

Misplaced Anger

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[0 : 00] Please turn your Bible to Jonah chapter 4.! The book of Jonah chapter 4.

! I want to ask you a question before we read the text.! This is the question. When was the last time you were angry at God?

When was the last time you were angry at God? I know some of you are no doubt thinking, and you're correct, that that is a presumptuous question, because I'm presuming that you have been angry at God.

And the truth is, I don't know that. But what I do know is that I have pastored for about 32 years. And over 32 years, I have met many people, believers and unbelievers, who were angry at God. And perhaps in the providence of God, you're here this morning, or maybe listening to this recording sometime later, and you may be angry at God.

[1 : 21] In Jonah chapter 4, we come face to face with a man by the name of Jonah, who was angry at God. If you were here for the previous five Sundays, you'd have heard the sermons leading us up to this point, or if you know the story, you would know that.

In chapter 1, God speaks to Jonah and tells him, I want you to go to Nineveh and preach a message against them.

God said to Jonah, go, and Jonah said to God, no. And instead of going east to Nineveh to preach, he went west to Tarshish, which is modern-day Spain.

He was sent to what we would consider today modern-day Iraq. In the east, he went in the west to modern-day Spain. And the Lord brought a powerful storm on the sea in the boat that Jonah had gotten into to go to Spain.

And the storm was so powerful that the boat threatened to break up. And Jonah said to the man, he said, I'm running from God. And if you throw me overboard, the sea will be calm for you.

[2 : 47] And reluctantly, the men did that. They threw Jonah overboard, and the sea quieted down, and a big fish swallowed Jonah up. And for three days and three nights, had Jonah in its belly, and then vomited Jonah on the shore after that.

And then in chapter 2, we saw how Jonah is now recounting his experience in the belly of the fish and in the depths of the sea.

And what we see is his prayer of thanksgiving for the mercy that God gave him. And two prominent things we see in these words of Jonah is one, that he said he was going to pay a vow that he made to God.

And also, that he came to the place where he was able to acknowledge that salvation belongs to the Lord. It was a hard truth for him to swallow, but he finally concluded salvation belongs to the Lord.

And he was accepting that even the hostile, violent Ninevites could be recipients of God's salvation.

[3 : 57] And then last week, we considered in chapter 3, how Jonah hears the word of the Lord again a second time, and Jonah goes to Nineveh, and he begins to preach.

He starts one day, and he preaches, and the entire city of Nineveh, the king and the nobles and all the people, humbled themselves, and they repented.

And what we read in verse 10, in Jonah chapter 3, verse 10, are these words.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

Now, you would think, in light of the prayer that Jonah prayed in chapter 2, how God rescued him in his acknowledgement that salvation belongs to the Lord, he would have rejoiced.

[5 : 11] He would rejoice at his obedience, he would have rejoiced at the change of heart of the Ninevites, but let's read Jonah chapter 4 to see Jonah's reaction.

Jonah chapter 4, beginning in verse 1. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country?

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

Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live. And the Lord said, Do you do well to be angry?

Jonah went out of the city 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.

[6 : 31] 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. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant so that it withered.

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.

God said to Jonah, Do you do well to be angry for the plant? And he said, Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.

And the Lord said, You pity the plant for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night.

[7 : 49] And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you this morning for the privilege that we now have to sit under the preaching of your word.

Lord, this is your word, and these are your people. Would you speak to your people through your word for the glory of your great name, we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Just suppose for a moment that someone was recounting to you the story of Jonah. And they were telling you the story, and they got up to chapter 3, and then they said to you, Guess what happened after chapter 3?

Guess what happened after the Ninevites repented and God relented and did not destroy them. I'm pretty sure that there's no one here who would have guessed that Jonah would have been angry.

[9 : 22] I mean, it just doesn't seem to fit the narrative. It seems to be just totally out of place that it is possible that this man who had been disobedient with whom God was patient, he was a prophet of God, God told him to go and preach this message, God gave him a second chance, he goes and preaches it, the people turn and repent, and he gets angry.

It's just counterintuitive. It's quite a surprise in this story. And so my question this morning is, why was Jonah angry?

