

Man Angry

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[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! I'm going to conclude our study of this wonderful book, and I'll have to admit I'm going to miss our friend Jonah and all he has to teach us.

It's been a fun study, more than I think I expected. So Jonah chapter 4, and I'm reading from the English Standard Version.

If you need a copy of the scriptures, we have some in the back. I'd love for you to grab one. So Jonah chapter 4, verse 1. This is the Word of God.

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 to you when I was yet in my country?

[1 : 21] That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish. For I knew that you are a God gracious 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.

Verse 4. 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. Verse 6. Now, the Lord got appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah so that it might 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.

[2 : 36] Verse 8. 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.

But 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.

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 hand, and also much cattle.

That is the Word of God. Anger is in each of us. You know, it's an emotion common to us all, and it is a sin that we all struggle with.

[4 : 01] Now, we may be on different levels, so to speak, but it is something. Track down the little inconveniences of the day, and you'll see anger. The slow car in the left lane.

The traffic slow down when you're running late. The dinner with not one or two, but three spills. You know, sometimes you're eating dinner, you just feel like, might as well just turn them all over now to get it over with.

You know, or maybe it's the person in the checkout line that's on their phone with 30 items in the express lane when you just had to get some milk. You know, anger often escalates and explodes. Some people are just famous for their anger. You know, John McEnroe, the tennis player, who's just famous for his tirades on the corner. Bobby Knight, the famously angry basketball coach, or maybe one of the family members that are in your family tree that has famous episodes of anger.

I had a family member that was a doctor and got in an argument with someone at a restaurant and threw him through a plate glass window. Now, thankfully, he's a doctor, so he went and sewed him up afterwards.

[5 : 16] But it is a famously angry story in our tree. But anger does not always explode, does it? Sometimes it seems to leak out in virtually unseen ways.

Counselor David Pallison, in his book on anger, he begins by telling two stories of anger. He tells a story of a gunfight in a suburban home. He counseled this cup.

He said, Willie was upstairs, I'm quoting him, with the pistol, Brenda downstairs with the rifle. They had words, the usual, bickering daily kind of stuff. It had gotten more heated, obviously, than usual. Finally, ugly words escalated into a domestic World War III. A half dozen live rounds zinged up and down the stairway, blasting holes in sheetrock, scaring the daylights out of neighbors, and bringing the police sirens waiting to their door.

Most of us have never been in a gunfight. But Dr. Pallison continues with another story of anger. He says that at about 10 o'clock one evening, my wife Nan and I had just gotten our fussy little two-year-old off to bed.

[6 : 28] Dirty dishes overflowed the sinks. Toddler debris had turned the living room into a FEMA disaster site. A basket of clean laundry, kneaded, folded.

Oblivious to it all, I sprawled out on the couch to read the latest issue of National Geographic. He said Nan walked in a few minutes later and said, it sure would be nice to have some help with cleaning up.

He continues, I lowered the magazine two inches closer to my face and buried my nose in my reading. I don't know any husbands that have done that.

You know, I realize I'm angry, though I hadn't said a word. But inside me, I was saying a lot. It's been a long day. I just need a break. If only she'd asked me more nicely.

I don't feel like doing it right now. I mean, we could do it tomorrow. Go away. Don't bother me. He continues, why is this happening to me?

[7 : 29] Amazingly, sanity intruded and he got up and helped. But he concludes, a gunfight is one way to cut off a person and protect your turf. Burying your head two inches deep in a magazine is another way.

And this morning, when we find Jonah in our passage, his face is buried, so to speak, in a magazine. He is angry. He is sulking.

And he is stuck. You know, obviously, or graciously, the Lord comes to him. The Lord's been after Jonah since the beginning of this book. I mean, he's been after him in the storm, in the sea.

He's been after him by getting him into the belly of the fish. But this time, the Lord comes to him.

The Lord pulls up a chair. The Lord begins to speak directly to him and to talk to him and bows down and simply asks, Is your anger good?

I mean, that's that question that's going through. Do you do well to be angry? Is your anger good? It is the question he's asking, Jonah, and the question God is asking us.

[8 : 41] Is our anger good? I'm going to break this out in three points as we continue to study our friend Jonah. The first is anger is the most satisfying of all sins.

