

Grace & Mercy (Part - 1)

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Preacher: Jeff McVannel

[0:00] But good morning. Grace and mercy. You need it? I do. Let's pray and ask for the Lord's grace and mercy as we get into his word. Father, we do look to you. Thank you that you are the giver of all good things and you know what we need.

And just ask that you would guide our time. Pour your spirit out upon us and speak, Lord, through your word as you see fit to each and every one of us. So we do look to you and just rest in your goodness. In Jesus name. Amen.

Amen. Backwards. I can remember my arrows. Here we go. Clue. Grace and mercy and Jonah. It's like, really? Certainly. Certainly.

Jonah is one of the books that we refer to as a minor prophet. Okay. Now, minor does not mean lesser because we have the major prophets and the minor prophets in our scripture.

But it does not mean lesser. It means, generally speaking, shorter. So when you're in your Bible and you're trying to find the minor prophets, you got to go real slow because it's really easy to fly by them.

[1:37] And then you start all over again or you go to the very beginning where that table of contents is and you find a page number. I was going to tell you what page it's on in my Bible, but that probably doesn't help you a whole lot.

But we know the story of Jonah, the account. We use that term story a lot, but I don't like that. It's the account because it's not a story.

It is an accounting of an actual historical fact. Now, I say that because there are a lot of people, even within the large umbrella of the church, that would say, it's more of the story. It's an allegory. But the problem with that is Jonah was a real guy, right? Second Kings chapter 14 tells us about Jonah and that he served the Lord in the northern kingdom of Israel during that time when the kingdoms were divided.

Israel and Judah during the time of Jeroboam II. So he's an actual human being that lived approximately at 826 BC.

[2:54] And not only was Jonah from that area referred to as Gath Heifer, if I pronounce that correctly, which is near Nazareth in the area of Galilee, which is where Jesus is from.

And Jesus himself tells us that he was a historical person. In Matthew 12, the Pharisees and the scribes are answering Jesus saying, Teacher, we want a sign from you.

And Jesus answers and said to them, And evilists, there's a good word for us. Evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign.

And no sign will be given except the sign of the prophet Jonah. So he's acknowledging Jonah as being a prophet. And again, in Luke chapter 11, Jesus acknowledges him saying, As Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

So again, people can deny that Jonah was a real person or deny the scriptural account. Don't. Jesus acknowledges him.

[4:21] Personally, I think the safe place to stand is with Jesus, not with our scholarly people that deny the scripture. So again, like I said, they can believe as they choose, but outside with Jesus.

Now, Jonah chapter 1 and verse 1 says, For as Jonah became... I missed that.

Anyway, we'll go. Jonah chapter 1 and verse 1. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it, for their wickedness has come up before me.

So it says the word of the Lord came to Jonah. Now, scripture doesn't tell us how or what that meant for Jonah. The word of the Lord comes to him in a way that he knows definitely that God's

speaking to him, because we get that.

But again, what does that mean? Did he have a dream? Did he have a vision? We know from the scripture, God spoke to Moses through a burning bush. Right?

[5:47] We have the scriptures where the Lord speaks to us, but we're not told how it is that God spoke to him. Now, the question for a lot of people is often, does God still speak to his people today?

Right? Valid question. Well, the answer being, Hebrews, my clicker?

There we go. Maybe I got to get it right here. He says, God, who at various times and in various ways, spoken time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by his son.

The word of the Lord. By his son. I got ahead of me.

Don't mind me. Being clickers don't always get along. Plus it's, well, I won't go into that. For us today, again, he speaks to us in a variety of ways, but primarily, right?

[7:06] The word of the Lord. And I say that because he spoke, the word of the Lord came to Jonah. And how does he speak to us today? The word of the Lord.

The word of the Lord. Which is what? Primarily. Right? And I always think to myself, I want to hear from the Lord.

Right? Do you think that sometimes? I just wish God would let me know. Spend time here.

Primarily, that's how we're going to hear from the Lord, is through his word.

Scripture tells us, Paul writing to Timothy, that all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. Profitable, good, helpful, useful.

