

# Gobsmacked!

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Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[ 0 : 00 ] Father, we've confessed our sin, we've heard your word, we've confessed the faith, we've given of offerings, we've sung your praises. Now we come to not just have heard your word, but to think upon your word.

And so we ask, Father, that the Holy Spirit would fall with fresh but deep power upon us at this time. Father, may your Holy Spirit, may the Holy Spirit help our minds to think humbly and hungrily and well.

And at the same time, Father, help us to know that we are dependent upon you to make yourself known to us. And so, Father, we ask this, that you would make the gospel real to us and bring your word home deep in our heart, that it might change how we live, all for your glory.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated. So a couple of weekends ago, our church, Church of the Messiah, we sponsored something that came up from below, so to speak. Jonathan Kamiri had this great and wonderful idea about having a conference for those involved in the arts, those who love the arts or just interested in the arts to try to think Christianly about the arts, especially around the area of music.

[ 1 : 15 ] It was a good success. And about a month or five weeks or so before the conference was to happen, it turned out that one of the main speakers at the conference, she was maybe not going to be able to attend because of a severe back issue.

So Jonathan and I were talking about this, and I said to him, well, listen, I've actually given some thought to these topics. I'll start to prepare some talks, and if necessary, I can step in.

And it ended up that she did have to cancel. I was thinking about these things. It turned out that they ended up changing my talk, which was fine. But as part of my preparation, I thought, I know a really, really great young guy who works at a coffee shop that I go all the time, and we've had a few talks.

And I know he was really, really, really thoughtful about music. And he's a complete non-Christian. So I thought, oh, I'll see if he'd talk to me. Like, rather than just sort of talking about what non-Christians say about music, like, I'll listen to a non-Christian about music.

Like, that's a bit of a, like, that should just be an automatic thing that we would do, right? So I asked him, and he was a bit hesitant. I keep forgetting, you know, in my mind, I'm 24.

[ 2 : 31 ] Like, I'm the same age as that young guy. And then occasionally I look in the mirror and I think, how'd this old face turn up with this young guy? Anyway, so I sometimes forget that I might be very intimidating to talk to a young guy.

But he said, sure. So we eventually did talk. Had a wonderful 70, 75-minute talk. I was just asking about what music meant and how he saw it in life and a whole range of questions.

And as I anticipated, I thought he was, in fact, quite articulate about these issues. And by the way, I wasn't talking to him. I didn't go in to talk to him thinking, I'm going to see how wrong he is so I can go, aha, got you, and then try to, no, not at all.

I was just curious. In fact, I suspected that what he would say, that most of what he would say that I would agree with. But for much of non-Christian thought in the West, good Christian thought, I mean, much of secular thought in the West, when it's good, it's Christian without realizing it's Christian.

And where it stands in middle air, not supported by anything. And in fact, the matter is that just about everything he said I agreed with. And after we'd been talking for about 70 or 75 minutes, as we were getting ready to go, he asked me what I thought.

[ 3 : 50 ] And so I had learned a few things from Jonathan. And one of the things I'd learned from Jonathan is that music is hardwired into human beings. Like it's hardwired into us.

And Jonathan shared with me some scholars who've done some experiments and stuff like that. If you take a simple tune and you play it on the piano, one that we've never maybe even heard before, but if you do a wrong note, people will all say, oh, that was good except there's a note wrong.

And how is it that that would happen, that human beings can just tell that there's a note wrong? I mean, that's like, and I shared that with him, you know. I said, it's really fascinating that he said, that really is fascinating.

That's true. And I said, and so here's the fascinating thing that I wonder about. I think it's a good thing to think about. I said, you know, if you think about it, if you go to high school and university and you go to elementary school, the way they tell you the world came to be is just a result of, you know, just like blind scientific laws and chance and the survival of the fittest.

But if the world came to be purely by chance, how is it that music would be hardwired into us? And he said to me, I've never thought about that.

[ 5 : 07 ] That's a really, I don't know. I'm going to think about that. You've given me something to think about for the rest of the week, he said to me. And then we went on.