Anger is the most satisfying of all sins. What is anger? Like, what is anger actually? What is this emotion, this thing? You know, David Powelson simply says, At its core, anger is very simple.

It expresses, I'm against that. I think that's so helpful, right? I'm against that. That thing that just happened, I don't like that.

I'm opposed to that. So at its core, anger is not an emotion. It's not a surge of adrenaline. It's not even a flurry of words. Anger is identifying and resisting something that you see is wrong.

Now, anger, in identifying wrong, anger in and of itself is not wrong. You know, God gets angry, famously angry in the Old Testament. He's jealous, and he pours out his wrath.

[9 : 47] It's not just in the Old Testament. Sometimes we can think, man, that God of the Old Testament, I don't like him. I like the new and improved God, you know? But that's not the way it is.

Scripture presents anger as an attribute of God that is good and righteous and holy. And we see anger in Jesus' life. The meek and mild one gets angry.

My favorite story of his anger, so to speak, is at Lazarus' tomb. You remember he showed up a couple days late to make sure Lazarus was good and dead.

And the text says he was indignant. Now, that's just a nice way of saying he was angry. You know, indignant just means an intense feeling of concern.

Now, he was not angry because Mary and Martha were annoying him or because he didn't want to help Lazarus. Lazarus was just kind of doing some other things.

[10:43] You know, he kind of distracted. He was angry at death. He was angry at the devil. He was angry at how far the world had fallen. So it would be more concerning to us if Jesus was not angry.

Obviously, Jesus is not and must not be irritable, irrational, and out of control in his anger. But Jesus would cease to be good and cease to be God if he was not incensed, offended, and opposed to suffering, sin, and injustice.

So in that respect, his anger is our comfort. Listen, anger goes wrong, though, when it becomes all about us.

Anger goes wrong. Something that can be right goes wrong when it becomes all about our desires, our wants, our rights, and our way. And it becomes all about us.

Anger is sinful. For the purpose of following this message, in general, when I'm referring to anger, from here on, I'm talking about sinful anger. And that's what's going on with Jonah.

[11:53] He is sinfully angry. He is in rage. You know, as we studied last week, he preaches the word, and all of Nineveh turns to the Lord.

Remember that? They turn with all their heart. They turn with all their lives. Revival breaks out. I mean, most preachers would give an arm or a leg, some appendage for that type of response. And the Lord turns and relents, right? The Lord relents from his disaster. But Jonah becomes angry. Look down there in verse 1. It says, I mean, literally, it begins very specifically, but, so all that great stuff that was happening, but it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.

And he prayed, O Lord, is this not what I said when I was back yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee the tar sheds, for I knew that you were a God gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

The idea is Jonah is not angry because the Ninevites turned. Jonah is not angry because he sees their tears. Jonah is not even angry because he hears their rejoicing, that the Lord has turned away his disaster.

[13:04] Jonah is angry because God has shown mercy. Think about this. Elijah sulks and becomes angry in 1 Corinthians 19 because he preaches, and the people don't respond.

But Jonah sulks because he preaches, and they all respond. And in his prayer, he tells us what happened. It displeased him exceedingly.

O Lord, is this not what I said? I knew you were going to do this. I was going to preach, and you were going to show mercy. I mean, he's angry that the Lord has done what the Lord always does and shows mercy.

It's almost like he's pushing back. He's saying, I will go, and I will preach, but you must not be merciful. When the Lord refuses, he runs.

And we know that story. The Lord chases him down and brings him back. Finally, he goes to Nineveh. But when the Lord gives mercy, he gets angry. Do you see, Jonah's anger is all about himself. It's all about what he thinks is best.

[14:05] It's all about what he thinks is right. He's not grieved that the Ninevites are evil. Not grieved that they're an enemy nation. He's not upset that they're worshiping idol. He's not offended that they're sinning against God.

Jonah is angry because he thinks they don't deserve mercy. Jonah is angry because he thinks they are wrong, and he is right. And anger always treads there.

They are wrong, and I am right. Anger, though, in the moment feels so right and so satisfying, if we're honest.

You know, when we see something that we think is wrong, it feels so right to be angry. When a friend talks about us behind our back, or when our spouse hurts us, or when another job opportunity passes us by, it feels so right, feels so good to be angry.

