

How Do You Receive God's Word?

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Date: 29 October 2023

Preacher: J.D. Edwards

[0 : 00] If you aren't familiar with the book of Jonah, you can find on our church website the other two sermons on Jonah chapter 1, Jonah chapter 2. And that brings us up to speed where we are today. I'm going to read the entire chapter for us.

You can follow along in your Bible. I'll be reading from the King James. Then I'll be expositing a little bit from both, including the ESV. I think it's helpful for us to hear God's word from a variety of different English versions.

And as I read this, remember that this is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, and sufficient word. It's God's very own word for you. If you believe that about the Bible and you receive it that way, after I'm done reading Jonah 3, I'll say, This is the word of the Lord, and you respond, Thanks be to God.

Jonah chapter 3, verses 1 through 10. Verse 4.

Verse 6.

[1 : 36] Verse 6.

Verse 9. Who can tell if God will turn and repent and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not?

And God saw their works, that they were turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not.

This is the word of the Lord for the people of God. Thanks be to God. You may be seated. The Bible says that the grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of the Lord endures forever.

Would you pray with me? From Isaiah 55, 6. For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there, but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth.

[3 : 33] It shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

May this be so today, Lord, through the ministry of your word, for the glory of King Jesus in this congregation, we pray. Amen. Beloved congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, how do you receive the word of the Lord?

The word of the Lord goes out. How do you receive it? A freed slave is expected to cherish his freedom.

A pardoned criminal is expected to live a reformed life. There is a term in criminal justice used to describe this human tendency to relapse into a previous mode of behavior.

Do you know what it is? Recidivism. I learned this week that Colorado has consistently been ranked as having one of the highest recidivism rates in the USA.

[4 : 46] Almost half of those criminals released within about six months commit the same crime for which they were arrested. Kids, what that means is for every two prisoners that maybe paid their time five years, they get released.

One of them has to end up right back in the slammer for another five years for committing the same crime. See, Israel had been enslaved in Egypt.

The Lord delivered them out of there. He said, I will be your people. I will be your God and you will be my people. And I give you my law and you will walk with me in a way that pleases me. And Israel falls back into their bondage and their captivity.

Not to Israel, not to Egypt as a nation, but to sin. And they turned to all the idols of the surrounding nations instead. If Israel had cherished their freedom, then they would love God who set them free. But Israel loved the idols of their own hearts and all the other nations more than they loved their Savior. So at this time of the book of Jonah, God had sent two other prophets that were

contemporaries of Jonah.

[5 : 57] These were Amos and Hosea. And Amos and Hosea are going throughout the cities of Israel declaring the word of the Lord and calling the Israelites to repent to their God. Amos chapter 3 verse 6, he says, Is a trumpet blown into a city and the people are not afraid?

You hear the horn go off. You should do something. You should receive it and respond. The trumpet is sounded. And Amos and Hosea are preaching to God's people. But it falls on deaf ears and hard hearts.

Amos wrote, Does disaster come to a city unless the Lord has done it? Israel, God will bring his disaster on you. It will come from the hand of God.

Hear his word now and repent. Repent. And Israel is paralyzed, cold. So the word of the Lord was proclaimed to Israel. And they did not repent.

And I see the theme of chapter 3 of Jonah being the word of the Lord. And it goes out. And it causes a response. How is it received? The word of the Lord, that phrase is used in the Bible 446 times.

[7 : 06] And four times right here in this chapter. The word of the message of God. So my prayer this week has been that we not be blind and hard hearted like Israel. If the Lord has in fact delivered you from sin, Satan, worldliness.

He set you free. Then we receive his word. We don't fall back into the idols of our hearts. We receive his word the way he wants us to receive it. So I'm going to show you seven ways I believe this chapter teaches us to receive God's word.

Before we get going with that, let me just ask you to reflect. How much has God forgiven you? The one who's been forgiven much loves much.

The only fitting response to God's gracious word is gratitude. I hope that comes through as a clear theme from this chapter. Number one.

Jonah chapter 3 teaches us to receive the word of the Lord as God's gracious word to you. So receive the word of the Lord, number one, as gracious to you.

[8 : 17] You'll notice the way that this chapter begins in verse 1. It's that the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time. Chapter 3 is really just a mirror of chapter 1.