Why was he angry? Now, on the surface, you may say, well, Jonah was angry because God did not destroy Nineveh. And that's not what I'm trying to ask, so let me ask it a little differently.

Why was Jonah angry that God did not destroy Nineveh? Those are two different questions. Two very different questions.

One that deals with the surface and the other that gets to the root of the issue. Why was Jonah angry that God did not destroy the city of Nineveh?

[10 : 52] That's what I hope to answer this morning. And what I hope to show this morning as well is that Jonah got angry for the same reason we get angry when we get angry at God.

For the exact same reason that Jonah got angry when God spared Nineveh, we get angry at God for other situations.

But like the rest of the book of Jonah, there are two characters in chapter four. The two main characters are Jonah and God.

And what we see highlighted in chapter four about Jonah is his anger and what we see highlighted in chapter four about God is his mercy.

And so in our remaining time this morning, I want to consider each of those beginning first with Jonah's anger. We're told in verse one, it displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was angry.

[12 : 01] And to what does this pronoun, it, refer? It refers to God's showing mercy towards the Ninevites because they repented. And we're told in verse two, that Jonah in his anger prayed to God.

Imagine that. You're praying to God in your anger and he says, O Lord, is not this what I said when I was in my country? This is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish for I knew that you are a gracious God, merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and relenting from disaster.

What is clear is that even though Jonah preached against Ninevites, even though he obeyed God outwardly, inwardly, Jonah still harbored resentment against the Ninevites and he didn't want to see them repent.

He didn't want to see them change. He was somehow hoping they would not repent. And so it seems like Jonah is feeling like God tricked him.

He's kind of like saying, I knew it, I knew you were going to do that. And in verse three, Jonah is so angry that God showed mercy to the Ninevites that he is in essence saying, God, I am so sick at what you've done, I could die.

[13:28] Just take my life. It's better for me to live than die. That's what anger would do for us sometimes, that we would want to hurt ourselves in exhibiting our anger towards other people.

It's almost like Jonah saying, this just cannot be happening. And so we see in verse five, he goes out of the city, he storms out of the city, sets up this little cubicle, and builds it, no doubt it's a makeshift hut like with some branches and thatch on top of it to protect him a little bit from the sun. And so he sits in his booth and he is seething with anger and he's looking to see what God is going to do with the city of Nineveh. He's somehow thinking, holding out the hope that somehow Nineveh is still going to be destroyed.

Whatever's going on in his mind, while he was sitting there, he was thinking, this city, hoping they would be destroyed. Now consider how foolish Jonah would have looked.

He is so absorbed in his anger that God gave mercy to people who he didn't think deserved mercy, that he is bringing great discomfort to himself sitting in the hot sun in the desert in a booth waiting to see God bring judgment on these people who he don't think deserve mercy.

[15:01] Now if you know the story about what happened to Jonah and you were passing by and you saw Jonah, you say Jonah, Jonah, that's you?

I remember years ago, this dates me, there was a movie out, Norman, is that you? How many remember that? Shelly remembers that. They say, Jonah, Jonah, that's you? That's you sitting under that hut in that blazing heat, seething in anger, what's wrong with you?

I thought you'd be rejoicing. God just spared your life. Why are you doing that? The story of Jonah could be very interesting and entertaining until we realize that every single one of us is a Jonah or a potential Jonah.

The story of Jonah is closer to us than we sometimes realize. And what I mean is that sometimes we find ourselves where we, though we have, those of us who have trusted Christ, though we have received mercy, we have no heart that God would give mercy to those who we don't think deserve it.

We can have a hard heart towards them. But we only do that when we forget that God has given us mercy, that the salvation that God has given to us, we did not deserve it.

[16:41] We don't want God to give mercy to others when we forget. And like Jonah, we are forgetting God's salvation when we don't want to give it to others.

And the reason that that is so bizarre is that when God gives mercy to anyone, it is his choice to do that.

It is his sovereign choice to do that. He said to Moses, he said, I will have mercy on whom I'll have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

In other words, God is saying that he gives mercy and compassion and they are exclusively in his power to extend them to whomever he chooses to extend them.

