

Furious With God

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[0 : 0 0] Father, we know that no one is good enough to warrant going to heaven. That as the Creed said, in a sense, whatever righteousness we have comes from Jesus, not from ourselves.

And to fulfill your good and perfect will is to put our faith and trust in Jesus, not as a work, but as a fulfillment of the leading of your Holy Spirit and the desire of your heart, that we might trust Jesus and him alone as our Savior and Lord.

Father, we ask that you would pour out the Holy Spirit upon us today, that you would bring your word and touch our hearts, that we might be disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, learning to live for your glory.

And this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated. So quite a few years ago, it's not one of my kids who are at church today, but quite a few years ago, one of my children was in the car with my mom and dad, and they were on the Queensway, and somebody cut my dad off, and my dad said, what an idiot.

And my son, because it was a son, he piped in, I think he was like eight years old or something at the time, my son piped in with just the innocence of a child and said, yeah, that guy's a jerk.

[1 : 1 8] And then he continued, there's lots of jerks on the road. My dad says that all the time. As we're on the Queensway, he's always talking about all the jerks on the road.

Just complete level innocence. And I, of course, just, my parents came and told me about it afterwards, and I just wanted to cringe. I didn't realize that I said I had an anger problem on the road.

That's a problem that other people have, not me. But obviously, my children heard differently, and in a sense, it not condemned me.

It really challenged me about how I drove. Today, we're going to talk about anger, amongst other things, but we're going to talk about anger. And one of the things about anger is that often people like myself, who have bouts of anger or maybe even constant low-level anger, we don't recognize it in ourselves, but we think we see it in others.

It's often a sin or a fault, as I said, that we don't acknowledge ourselves as having, but we think other people have. One of the things, and that's actually one of the reasons why, for old Christians, when they were coming up with ways to try to understand how to live a moral life, they came up with this idea of the seven deadly sins.

[2 : 3 8] And this is going to be a bit of a surprise to some of you if you are a guest, but in the list of the seven deadly sins, lust was there, but lust is the least deadly of the seven deadly sins.

And part of that, of course, is that, I mean, I've told this story before. I used to visit a man in a hospital who was 100 years old, and we got talking about it someday or another, and he just told me when you hit 100, lust isn't much of an issue in your life anymore, not compared to when you were a 16-year-old male.

So that's one of the reasons it's a bit of a less deadly sin than some of the others, because just with your body getting old and tired, it just becomes a little bit less of an issue. And the other thing about it is that often people know when they're filled with lust.

But just as one of the things that makes cancer so deadly is not only will it kill you, but there's many forms of cancer that you don't know you have it until it's too late to do anything about it.

So it is that anger and pride, which in fact are the two most deadly of the seven deadly sins, pride and anger, anger is a deadly sin because it will do great damage to our lives, but at the same time we often don't recognize that we actually have an anger problem ourselves, or anger-driven.

[3 : 56] So today we're going to look at a famous story about anger in the Bible. It was read earlier to us by Deborah. If you don't have a copy of a Bible to look, there'll be a text up on the screen. But it's always good to bring your own Bible to church and be able to make little notes on it as we go through and talk about this text.

So we're going to be looking at Jonah chapter 4, and we're going to be looking at, and for some reason I also have it open to Micah, we'll turn to Jonah, Jonah chapter 4, just these four verses.

And if you're curious about why we're doing this, one of the things we do at Church of the Messiah is we preach through books of the Bible, we're preaching through Jonah. And a good way to understand the book of Jonah is to compare it to watching a good BBC series on Netflix or Crave or whatever it is that you happen to subscribe to.

And in a really good BBC series, what you'll do is it tells you one story, but it tells you one story by telling maybe four or six or eight or ten stories, whatever the number is.

In this particular case, there's four separate stories. Think of them as episodes. And each episode is a story, but when you talk all four of them together, it tells you a very different, like it's nuanced.

[5 : 04] And we're not going to look at all of episode 4 today. We're going to break episode 4 into two parts. We're just going to look at the first part of episode 4, so to speak, 4A, and then next week we'll look at 4B. And just if you're not familiar with the story, what's happened in episode 1, God shows up and speaks to Jonah and tells Jonah he has to go to Nineveh and proclaim a message.

And Nineveh was the major power of the ancient Near East at that time. Israel, which is where Jonah was from, was a vassal state. They'd been conquered by Assyria and had to pay tribute.