And one author says it like this, provocatively, of the seven deadly sins, anger is perhaps, or possibly, the most fun.

[15:12] Jonah's not hiding from the Lord again, because he knows he's done wrong.

Jonah's hiding because he thinks he's doing right. And it feels so good. These verses show us that there are two ways to run from God.

You can run from the Lord like Jonah does in the first two chapters by refusing to obey him, going your own way, demanding your way, doing what you like, or you can run from the Lord like Jonah does here by obeying him for the wrong reasons.

It reminds me, this book parallels the parable of the father and his two sons. You know, the younger son, the prodigal son, runs away, wastes his life in poor decision and reckless living.

We know that. I mean, surely he doesn't love the father if he runs away like this and wastes all his father's money. But the older son, and so that was Jonah in those first two chapters, and the older son stays home, and he obeys the father completely, right?

[16:33] You remember that? He stays home. Lord, I always work for you. But when the father comes home, does something he doesn't like, he gets angry. He must not love the father either.

Now, what's going on? Don't we show how much we love God by how we obey him? How did the older brother go astray?

You know, often we think that if we obey God completely and do all the things he tells us to do, then we've paid our dues. And he can't ask anything else for us. He must answer our prayers.

He must bless us. He must do what we want to do with our lives. Anything else would be unfair. But this is not obeying God out of love and gratefulness, and that's what's going on.

And Jonah's heart is what's going on in the older brother's heart. That's what so often goes on in our hearts. It's a way of trying to control God, and it's a way of running from him. Jonah's like that older brother.

[17:34] He obeys, but he assumes if he does, God will give him what he wants. And when he doesn't, he gets angry. And just like the older brother, he doesn't go to the party. He doesn't celebrate.

He gets angry. Far too often we run from the Lord like Jonah does in these passages in self-righteous, sulking anger. We walk away from friendships without dealing with it.

We walk away from marriages without working through it. We walk away from the Lord. We may say, Lord, I'll go through the motions, but I'm not putting my heart out there again.

Anger feels so right. It feels so good, and it's so hard to let go. But the Lord is here. And saying, is your anger good?

Point two, anger becomes bitter fast. Anger becomes bitter fast. You know, Jonah in so many ways reminds me of Peter, reminds me of myself. He is up, and he is down fast.

[18:38] There's just something wonderfully candid about Jonah. He's a prophet of the Lord, and yet he is a lousy man, which I can relate to completely.

Anger feels so right and so satisfying at first, but it goes bitter fast. Jonah, as this passage continues, Jonah goes overboard again.

This time he's not thrown over the ship, but this time he plunges overboard into a spiral of selfishness and anger. I just want us to look at this together. Look in verse one.

Now, it displeased him exceedingly. There's that word that's been repeated numerous places.

Anger begins in his thoughts. I mean, it begins with, just like Pallas said, it begins with, I don't like that. I really don't like that.

I don't think that's a good idea. But then he continues. He displeased him, and then, verse one, he was angry. His displeasure turned to anger when he concluded, I don't just like that.

[19:43] I don't deserve that. This is not right for me. You know, anger always makes a judgment. Anger doesn't merely receive something.

It makes a conclusion about something that's happening to me. And so that's what happens. He begins to complain, you know. He prays, which is great. Praise to the Lord, but his prayer is irreverent and complaining.

Oh, Lord, is this not what I said to you when I was yet in the country? This is why you made me, this is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish. I knew your God gracious and merciful, slow to anger.

Anger always adds words. He's essentially saying, what's going on? What's happening to me? He begins to grumble, gripe, and vent. Anger always says too much and goes too far, slanders, gossip, and destroyed.

And then after this, he kind of plunges down inward. Look at that prayer in verse three. He just prays, God, I know that you're like this, and I don't like that you're like this.

[20:42] He says, take my life. It is better for me to die than to live. His anger goes down. He sulks and licks his wounds.

I can't believe God would do this to me. Life is not worth living. Rather than exploding, his anger turns inward.

It withdraws. It grows cold, becomes moody, indifferent. He turns in to self-pity.

That's that licking the wounds. It was just reference. Anger. And Jonah's sin is plunging him down. Verse five, Jonah gets bitter, I think, is what's going on here. If you look down there, Jonah went outside the city, sat to the east of the city, made a booth for himself. He just sat out there.