But sometimes we forget that. a number of years ago when I was actively involved in prison ministry, I remember being at the prison and a guard came to me and he said to me that a particular prisoner wanted to see me.

[17:58] And immediately I knew the prisoner was, I never met him personally, but I knew who he was because I read about him in the newspaper. He had committed five murders. And I wasn't eager to see him.

I wasn't eager to see him because I read about the case, I read the evidence, he was guilty, he was overwhelmingly guilty. And as I recalled to my shame as I talked with him, sharing the gospel was not to the fore of my mind.

because deep in my heart, I didn't think he deserved God's mercy. As I reflected on this, as I prepared this sermon, I was remembering that one of the songs that we used to sing in the prison a lot, David, myself, Brother Stuart, we would sing Fanny Cosby's song, To God Be the Glory. And the second verse of that hymn says, O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood, to every believer the promise of God, the vilest offender, the vilest offender, who truly believes.

That moment from Jesus a pardon receives, but that day, that verse was not in my head. And for those of you who have come to Christ, and you have trusted him as Savior and Lord, Lord, how would you respond if you were to hear the news that perhaps that person who was a thorn in your flesh, maybe a co-worker, a neighbor, an ex-husband or wife, who was unfaithful, who mistreated you, who abused you, inflicted pain and abandoned you, perhaps a criminal who inflicted a crime upon you or someone you love, that they came to Christ?

[20 : 05] What would be your reaction? Suppose the news that Prince Hepburn or Kofi Goodman came to Christ began to spread.

What would go through your mind? What would you think? Would you rejoice? The truth is rejoicing is not a natural response for any of us.

We will only rejoice if we remember that we have received mercy, mercy that we didn't deserve, and we will only rejoice if we see our sins rightly in the light of the sight of a holy God.

And we will only rejoice if we remember that salvation belongs to the Lord and he has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, he pardons whom he wants to pardon, he has compassion on whom he wants to have compassion.

He's sovereign to have mercy on whom he wants to have mercy. But perhaps there's some this morning that maybe your issue is not that God has mercy on someone who you are at heart with.

[21 : 28] Probably not angry because God has mercy on other people, but maybe you're still angry with God. Angry with God because perhaps life does not make sense, desires of your heart have gone unfulfilled,!

Maybe hardships and trials are your lot and you don't understand why, but you do understand that God is all powerful and he could change it. He could change it, but he doesn't.

And perhaps you're angry at God. Jonah affirmed with his lips from the belly of the fish, salvation belongs to the Lord.

Yet he questioned God's mercy to Nineveh. And friends, we do the same thing. We will affirm with our lips that God is sovereign and then we question his sovereign dealings in our lives.

We question the ebbs and flow of the hand of God in our lives. And that in itself is an underlying expression of anger.

[22 : 53] Of questioning, God, you don't know what you're doing or you're doing wrong or you did wrong. When we think about this novel coronavirus that is bringing our world into one of the greatest crises that we have known in decades, certainly in our lifetime, there are people who have lost enormous sums of money.

Trillions of dollars have been lost in investments. Businesses have been shut down. I saw a guy standing in a warehouse with a whole bunch of supplies that he wanted to sell on Amazon.

They were sanitizers and because people have been price gouging on Amazon, Amazon refused to take more listings of sanitizers because people were just gouging prices and he stuck with it and you could see the despair on his face.

In the home church I grew up in, there was a man, very well to do man, wealthy, he was in agriculture and in one of the hurricanes, his farm was totally destroyed and he was angry at God.

He ceased attending church and he died a very bitter man. No doubt before the hurricane, if you had questioned him about God's attribute and whether God was sovereign, he would affirm it, yes, God is sovereign.

[24 : 35] But when the sovereign dealings of God came, he was angry at God. You know, that kind of anger, just like Jonah's anger, is misplaced anger.

It's anger that is out of place. And all of our anger against God, it's just like Jonah's anger, it is that we are angry because God is God.