And God says to Jonah, go to Nineveh, the capital, and proclaim this message against him. And Jonah reacts by saying, I'm not going to do it. I'm going to get as far away from God as I can and as far away from Nineveh as I can.

And of course, the rest of episode 1 is what most people think of when they think of Jonah. There's a huge storm, and he ends up that Jonah gets thrown overboard to stop the storm by the pagan soldiers with Jonah's permission.

And in a sense, episode 1 ends with a cliffhanger. The storm stops, so the pagans got it right. And Jonah's sinking into the water. Episode 2, that's how you want to watch episode 2.

[6 : 17] What happens to Jonah? Episode 2, God appoints a huge aquatic beast to show up just as Jonah's about to die in the water. The huge aquatic beast swallows Jonah, takes him right into the entrails, the intestines.

And chapter 2 is Jonah's, in a sense, reflection and summary upon what it was like to be in the belly of a great aquatic beast for that period of time.

And he ends up putting it in the form of a prayer. And it's really a form of a prayer about how he comes to realize that the Lord is merciful, slow to anger, filled with compassion, and that the Lord has delivered him.

And Jonah's filled with gratefulness. How does episode 2 end? In a way that humbles Jonah, Jonah is vomited onto the land by the great aquatic beast.

If you're vomited by a fish, that would be a humbling experience for you. So, episode 3, what's going to happen next? Well, in episode 3, we find Jonah actually showing up in Nineveh.

[7 : 19] And Jonah goes throughout Nineveh proclaiming, in 40 days, the Lord is going to overthrow you. And the word overthrow is the same word that's used about Sodom and Gomorrah, how they're completely destroyed.

So, Jonah proclaims this message. And lo and behold, everybody in Nineveh, the capital city, repents. The king repents. The nobles repent.

The people repent. Everybody repents. And as a result, the Lord sees their repentance, and he stays his judgment. Now, here's the question.

We have episode 4. What on earth could go on in episode 4? If you think about it, this is the perfect Hollywood movie. It's the type of Hollywood movie that people like to watch.

Hollywood movie that people like to watch, it would be as if, from your point of view, it's a J, right? In a good Hollywood movie, you begin up here. Some type of crisis happens.

[8 : 16] You're all being defeated. Everything's going. It looks like it's just going to be disaster and tragedy. But then, things conclude. And at the end, you're higher up than when you began.

And in a good Hollywood movie, I just watched Hunter Killer, a not very good movie on Netflix. How does it end? Classic American ending of a J story. Everybody's clapping because the good guys win.

The bad guys die. High fives, hugs. Everything's going. And in a good Hollywood movie, it either ends up that the guy gets the girl, or the girl gets the guy, and they ride off into the sunset, or there's applause, or there's both, or there's all of that type of stuff.

Lord of the Rings, it has it all. The wedding, and of course, the applause and the ceremony. So you think, Jonah should end with chapter three, but there's episode four, which we're going to do in two parts.

Why? Because Jonah is like the movie The Sixth Sense. And if you haven't seen the movie The Sixth Sense, I'm not going to give you a spoiler. I did that in another sermon, and a couple of people told me off for it.

[9 : 15] What I can tell you is if you watch The Sixth Sense, something happens in the last three or four minutes of the movie that makes you reconsider everything that went on in the entire movie.

It completely and utterly blows the whole storyline away. You have to rethink everything that you saw, and that's what's going to happen in Jonah. And here is how it begins to happen. It happens with three questions in terms of what happens to Jonah.

So chapter four, verse one, But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And just sort of pause. Very, very good translation. But what it actually says in the original language is far worse.

They can't actually indicate the full depth of what's being communicated in the original language. It says displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.

What it says is it was a catastrophe to Jonah what had happened. A great catastrophe. And it burned him.

[10 : 14] The word for anger there is actually that he's so consumed, he's burning with anger at the great catastrophe which has just happened. Remember the great catastrophe is that the people of Nineveh listened to his preaching, repented, called out to the Lord for mercy, to God for mercy, and God stayed his judgment against them.

And to Jonah, this is a huge catastrophe. And it's such a huge catastrophe that he's completely and utterly burned up with anger. So, well, why is he so filled with anger?