[21 : 47] I think he just can't let it go. He's bitter. He can't let it go. He thinks the Lord needs to wipe out Nineveh, so he throws down a chair and says, I'm going to wait on it. And the presumption is, Lord, if you don't take him out, I'm just going to get angrier.

And he does. Abraham Lincoln, our president, former president, once, listen, I was trying to remember which one he was.

I was going to go with 14. I'm glad I held my tongue. But he once listened to a pleas of a mother of a soldier who'd been sentenced to hang for treason.

She begged the president, as other people have, pardon him, pardon him, pardon him. He's committed treason, but pardon him. He's a good little boy, you know, or something like that.

And he's reported to have left the lady with the following words. He granted the pardon, but he gave her a few words. He said, still, I wish I could teach him a lesson.

[22 : 55] I wish we could give him just a little bit of hanging. Just a little bit of hanging.

You know, often when we feel angry, we know it's wrong to repay, but we just want to make them pay a little bit. You know, we just want to hold on to a little bit.

We just want to not let go of a little bit because we've grown bitter. The problem is bitterness only hurts you.

It only offends God, and it only hurts you. H.B. Charles says, bitterness is drinking poison and waiting on your enemy to repent. The poison is going down your throat.

The quote we read a moment ago continues. I cut it off. It says, in many ways, anger is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you're wolfing down is yourself.

[23 : 58] The skeleton at the feast is you. What we're seeing is Jonah cave in and consume his self.

In so many ways. There may be only one message you need to hear this morning, and it might just be, let it go. Let it go.

I don't know what it is. I don't know what happened. I don't know how hard it's been, but in so many ways, the Lord wants us to let it go. I think there's two choices.

When the Lord does something, or something happens to us that we don't like, it's let it go or get bitter. What are you holding on to? I remember hearing John Piper preach one time, and he was talking about some of his favorite memory verses.

He said one of his favorite memory verses on marriage is Romans 12, 19. It says, Blood, never avenge yourselves. Leave it to the wrath of God.

[25 : 03] We all kind of fell out, but there's something. I mean, because that sounds a little intense for marriage, right? You know, but the point is there's something to that. I'm going to look over. I'm going to leave it to the Lord.

I'm going to look over this. I'm leaving it to the Lord. And that's what Jonah needs, and that's what we desperately need. There's things we have to look over and let go.

Let the Lord run his universe instead of climbing on the throne and trying to run it ourselves. Jonah sinks even further down. He becomes numb.

Look down in verse 8. He says again, It's better for me to die than to live. Verse 9, Do you do well to be angry? Yeah, I do well.

Angry? Angry enough to die. I think in so many ways, Jonah is becoming indifferent. Jonah gives up in self-fitty and bitterness. He becomes indifferent.

[25 : 59] He's so angry that he doesn't care. Now that doesn't even seem to relate with each other, but eventually he's so angry he doesn't care about the Ninevites. He doesn't care about himself. He doesn't care about his life.

He doesn't care about the things he used to care about. All throughout chapters 1 and 2, think about it. Jonah is sinking down, right? You remember that? He's sinking down, down all the way into that belly of the fish or sinking down in that water.

The Lord rescues him and yanks him up, and now here he is. He's saying he wants to go down again. Isn't that incredible? I mean, that's the way the writer's writing this, and that's the way Jonah's story comes back.

He wants to go back to death. Two messages ago, he was going off about how thankful he was to be delivered, but that's what happens when anger continues to consume.

We become indifferent, and indifference may be the most dangerous form of anger, anger and self-pity that runs its course such that we don't care about the Lord or others or the things we used to care about.

[26 : 58] And I've just seen too many people here holding on to anger year after year. It takes a lot to hold on to anger until they become completely indifferent.

They're angry about everything. It's left unchecked for so many years, it leaves them completely not caring and numb, not feeling anything anymore for God, not feeling anything for others.

You know, the opposite of anger is not love, it's indifference. And that's where anger drives.

There's no sin I've battled more consistently in my Christian life than anger. You heard about my family tree earlier, but when I was younger, it often led to fits of rage.

Sadly, I continue to battle it, but often with softer impatience is where it comes, right? More refined, more refined irritation.

[28 : 14] Little bubbling beneath the surface of moodiness, self-pity, indifference.

