

# True Compassion

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[ 0 : 00 ] Father, each of us know people who have a real problem with anger, and Father, we just lift them before you at this time.

Father, you know that there are some of us here who have great problems with anger, and some of us, Father, who don't know that we have anger problems or anger issues at all, and we ask that you, with gentle but loving power, make that clear to us.

But, Father, we also know that we often get angry, and sometimes we regret it, and sometimes we don't, but we should, and we're just confused about anger. We ask that you would speak to our hearts this morning.

You'd bring your word, your grace, your gospel to our hearts, that we might live well in the face of injustice, that we might live with anger in a way that is good for people and good for us and brings you glory.

And so we want to know your wisdom. So pour out the Holy Spirit, and we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. If you Google this question about negative emotions, and, of course, when you Google something, you always get the right answer.

[ 1 : 23 ] But if you Google things about negative emotions, on all of the lists that I looked at, the first list that come up in every single case, anger, is listed as one of the negative emotions. In fact, it's often the first negative emotion which is listed.

But last week, I talked about how if the day ever came that in Canada, every Canadian was doing a meditation technique, or a type of meditation that meant that they didn't get angry, or if every Canadian was in a type of therapy or counseling which meant that they didn't get angry, or if every Canadian was taking a drug that meant that they wouldn't get angry, if in any one of those three situations or a combination of that day came when something came that nobody in Canada or nobody in any country was getting mad, getting angry, that would be the day that tyrants and oppressors and abusers would throw a party and dance a jig because it would mean that they weren't being confronted ever by the wrong that they were doing.

And so, the fact of the matter is that the Lord will never, part of God's common grace is that God in his common grace will never remove from human beings their sense of anger because to do that, he'd have to destroy our sense of right and wrong.

Now, having said that, we all know that anger still is problematic in all sorts of ways. Some of us get too angry. Some of us don't get angry when we should because we've been so beat up.

Some of us get angry about the wrong things. Some of us, anger becomes a type of an addiction, a type of habit. And often, our anger leads to hatred. And it's like a drug and it can do all sorts of harm.

[ 3 : 16 ] But so, it's just complicated. Anger is complicated. Well, believe it or not, the story that we're going to look at is the book of Jonah comes to an end. This book that was written over 2,700 years ago, almost 2,800 years ago, this book that was written so long ago has such deep wisdom about anger.

So, it'd be a great help to me if you would turn in your Bibles to Jonah chapter 4. Jonah chapter 4. And we're looking at the fifth verse. We've been preaching through the book of Jonah.

And as I've shared before, the way to look at the book of Jonah, the way to understand it, as you're reading it, is to think of a Netflix series that had four or five episodes. I've taken, in a sense, the fourth episode and turned it into two.

And, you know, if you see a good Netflix series from the BBC or from Germany or France or Belgium or something like that, each episode tells a story.

But if you look at all of the episodes together, they tell a far more nuanced and interesting story. And that's the way to understand the book of Jonah. So, if you were making a Netflix special for it, Jonah chapter 1 tells the story of God wanting Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital of the most powerful empire in the ancient Near East, to go there and confront them.

[ 4 : 38 ] Jonah doesn't want to do this. He goes the opposite direction. And that part of the story of Jonah, many people, secular people, people of other religions, they know this part of the story. It becomes clear that Jonah is the one responsible for the storm.

He's thrown overboard. End of episode 1, great cliffhanger. Episode 2, a great aquatic beast, just as Jonah's about to drown, a great aquatic beast comes, swallows Jonah, and Jonah discovers that rather than being dead, he's alive.

Unfortunately, the good news, he's not dead, he's alive. The bad news is he's in the intestines of a great aquatic beast. And how he describes what happens, he does in the form of a prayer, which is also a bit of a conversion prayer.

Him just being, in a sense, gobsmacked at the mercy of God and the kindness of God and his trust in God that God will deliver him. And episode 2 ends with Jonah being vomited by the great aquatic beast onto the shore.