Well, that's what verse two begins to tell us about. And look at verse two. So Jonah prayed to the Lord and said, Oh Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That's in chapter one.

That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish. Chapter one. For I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and relenting from disaster, from catastrophe, from calamity.

That's the different ways that that word disaster could be translated. So why is he angry? He's angry that Nineveh was spared. He's angry that Nineveh was spared.

[11 : 39] And all of a sudden, and his great anger shows how much he hated Nineveh. You see, one of the reasons why anger is considered a bad thing by almost everybody in Canada is that anger is a very, very, very quick road to hatred.

And not only is anger a very quick road to hatred, anger is a very effective way to maintain and deepen hatred. And that's amongst other reasons why it's generally viewed as being a bad thing, even in our culture today, that anger is a bad thing.

We're going to talk more about it in a moment. But all of a sudden, you realize, one moment. So, in fact, sometimes if you hear people talk about the story of Jonah, they'll describe that the reason that Jonah left and didn't want to go to Nineveh was because he was afraid.

Because Nineveh would sort of be like going to Tehran and telling the leaders to repent or something like that. It would be going to the capital of North Korea and telling the leader to repent.

And people will often use those analogies. But that's not actually what the text says. He didn't want to... The reason he ran away from the thing wasn't because he was afraid, but because he was worried that God would listen, that they would repent and God would listen, and they wouldn't all die.

[13 : 07] Jonah wanted them to all die. He wanted God to kill them. And whoa! Well, that changes your reading of the first thing. Like, do the pagans there, who were all, like, sort of trying to be nice to Jonah in that first story, do they realize how much he hates pagans?

They don't. And then in chapter 2, where all of a sudden God saves Jonah, now you go to yourself, why on earth did God save a guy who's so filled with hate? And then you go to chapter 3, and then you think to yourself, why is it that God used a guy who's so filled with hate so successfully?

Like, if you're a guy like me, and I, you know, I have some anger issues, but I, you know, generally I try to fight against him, I don't have that success. So, God, why is it that Jonah has this success, and he's filled with hatred, and I'm trying to do a good job, and I don't have anything even remotely close to his success?

Like, what on earth is going on with the whole story? You see, all of a sudden, it's like the sixth sense. It changes the way you look at all the earlier stories, when you see that Jonah actually did not want to go to Nineveh, because he was worried that if he went and did what he was supposed to do, that God wouldn't kill them all.

And then some of you might think, some of you have heard me, if you've been here before, I like saying that in conversations, when it can come up with a non-Christian, I like to tell them that I don't believe in the God of Canadians.

[14 : 30] I don't believe the same God that most Canadians believe in. I believe in a different God altogether, and then I go and try to describe the difference between the gods.

For many Canadians, if it's not a deistic God or an impersonal force, they worry that the God is like bloodthirsty. I've shared this with you before, that the God they're afraid of exists, and they don't want to believe, is a God who likes to have people die.

He likes to kill people. He's bloodthirsty. And I tell them, the God that I believe exists, that's revealed by Jesus, isn't a God that likes to kill people, but a God who died for people. The complete opposite.

So maybe that's what's going on here with Jonah. But no, that's not what's going on with Jonah. Jonah has a very, very, very, very good Orthodox Old Testament, New Testament view of God. Look again at what he says in verse 2.

How does he describe God? I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and relenting from disaster.

[15 : 32] Like that's bang on. And it's really puzzling. If you go back later on and you read Exodus 34, the same words are used to describe God. But these very descriptions of God, that he is gracious, merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, that's the entire basis of the writer's hope.

Because the nation of Israel, after they had been delivered out of bondage and slavery into Egypt, and they're on the way, and even though they've done all these terrible things, they refuse to obey God, and they create idols.

And the writer, it's Moses, is saying, the whole reason I have any hope is because you are gracious, merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relent from disaster.

Go read the book of Lamentations, a very, very wonderful book. And if you read at the very heart of Lamentations, in chapter 3, for the first 20 verses, it's our memory verse this week, it's 21 to 23 in Lamentations 3.

It's a great verse to memorize. And all these things that the person has done wrong, and the nation has gone wrong, and then it comes, the whole basis of my hope is that you are a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relent from disaster.

[16 : 43] But this is why Jonah Jonah is angry at God and hates him. In fact, you know, there's something which is going to be really interesting that happens in the next verse.