And I share all of that because the story in Jonah, believe it or not, actually has a lot to say with this analogy about music or other things like music being hardwired into us as human beings.

It actually has some very, very interesting things to say about that and about other matters, about how we relate to non-Christians and how we relate to the city. So it would be a great help for me if you would open your Bibles, turn to Jonah 3.

It's a hard book to find because it's a wee tiny book and it's close to the end. It's sort of if you open up your Bibles, it's almost exactly in the middle, just a little bit to the right of the middle.

And it's Jonah chapter 3. And just as we get into it, just to sort of help to place where Jonah is, the way to think of the book of Jonah, and most people, by the way, when they think of Jonah, they think of Jonah being swallowed by the whale and they don't really think of very much else.

[ 6 : 04 ] But the way to think about it is imagine that you're watching a BBC or Netflix series. And in a BBC or Netflix series, there's a certain number of episodes. And usually every episode is its own story.

But if you watch all, whatever, four, six, eight episodes, it makes one big story. Very, very, if it's well done, very interesting the way the story interplays, the big story interplays with the individual episodes.

So the way to think about the book of Jonah is like that. Episode 1, God shows up, tells Jonah, I want you to go to Nineveh and proclaim a message that I'm going to give you. Jonah's response to God showing up is to try to get as far away from God as he can.

And he tries to go a one-year journey away the opposite direction from Nineveh. A year's journey away from Jerusalem and the opposite direction from Nineveh. And that, of course, as we know, ends up with a storm and Jonah being thrown overboard.

And Episode 1 ends with a cliffhanger. Jonah going overboard. What's going to happen?

Cliffhanger. Great episode in Netflix. Episode 2, you discover that there's a big fish there at the exact right time.

[ 7 : 13 ] In fact, the language in the text isn't fish, but aquatic beast. A water-dwelling beast. A water-dwelling beast is there at the exact right time by God's command.

Opens its mouth. Swallows. The mouth isn't open, but it's a great image by Amy. Swallows Jonah just before he dies. And if you read Jonah 2, we talked about this last week.

Jonah finds himself in the intestines, the entrails of an aquatic, of a water, a deep water beast.

And he's going to be there for at least 26 hours, maybe a little bit longer because there's an idiom there. And what we see for the rest of Chapter 2 is Jonah, obviously, who has survived it, and how he thinks through his experience in the form of a prayer.

And we looked at that last week. And Episode 2 ends with Jonah acknowledging that the Lord's compassion and being grateful for it. And the fish vomits Jonah on the shore.

[ 8 : 15 ] End of Chapter 2. What's going to happen next? Well, this is Episode 3, which we'll look at now, and here's how it goes. Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.

Just as an aside, some of you know the Arise dance troupe that we've had here at different times. Yesterday at the wedding that I did, the Gilman wedding, I officiated with a small, it was a very small

wedding.

Only 700 people or so showed up for Daniel Gilman's wedding. But somebody afterwards, they were really happy to see me, and they kept telling me that I was, they were introducing me to their circle of friends.

This is George. He's one of the people on stage with Arise. And what he meant to say was, dig and delve and renew.

But he said, arise the ballet company. And I said to him, friend, I'll take it as a compliment. You think I could be a ballet dancer. But I can assure you I'm not. Anyway, the text here says, so God shows up.

[ 9 : 23 ] It skips all the part about how Jonah gets from wherever he gets vomited on the shore. But he makes his way to Nineveh. And notice here again in verse 2, arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.

So it doesn't tell you right then what the message is, but Jonah knows he's to go to Nineveh. And whatever the message is that the Lord gives him, that's the message he's to proclaim. Verse 3, so Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord.

Now, Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey, and he called out.

And this is obviously, he said more than this, but this is the summary. Yet 40 days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. Yet 40 days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

And just pause. That word overthrown is used just a few times in the original language. That word is just used a few times. The great famous time that this word is used is for Sodom and Gomorrah.

[ 10 : 28 ] So this is profound judgment. And Jonah, that's the message that Jonah has been told, to go to this pagan city.