You may be right there this morning. You may be giving up. Now, you might have your smile on and all that stuff, but you may be giving up because of how hard your marriage is, because of how far your children have strayed, because of how great you've been wronged.

And wrong is real, and wrong hurts, but it's wrong to hold on to wrong for too long. Or how long it's been since you woke up and didn't have to face difficulty and pain.

You may even believe you could just drift away and no one would notice. Don't give up. I mean, I think the Lord is here. Is your anger good? Is it good for you?

How's it working out? Hold on to it. That's the Lord. Is it blessing you? Is it helping you please Him?

[29 : 28] Is it helping you serve? The Lord is here. He's making all things new. God, there's so many things I'd want to say if that's you.

The Lord will take you out. Small, deliberate steps in humility will deliver you.

That's the problem. It will deliver you. Read a song a day. Ask a friend to pray. And step out into the light.

Thirdly, anger runs from mercy. Anger runs from mercy. Anger is so satisfying. We think we're right. It becomes bitter. And we run as it becomes bitter.

Jonah is angry because the Lord shows the Ninevites mercy and he just gets bitter, right? He gets so bitter. And in the end, he just runs from the Lord. The Lord's after him.

[30 : 32] The Lord just after him. But he's running. He's running from the Lord in the way the Lord defines mercy. In so many ways, the entire book hinges on these final verses.

Like if you, if you, we laid it out, which it lays out on two pages in our Bibles, the matching pattern is right there. Chapters one and two and chapters three in the beginning of four, kind of, they parallel one another.

Chapters one and two, Jonah gets that first call, right? He takes off running and then the Lord rescues him. Hallelujah. Chapters three in the beginning of four, Jonah gets that second call and then he obeys and then he gets angry.

So both of them have the call, what happens and then the response and Jonah's heart and life. But chapters five through, or verses five to 11 in this final section stand out from the rest of the book.

They're intentionally set apart and they're meant to unpack the heart of this book. Everything that Jonah's about, the book, is right here.

[31 : 33] So what are they trying to say? You know, I mean, we just read them, but Jonah goes out the side of the city. I said he was planting his chair down there to see if the destruction would come and he wants to see what happened. He makes a little shelter and then the Lord appoints a plant to cover him, right?

There's another example. The Lord appoints the intimate involvement of the Lord in all the details of Jonah's life. Jonah's life is not happenstance. It's divinely directed and so he's exceedingly happy.

Now that's not surprising. You know, right now, if you didn't have a cover out there, you would be exceedingly sad. But when that cover comes or umbrella comes, you are shaded and you're happy.

The next morning, the Lord sends a worm. That's a very interesting end, right? He's sitting there underneath the shade. He goes to sleep. Ever woke up hot?

You know, that's what happened to Jonah. He wakes up not just in his own drool, but in his own sweat because the worm had eaten the plant and the plant had withered up and died.

[32 : 34] And then the Lord appoints, there it goes again, a hot wind across the ground to hit him. And then this hot sun beats down on him and he moans in anger and we probably all would.

It'd be better for me if I died. The Lord responds again, is your anger good? Now this is a very odd way to end a book. You know, what's going on? Is this just cruel and unusual punishment?

Is Jonah just, is the Lord just adding insult to injury? I mean, why would the Lord do this? Why would he give him shade and then take it? Sometimes we can feel that way. Lord, you gave me that great thing and then you took it.

What's up with you? Why would he tease him? I mean, this almost seems like a prank between a couple preschoolers. the Lord is teaching Jonah.

This is it. You love mercy when it benefits you. You love mercy when it benefits you. In anger, Jonah runs from the Lord and from mercy and he rejoices when mercy comes to him.

[33 : 40] He's, he's, he's been rescued from the water and he is in the belly of that fish and he's thanking the Lord. When mercy comes to the Ninevites and he, his life gets worse because of it, he hates it.

I hate mercy. But when it comes to him in the shade again, he loves it. He rejoices. When the shade disappears, he hates it and gets angry. He becomes sad over that poor plan.

You see, Jonah loves and rejoices over mercy only when it blesses and benefits him. When he's sinking, he rejoices. When he receives, he gives thanks. When it, when mercy is extended to others, who he thinks are wrong, he hates it and runs.