For what? For doctrine. For reproof. For correction, instruction, and righteousness. That the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

[8:22] Right? God's given us his word to teach us. To show us those things that we need. To show us where we're out of line.

To show us how to get back in line. And how to walk in that. To continue in that. That's partially why we have the scripture.

So that we would be equipped for the good things that he has for us. The foundation of everything that we need, we can hold in our lap.

Right? And that said, Acts chapter 2, beginning at verse 17, says, And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

Your sons and daughters shall prophesy. Your young men shall see visions. Your old men shall dream dreams. And on my manservants and my maidservants I will pour out my spirit in those days and they shall prophesy.

[9:36] All that to say, God can speak to us any way he chooses. Personally, I look at the world around us and the scripture and think, I don't know how you can think that we're not in the last days.

But that said, he can speak to us through dreams. He can give visions. However he chooses to speak, he can have a burning bush jump up in my yard.

If that's how he chooses, he's able, right? But the issue is those things are always going to be in alignment with what he has said in his word.

So we have to know the word. Because that, again, is the basis, the foundation of everything and that he's going to reiterate those through our circumstances, through our devotional time, whether you're looking at a devotional book that somebody wrote or you're hearing a song on the radio or whatever, however he chooses to communicate is going to be in alignment with his word.

So that foundation that's needed. So, all that to say, God spoke to Jonah and he didn't have a question as to what God was telling him to do.

[11:03] Right? And he says, go cry out against the city of Nineveh and he's basically saying, you go preach to them or against them.

You bring the fire and the brimstone. You tell them what's going on, what's coming. Right? So, why does God send Jonah to Nineveh?

Their wickedness has come up before him. He knows full well what's going on. What Nineveh was all about.

Right? He sees everything. Jesus tells us in Luke chapter 8, nothing is secret that will not be revealed nor anything hidden that will not be made known and come to the light.

Right? But like the nation that Jonah represents, he's called to bear the message of God to a Gentile people.

[12:17] God's plan from the very beginning but Israel had forgotten or neglected that and they're not alone.

Paul writes to the churches in Galatia and he says, the scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand saying, in you all nations shall be blessed.

So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. So again, that's God's heart, right? That all men would be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth.

Not just the Jewish people, all men. From way back when he's calling Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, God's plan was that through him the message of his love would go to all of mankind.

Okay? So again, important for us to keep in mind. And we look at that and say, yeah, sometimes seems slow, but the Lord is not slow in fulfilling his promise.

[13:47] The some count slowness, but he's patient toward you, not wishing that any would perish, but that all would reach repentance. So, God's heart.

And he sends Jonah to Nineveh. But what do we know about Nineveh? Nineveh was an ancient city, an Assyrian capital, located along the Tigris River in modern-day Iraq.

Again, area we're familiar with from happenings in recent history. But it's a Gentile city believed at the time to be one of the largest cities in the world.

Very beautiful, ornate, wonderful gardens, horrible people, if I can use that term, vicious, vicious people.

Now, they were known particularly for their brutality. And we often hear, you know, the Bible's boring, and what about, it's like, well, you haven't read.

[15:04] You want to read about brutality and wars and all of those things, read your Bible. But some of the things that these people were known for is they would capture a city, they would take the people outside of the city walls, stake them down to the ground, skin them alive, and put their skins all over the walls of the city.

Others, they would take and impale on poles outside the city walls and leave them there to die.

Why, I said, horrendous or vicious people.

So, this is who God is sending Jonah to preach to. Okay?

Now we get an understanding of the basis of the book. But again, God sees, he knows, and his heart is that none would perish.

And we think, but, those people? And we have that kind of a mindset today, don't we?

[16:31] We could all make a list of those that we think, I don't want nothing to do with. I don't want to see them get saved.

They've done horrendous things, right? pull out your list. We all have them. Or am I just alone?

Right? It, but that's not God's heart. But we can understand Jonah better, right? And again, I think that's, that's the key.

prophet Ezekiel says, as I live, says the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked would turn from his way and live.

God's not denying the wickedness. He's saying my heart is, is that their heart would change, that they would turn from that wickedness and turn to me.