The description of what happens is almost word for word. How the book began in Jonah chapter 1 with where we're at now happening a second time in Jonah chapter 3. Someone said it's like we got to that point in the story where Jonah got swallowed and then spit back up.

Now the tape got reversed, got rewound all the way back and we're starting a second time. That's God's grace to Jonah. Notice how God did not stay silent toward Jonah.

Despite Jonah's rebellion and disobedience, Jonah had disqualified himself. He should not be considered a prophet. He has no humanly right to be considered one who would receive the word of the Lord to go declare it with authority.

Jonah disobeyed God's command to go to Nineveh and preach the word I give you. And yet the word comes to Jonah a second time. See how gracious God is?

[9 : 24] We read in chapter 1 verse 3 that Jonah fled. What did he flee? He fled the presence of the Lord. That's why he's trying to get out of town. And he ran not toward Nineveh, the exact polar opposite direction.

He ran to Tarshish. And the city port there is Joppa. And in chapter 1 we see this literary theme of going down deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper and deeper. It's a downward spiral of sin and rebellion in Jonah's life.

Jonah chapter 2 verse 10. We're toward that the word of the Lord then came to the depths of the ocean. And it was the word of the Lord that made that fish spit Jonah out.

You see the word of the Lord is what carries power here. In Jonah chapter 1 we read how Jonah went down to Joppa. Then he went down onto the ship.

And he went down into the inner part of the ship. Then they threw him down off the ship into the water. Then the fish swallowed him and took him down to the depths of Sheol. He calls it hell on earth.

[10 : 29] And he's down in the deepest part of the fish now. That's how deep his rebellion was toward the Lord. But it was from the depths of that fish's stomach.

With the smell of rotting fish and the acid of the stomach working on his hair, on his body and covering him. And the Lord even provided oxygen inside the stomach of the big fish for him to

breathe in and cry out a prayer of repentance himself.

And then the word of the Lord caused Jonah to be vomited up on the beach. Jonah's going to march from Joppa all the way across Israel.

And then beyond Israel all the way to Assyria. To the capital of Assyria. And this second time now in chapter 3 he receives the gracious word of the Lord.

Jonah was a reluctant prophet. Jonah was a rebellious soul. Jonah was a disqualified minister of the word of God. And yet the word of the Lord came to him and the word of the Lord was gracious to Jonah.

[11 : 38] And the gracious word of the Lord made Jonah a gracious soul. Thomas Brooks pointed out that a gracious soul may look through the darkest cloud and see God smiling on him.

Has God made you a gracious soul? Is God teaching you that? Maybe right now. Despite your previous sin and mine, the Lord graciously keeps giving you and me his word, doesn't he? He keeps speaking to us. His word keeps coming to us. Time and again. It's considered child abuse when a parent gives one of their children the silent treatment.

When a parent stops talking to their child for extended periods of time, it's considered emotional abuse. Isn't it comforting that the Lord Jesus Christ, the living word of God, he never is silent.

The word of the Lord is gracious. It keeps coming to his children. It comes a second time, a third time. It comes day after day, week after week. The word of the Lord comes to you graciously.

[12 : 52] Notice how Jesus is described in Luke chapter 4, verse 23. God the Son took on flesh, walking the earth, revealing who the Father is.

And here's the description. Quote, all spoke well of him and marveled, listen to this, at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth.

The word of the Lord from the lips of Jesus is a gracious word to you. How much has God forgiven you? The only fitting response to God's gracious word is your gratitude.

Receive the word of the Lord as gracious. toward you today. Number two, receive the word of the Lord as unbending.

Receive the word of the Lord as unbending. Notice in verse two, the word of the Lord told Jonah, arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it.

[13 : 57] Not a compromise message, not a softer version, but call out against it the message. It's the same message. The message will not change, Jonah. You can be rebellious, you can try to flee.

My word will not return void. Go declare my message like I told you. See, nothing changed about Assyria.

Assyria still had the same number of inhabitants. It was still the same metropolis of the Assyrian Empire. Nineveh was the great seat of the greatest monarch on earth. But now Jonah has been a changed man.

His fear of this great city, Nineveh, has been displaced by a greater, more reverent, more holy fear. The Lord taught him the fear of God. And the fear of God replaced in his heart and his soul that fear of man.