End of episode 2. Episode 3, he goes to Nineveh. He proclaims the message. He says, if you don't repent, you will be overthrown in the same way that Sodom and Gomorrah were overthrown, completely and utterly.

[ 5 : 43 ] And to his complete and utter shock and amazement, well, not entirely, but to our shock and amazement, Nineveh repents from the king right down to the lowest individual.

And what they do is they say, even though this is a message which seems that we have no hope, we are going to repent of our violence, our evil, and our injustice, and we are going to cast ourselves upon the mercy of the Lord in the hope that he will have mercy upon us.

And God relents from his justice upon them, which would then make you wonder why on earth could there be any episodes after that? Well, the episodes after it go at a very interesting thing because, you see, the fact of the matter is, is that the Bible and the Lord is concerned not just with what we do, but the motivation of what we do, the motivation behind why we do things, what we want to have happen, is also very important in trying to understand what's going on in our lives.

And so what we looked at last week, the first four verses, is this shocking thing that the reason that Jonah had run away from God was because he believed that God was merciful and compassionate and all-powerful, and that it might very well be that if he went to Nineveh and proclaimed their need to repent, they might repent, and if they repented, God might not destroy them.

And Jonah hated the Ninevites so much, he didn't want them to be spared. He wanted God to destroy them. And we looked at that last week.

[ 7 : 12 ] But now, and we looked at it, we talked about it in terms of mercy. But if you think about it for a second, and many people in the ancient world, when they were reading this for the first time, they would have maybe said, well, one moment, before we go any farther, I don't know if Jonah was wrong to be angry, and I don't know if maybe God, the Lord was, like maybe Jonah was right to be angry at what the Lord did, and maybe what the Lord did was wrong.

Like, they are, you know, I don't know if I said this last week, I've said it, you know, some other time, and you might or might not remember it, but the fact of the matter is that Nineveh, the Assyrian Empire, literally, literally practiced genocide.

They literally practiced genocide. And in fact, about, if this was written around 755 BC, 33 years after this, Assyria would reinvade the northern kingdom of Israel, take all of the people away in bondage and slavery, and the ten and a half tribes that made up what was then known as Israel completely disappeared from history.

Like, real genocide, real, complete, utter, thorough genocide. These were bad people. And many people in the ancient world, reading this in 755 or 722 or 700, they'd go, I don't know, you know, maybe I don't know about this story, what's going on with this story.

So that's why the story continues. The Lord is going to press in, and we're going to see, well, let's just see what happens. Look at verse 5. So remember, what's just happened is Jonah blasts the Lord and says, I'm so angry, I want to die.

[ 9 : 01 ] He blasts the Lord. The Lord asks him a question. Do you think it's right for you to be angry? Verse 5, Jonah responds, in verse 5, Jonah went out of the city of Nineveh and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there.

He sat under it in the shade till he should see what would become of the city. In other words, Jonah hopes, I've just given the Lord a blast and I think I'm right and I think he's wrong and I'm going to give him a blast and I hope I've changed his mind.

So I'm going to just sit out here, still angry, and I'm going to make something so I have a bit of shade and I'm just going to sit hoping that the Lord changes his mind and fire comes down from heaven and completely obliterates and kills all of the people in Nineveh.

That's where Jonah is. Well, does the Lord change his mind? Well, let's see what happens in verse chapter 6. There's sort of a surprising thing that happens in verse 6. Now, 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. Now, just pause. What's described here, the word appointed is very important. It shows the Lord being sovereign over the world.

[10:23] It's the Lord appoints a great aquatic beast to it. Just the perfect time swallowed Jonah and he appoints the plant. You're going to see in a moment he's going to appoint a worm.

He's going to appoint a scorching wind and it shows how the Lord is sovereign. But what the Lord does here is he causes a plant to grow very, very quickly and it would have been like a vine that sort of entwined itself over the booth and it would have had very, very large leaves.

So while the booth itself, which would have just been made out of sticks, wouldn't have provided very much shade, all of a sudden with the leaves it would have provided very, very good shade. I don't know how many of you have been in a country like Iraq or like Israel.