[17:39] Again, it's not about what anybody has ever done in the past. It's about hearts coming to the Lord and being changed. That's his perspective.

So what's Jonah do? Jonah arose to flee from Tarshish from the presence of the Lord, went down to Joppa, found a ship going to Tarshish, so he paid the fare, went down into it to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord.

So what's he do? He runs. Like, and you think, like that's going to work. Come on, Jonah, it's God. you're running from God. But, and you can kind of understand his perspective.

But we do the same thing. We think we can run from God, right? Like, or, or, you know, maybe he doesn't see what I'm doing over here, or what goes on behind the closed doors.

[18:57] But we know better. Jonah knew better, because he knows the Lord. But we can fall into that same kind of thing.

All right? We take off running in our own way, just like Jonah. Jonah. you wonder if Jonah didn't know the Psalms.

David writes, where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend into heaven, you're there. If I make my bed in hell, behold, you're there.

If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me.

So, again, it's, there's no escaping. But Jonah's determined not to go to Nineveh.

[20:01] So, he goes down to Joppa, a coastal city, and he goes west, or is trying to go west, right, on this ship.

And Tarshish is like 700, or excuse me, Nineveh is like 700 miles from where he's at to the east, and he's going to go west to Tarshish, which is like 2,500 miles away.

So, what's he do? He's heading in the complete opposite direction. God says, you go this way, Nineveh's like, yeah, right, I'm going that way.

Again, we do that. The Lord lays on our hearts, speaks to us, however it is he chooses. And do we always get right in line and go with what he calls us to, or do we go, yeah, no.

Again, can understand. But notice that it says, Jonah was to flee from the presence of the Lord, he went down to Joppa.

[21:26] And I think that's important to grasp, because whenever we try to run from the Lord, we're going down. Right?

And this becomes a major thing throughout the book. He goes down to Joppa, goes down in the ship.

He goes down to the depths of the sea. He goes down into the belly of the great fish. down to ground. When we persist in disobedience, it's a downward spiral.

Round and round. I get the picture of the drain. Maybe the toilet. Okay? That's probably a better picture.

Round and round and down and down. running from God is not a good idea.

[22:35] Downward. That's not good. But that's what is going on with Jonah. Right? But like I said, we do the same kind of thing.

And also notice, he paid the fare. There's a cost. Run from the Lord.

You're disobedient to what he calls you to. You're going to pay the price. There's a cost. Always a cost.

And again, when we think about how cruel the Ninevites were, you wonder, was Jonah scared?

Was he afraid to go there for what might happen to him? He's not. You read the whole of the book.

[23:45] You find out at the end, Jonah was afraid. He was afraid that God would be merciful and forgive those people.

And he wanted nothing to do with that. He knew the Lord. He knew that if they repented and cried out, God would forgive them.

And he hated them and didn't want to see that happen. He wasn't afraid of them. He was afraid that God would forgive him.

So, again, he wanted to see them judged. And we looked at it before. 2 Peter 3, 9, right?

God's not slack concerning his promises, some call slackness, but long suffering toward us. Who's us? Not willing that any would perish.

[25:00] Any. No one's disqualified. regardless of what they've done.

Same for you and I, regardless of what any of us have done. God's heart is that we'd come to repentance. And them too.

Right? All of that to say, this is what the book of Jonah is about. we always see the fish and the dude in the water.

Right? We always think Jonah is about Jonah and the whale. Jonah is about God's great grace and his mercy.

And we see it right up front. God's heart. So what's our excuse when we try to run?

[26:08] When we're disobedient, when God speaks to our hearts? God's He's told us to go and make disciples of all nations.

Baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you. So why don't we?

I've shared before, I'm a music head. I play my stereo. But I go through stuff like this, songs pop into my head.

There's a song that is entitled Crawl to China. And one of the lines in the song says, is God asking you to crawl to China or just to cross the street?

I'm like, ooh. that's the thing. I'm afraid God's going to call me to be a missionary and make me go to China.