Now Jonah went knowing the mighty God, the true king. And the king himself really is the message for Nineveh. Jerry Bridges pointed out, the object of our faith is not the mere content of the message, but the one whom the message is about.

[15 : 11] Jonah's going to declare God to the Ninevites. Jeremiah 10.10 says, the Lord is the true God. He is the living God and he is the everlasting king.

Why would you fear the king of Assyria who lives in Nineveh? Now, what we know of Assyria, you can visit the British Museum and you will be blown away by two empires, the Babylonian and the Assyrian Empire.

And historians, secular historians, tell us that everything about Nineveh was set up to put terror in all of the visitors. You've probably watched some R-rated movies for violence and you can see like these, you know, brave heart images of torture and just cruel treatment of the human body.

And so, as you would enter Nineveh, there would be spikes of decapitated victims of kings and generals that had been defeated. So, welcome into Nineveh. This is the fear they're trying to strike in the heart of man.

So, here comes Jonah straight out of the belly of the big fish marching into this big city commanded by the true king, the God, the creator of heaven and earth.

[16:23] I know that the fear of man is real in my heart, but I look around our cities today, it's pretty soft. It's pretty soft. We're afraid of this man?

I mean, look at Nineveh, look at these great empires of the ancient world, of the Middle Ages. Think of the physical, literal torture God's people have been called to march through over the centuries. We better not be soft. We better be called out of this culture. We better have at least the same reverence for God that displaces that fear of man in our hearts.

I'm preaching to myself here. God says, arise and go. Call out God's message. God is against the great violence, the wickedness, against the evil, against the sin.

God is ultimately against Satan who is behind all of this that attacks the image bearers of God in this awful city. You know, God forgives these Ninevites, these wicked, violent men.

[17:25] God forgives them. How much has God forgiven you? The only fitting response to God's gracious word in our life is gratitude.

gratitude. Receive the word of the Lord. It is an unbending word. God won't bend His word. We're the ones who better bend ourselves, submit to Him.

Number three here is receive the word of the Lord as that which you will immediately obey. Receive the word of the Lord, number three, as that which you will immediately obey.

Notice in verse three, this time around, the second time, Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to what? Look in your Bible, verse three, according to the word of the Lord.

Now Nineveh, we're told, was an exceeding great city, three days journey in breadth. Well, God had used Jonah's affliction to sanctify Jonah.

[18:28] God had disciplined Jonah and He had done it as a loving father to restore Jonah's wandering soul. Jonah was straying from his father and the father used that discipline.

He took him to the pit of death itself and then brought him out of that to correct Jonah until Jonah learned to obey the word of the Lord. And this time, Jonah does not delay.

As John Gill put it, under the influence of God's power and grace, this word of the Lord that sends him, Jonah stands not consulting with his flesh, but immediately arises as God commanded him.

Verse four says, Jonah began to go into the city. So we can picture Jonah approaching the outskirts, seeing it, smells hit his nostrils, the sounds.

One thing the Ninevites repent of is their violence. It was in your face. It was everywhere you looked. And God had given him a message. And as he walked through the city, he would call out, yet 40 days in Nineveh shall be overthrown.

[19:41] Can you picture that scene in this ancient city, this prophet of weak little Israel walking wherever the people are gathered, wherever there's a big intersection, repeating this message, over and over.

And the language here tells us he had barely gotten into the city, this great city, declaring this message. And God's word caused an effect on the Ninevites.

They realized this is not a, this is clearly not the threat of a military conqueror. This is not a mighty general trying to threaten some political thing. Here's a man who died, essentially died, and is living now, telling them of a coming judgment unless they turn.

And the word overthrown, yet 40 days Nineveh shall be overthrown. It's the same word that is used to describe the judgment God brought on Sodom and Gomorrah.

Nineveh will be overthrown. It can also be translated overturned. The people of Nineveh will turn in 40 days.

[20:48] This whole city will turn. That's what he's declaring. Just as Amos had trumpeted that message to the Israelites, no response. Now this reluctant prophet, Jonah, the loser, the one who's disqualified himself, he's going and doing the exact same thing to the Gentiles.

Not just any Gentiles, the most wicked of all the Gentiles on the earth right now, and the most to be feared. He's trumpeting, you will be turned over in 40 days.

The fact that there's a 40-day delay is also interesting because it's eliciting a response. It's saying, there are 40 days here. This is not today. It's not tonight. You have 40 days, Ninevites.