The heat is if you're, I mean, not if you're down by the ocean, but in where this is, it's a dry heat.

And so when it's a dry heat, it means if you're in the shade and there's a breeze, it actually can be surprisingly comfortable even though the temperature might be quite high.

And so the Lord does this. And there's sort of an interesting thing in the original language. The language is that when it says the Lord wants to save him, what it's saying is that the Lord hopes that by cooling Jonah off, he can cool off his anger as well.

[11:41] Because as we all know, sometimes if things are just going wrong, if you're a bit in pain, you're more grumpy. I shared last week, I can get hungry and not realize that because I'm hungry, I'm getting more grumpy.

Somebody in fact told me there's a word for it, hangry. H before the word angry. And so I can be prone to being hangry. And so there's a similar type of thing that goes on here.

And then it says that Jonah's exceedingly glad. And it's a link to what just happened in the previous story. Because if you go back and read verse 1, Jonah is exceedingly, like just hopping, unbelievably deeply high level angry that the Lord didn't destroy Nineveh.

And now that same description of just unbelievably fever pitch, but now he's happy. He's happy over the plant. And it's connecting the two stories at the level of the original language.

So what's going to happen now? Is Jonah in fact going to say, oh yeah, okay, now that I'm a bit cool and there's a breeze, I don't know, yeah, maybe I have to tone down my anger a little bit. Maybe the Lord was right. I'm a little bit too angry.

[12:48] Well, let's see what happens. Verse 7, but when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant. Actually, in the original language, if you use real technical language, it's smite.

It's an old-fashioned word, you know, like he has a sword, you smite, he smites the plant. And sorry, I like old words. I just, for the three of you out there in the room, that's how you could translate it who like old words.

We'll read verse 7 again, but when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant so that it withered. In other words, it dies. And when the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind and the sun beat down on 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. He'd said that before. He was so angry, it would be better for him to die than to live.

He says that in the previous story. But God said to Jonah, do you do well to be angry for the plant? And Jonah said, yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.

[13:56] That's what he says. I probably should have said that without a smile to be really communicate the anger. And just sort of pause there. Earlier, as I shared, the same type of question was asked in the previous story, do you do well to be angry?

And it's very interesting. In the original language, it does something which you can't really do in English. There's many of you here who speak multiple languages. And you know how sometimes it's complicated to try to communicate something in another language.

And that's one of these cases. And really, the question could be understood two ways or the same way, but with two different senses. Part of it is just asking Jonah, do you realize how angry you are? Do you realize how thoroughly, completely consumed you are with anger? I've done counseling sessions with people. It's so, like it's not funny, but it is funny.

And I sit there and they're across from me and they're red. They're red. You can see veins throbbing in their temples. And they're either sitting there grabbing the tape, the arms like this, or they're tapping furiously.

[15:08] And I might eventually say, do you think you, like, you're really angry? I'm not angry. They say in an angry voice. And you can't even do any counseling until you get them to realize, one second, just time out here, you're angry.

You don't realize you're angry, but you're really angry. Okay, and you can't have any other conversation about anything else until the person realizes how angry they are. So this is like a modern counseling question that the Lord asks them.

First of all, do you realize how angry you actually are? And the second sense of it, it could also, and some of your English versions show the two different senses. The other question is, is it right that you're so angry? Like, do you think it's right that you're so angry over this?

Just this, I know that, you know, in modern counseling, you're not supposed to say, you know, make judgmental comments about emotions and all of that type of stuff, but that's wrong.

It's just sometimes just wrong. Sometimes it's very right. You know, a person has their emotions, but sometimes you have to, in fact, in counseling, you often go off, you often use emotions as a key to figure out what's actually going on because emotions show what we value, what we think is important.

[16:22] It reveals our moral order. It reveals the idols that we have. That's what emotions often reveal. Or the good things, not all bad things because sometimes it reveals a good sense of, a good way of understanding the world and they're very healthy, but they reveal things.