Just remember, this text of Scripture was probably written around the year 755 B.C. 755, 758 B.C. So 20, almost 2,800 years ago.

One of the interesting things about it is this text in the story brings out something that modern psychology discovered in quotation marks, which is the connection between depression and anger. Look what happens in verse 3.

So, Jonah's burning with anger. Whether he recognizes it or not, we don't know. But verse 3, Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.

That's a perfect description of depression. I just want to, depressed, I just want to fall asleep and not wake up. Many people commit suicide.

[17 : 51] They want to die. They'd rather die than live. It's a very powerful description of depression in this text written in 755 B.C. So how does, how does the Lord respond?

Verse 4, And the Lord said, now, this is very interesting. It's a good translation. You know, one of the things when you're going from one language to another, I know there's people here, lots of people here who know multiple languages, and you know the experience of trying to translate from one language to another.

Two summers ago, I was in Angola, and I got, I had this great honor. I was on the edge of the Kalahari Desert, and I got to preach at a mission statement to a semi-nomadic tribe that was just beginning to hear the gospel, and I got to preach to them, and it was a great honor.

When I spoke, I really had to work on it. I really tried to pray about how to make cultural connections with them, and I, you know, how could I do that? I didn't know them very, at all, and I had to preach simply from the Bible, and every time I said a few words, it would be translated in Portuguese, and it would be translated into the tribal language, because many of them spoke Portuguese, and one of the things I wanted to do at the beginning was just to try to describe how different I was from them, and I'd looked up how much snow we had in Ottawa the year before, and so I said to them that where I come from last winter, we had three meters of snow, and they translated into Portuguese, and then all of a sudden, there was a five-minute discussion amongst them, because, of course, they had no word for snow, and they were trying to think of what word they could give for snow, and they ended up coming up with ice, which just made the whole room look, how could there be three meters of ice that lands on him?

I mean, it was, anyway, but so when you translate, there's some issues. This is a perfect, but in the original Hebrew, it's very powerful. There's two senses in the original Hebrew when it says here, do you well to be angry?

[19 : 52] The one is, is in a sense, the Lord asks, in Hebrew, it's just three words, actually, and what he says is, is it right for you to be angry? Great question.

Is it right that you're so angry that I stayed judgment on this city, that I didn't do Sodom and Gomorrah on this city? Is it right for you to be that?

And the other thing is, it's actually a searching question. I remember being really, really being angry, short-tempered, not realizing I was angry and short-tempered, and the person I was with said, they knew me very well.

They said, George, you're grumpy, angry, and short-tempered. We've got to get you something to eat because they knew that if I had something to eat, I'd be a little bit less grumpy and angry, which was true.

I didn't recognize I was feeling grumpy and angry. They did, and so the other thing, so the first thing that God says, in a sense, with the Hebrew, has this wonderful double sense. Is it right for you to be so angry?

[20 : 54] And the other thing is, do you realize how thoroughly, deeply, completely angry you are? Do you realize it?

That's the two senses of this great, these three words in history. So, let's try to bring this whole text home to us, to you and me, now that we sort of understand the story.

So, here, I'm going to do a simple test because, remember I said how one of the problems with anger is that we tend to think of all the other people that it applies to. So, imagine, now you guys have to figure out which category you're in, okay?

You're driving home today and whatever it is, Apple News or whatever it is, but somehow, you're driving with somebody, they get a tweet and they tell you what's going on and they tell you of some terrible, stupid, evil decision that Donald Trump made or Doug Ford just to be Canadian and they tell you, did you hear the terrible, Doug, Trump just did this.

Can you believe it? Or, the rest of you, it's Trudeau. You're driving home and they just get some news announcement of this terrible, terrible, terrible thing that Trudeau just did.

[22 : 14] Now, that's not the test. The test is tomorrow in the afternoon, there's a news item to say, we apologize for that last newscast.

It didn't happen. Now, here's the test. How do you respond? Do you say, oh, thank goodness Trump didn't do that.

Thank goodness he's not as bad as it sounded. I'm so relieved. Or, you say, thank goodness Trudeau didn't do that. I mean, he's our prime minister.

I'm glad he didn't do something like that. I'm so relieved that he's not as bad as I thought he was. Is that how you respond? Or, do you not believe the news report? Do you want to hang on to how bad they were?

If you do not respond with relief, you have an anger problem. You and I have an anger problem.

