

Do You Do Well to Be Angry?

Over the past few years, I have labored in my yard in an attempt to get grass to grow into a lawn. I have also taken somewhat of an interest in shrubs, planting several in various locations around the yard. Each year the labor seems to be in vain as the heat and lack of rain destroy my efforts to have a green, full lawn. I try again the next spring with high hopes encouraged by promising green grass early in the season. Then, the summer heat takes its toll and my lawn is once again reduced to a dust bowl.

This year, I added sprinklers to help with the lack of water in the late summer. However, this year the heat wave arrived in May and I could not add enough water for the young lawn to survive. I saw the early green grass reduced to a burnt brown color and it quickly became outnumbered by bare patches of soil. I became angry at the thought of all the work, seed, and fertilizer I had again put into the yard just to have a dust bowl in the summer and a mud pit in the winter. I stormed into the house exclaiming to my wife that I would never plant another piece of vegetation ever! What grows will grow and whatever dies will be what we have!

I was then reminded of Jonah when he was angry over the Lord sparing Ninevah (chapter 4). The Lord asked Jonah in verse 4 of chapter 4, "Do you do well to be angry?" I love the way the Lord puts this question to Jonah. It makes a great lesson for us today. Later in the chapter, the Lord creates a plant to shade Jonah. When it dies, the Lord asked the question a second time: *And the LORD God appointed a plant, and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort. So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm which attacked the plant, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God appointed a sultry east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah so that he was faint; and he asked that he might die, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live." But God said to Jonah, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" And he said, "I do well to be angry, angry enough to die." And the LORD said, "You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?" (Jonah 4:6-11)*

Once I recalled this lesson, I felt I indeed did not do well to be angry. A drought affects farmers much more than my yard affects me. My yard is insignificant to what the Lord blesses me with over and over again. The Lord has since sent more rain. Blessed be the name of the Lord.