I was just talking to somebody within the last couple of weeks. This is a professional and the court had asked that he do an assessment of a person around a particular issue that was within his medical area of expertise because it affected whether or not a certain type of sentencing was going on and the person, it was a very, very serious offense.

It could mean a long time doing hard time in jail. And basically, as he was sharing this with me and he was sort of laughing about it a little bit, the person tried to fake it and they were doing a terrible job of faking it and he eventually just said, okay, you don't have this condition, you're just trying to fake it.

And as they left the room, they were furious with him because they were trying to manipulate the medical assessment so they could get out of doing hard time and he caught them and their response wasn't, oh, I'm so relieved I don't have it.

No, they were, I won't say all the different F-bombs and other types of expletives that they used as they walked out of the room shaking with fury. Sometimes what we're angry about, as we all know, isn't right and it's good to confront them.

[18:03] So here, just to bring it back to the story, so what's happened? God has had, has shown mercy to Nineveh. They, when they're, they come face-to-face with God, their response to coming face-to-face to the Lord is to say that we're going to stop acting unjustly, we're going to stop doing that which is evil and we're going to stop all of our habits of violence and we're going to cast ourselves upon the mercy of the Lord in the hope that he will stay his judgment and the Lord sees it and he does stay it and Jonah, who's not a Ninevite, not an Assyrian, he's furious over this.

He's furious and remember I said, well, maybe there's something, maybe Jonah had, maybe God's bit, the Lord's a bit wrong to show that and maybe Jonah has something right but now this instance with the plant, the plant grows, the plant dies, Jonah's furious, furious, furious at the death of a plant and now the Lord is going to ask two very, another very searching question.

Remember, he's already said, do you think it's, do you realize how angry you are? Do you think it's right to be so angry over the plant? Is it right for you to be so consumed with anger over the death of a plant?

And Jonah's response is, I'm so angry I could die and then here's how the Lord goes on and the book of Jonah is very interesting. The only other book in the Bible is Lamentations. It's the only other book in the Bible that ends with a question and everything in the book of Jonah is leading to these last two verses where the Lord is going to ask a question and here's how it goes.

And the Lord said, verse 10, you pity the plant. The other way you can translate that word pity is you have compassion and want to do something out of compassion for the plant.

[ 20 : 02 ] You pity or you have compassion for 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.

In other words, if you know anything about plants, those are plants that don't last very long. They're very, very transient. Here's the big question. Verse 11, And should I not have compassion?

Should I not have pity on Nineveh? That great city in which there are more than 120,000 people who do not know their right hand from their left and also much cattle.

And that's how the book of Jonah ends. Shouldn't I have compassion and pity on people? Shouldn't I have that? That's how the book ends.

Just as a bit of an aside, did you know that the same man who was responsible for the long, long, long, most responsible, humanly speaking, for the long, long struggle in England to ban all slavery, William Wilberforce, was also the man who started the first in the world Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

[ 21 : 12 ] Did you know that? The same man who worked to abolish slavery set up an SPCA, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The Lord has compassion on animals.

And if the Lord has compassion and mercy to animals, we should too. We should too. Just a bit of an aside as a throwaway. So, let's, how do we bring this all home?

Remember, I began by saying that if the day ever came that through counseling, therapy, meditation, or drugs that we no longer experienced anger, then the husbands who abused their wives, the employers who abused their employees, the tyrants who abused their people, they would be happy if people no longer experienced anger.

And so, we realized that you don't, that anger is a complicated emotion and that we don't want to, we don't want to get rid of it I mean, that actually wouldn't really be wise because anger is connected even if our moral order and moral understanding is all confused and even deeply confused, you'd think you want to change the order of understanding of what's right and wrong but not ever get rid of that aspect that when we see great evil being done, great wrongdoing being done, great sin being done, great injustice being done, that the proper response should be that we are angry at the injustice and the wrong.

So, it's complicated. What we think about, if you think about it in a second, is we want something to disrupt anger but not eliminate it in a way which also eliminates our sense of right and wrong.