[23 : 14] Because our anger at these people wants us, we rejoice that they're bad and we don't want to let it go.

we have an anger problem. Our culture is very conflicted about anger. It's a very, very common thing if you go into psychology.

They'll talk about negative emotions and positive emotions and anger is almost always a negative emotion. We have a very, we have a great problem about it because we want, if not for ourselves, if we think we have an anger problem or if we have a, we're married to somebody who has an anger problem or a kid has an anger problem and our boss has an anger problem or a co-worker has an anger problem, we want them to go through some type of therapy or some counseling, maybe take up Buddhist meditation or something like that where they can get rid of their anger, it can be taken away.

We have a problem obviously in our culture which is being talked about a lot but we don't know what to do about it that it seems as if our culture with all of the social media that in fact we get into little tribes and echo chambers and it furthers anger.

We have a problem as I maybe have just shared with you in terms of not recognizing we have problems with anger as we describe our opponents as being anger driven. The problem with the Trump people is that they're all filled with anger.

[24 : 46] The problem with the social justice warriors is they're all filled with anger. The problem with the conservatives is they're all angry. The problem with the liberals is they're angry and we see it as other people but not ourselves but we're very, very confused about it.

So just to get us thinking back to the text I want to say something. The day they discover a therapy or a meditation technique or a drug that removes all anger from human beings will be the day that tyrants throw a party and dance a jig.

The day that somebody invents a drug or a therapy or meditation technique to take away all anger from human beings will be the day that tyrants and oppressors throw a party and dance a jig.

If you could help the first point, Andrew, we'll go through these relatively quickly. It is good that the Lord is slow to anger. It means that justice matters. That's why I said that if there was something that could take away all anger from human beings, tyrants and oppressors would love it because we would have lost our ability to be concerned about justice.

It is good that the Lord is slow to anger. It means that justice matters. Many Canadians complain that the Christian God is angry, an angry God.

[26 : 08] Actually, he's a slow to anger God and the slow to anger is very, very, very important. The emotion of anger is connected, intimately connected to our experience of right and wrong.

It's intimately connected to our experience of right and wrong. If we had no anger at all, it would mean that we never thought that we came across things in this world which are just wrong.

A case in India, they all got convicted of a group of men that raped an eight-year-old girl. If you don't think that's wrong, you have a problem. It's very, very interesting that in Eastern religion, and it's actually not a very good thing in our culture.

This isn't just dissing them, but in Eastern cultures at the end of the day in the overarching mythology of whether it's Hinduism or Buddhism is this belief that everything ultimately will become one.

The governing metaphor is the drop of water returns to the ocean and when the drop of water returns to the ocean, the drop of water ceases to exist. There's just the ocean and within that, there's ultimately no real right or wrong.

[27 : 20] And so, attempts to do meditation or other things to try to calm our feelings of anger on one level, there's obviously some things in there that are good, but the problem is it's often connected with losing a sense of right and wrong.

So, I mean, the fact of the matter is that, and this is beyond this, we'll talk about this a little bit next week because anger's going to return at the last part of Jonah 4. I mean, the problem with anger is that our sense of right and wrong is wrong and we get angry too much, we get angry too little, we get angry too easy, we get angry about the wrong things, we get angry too quickly, we can't get out of anger.

There's a whole range of reasons by which anger is wrong, but God can't remove our sense of anger without removing our sense of right and wrong. And so, the gospel is going to try to reorder and heal our sense of right and wrong as well as give this other very powerful insight about what it is that can maintain a sense of right and wrong but not have us be so anger driven.

If you could put up the second point, that would be very good. Notice the key slow to anger which is very key in the whole text. You can have justice without mercy but you cannot have mercy without justice.

You can have justice without mercy. You just can. And at the end of the day, we can't complain that something was unjust. You know, you did the crime and you're going to pay the penalty and that's just the way it is.

[28 : 49] You did the crime, you pay the penalty. But mercy is also connected to a sense of right and wrong. You see, what's at heart of mercy? There's obviously sometimes mercy can just be shown towards misfortune, but primarily, mercy is shown when something wrong has been done to you and you know that it's wrong and you want to temper your response of justice with a sense of mercy and compassion for the other person.