It's the greatest city in the ancient Near East of a great empire. And in fact, Israel, which is where Jonah is from, is a vassal state under the controlling power of Nineveh.

And he is to go and to give this summary message. Just as an aside, anything the Lord asks you to do is not going to be as hard as this. Sometimes the Lord asks you to do hard things.

That's just what it means to be a Christian. Sometimes he asks you to do a hard thing. This is a huge, big ask of God. And Jonah does it. He preaches this message. The summary of which is, as I said, in 40 days, Nineveh shall be overthrown.

And it seems as if there's no hope. It's just a message that, like Sodom and Gomorrah, that's what's going to happen to Nineveh in 40 days. But how do the people respond? They respond as if there's still a chance.

[ 11 : 32 ] Look at verse 5. And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least of them. And to sort of pause there, the title of this sermon is Gobsnacked, which is an Irish and English word, of being completely and utterly just stunned.

It's a deer in a headlight look. It's your jaw drops. It's your speechless. And probably the last thing in the world that Jonah expected was that the people would actually respond in this way.

But they do. They do. It's a... They respond by sackcloth and ashes, which was the ancient... One of the things the Jewish people and the other people of the pagan nations of that whole large region, it was a culturally similar thing, a form of seeking God's favor, of his mercy, of repentance, of calling out to God would be to put on...

put ashes on your body and to put on sackcloth. And that's how they respond. And then in verse 6, we see that it even goes to the king himself. Look what it says in verse 6.

The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe. Just to pause here for a second.

[ 12 : 57 ] This isn't just the fact that he's wearing a robe. It would be as if you go into the general, you go into wherever the Pentagon, and there's the four-star general who's in charge of all of the armed forces, and he's there in his dressed uniform, and you speak to him.

And as a result of speaking to the guy in the Pentagon, four-star general, which is the highest rank you can have. Occasionally, they have five-star generals, but the four-star general, and he responds by taking his uniform off.

The symbol of his power and authority. And that's what the king does. Look at it again, verse 6. The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, which is symbolic of control of the

entire empire, removed his robe, symbolic of the fact that he is the king and the sovereign over the empire, covered himself with sackcloth instead, and sat in ashes.

He went from the throne to ashes, from the robe to sackcloth. And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh. Here's what he published.

By the decree of the king and his nobles, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God.

[14:17] Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.

Just as a bit of an aside before we see the response, Jonah here is capturing something which is found in other documents about Assyria at that time, is that in times of, unlike the Jewish people, in times of profound mourning or profound calling out to God for favor, they actually included the animals in the sackcloth and ashes, and they included the animals in the fasting.

He's actually capturing here something that archaeologists know that was typical of the empire at this particular time. And so the king takes this absolute statement by God, and he acts as if there's some type of hope.

And here, what happens? Look at verse 10. What happens is that when God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

Look again at that. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it. Just before we get into some of the other implications of the text and what it means for us, sometimes when I talk to skeptics in coffee shops, one of the things they do is they'll bring to perform me a lot of the bloodthirsty language in the Old Testament.

[15:57] And sometimes when people bring the bloodthirsty language of the Old Testament before me, it's because they actually, you know, occasionally they were raised in a Baptist or a Pentecostal or a Brethren church, and they actually know the Bible, but a lot of the times they don't.

What they've just said is they've read a couple of things by Dawkins or Hitchens, and they think they know what the Bible says, but I know that they actually don't have the vaguest idea about what the Bible says. But the point here is this.

Ian Proven, if you go on the Dig and Delve website and see one of the talks that he gave, he had a very, very good talk on the fact that you, to understand what words mean, you actually often in the Old Testament, you have to see what it says in the rest of the story.

And that often we get very upset with words, not realizing that if you look at all of the words in the story, the words don't mean what we think they mean. And he used an example, it would be a very good language.

If I say to you on Tuesday morning, for all of those basketball fans who wake up bleary-eyed, by the way, I will make a promise that Vestry ends tomorrow night early enough that you can watch the basketball game.