[ 23 : 03 ] we want to disrupt anger in the sense that part of the problem with anger for us human beings is that anger very quickly leads to hatred and that anger quickly leads to something becoming like a habit of anger that we can go to anger to relieve stress, that we can go to anger to make ourselves feel good and lose sense of the other person and so on one hand, anger is connected to a sense of injustice and wrongdoing.

On the other hand, there is something problematic in terms of where anger can go and so, you need something to disrupt the anger. But here's the problem in our culture.

Most of our attempts to disrupt anger want to give evil a pass. Most of our attempts, in fact, all Buddhist compassion, at the end of the day is indifferent to whether or not we give evil a pass.

The meditation technique is to lose that sense of self, to see yourself distant from yourself and so you can just observe the wrong that you've either done that's caused the anger or the wrong that somebody else is doing and it's in a sense an attempt to desensitize us to the wrongness of what has been done.

A lot of counseling and therapy is really just get over it, which means, okay, yeah, they've done that and just get over it. In a sense, it's advice to give it a pass and if you take the drug so that you don't show anger or anything that happens, once again, it's giving evil a pass and so, part of the complication with this is how do we actually disrupt anger so that it doesn't lead to hatred, it doesn't become a habit, it doesn't become an addiction, but how do we do that?

[ 24 : 53 ] One of the reasons we don't want to practice forgiveness is that for many people in our culture, the way we understand forgiveness is it's going to mean giving evil and injustice a pass and one of the reasons we don't want to do some other things about anger is because it's going to give

evil a pass.

So, is there something that can disrupt anger that does not give evil and injustice a pass or say that it's not evil?

that's what the book of Jonah tackles brilliantly at the level of the story because if you think about it, we looked at it last week, there's three things in the Bible that disrupt anger in a good way.

If you could put up the first point, that would be very helpful. I had a hard time wording this point. I'm not really satisfied with how I worded it. I couldn't figure out how to fix it. You know, you folks can tell me how to fix it later.

It's the best I could do. Only that which is rooted in a just moral order can disrupt anger in a good way. Only that which is rooted in a just moral order can disrupt anger in a good way.

[ 26 : 08 ] Now, I'm not going to say much about it this way. There's in a sense one of the ways to disrupt anger in a good way or to start to heal our anger.

And for those of us who struggle with anger, and you know who you are, we know who we are, part of what we have to do is not just pray that we won't experience anger, but partly what we need to do is first pray that the Lord will heal our sense of right and wrong.

It happens in the story in a very simple way. Okay, Jonah, really? You don't think people are worth more than a plant? Like, really?

Plants matter more than a human life? Really? Like, what moral order does that come out of?

People matter more than plants.

They do. So partly the story itself in some small way is trying to help us to shape, to reconsider our moral order. And for some of us, you know, we can get angry about lots of things.

[ 27 : 18 ] We can get angry at the fact that we're not making enough money. And in a sense, what that is trying to tell us is that having a lot of money is very, very, it's right to have lots of money and it's not right to have lots of money.

Or we can get angry because we're just not losing that weight that we want to lose. And the fact of the matter is, is that losing weight is good and having it on is bad.

Or we can have, we can get angry that we're just not putting on the muscle. Or we can have, it can have angry, we can get angry. Here's the thing. It is not a virtue to have more money than somebody else.

Bay Street, it's not. It's not. It's not a sin to be low income. It might be a sin if somebody's doing something to force you to be low income because they're ripping you off.

That can be a sin. But it's not a sin to be low income. It's not a sin to have a few extra pounds or not have as much muscles or not be beautiful.

[ 28 : 24 ] Just to be plain. Those aren't moral things. Those are things in our culture we get all upset about. And so part of our prayer can be the healing of our understanding of right and wrong.

But the Bible here is going to go to something deep and I want to spend more time on something different. There's three things that the Bible talks about that are rooted in the moral order when you understand it properly. You see, if something's coming out of the, since if we understand that anger is connected to the moral order, you get angry at injustice, you get angry at evil, you get angry at sin, you get angry at that, it's connected to the moral order.