How will you receive this word of the Lord? You see, that's the message. How do you receive the word of the Lord? You will be overturned.

We don't know what the overturning will look like in our lives, but most of us can look back just a few years or a decade and you can see times where God has overturned you.

[21 : 59] He's overturned parts of your life. Amen? When he overturns us, he's turning us back to himself to make a connection with where we're at in the Gospel of John.

If God is pruning you, it's so that you will bear more fruit. If God is disciplining you as a loving Father, it's so that the fruit of Christ will be multiplied in your life.

If God is humbling you like he humbled Jonah, it's to make you ready like Jonah to obey him immediately. Obedience can be as simple as moral law.

It's the moral law of God in my life. I need to take that step of obedience right now with what he's shown me. He's made his will to us very clear. The will of God in your life is your sanctification. Don't put off obeying him as the Spirit convicts you. Jerry Bridges said, it's love that provides the motive for obeying God's moral law and it's his law that provides the specific direction on how to exercise that love.

[23 : 05] how much has God forgiven you? Has he put his love in your heart? Is he putting more and more and more of his love inside of you?

Love for God and love for others? Then the only fitting response to God's gracious word is gratitude. Receive the word of the Lord as that which will bring immediate obedience in your life. Don't negotiate with your flesh. You receive it to obey it right now. Number four, the word of the Lord we see in this passage.

We're to receive it trusting that it will accomplish God's purpose. Receive the word of the Lord, number four, trusting that God's word will accomplish his purpose.

In verse five, we read that the people of Nineveh believed God. they believed this word that Jonah preached to them. They called for a fast.

[24 : 10] They put on sackcloth, not just a few, all of them from the greatest to the least. Verse six says, the word reached the king of Nineveh.

You see the word of God going forth all the way to the top and he arose from his throne. He removed his robe. He covered himself with sackcloth and he sat in ashes.

What happened in Nineveh is an illustration for us of that promise of Isaiah 55, six. The word of the Lord goes out from the mouth of God and it shall not return empty.

It shall accomplish that which I purpose. It shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it. Here's an illustration of that happening right before their eyes. I was trying to picture what this would be like right here in Colorado.

Would you like to see a reform of Colorado? This is Reformation Sunday. You want to see Colorado be reformed, turning and repenting to the Lord? It's okay to respond with a little bit of volume in your mouth.

[25 : 15] Do you want to see that or not? Oh, amen. Well, I mean, picture like the wickedest day that Denver has come up with. Everybody's out on the streets celebrating sin and wickedness.

And picture the prophet of the Lord marching in and saying, in 40 days, this city will be overturned. 16th Street Mall, people take off whatever they were wearing and instead they cover themselves with ashes and sackcloth.

And they're saying, Lord, forgive us. Have mercy, Lord. What a scene. The word of the Lord. It goes forth with power. Can't think of a better sermon text for Reformation Sunday for those of us where God has planted right here in Colorado.

Now, we don't need to guess at what was going on in Nineveh because the New Testament interprets it for us. In Matthew 12, 39 through 41, we read that Jesus, he explained why this happened ultimately.

He said, evil and adulterous generation, you seek for a sign but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. What do you mean, Lord Jesus? Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

[26 : 35] Now, listen to this. Jesus said, the men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it for they repented at the preaching of Jonah and behold, one greater than Jonah is here.

our Lord Jesus. He took on the sin of his people and he nailed it to the cross.

The Lord Jesus was taken down, dead, and he was buried. The Lord Jesus transformed the grave. He transformed that grave into a womb and Jesus rose from that grave.

He was born again, the first man. Just as Jonah essentially died inside the belly of the fish and was vomited out, a new man, newness of life. Jesus Christ appeared to over 500 witnesses.

He says, one greater than Jonah is here and he's giving you the word of the Lord. How do you receive it? Repent and believe. We saw in chapter 1 the name Jonah means dove and a dove is an emblem for Israel of peace.

[27 : 52] Jesus is the prince of peace. He comes to inaugurate the new creation. Jonah was cast into the waters of God's judgment and the Lord settled the waters.

He brought peace by dying on behalf of those Gentiles in the boat. Jesus Christ passed through the waters of judgment and he rose up alive to bring peace on earth, the peace from heaven.

See, Jonah was a shadow. Jesus Christ is the substance. When Jonah comes a second time now, this is an image for us of the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ.