[17:09] Okay? If not, at a certain time, I just suggest one of you get up and say, I move a motion of adjournment. And everybody else, other than the speaker, will want to second the motion, and then we can all go home.

But anyway, so let's say on Tuesday morning, I get to say to people, the Raptors slaughtered Golden State last night. Now, if there's an interview of Steph Curry on Tuesday morning, you know I don't mean literally that they pulled out machetes and killed the Golden State Warriors.

It just means they beat them badly in a game. And a lot of the times, in the bloodthirsty language in the Old Testament, it'll say that God says, slaughter all the Jebusites. And then a chapter later, there's still Jebusites.

So, it doesn't mean that the Bible contradicts itself. It just means that's how they're using the word slaughtered, in a way, in terms of a bad victory, like a great victory or something.

It's just how the language is used. But there's something else going on here in the text, which is very important in the Old Testament. And it's important spiritually for us. Sometimes when the Bible speaks, it gives a conditional statement of judgment.

[18:24] It'll say, if you don't do this, you will be judged. That's a very common thing in the Old Testament, especially. But other times, there seems to be a statement like this that seems to be no condition.

In 40 days, Nineveh is going to be like Sodom and Gomorrah. But in fact, behind it, there is in fact a conditional statement, and people are welcome to repent. And that's what happens in this story. They repent. And as a result of their repentance, God says that he will not do to them as he had done earlier to Sodom and Gomorrah.

Now, here's the issue in terms of us getting serious about this particular text. The big shocking thing about this story is that Nineveh doesn't convert.

Nineveh doesn't become Jewish. Think about it. I've heard a lot of Christian speakers who talk about it as if it's a conversion. It's not a conversion.

[ 19 : 28 ] They don't become Jewish. They don't give themselves to the Lord. In fact, if you look at the text, it's very, very interesting. One of the things, just a bit of a clue about how to read the Bible well, is that often in the Old Testament, if you see the word Lord, it's referring to Yahweh.

It's referring to the covenant name, the personal name that the Jewish people had for God, the God of the covenant, the God who delivered them from slavery in Egypt, the God of the covenant, the God who is now their God, their protector, their provider, that they were to serve, that they were to know, that only they knew and they were to have the job of making him known and his praises known to the ends of the earth, which they often didn't do very well.

But you see the Lord, there were lots of other names for God. And in this text, you'll see that the Lord tells Jonah to go do this, but the people don't call out to the Lord, they call out to God.

They call out to the generic name for the high God, the abstract word for God. In all of the pagan mythologies, there'd always be at least one high God, the abstract, most distant God.

And that's the word that they use. They don't respond to the message by calling out to Yahweh.

They respond to the message by calling to Elohim, that abstract, generic name for God.

[ 20 : 49 ] So there's no conversion that happens here. There's no conversion. So if you could put up the first point, we're just going to rest here a little bit.

If the Lord cares for all of his creation with compassion, then so will I. If the Lord cares for all of his creation with compassion, then so will I.

You see, that's what's going on here in the text. Quite a few years ago, there was a guy, it was a classic example of a terrible salesman.

Maybe he's not a terrible salesman. Some of you folks who are good in sales, you can tell me whether or not he was a bad salesman. But he was very interested in us, you know, our family, our needs, and you know, yeah, and you know, talking to us.

But all the while, I think he was trying to sell us. I can't remember exactly. I think it was some type of vacuum system. And very, very friendly, and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But when it became obvious to him that there was no way on God's earth that Louise would ever buy that vacuum cleaner, he went from being friendly to droppiness.

[ 22 : 03 ] Just, it was so, like, I wish there was a video because it was like a switch went on with him. When I wouldn't give him what he wanted, packed up his stuff, was rude, didn't say goodbye, didn't say anything, just packed up his stuff, turned his back on us, and left.

And, one of the things which we Christians have to come to terms with is the fact that, of course, ultimately, the Lord wants us, he wants all people to come to a saving relationship with Jesus.

But if we share the gospel with people and they don't have any interest in it, how should we respond? Not like the vacuum cleaner, salesman. But it's a persistent problem for Christians.