So maybe if there's something that's also rooted in the moral order, it can disrupt anger in a way that's actually going to be good for people. And the Bible has three things.

This story only talks about one of them. One of them is forgiveness. Second is mercy, which we talked about last week. And the third is this, compassion. Compassion not just as a feeling but as an action.

In the Bible, compassion is never just a feeling. It's something which leads to benevolent, caring, charitable, generous action.

[ 29 : 38 ] It's not just a feeling. It's something you see. You see, how is it? Well, here, you can put up the next point. True compassion is clear-sighted about what is unjust and or wrong.

True compassion is clear-sighted about what is unjust and or wrong. You see, that's why so many of the meditation techniques and therapies and drugs, they're amoral.

And they want to dull the sense of right and wrong for you to move forward. But compassion, real compassion, I'll give you an example in a moment, is clear-sighted about right and wrong.

Could you put up the next point? Help to nuance it a bit. True compassion does not do wrong or act unjustly. Injustice and evil are never, injustice and evil are never compassionate.

True compassion does not do wrong or act unjustly. Injustice and evil are never compassionate. I'm going to lose you all, but I'm just going to say one thing. That's one of the many, many, many reasons why euthanasia is wrong and it's not compassionate.

[ 31 : 04 ] To take the life of an innocent human being is never compassionate. To use the power of the state, true compassion does not do wrong or act unjustly.

Injustice and evil are never compassionate. You think about that for a second. Imagine that Trump loses the next election and the day before he leaves office all of his friends who are in trouble and going to maybe go to jail, he pardons them all.

Would you say, oh, it's so wonderful that Trump is compassionate? No, you would not say that. You'd say, that dirty rat. Showing compassion.

And you know what? If the Canadians had the same power and Trudeau did it in his last day of office, you'd say the same thing. You would. It's not compassion. Okay? If a manager treats you terribly and you complain over their head and the boss says to you, I think with your complaint they've suffered enough.

I'm going to show compassion. You'd go, that's not compassion. That's not compassion. And by the way, here, I'll throw out all of these points.

[ 32 : 29 ] I'm using the word evil, wrong, and sin. They're all the same idea in the Bible. I've just used them, varied them for a different effect. Evil, wrong, and sin. Evil isn't sort of really bad wrong things.

Wrong is evil. Evil is wrong. Sin is wrong. Sin is evil. Evil is sin. You get the picture. Now, you know, one of the things is that the Lord is described in chapter 4 earlier as being slow to anger.

Why? Because mercy, as we talked about it last week, which is also rooted in a clear-eyed understanding of right and wrong, in a sense, disrupts the anger of the Lord, in a sense.

It's a different thing because he doesn't experience passion. Here we see the same thing happening with compassion. Well, how on earth does this work? And why is it? I mean, on one level, at a natural level, people do show compassion, but on the other hand, there's a...

Here, let's just talk a little bit more about compassion. If you could put up the next point, Andrew, that would be great. You cannot act compassionately without bearing a personal cost. You cannot act compassionately without bearing a personal cost.

[ 33 : 39 ] Otherwise, it's just a feeling. Good example. Let's say, you all know I love going to coffee places. I have a great affection for baristas. There's all sorts of reasons for it, but one of the things...

And the same thing with people who work at McDonald's or Tim Hortons. You know what? These guys and gals, they're making minimum wage. They could maybe be better off on welfare. But they work.

They work hard. I really admire it. I really do. They get up, especially those who work in Tim Hortons, they wear those ugly uniforms. You know?

Or Burger King. Ugly, ugly, ugly uniforms. They show up on time. They do a hard day's work. They go home. You know what? There's all sorts of other things they could do to be late. I admire them.

I really do. Anyway, so let's say a barista, I find out that they're going to be moving and I say, you know what? You can borrow my car. Here's the keys. You can borrow my car. I'm not doing anything with it all day.

