thank about that! In his explanation to God about why he refused to initially go, he spells it out—4:2—by telling God—I knew you would do this—spare Nineveh—because of your grace and compassion! It angered him so much—he wanted to die!)
3. Turned Over (instead of Nineveh being overturned—everything in Jonah is turned over because of God’s compassion and mercy to the others)
 - a. It is the prophet who is disobedient and angry
 - b. It is the others who are receptive and rescued
4. (The book of Jonah makes it as clear as possible that God’s mercy and compassion is extended to everyone—even folks as vile and hated as the Ninevites—his love has no boundaries; his compassion has no end; and he will do what needs to be done to express that love to everyone—even our enemies) Jonah 4:11
5. (Now the big question of the text to us then is) Are We Okay with God Loving our Enemy (BTW, if you do not know—the city that exists now on the location of ancient Nineveh is Mosul, Iraq. How would we feel if God called us to go to that city right now and proclaim his message? But we don’t even have to look that far—what about those around us with whom we disagree on issues, lifestyles, etc. What does the book of Jonah speak to us concerning those others? Listen to Christian author and teacher, Timothy Keller, from his book, the Prodigal Prophet—**QUOTE.** Better yet, let’s listen to Jesus. He says it simply but precisely—love your enemies. God certainly does—as he does all others. One more scripture—a beautiful one that wraps up Jonah’s story)

6. Isaiah 19:23-25 (quite a different perspective on the others and how God sees them. What about us?)