The Lord is trying to teach Jonah, your mercy is not mercy. It's selfish. It's only mercy if it meets your demand and agrees to your terms.

It makes you the judge who decides what's right and what's wrong and who deserves mercy and who doesn't. And the Lord keeps coming to Jonah and all that he's doing, trying to say to Jonah, I am the Lord over all.

[34 : 45] And I'm merciful and slow to anger over all who are undeserving. I give mercy out as I please. The Lord's been announcing that the whole way.

He's the God of the Ninevites. Yes, the enemy nation. He's trying to say, I'm the Lord. I created them. They're stamped with my image. They're called to worship me. I will have mercy on them if I so choose.

He's upending Jonah's life. He was a prophet of the Lord. He wasn't new to these things and yet his heart had grown to where his mercy was surprisingly, shockingly selfish.

And in the end, the book of Jonah, though, asked the Lord a question. The Lord's been asking all the questions today, but the text asks him, how can you give mercy to the undeserving?

How can you, like Exodus says and like Jonah quotes, be merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, forgiving iniquity and transgressions, yet by no means clearing the guilty?

[35 : 58] Do you just give mercy sometimes and justice other times? I mean, is it based on how you feel? Is that all that's going on with this plant and this worm and these things? Is your mercy just, Lord?

To answer this question, we must move past Jonah to another man who was put forward in our place on a hill called Calvary. The scriptures say, redemption was secured when Jesus Christ was put forward as a propitiation by his blood to be received by faith.

He was put forward to suffer for the sins of all those who hope in him, not only to forgive sins, but to prove that God's mercy is just. God did not throw out justice in our salvation.

God did not overlook sin. He did not sweep it under the rug. God put forward his son, the only son, truly God and truly man, to suffer in our place for our sins and to uphold justice for every time he passed over sin and the sins of ours and the sins of everyone who would trust in him.

The riddle that Jonah struggled with is the riddle that unfolds at the foot of the cross. John Stott says it like this, how then could God express simultaneously his holiness in judgment and his love in pardon only by providing a divine substitute for the sinner so that the substitute would receive the judgment and the sinner the pardon.

[37 : 31] In so many ways, we see the full understanding of God's mercy because we see Jesus Christ as our substitutionary sacrifice. He was put forward so that all the world might know God is

just but his mercy is more.

His mercy has overwhelmed the enemy. His mercy has conquered sin and death providing a way through grace. His mercy is secured for us unannoyable favor with God and uninterrupted communion with God.

There is good news for us this morning. There is more mercy in Jesus than anger in us. How can the Lord give mercy to the undeserving only through and in Jesus?

Are you in him? Only through this covering can you be covered from the wrath, the angry, just wrath of God that is warranted because of sin.

So, did Jonah get it? the book ends with a question and never tells us the answer.

[39 : 05] It ends with, should, if you pity the plant, should I not pity the people I created in my own image? I think the point is that we're not to leave the book of Jonah thinking about Jonah.

The point is we're to leave it thinking about us. Is our mercy right? Is our anger good?

Oh, we like Jonah. I mean, do we only obey when we like it, when it suits us? I mean, do we only love mercy when we feel like we've earned it, made a contribution? Do we understand how bankrupt we are and how great his mercy is?

Do we only extend mercy to those when we feel like it, when it blesses us, when someone seems worthy of it? Are we running from mercy? The Lord, I think the Lord would have us place ourselves there and ponder that.

let me pray for us. Father in heaven, praise you and thank you for your word, God.

[40 : 27] We do humble ourselves before you and confess our need for mercy. God, there are people in this room, myself included, that that sin of anger have plagued us for so long and we need mercy.

Lord, I pray that you would lead us out of the light. Lord, I pray that for anyone that's clutching on to the sin or wrong of other, I pray that you would, by your spirit, allow them to let it go and be reconciled.

Lord, I pray that you would lead anyone who's gotten to a place where they would say, I'm almost numb. I think no one would care if I died. No one would care about my life.

I don't even care about my life. Lord, we pray that you would draw them out into light. The Lord cares. Just like he hunted down Jonah, so he's come to hunt us down and to help us see how great is love for us while we are undeserving.

Lord, we just pray that you would open our hearts to trust you more, to lean on you more, and to follow you more because of Jesus.

[41 : 54] in Christ's name, amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

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