[ 34 : 38 ] You borrow the car. At the end of the day, if they're borrowing the car, I get a call and they've wrecked my car. And I can smell alcohol off their breath.

Now let me tell you, you all know that I'm very, very, very wealthy because I drive a 1998 Honda Accord. And nothing says making lots of money like driving a 1998 Honda Accord, which I got, I think, for \$1,800.

But here's the thing. It runs well. Somebody totals my 1998 Honda Accord, I think I'd be lucky to get \$300 from an insurer.

and I will not be able to replace my car for \$300. So what do I do to the barista? And maybe I know that that barista, if I call the police, you know, and the insurance, I decide I'm going to just be justice.

You're drinking and driving and you wrecked my car. There has to be consequences for you. That's justice. But if I happen to know as well that, you know what, they're going to start a new job next week and they need to be able to have a driver's license, if this comes out, they might lose their driver's license, might lose their job, might lose their opportunity to no longer be making \$14 an hour

to start to move forward with their life.

[ 36 : 00 ] And I look at it and I decide, you know what, I'm going to have compassion on them. I'm still out of car. I'm out of car. But I've acted compassionately.

I haven't said, oh yeah, it's all right. Yeah, go ahead. Drink and drive. Here I have a van and a six-pack. Go for a drive. No. I decide I'm going to swallow it out of compassion.

You cannot act compassionately without bearing a personal cost. And you can see how compassion here is still clear-eyed about right and wrong. It's based on the moral order. But I decide I'm going to show compassion to the barista who's maybe heartbroken over what they've done, just pleading for mercy.

And I decide I'm going to show compassion. I'm going to show compassion maybe because I, for a whole, I won't go into the reasons for it, but I do it. It's going to glorify the Lord. It's good for that person.

And I'll get over the finances, but it's going to be good for them and it's going to also bring glory to the Lord that I'm going to forgive them. I'm going to forgive the debt. If you could put up the next point. On the cross, we see the Lord himself bearing the cost.

[ 37 : 20 ] We see the Lord himself bear the cost of showing you compassion. You see, one of the things about this whole story with the book of Jonah is there's a riddle in this story.

And the riddle in this story is, you know what, the fact of the matter is is the Ninevites have been doing terrible, terrible, terrible things and it seems as if they get off. One of the things to understand about this story is that when the Lord shows compassion in that particular case, it doesn't mean he drops the charges, so to speak, against the Ninevites, but they're stayed.

By stayed, it means if you're charged with an offense and I wish we had Victor here, I think I'm getting this right, and they stay the charges, it means they can still be brought up. It just means you're not going forward with the prosecution.

And at the same, maybe that's Victor calling to give us that I got that right. And it's the same thing, at the end of the day, every single human being is going to appear before the judgment seat of God and nobody gets away with injustice and doing wrong.

Nobody. You and I right now, whether we realize it or not, the city of Ottawa right now, every single person walking around right now, even though they might laugh at God, mock God, hate God, shake their fist at God, intentionally do things that are against God just because they want to give Him the finger as many times as they want.

[ 38 : 40 ] They might be doing evil as much as they want. They might lie, cheat, steal, commit adultery, do all those things. Every single human being, in a sense, the charges are stayed, but not dropped.

And so it is with Nineveh that we'll experience the judgment of God and every one of those Ninevites will have, by now, appeared before the judgment seat of God and they will know the Lord's justice. He has compassion on them for a season that they might repent.

So there's a riddle. But the fact of the matter is is that you and I have done wrong things. You and I are enmity with God. And what we see is on the cross, we see the Lord Himself bear the cost of showing you compassion.

To use the story of the barista, in the story of the barista, I use myself as an example, but at the end of the day, if you look at it from the Bible's point of view, I am the barista who took the car, drank, wrecked the car.

That's me. And that's you. Can you put up the next slide, please? On the cross, the Lord dealt with your wrongdoing with perfect justice and perfect compassion.

[ 40 : 08 ] He dies in your place. He takes your judgment in your stead because He knows it will unmake you. It's not a matter that the Lord just says, you know what, George, you're so cute, I'm just going to pretend you didn't do those bad things.