It's as if, if you don't want to go all the way with me, the heck with you. The heck with you. I'm not going to waste my time with you.

I don't really care about you. You know what? If your life gets all messed up, it just serves you right.

We might not come out and say that, but inwardly, we think it. But that's not a Christian. That's not what goes on here in the story.

[ 23 : 10 ] The response to this message of judgment isn't the best response, but it's a good response.

And that good response, God honors. Because he cares for people. It's not as if, with God, that there's either God has compassion for you until you give your life to Jesus, and if you don't, he stops having any compassion for you, and you just know he always has compassion on his creation.

He always has compassion on his creatures in his created order, which includes us and animals.

The animals is going to be mentioned in Jonah chapter 4. And this is actually brought home even

more powerfully by a part of the text which is not obvious in English.

All the way through the book of Jonah, but especially here in chapter 1 and chapter 3 and chapter 4, there's a word play that goes on in the original language. You see, in the original language, the word for evil, the word for evil means just what we would think is evil, of doing things which are wrong, of doing things which are bad.

But it also has another meaning to it. It has the meaning of disaster or calamity. And so, in fact, actually in this story, you go back and forward, you'll see that on one hand, God sees the evil that they do, the evil that he does, but he's not going to do evil to them.

[ 24 : 38 ] What will happen as a result of the evil is the disaster from God will come upon them. It's in fact the same word in the original language, but the double meaning is played upon. But the double meaning is very significant when we view them together, and it goes back to my story with my friend Bob and why is it that music is hardwired into us.

One of the problems that we have in our culture is we can't get a pipeline built. Now, I know I just made a political comment, and those of you who are very green will say, I am praying that there's never a pipeline built.

But just hear me out a little bit on this particular thing. One of the things which is a bit of a mystery to me is why so many people in our culture have been turning to Buddhism and Hinduism.

Yet the fact of the matter is is that Buddhist and Hindu cultures, they trash the environment. Let me tell you, you'd rather drink, you'd rather go, I don't know if you could go on any river in India and drink the water that you were canoeing on, but you can do that in Canada in many places.

You wouldn't want to go canoeing in China and drink the water in any river, but you can do that in many rivers in Canada.

[ 25 : 58 ] The fact of the matter is is that if you understand, if your basic worldview is that at the end of the day we all came from one and we will return to one, and the idea of there being a difference between you and I is ultimately an illusion, then there's no incentive to care for the creation.

At the same time, if you go the route of more native spirituality, it's very, very complicated. That's just beyond the problems on native reserves.

But in fact, if nature itself is divinized, if a river is divinized, if a tree, if a mountain is divinized, you have not only the science not work, but you have a hard time actually doing anything.

There'd never be any type of development or progress at all if you understand the world is filled with spirits resident with particular rivers and trees and brooks and channels. And our culture is profoundly confused by that.

And at the same time, ultimately, if you really think that everything is just a result of chance, it's just a result of evolution, there's really no basis to care for the creation.

[ 27 : 05 ] In fact, if we understand that everything that comes to exist is because the strong survives and the weak dies, and that's what brings us to be human beings, then why is there any outcry at all over any endangered species?

It's just evolution. And why shouldn't we just take raw matter and use it to whatever we want? There's really no ultimate reason for that.

But you see, in the Christian understanding of the world, it's a very, very different thing. In the Christian understanding of the world, there is a God who's created all things.

Actually, if you could put up the second point, that would be very helpful. I should have told you to do that before. Doing something that is wrong is not just wrong, it is also a calamity slash catastrophe.

Doing something that is wrong is not just wrong, it is also a calamity slash catastrophe. You see, what we understand is that the personal God who from all creation, the Father loved the Son and the Son loved the Father and the Holy Spirit loved the Father and the Son and vice versa.

[ 28 : 16 ] From all, at the beginning, before there was any created order, there was the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They were good, they loved each other, and it was out of that love and out of that, in a sense, community that was that one person of God, all things were created and God who creates all things, a mark of his nature is in all things.