See, that's why slow to anger is so important. It's giving this hint and if you go back and look at verse 2 again when it describes the Lord that he's a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, is that when you have the steadfast love, when you have mercy, when you have grace, it doesn't mean that you no longer see things that are right and wrong, but you realize that reacting to something which is wrong, there's another response other than just justice.

There is a response that involves mercy and the more that mercy and compassion become important to you, it means, if it's real mercy and real compassion, it means that it will slow down, it will temper your response of anger at the injustice.

If you could put up the third slide, to offer mercy is to offer to personally bear a cost. To offer mercy is to offer to personally bear a cost.

And that's very, very hard for all human beings but increasingly hard for our culture which is so confused about anger and confused about even the way to move forward. Back, my first five kids I had two boys, a girl, two boys and my boys were boys and if they were, if we had three of them sitting at the back seat of the van, at some point in time one of the boys would do this or do this or move over into the other person's space and the other boy would do this or do this and before you know it you have lots of elbows and stuff like that.

[31 : 05] And there's other times when you give them a push, push, push, push, punch, punch, whatever, you get the picture. So one of the things I would say to my kids all the time is I said, we have a choice.

Do we want to live in a house where we're punching each other and calling each other names or do we want to live in a house where there's some sense of peace? And the only way there's going to be any sense of peace is if one of you doesn't retaliate.

If one of you lets the other one win. Otherwise there's no peace. Somebody has to be the one who'll just say, okay, you hit me nine times, I hit you eight, you win.

And if there's nobody willing to pay that cost, then it just keeps going and it escalates. One of the wonderful things about South Africa when Nelson Mandela became the head of that country was that Nelson Mandela understood the power and importance of mercy and forgiveness.

And he knew that unless there were people who were willing to just say we are not going to pursue justice to the end. Doesn't mean we're not saying what they did was right, but unless there's mercy there will be no peace in our society.

[32 : 30] He was a very, very great statesman, still viewed as a great statesman, probably one of the greatest statesmen of the 20th century. And he understood the importance of mercy.

But you understand, and he himself was a living embodiment of it, he wasn't just some ivory tower rich guy who'd never had anything wrong done to him, and goes off and shows mercy to people who, well, these people hurt this group, I'm going to show you mercy.

This people hurt that group, I'm going to show you mercy. That's not mercy. That's cheap grace. That's telling everybody else to suck it up. Nelson Mandela spent time in jail.

He was oppressed. He knew what it was like to be oppressed. He knew what injustice was like. And unless you are willing to pay the cost of showing mercy, which is going to involve something like forgiveness, well, it's not mercy.

Now, just, here's a bit of a shocking thing. So, the story of Jonah, in some ways, it posits a bit of a riddle.

[33 : 43] see, the fact of the matter is, is that many of us, if we went back in time, we would probably side with Jonah. Because Jonah was right on one level, that what the Lord did to Nineveh wasn't just.

Because Nineveh was terrible. They were a terrible, oppressive people. I think I shared with you last week or the week before, 22 years, 23 years after this, when Nineveh's gotten over their repentance and gone back to their old ways, they literally, literally practiced genocide.

And in 722 BC, the Assyrians invaded Israel, the northern kingdom of Israel, and they carried all the people away. Those 10 tribes of Israel have been lost forever from history.

they literally practiced genocide. And so the text has a bit of a riddle, and it has a bit of a riddle that only the gospel, only the rest of the revelation of the Bible can actually start to help us to understand.

Just one thing is that what Jonah didn't know is that the Lord, he's slow to anger, but he's still concerned with justice. He stayed the judgment on Assyria, but eventually when they returned to their evil ways, the judgment upon them for their horrendous acts of genocide and violence were in fact judged by him, and Assyria would later on disappear from history.

[35 : 21] But what's going on in Jonah's heart? Well, if you could put up the next point, Andrew, that would be very helpful. your enmity to the Lord is always present.

See, one of the problems with anger, one of the many problems with anger, is that not only does it make a very, very quick road to hatred, and as I use my example about whether you heard tomorrow that Trump and or Trudeau were not as bad as the news reports, and we don't want to let go of our hatred and anger and desire for them to be humiliated, and we don't want to let go of that, and it reveals we have an anger problem, is that not only does anger quickly take us to hatred, but it deepens hatred, it nurtures hatred, it gives oxygen to hatred, but the other thing that it does is it creates within you a sense of God-like, God-like virtue and towering over others.