It's, George, you've done, this is the wonderful thing about the cross and the fact that God is completely just and knows every single thing I've ever done.

Is it one of the reasons that it can begin, I can begin to change my moral order is that I understand that God knows me perfectly. He knows every single thing I've done, every good thing I should have done but didn't do.

He knows all my thoughts, all my motivations, all of those things. He knows it from the moment of my birth to the moment of my death. He knows it all and all was dealt with when Jesus died in my

place on the cross.

So if it comes and it will come, I have kids and it comes up that sometime whether it's next week or next month or next year, one of my kids tells me, Dad, you did this to me, you said this to me five years, ten years ago and it has just, it has been really hard on me.

[ 41 : 28 ] Now it will be hard to hear that from my child. I like the illusion that I'm a perfect dad. I try never to believe it but I like the illusion.

I'm a fallen human being like you. But you know, one of the things I can do is I can understand not that it means I get a pass because the Lord has forgiven me but because I know there is no evil even in my past that could be revealed to me today that the Lord did not know about when he hung upon the cross and died for me.

That there's the possibility that my identity rooted in the cross and Jesus and what he's done for me and the knowledge of his love for me that I can then maybe have the self-possession to say I am so sorry I did that wrong to you.

Can you forgive me? Can you pray that I learn how to do it better? And I don't have to live in the illusion of my perfect life.

I can live in the reality of his perfect compassion and bearing the cost of my sin upon the cross. I can live in the real world because Jesus died for me bearing the cost for him to show compassion to me in the real world.

[ 42 : 52 ] If you'll put up the final slide. See the gospel shapes you and me to desire a healthy conscience. and to have compassion disrupt your anger for the good of others and for the glory of the Lord.

It's not automatic. But as the gospel shapes you as it grips you as it molds you as it forms you as you think upon it it will desire you to have a better sense of right and wrong.

It'll give you the sense of security to look at what's actually right and wrong without having to worry that if I actually acknowledge that this is wrong I have to say that I did wrong for a long time and that's really hard for us but as the gospel grips me and shapes me as it becomes the air I breathe and that on which I stand by which I understand my identity my past my present and my future as that becomes more real to me who Jesus is and what he did for me upon the cross there is the possibility for me to look at right and wrong in a way that does not threaten my identity and I can say you know what that's wrong and that has characterized me for the last 20 years of my life but it's wrong and as my moral order becomes more healed becomes healthy and my conscience becomes healthy that will mean my anger becomes more healthy but the gospel does more than that the gospel shapes you to desire a healthy conscience and to have compassion disrupt your anger for the good of others and for the glory of the Lord

I am a recipient of compassion a very deep and total and complete compassion that frees me to begin to live eternal life and if I have known such compassion maybe I need to show compassion in this case and I can call out to the Lord for what it's going to mean in terms of forsaking revenge for forsaking what I might like to do in terms of slander or gossip or hatred or punching or vengeance or all of those things and I need to swallow that and I might have to call out to the Lord Lord I think you're calling me to show compassion and that's a cost I know you showed compassion for me I don't know how to bear but Lord I ask I just I know that you are calling me for compassion in this particular case Lord I come to you help me to bear the cost to show compassion to this person for their true good and your great glory let's stand and let's just pray

Father we are so grateful that your just anger at the wrong that each one of us has done not that it was disrupted Lord but we're using that language that forgiveness mercy compassion your forgiveness is perfect your mercy is perfect your grace is unfailing your compassion is perfect as is your justice and that you bore the cost Father without injustice becoming justice injustice becoming injustice without any of that happening you bore the cost paid the price to show compassion to me Father we are so grateful grip us Father with the mystery and the wonder of what you did for us on the cross grip us with that Father that it might be that upon which we stand that upon which covers our head that upon which we breathe that which pushes and pulls us and shapes us to live well every day with people for their good and your great glory

[ 46 : 48 ] Father we ask in Jesus' name and all God's people said Amen