And when the Gentiles repent and believe, this is foreshadowing the ingathering of all the Gentiles. That's us. Believing now. Jesus Christ, one greater than Jonah, he is here.

How do you receive his word? When you receive Christ as the living word of God, the greater Jonah, you want to eat up all of the Bible. Show me, Lord, this is who you are.

[28 : 58] Show me more. Spurgeon said, eat into the very soul of the Bible until at last you come to talk in scriptural language and your spirit is flavored with the words of the Lord.

Don't you want to receive God's word that way? Well, the Ninevites did, at least temporarily. How much more should we with the spirit regenerating us, causing us to love God, giving us a hunger for his word?

If you've been forgiven much, the only fitting response is to receive God's gracious word with gratitude and eat it up. Receive the word of the Lord, trusting that it shall accomplish his purpose in your life.

number five, receive the word of the Lord as his powerful means for changing your heart. Receive the word of the Lord, number five, as his powerful means for changing your heart.

we need our hearts to be changed. We need to be overturned time and time again. A second time, the word of the Lord graciously comes to us to turn our hearts back to him.

[30 : 13] A third time, a hundred and fourth time, the word of the Lord keeps graciously coming to us. Notice how the word of the Lord makes its way all the way to the king of this great empire of Assyria.

In verse seven, he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh 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. 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. Do you see how they received the word of the Lord? They didn't take this as a military threat.

They took this as God himself is not pleased with our sin. See, the law of the creator was written on their hearts. They knew their acts of violence deserve judgment. They knew that.

[31 : 17] This most wicked, most pagan, most sin-enslaved people repents. And God captures this whole story in his word. I looked this up.

I'm going to read it from my phone for you because I believe this is true. Why? Here's the question. Why now? Why do we have this? One commentator believes that this repentance of the Ninevites is a foil.

A foil is when a character or one people is set up in contrast to another. It's typically a contrast against the protagonist in order to better highlight and differentiate certain qualities of the protagonist.

So contrast means differences. And let me give you an example from literature that might be more familiar. In Romeo and Juliet, Shakespeare has Benvolio and he has Tybalt.

Benvolio is passive. Tybalt fights. Benvolio is even-keeled. Tybalt is quick-tempered. Benvolio is very loyal to his friends. Tybalt is more loyal to his family.

[32 : 27] So you see the contrast set up. One is a foil to the other. Ninevites were a foil to the protagonist, which was the people of God.

It was Israel. We need a contrast here. We need to see what are the traits of the Ninevites that need to expose the sins of God's own people. Expose their hypocrisy.

That's why the word of the Lord does this. And it foreshadows what God's going to do to the ends of the earth. Brian Estelle commented, Ninevites are a foil to God's people. God is rebuking Israel's lack of repentance from the prophetic preaching of God's word to them.

You ignored Amos. You ignored Hosea. Fine. I'll take the reject. I'll take Jonah. And I'll show you what, not him, but what my word will do. You give me the hardest city in the world to turn over Nineveh?

Fine. I'm going to send Jonah to Nineveh to show you the power of the word of God. Augustine said, God's promised forgiveness to your repentance.

[33 : 33] God has promised if you repent, he will forgive. And that's what the king of Nineveh was counting on. Lord, if we turn, maybe you'll withhold your wrath. But Augustine said, God has not promised tomorrow to your procrastination.

Israel, learn this example. The way I made my word, made Nineveh respond, you need to respond that way. We're no different. We're no better than the Ninevites.

We're no better than Israel. If you have been forgiven much, the only fitting response is to receive God's word, his gracious word to you again today with gratitude. receive the word of the Lord as his powerful means for changing your heart.

He did it to Nineveh. He can change that hard heart in your family, of that co-worker, maybe your own heart right now. His word works powerfully to change hearts.

The reason for this is number six. We receive the word of the Lord, trusting that he is glorified when he proves himself true to it.

[34 : 40] God is glorified when he proves to you, I was true to my word. That's why we receive it, trusting he will bring glory to himself through his word.

Look at verse 10. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented. The King James, God repented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them and he did not do it.

Well, this brings up a big question about God. Recently, there's been wrong teaching on this topic that God doesn't even know the future.

He created possibilities and the future will unfold based on human choices. So, this is tricky. Did God repent here? What does this mean? Did God change his mind?