We are angry at God being God. That's what Jonah says. Jonah says in verse 2, he says, I knew this is what you would do.

I knew that you are a gracious God, merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from desire, from disaster, sorry.

Jonah is angry at God for being God. God demonstrated his mercy and his grace to Nineveh sovereignly, not getting Jonah's permission, not getting Jonah's advice, and Jonah was angry that God did that, that God spared them.

[25 : 54] God does what he does because he is God. He's sovereign in all of his ways and he does not seek permission, he does not seek approval, and he decided to show mercy to Nineveh and Jonah did not like it.

And whatever happens in our lives is the result of God's sovereignty, and when we don't like it, we become angry.

God is God. You know, it's interesting, there are people who, like Jonah, get angry when God shows mercy and he spares the wicked, those who deserve to be destroyed.

But you know, that's not all that God does. Sometimes God destroys the wicked. And the same sovereignty that he exercises in showing mercy is the same sovereignty he exercises in showing judgment.

And there are people who get angry because God acts as God, because he is God.

[27 : 15] And see, friends, this is why Jonah got angry. Jonah got angry because God was God. Jonah got angry because God showed his sovereignty, that he did not need to consult anyone, he did not need to get the advice of anyone, that he could do what he did because he is God.

Remember, you get angry at God? We're getting angry because God is God. We're getting angry because God is sovereign. The mercy that he gave to Nineveh was sovereign mercy.

And whatever he does in our lives is sovereign. And when we're angry, the root of it is we're challenging his right to be God.

We're challenging the fact that he is sovereign. Just imagine someone coming to you and say, you, I don't like you.

You do nice. I don't like you. You're just kind. Why? Why are you like that? It's just so counterintuitive. But that's what Jonah does to God. I don't like what you, I don't like you.

[28 : 31] You're gracious. You're merciful. You're steadfast in your love. You're relenting from disaster. God. But he didn't like it for others, but certainly loved it for himself in the belly of the fish.

Jonah's anger at God for being God was misplaced. And when we get angry at God, our anger is misplaced. And what we have to do is we have to humble ourselves and remember that God is God.

and especially as we consider his mercy, he does with it what he wants. See, think about it. If you and I can have a say in mercy and we can demand it, it's no longer mercy.

You realize that if God chose to save no one, he has the right to do that. If God decided that he was going to let all of humanity go to hell, he had the right to do that.

In Adam, we all sinned. We all deserve hell. And God had a right to let us all go to hell.

[30 : 02] God said that he didn't do that. But the witness of scripture also is that he has mercy on whom he will have mercy.

And he pardons whom he will pardon. He doesn't have mercy on everyone. He doesn't pardon everyone. Because his mercy is a sovereign mercy.

And if you would agree that God owed salvation to no one, then you can't complain if he gives salvation to some and not all. will have him.

If you complain, your anger and your complaint is misplaced like Jonah's. Jonah was angry because God sovereignly decided to show mercy to Nineveh.

This brings you to my second and final point. God's mercy. When we think of the story of Jonah, it's easy to see God's mercy to Nineveh, but we can easily overlook God's mercy to Jonah.

[31 : 28] God gave Jonah mercy in chapter two when the fish swallowed him, really rescued him from the depths of the ocean and vomited him on the beach.

Jonah received mercy. Well, I gave him a second chance. That's mercy. And now in chapter four, we see Jonah again getting mercy.

Imagine this. A disobedient prophet created by God who doesn't know anything, who's standing in God's face and saying, I'm angry with you.

I'm so angry. I want to die. You can take my life. I don't care. You add up all the reasons that Jonah should not be doing this.

God is God. Jonah is a sinner. Jonah has been the recipient of mercy and now he stands in God's face and he says, I don't care. I want to die because I don't like what you're doing.

[32 : 32] Jonah got mercy from God in chapter four. And I think we all know this. Imagine how we would have treated Jonah if Jonah behaved like that. Remind him, man, look here, you still have fish sent on you.

Are you coming up in my face? You forgot what I did for you yesterday? God was merciful to him. And we see God's mercy to Jonah in the questions that he asked Jonah. The first one in verse four, he says to Jonah, do you do well to be angry? That was something to backhand Jonah and tell him, find your place, we're not company.