A mark of his nature is in all things. And that's actually what I would say to my friend Bob if I'd gotten the chance or when I eventually get the chance about why it is that we can hear music and we can hear a tune for the very first time and if there's a wrong note, we say, there's a wrong note in that tune.

Why is it that music is hardwired into us? Because God is ultimately, in a sense, the creator of music and beauty. They're singing in heaven and he's made the created order in such a way that something like music is hardwired into us and we recognize when something's not right.

And in the same way, when I do something which is wrong, the wrong that I do is not just, like let's say I believe a lie or let's say I'm filled with lustful or wrong thoughts or let's say I'm nurturing and harboring bitterness or anger and it doesn't seem as if anybody's hurt by this because it's all inside of me but what the Bible says is that every time we do something which is wrong, it's not just wrong in some type of legal sense against some type of code, it's also a catastrophe because God's created the world where goodness is natural to it and any time we go from goodness it has other types of impacts whether we recognize it immediately or not.

Our mind won't work as well. We now know from neuroscience thinking certain thoughts for a long type of time actually even starts to change the way our brains are hardwired.

[ 30 : 21 ] Like who would have thought of that? Like the more we find out about neuroscience the more we find out that even victimless things like thinking certain ways is actually going to have an impact in how we're wired.

It has an impact on how our heart pressure, how much our blood pressure and our heart rate and all sorts of other types of things and our culture wants to hide this from us.

A little bit controversial but I mean just the fact of the matter is is that you can't watch anything on TV without having people who are unmarried hopping into bed together and nobody on TV ever has a sexually transmitted disease.

Ever. Ever. And they say we live in a fantasy world? Come on. Like nobody ever has one once and nobody ever gets pregnant and has an abortion and you don't ever see anybody after they've had an abortion and how much it can wreck people up emotionally for so long even if they have an abortion and you don't ever see any woman who's given herself to a guy and then afterwards how bitter she might be about men.

Like no. Oh yeah, bye. And then like the next like that's not real world. It's this unbelievable fantasy world connected to these things that have no consequence whatsoever.

[ 31 : 45 ] By the way, if you were here this morning and I've maybe touched a nerve by referring to abortion and in a room like this it's very likely that there are people in the room who've either encouraged an abortion or had one themselves.

I'm not saying anything judgmental about this. All I can tell you is the Lord knows what you did and he loves you and he wants you to know him and he wants you to know Jesus and he wants to bring healing to you as you come to him in repentance and amendment of life.

He only loves you. And I encourage you if you've had something like that and that you just share with one of us you will not be condemned by any of us.

We will just want to love you and pray for you. And if you're wondering we're going to get to this in a moment there's only sinners in this room and it's only a sinner who's standing in front of you.

It's not perfect. Anybody here who thinks you're perfect? Good luck. You're a legend in your own mind. Sorry I don't want to insult you but you're not.

[ 33 : 00 ] You're not. You're a sinner too. But you see here's the big point of the text you see. So the first point is that what this text shows is the people didn't show the thing that ultimately God would desire of them the most.

That they would become they would call out to Yahweh they would ask that they would be included in the covenant people and they would begin within that history of salvation to live as observant Jews.

That's the great thing that God would be the greatest desire of his heart. They didn't say that but his response to them isn't well the heck with you. Let the fire fall.

No. They turn from their violence and evil. The word for violence in this text is also the word for injustice. God cares about his created order. He cares about the harm that we do.

He cares about people doing evil which is also a calamity which causes human suffering and unhappiness. He cares for injustice. He cares when people are doing injustice because he wants them to turn from injustice.

[ 34 : 06 ] He wants them to turn from violence. He wants them to turn from evil. And even if they do not go all of the way of calling out to him for mercy the fact that they respond by turning from injustice makes him smile.

The fact that they turn from violence makes him smile. The fact that they turn from evil makes him smile and if it makes him smile it should make you and I smile as well.

Some of you work in government. Some of you work in private industry. Some of you are self-employed. Some of you are retired. Some of you are in between jobs wherever you are. At some point in time you should try to do the job the best you possibly can.