Or did God decree everything that will come to pass in the future? What's at stake here is sovereignty. Who is truly sovereign over what comes to pass on earth? Is it God or is it man?

[35 : 41] This is a tricky passage. We have a hermeneutical principle. In Sunday school, we've been going through different tools we need to use to correctly understand all of God's word.

The hermeneutical principle in this case that's helpful is this. What the Bible reveals about God's essence, his nature, his attributes, who God is, that clarifies for us other language that describes God's actions or feelings because we know from the Bible that God is not a creature with human passions.

He's not. What does the Bible say about God's essence, God's nature? That comes first. Psalm 33, 11 says, the counsel of the Lord stands forever.

The plans of his heart to all generations. Romans. Brian Estella, again, helped clarify, Scripture speaks to us in terms of analogical discourse.

To say one thing is like another thing. It's a way of communicating to help us understand and make sense based on what we can relate to. John Calvin said, God talks to us in baby talk.

[36 : 51] He accommodates his truth to work in us that which we are capable of making sense and receiving. So, this language is not describing God as he is in himself, but it's describing God as he seems to us.

We know from the Bible that there is no shadow of turning in God. To say that God repented in this case, it means that God revealed that his action would be changed toward them.

He had warned them 40 days. God knew that this was his decree all along. he knew they would repent. His word would cause them to repent. And he knew that he would not destroy them now in this moment.

So, the word of the Lord going to the Ninevites is what made their repentance happen. It's actually reinforcing the divine decree. Because Israel refused to obey God, see, God, he would bring unrepentant Israel into exile for his glory.

Because he would also bring them back out of exile into their land with Ezra and Nehemiah and rebuilding and setting the stage for the coming of Christ. All of this for his glory. He's teaching his people who he is.

[38 : 05] He is just. He has wrath towards sin. But God is long-suffering. He is patient, desiring that none should perish. All of this is true of who God is. And he reveals this to us in this story.

In Genesis 1 and 2 we have a pattern established for the word of God going out and creating that which he intends.

This is one more example of how God does that in time. The word of the Lord goes forth and he brings into creation that which he decrees. He creates order out of disorder.

He creates life out of chaos and death. And here with the Ninevites his word goes forth and it brings about that which God decreed all along foreshadowing the work of his son.

And the purpose for all of this is the glory of God alone. Does Jonah get any glory in this story?

Jonah gets pushed lower and lower. Do the Ninevites get glory for repenting?

[39 : 02] No. They're so wicked. God was gracious to them. It's the word of the Lord that brings glory to God alone. How much has God forgiven you? The only fitting response to his gracious word to you yet again today is gratitude for his glory alone.

You receive it. The Lord receives you and you receive his word trusting that he is glorified when he proves himself true to his word in your life as well.

I've got one last point here and this is not even from Jonah but it's what this all points to which is the fulfillment the final word of the Lord. How do you receive the Lord Jesus himself?

That's number seven. Receive the final and full word of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ himself. When you receive the word of the Lord when you receive Jesus he changes you.

You receive Christ with life changing gratitude. The Lord had promised Israel in Exodus 34 that the Lord is a God merciful and gracious slow to anger abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

[40 : 16] That's who God is. That's who God has proved himself to be once again with the Ninevites repenting. We're told in John 1 14 that the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we have seen his glory.

God's only son full of grace and truth. Have you received the final full word of God Jesus Christ himself? Hebrews 5 8 says although Jesus was a son he learned obedience through what he suffered and being made perfect he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him. A freed slave is expected to cherish his freedom. A pardoned criminal is expected to live a reformed life. In Christ you have been forgiven much.

Receive him. Receive God's gracious word today with life changing gratitude for the glory of God alone. Would you pray with me? Oh Lord your word is gracious like you say in Proverbs 16 24 your word is like a honeycomb.

It is sweetness to the soul and health to the body. Lord we see through your word that even our suffering like Jonah if it leads to repentance it's gracious.

[41 : 42] As hard as it is for us to accept that and understand it we thank you that you have revealed your steadfast love your mercy your grace to us. Lord we testify like Jonah you are so slow to anger like the Ninevites Lord you do abound in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Please teach us Father to receive your word to receive Jesus Christ and to obey you now to abide in you every day and forever for your glory in our midst we ask Amen.