I mean, our parents won't let us talk to them like that. Imagine talking to God this way. But more plainly, God is saying to Jonah, do you have a right to be angry at my mercy? And again, the two obvious reasons that Jonah should not have been angry, one, he himself received mercy, and two, the mercy that God gave to Nineveh was God's mercy.

And Jonah had nothing to say about it. It was none of his business. He had no right to be angry. about it. Again, the scripture says, God has mercy on whom he wants to have mercy, he has compassion on whom he will have compassion.

[34 : 09] Notice that to that first question, when the Lord asked him in verse 4, do you do well to be angry? Jonah doesn't even answer him. Jonah walks away. How many of you know that your child is talking to you and they walk away?

You have to call the ambulance. call the ambulance or call the police or call both. But something isn't going to go like that. Jonah walks off. He walks off, leaves God standing there.

He goes, builds his booth to sit down to see what's going to happen to Nineveh as if to say to God, you better do something to them. You know, our kids sometimes try to manipulate us.

Jonah tried to manipulate God. You have to do something with them. And God is patient with Jonah. And we see his patience in verses six to eight. Look at verse six.

Now the Lord appointed a plant. Let me just pause here and say something. In the book of Jonah, we see the sovereignty of God in many ways.

[35 : 22] We see the sovereignty of God in the storm that came up. God appointed that storm. He appointed the whale. And now we're seeing him.

He, it tells us in verse six, he appointed a plant. And this plant God brings up miraculously overnight. So he 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, the mercy of God. But the next, but when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant.

Notice he appointed the worm, he appointed the plant, appointed the worm, so that it withered. 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 live, to die than to live. life. It's quite interesting when you look at the question that the Lord asked Jonah.

[36 : 49] He asked him the same question two times, first in verse 4 and then in verse 9. And the first question had to do with God's sovereign right to show mercy to the Ninevites.

The second question had to do with God's sovereign right over this plant to destroy it. He created the people of Nineveh, gave them mercy.

He created this plant miraculously overnight, he decided to destroy it. And he's essentially asking Jonah the same question both times. He said, Jonah, what right do you have to question me and be angry about this plant?

A plant that you didn't bring up, a plant that you had nothing to do with. You didn't plant it, you didn't water it, you didn't take care of it. And God being the humble God that he is doesn't remind him that I did it, he hints at it.

The people of Nineveh are mine, the people of Nineveh are mine, this plant is also mine. And we can see how blinding sin can be.

[38 : 10] That Jonah moves from questioning God about the Ninevites to questioning God about this plant that he miraculously brings into being overnight. And again, the key in both of these questions is God is saying, I'm sovereign.

You have no right to be acting the way that you're acting. Angry about the Ninevites and angry about this plant.

In verses 10 and 11, God helps Jonah to see how his concern for the plant was misplaced and contradictory.

notice what the Lord says to him. He says, you pity the plant for which you did not labor nor did you make grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night.

And should not I pity that great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who did not know their right hand from their left, and also so much cattle.

[39 : 28] God is showing Jonah how his sin has so blinded Jonah, Jonah's priorities are so wrong, that he can find himself being concerned about this plant and having no concern for these lost people who are under the judgment of God and who stand to be destroyed by him if they do not repent.

And brothers and sisters, when we are unmerciful towards other people, it is because we have forgotten that we deserve death for our own sins as well. Every one of us.

Every one of us was on death row. And every one of us by virtue of the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross, those of us who have put our trust in Christ were pardoned, were set free.

off of death row. And this morning as we consider the book of Jonah and we consider the closing of it, God is bringing us face to face again with the fact that he is a merciful God.

It is amazing to me when I hear people say, oh, the God of the Old Testament, he is this and he is that. It's the God of the New Testament we need to serve. We don't need the Old Testament and here we see Jonah saying the God that I know, he is gracious and merciful and kind.

[41 : 01] He is not some moral policeman up in heaven waiting to clobber us when we sin. You know the song that, the local song, my God is writing, he's writing all the time, he knows what you do.