That's what anger always does. You feel God-like, and you like it. I like it. The Bible describes that every human being is at enmity with God.

In Genesis chapter 3, when we chose that we didn't like the idea that God was God and we were not, and we wanted to be just like him, and that's the beginning, it's the ur-sin, the root of all sin is a desire to no longer love God or trust God or want to be in submission to God or just allow God to be God.

We want to be just like God, in fact, maybe even better, and so we resent his authority, we resent the fact that he is the creator, we resent the fact that he is infinite and we are finite, we resent the fact that we live in time and he does not live in time, we resent these things, and it is such a common thing of our experience that we often don't even realize that we have this as a low-level condition in our lives.

[37 : 18] It's exactly like gravity. None of us experience gravity right now or we don't feel like gravity exists, yet it's just so common to us that we no longer think about it. And the Bible describes that Jonah and every human being, you and me, that we have a problem with enmity against God.

And we are people who always need God's mercy. I am not better than anybody else. I am one who is completely and utterly dependent upon the mercy of God. If you could put up this almost last slide, Andrew.

On the cross, Jesus bore the full cost of the Lord's mercy to you. Remember I said, all mercy always involves bearing a personal cost.

If you forgive the person who ripped you off when you bought your vehicle, if you show mercy to them, it means you're going to have to absorb some of the lost money. Maybe not all of it, but some of it. There's a cost to be borne.

If you don't get the vengeance which you desire, you have to give up something when you do that. You have to give up your right for vengeance, your desire for vengeance. You have to bear the personal cost.

[38 : 23] And you do it because at the end of the day, mercy is so worth it. Forgiveness is so worth it. But there's a cost to be borne. And it helps us to understand why it is that Jesus had to die on the cross. Why it is that in Matthew and in Luke, Jesus is described as the true and greater Jonah.

He is the true and greater Jonah not only because he didn't just spend three days in a great aquatic beast. He spent three days in death and in hell. He's a true and greater Jonah not only because he can speak the words of God but he is the word of God and he speaks the very, very true words of God in everything that he does.

And he's the true and greater Jonah because in fact what he does with his life is to make real to us a mercy that every single human being needs because we are at enmity with God.

And he takes that when we understand that there is a price to be paid to show mercy and if God is to show mercy to us he has to absorb the cost of that and the cost of him showing mercy to you and me is what we see when we see Jesus dying on the cross.

It is the cost of mercy to you and to me. If you could put up the final point which is just a prayer I'm going to invite you all to stand.

[39 : 43] Every week in the mailing I do a blog I do a growing in grace and I also try to put the scripture text to a prayer and today if you look at this you'll see both part of Jonah chapter 2 but you'll also see James as well which is a reflection upon Jonah I mean Jonah chapter 4 verse 2 and I put both of those together in the form of a prayer.

You see it's it says we're gripped with the gospel as we come to understand that I experience enmity towards God and enmity towards other in my life without realizing it in the same way I experience gravity without often thinking about it when I begin to understand that my whole and only standing before the Lord is because at great cost to himself he showed mercy to me as that story begins to grip me that it's not as if God gave me a pass because I'm Canadian or because I'm nice or because I'm me but he he didn't forsake justice but he responded in the justice that I'm deserved in a different way he responded with mercy in such a way that justice was still maintained by paying the cost of mercy and the cost of the punishment in his own person as that story grips me it helps me to understand why I need to grow in mercy and compassion without losing a sense of right and wrong to temper the anger of my life that it will not consume me or take me over and I've tried to put it in the words of this prayer so if the Lord has touched your heart if you would pray this with me if you don't pray it that's fine it's up to you but let's pray this prayer together

Lord you are full of grace and mercy slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love you take no delight in the death of a sinner but desire that we turn from our wrongdoing and live please bring the good news of who Jesus is and what he did for me deep into my heart so that I will be slow to speak slow to anger and quick to listen in Jesus' name Amen Father pour out the Holy Spirit upon us that we might be gripped by the gospel and so gripped by the gospel that we learn the importance of mercy and compassion and without losing a sense of right and wrong healing our sense of right and wrong that we would look at the world with compassion and the importance to show mercy and to be described as a person of mercy deliver us from the lie help us to love the truth and be filled with mercy and we ask this in the name of Jesus

Amen God bless you Amen amen thank you thank siz