**Jonah 4**

I. Introduction

A. Listening is so crucial

B. We’ll look at principles for listening from Jonah 4

 C. Context of Jonah 4

1. Jonah’s commission: to go to the capital city of Israel’s enemy and preach a message of coming judgment.

2. Jonah’s response: to flee God’s commission and go in the opposite direction

3. God brings a storm and a fish that leads to Jonah’s repentance

4. Jonah goes to Nineveh and preaches a message of coming judgment and Nineveh repents and has a spiritual revival and God shows mercy to Israel’s arch enemy.

II. Principles for listening from Jonah 4

A. God is a listener

1. Notice God asks 3 questions of Jonah

2. God could have easily cut Jonah off for his childish behavior, but God engages Jonah by actually listening to him. He is trying to help Jonah understand his own feelings in the matter. He is not dismissive or condemning.

3. How important it is to just listen to people: to understand them, get clarity about their thoughts, help them gain clarity about their owns thoughts

 a. Listening is not the same as simply not talking.

 b. Pay attention: Why do people say what they’re saying?

 c. What do they really mean when they say what they say?

 d. Aim for the 80/20 rule of listening to talking

 B. God chooses to not say what he could say to Jonah

1. God could’ve legitimately said to Jonah, “you’re wrong! You are a bad prophet.” Or “you need to get a grip.”

2. Likewise, we don’t always have to say what we can say even when we think we’re right.

C. God is clearly right and Jonah is clearly wrong, but God appears to have no need to “be right” in the sense of simply winning the argument. He leaves Jonah with a question to ponder.

1. We need to be less concerned about winning an argument or “being right” and more concerned about listening to what’s really going on

2. We can do significant relational damage when we’re only concerned with winning an argument

**Discussion Questions**

1. How does thinking of God as a listener sit with you? In your relationship with him do you experience him as a listener? How does this idea impact your relationship with him?

2. As you consider God’s interactions with Jonah in Jonah 4, what stands out to you the most and why?

3. Who is a person in your life (from your present or your past) who modeled good listening to you? What specifically did you experience from that person?

4. What is a situation or relationship in your life right now that is calling you to be a more intentional listener? What might listening look like in that situation?