That is a misrepresentation of the God of Jonah, the God of Scripture. He brings us face to face with the God who he is.

It is interesting the way the book of Jonah ends. The book of Jonah ends with a question. There's only one other book in Scripture that ends with a question.

it's the book of Nahum, another Old Testament minor prophet. And interestingly, while the book of Jonah highlights God's mercy to Nineveh, the book of Nahum highlights God's judgment on Nineveh.

Nineveh's repentance did not last. God destroyed them. And it should serve as a reminder to all of us that while God is merciful and long-suffering with sinners, God is not forever long-suffering with sinners.

[42 : 36] There comes a time when the message of mercy will become a message of judgment. judgment. And we need to remember that.

This God who is merciful, this God who is slow to anger, meaning he does get angry, he's just slow to get there. But when the message of mercy is not heeded, it will become a message of judgment. And the same way that extending mercy is a sovereign right of God, executing judgment is also a sovereign right of God. And no one can question him and say to him, what have you done when he extends mercy?

And no one can question him and say, what have you done when he executes judgment? judgment. He is God. And so if you're here this morning or you're listening to this recording and you're living away from Christ, you need to heed the warning.

The God of mercy is also a God of judgment. He is patient, he is kind, he is slow to get there, but he gets there for those who do not.

[43 : 58] and will not repent. I think it's natural for us to wonder what became of Jonah. The book ends with suspense concerning Jonah.

Did he finally get the message about God's mercy? Scripture doesn't tell us. And the reason Scripture doesn't tell us is it's not important.

the reason Scripture doesn't tell us what happened to Jonah is the book of Jonah is not about Jonah.

The book of Jonah is about God. It begins with God, it ends with God. It begins with God saying to Jonah a message, you go to Nineveh and you preach.

And it ends with God asking Jonah a question. should I not pity Nineveh, that great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also much cattle.

[45 : 20] The book of Jonah is about God and it's about God and his mercy. Jonah is just a prop for that. And the right answer to that question that God asked Jonah is yes.

But it's yes not only to Jonah, to the Ninevites, sorry, it's yes not only to the Ninevites, it is yes to people from every kindred, tongue, tribe, and nation who don't know their right hand from their left hand, who deserve judgment and wrath from God, but instead they receive mercy and grace through Jesus Christ.

Jonah points us to the need for a better prophet, a better prophet who would not just come in obedience and preach to his enemies out of just outward conformity, preach to enemies who he hated, a better prophet who would come in obedience and preach in mercy and grace to his enemies whom he loved, loved so much by dying for them on a cruel cross.

Jonah points us to the need for a better prophet, a better prophet who even as he hung dying on the cross, prayed for his enemies, even those who were crucifying him.

Jonah failed and pointed to the need for a prophet who would not fail and that prophet is Jesus Christ. He came and he brought mercy and grace and indeed not just grace but amazing grace.

[47 : 14] but that grace is only experienced by those who hear and heed his message of repentance.

The message that Jonah, the failed prophet, took to Nineveh, the Lord Jesus, the true prophet, the good and righteous prophet, has come to bring to our world, cause us to repent, cause us to turn from sin, and those who do, he will forgive and he will reconcile to God the Father.

Brothers and sisters, this is the God of Scripture, sovereign in mercy, sovereign in judgment. He gives mercy to the undeserved and we should all rejoice for that because we are among those who deserve nothing from God except judgment for our sins.

Let's pray. Father, we are so grateful this morning for the mercy and grace that you have given to us through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[48 : 38] Lord, like the people of Nineveh, we didn't know our left hand from our right hand. Like the people of Nineveh, we deserve to be destroyed, but you demonstrated sovereign mercy and you saved us.

Would you help us, Lord, to remember that salvation is of the Lord. You have mercy on whom you will have mercy. You have compassion on whom you will have compassion.

And you do it in a sovereign way. And any anger on our part is misplaced anger. Would you help us, Lord, to humble ourselves and to rejoice in your mercy and grace that you sovereignly bestow on whom you will.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.