You really should. You should try to do the best you can. If you're having trouble doing a good job talk to somebody here at the church. Talk to somebody else. Get some insight about how you can be a better entrepreneur, a better poet, a better musician, a better self-employed, a better retiree, a better stay-at-home mom or a better stay-at-home dad.

Wherever you are called do the best you possibly can to the glory of God. Pray that God will give you opportunities to share the gospel with your co-workers or your neighbors or your friends and if you get a chance to bear witness to Jesus walk through that door and take it.

[ 35 : 22 ] But as well as that it does not being a good Christian at work is not only defined by being able to share the gospel. If you are working in the government and the government is going to be proposing something which is just wrong be the one who farts in the room so to speak and says what you want to do is wrong.

If you're in a boardroom and they want to do something that's wrong try to talk them to doing that which is right. Seek the good fair prosperity of your business because God has compassion on this city.

His longing is that every person in Ottawa will come to know Jesus as Savior and Lord but less than that he still has a heart for this city that what will characterize this city is justice not injustice prosperity not poverty generosity not being a scrooge a proper caring of the environment not a trashing of the environment.

When a human being turns from being a racist to loving the other that makes God smile. When a human being turns from injustice to justice it makes God smile and it should make us smile as well. If you could put up the third point to enter that would be very handy. This has been a point for every one of the sermons it will be in all five of the Jonah sermons. Because the Lord is God there is no other God hence there is no other when it comes to people.

[ 37 : 03 ] That's why I said there's only sinners in this room. On one level who is in this room and who is outside are all the same. We're all sinners. We're all sinners. Every single one of us.

We're all sinners whom God loves. Everyone. And we well could you put up the final point just to bring it to a close?

If my only hope in life and death some of you will recognize this is connected to an ancient catechism. If my only hope in life and death is the Lord's great compassion given to me in Jesus then I will learn his way of compassion.

See this is how the gospel is to form us.

I mean the fact of the matter is we will fall into the hands of almighty God. There is a judgment that every human being will fall under.

[ 38 : 08 ] Just as an aside if this text of the Bible was written around 755 33 years after this Bible text was written the nation of Israel did not heed the prophets calls to repentance and the northern kingdom of Israel was destroyed in 722 and its people scattered because in fact the Assyrians practiced true genocide.

True genocide. Genocide. all of the people of the northern kingdom were taken into captivity and they are lost to history.

130 years after this Nineveh fell and the Assyrian empire fell. I am very conscious not as conscious as I should be but I am conscious that I am a sinner and I am only redeemed by grace.

It is only because the punishment that I justly deserved fell on the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world it is only because I who stood properly condemned for my wrongdoing that in the words of Isaiah Jesus in my place condemned he stood.

It is only because of that that I have any hope in life and death and if in fact I am a complete and utter recipient of the Lord's compassion and mercy then I need to learn how to live and walk in the way of compassion.

[ 39 : 51 ] That is how the gospel shapes you to live. Please stand. Just bow our heads in prayer.

Father we thank you for Jesus we thank you Father that he saw our great need that we had turned our back on you and could not turn ourselves to save ourselves could not accomplish enough merit

to make ourselves right with you.

He saw our great need he came and lived amongst us amidst all of our mess all of our muck all of the injustice of this world all of the beauty of this world but all of the injustice and the evil he came and dwelt among us only without sin and that out of love for us he died on our behalf he died on my behalf taking upon himself that judgment which I justly deserve and that fell on him that I by my faith and trust and love my faith and trust in him that he would bear my punishment and bestow upon me his righteousness Father thank you for your great compassion and mercy that you showed to me and we ask I ask Father that as the great compassion that you have shown to us in Jesus as that grips us that we will learn to live in the way of compassion that we will be characterized by compassion in our office places in our neighborhoods in the city in our interpersonal relations that we will be characterized and known

Father by people who are gripped by your great compassion for us and are learning to walk the way of compassion and mercy caring for this city and caring for your created order in a way that brings you glory and is truly good for this created order and for all your creatures Father this is what we ask and we ask it in the name of Jesus and all God's people said Amen