[27 : 22] So I'm not going to pay attention to what he's saying. And he's trying to prompt our heart to pay attention to the people that he sets right in front of us.

but I'm unwilling. So again, what do we do?

Are we listening? Are we aware? Right? And the Lord tells us to always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.

or to be prepared. A good Boy Scout or Girl Scout. To be ready to give an answer.

To who? To the people that ask. To people that ask.

[28 : 22] The instruction is don't not. The instruction is not to go chase somebody down to hit them with my Bible to be ready to answer their questions.

And when they have questions that I can't answer, you know what? It's okay to say, I don't know, but can I get your number? Or can I, you know, I'll go see what I can find out and I'll get back with you.

And it's a learning process. But again, while we ought to be in our scriptures so that we can learn because again, God's heart is for these people and they have questions.

And he tells us to be ready to give answers. That's on us. Saying, go to Guatemala.

Maybe. Or maybe he is. Or maybe he's telling you to go back to Michigan. Or maybe he's telling you to go across the street and knock on your neighbor's door.

[29 : 39] I don't know. That's his. But are we willing and are we prepared? So that again is the question for us.

So, you know, I shared before out of 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and God talks about the body and we look at one another and it's like we're the church body here.

The local congregation. but every part of the body has a function. And God calls us to be in a local church and in so doing we have a part to play because we're all part of the body.

Every part functions and every part has its function but he's the one who determines what that is. But we all have a function.

And that falls into the same kind of category. If the Lord calls us to be a part, there's a reason. And we need to seek him and find out what that is and to be functioning as part of the body that he calls us to.

[31 : 13] So anyways, Jonah is heading in the opposite direction. Right? Verse 4 says, But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea and there was a mighty tempest on the sea so that the ship was about to be broken up.

And I think, you know what? There's times that God brings the storm into our lives. sometimes God brings the storm.

It's not to say that every storm is from him. Sometimes he brings storms. So am I open in asking, Lord, are you trying to get my attention?

Or is this the enemy? Because again, you go look at Job, God allows Satan to bring storm into Job's life.

So it can come from anywhere. But are we open and asking? But the reality is God uses these situations to get our attention.

[32 : 34] And one of the ways to get our attention is through our circumstances. God whips up this storm and says the ship's about to be broken up. And the mariners were afraid and every man cried out to his God.

And he threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship and laid down and was fast asleep.

Seasoned sailors are freaking out. So this is a pretty good storm. But Jonah's sin isn't his and his alone.

The consequences of his sin and God trying to get his attention are now affecting other people. But it's my choice.

I'm not hurting anybody. It's just me. I can do what I want. No. The decisions we make affect other people or can.

[33:52] And it says that every man cried out to his God. there's an old saying. I have a brother that has testified to this.

There are no atheists in a foxhole. When the rounds are coming in, everybody believes and is crying out to some God.

God God is crying out to their gods and again, they're throwing stuff overboard.

This is their income. See, when things get bad enough, priorities change. It's not all about the cargo.

It's not all about the job. It's not all about the bank account. it's like, I'm in trouble. God help.

[35:02] Okay? So, sometimes the storms change our perspectives. And where's Jonah?

Asleep. Down the belly of the fish. Belly of the fish, not yet. Belly of the ship. Is it just me echoing? Anyway, maybe that's better.

But he's hard-hearted. He's cold. He's indifferent. Sleep at the wheel. Doing his own thing. Asleep and running at the same time.

So, the captain, verse 6, comes to him and he said to him, what do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God.

Perhaps your God will consider us so that we may not perish. Right? So, the captain comes down and he rebukes him. I think here's a believer asleep.

[36:15] Here's a pagan calling him to account. Ever been there? In your Christian walk, have you ever had a non-believing or a born-again pagan call me to account?

Yes. Yes. Not a pleasant thing. God can use him.

God's using this captain to try to get Jonah's attention, to realize where he's at and what he's doing.

And God can speak through an unbelieving captain.

God can speak through a donkey. God can speak through a born-again pagan. He can speak through storms.

He can speak through accidents. he can speak through whatever he chooses to speak through. So again, not a pleasant thing.

[37:48] But they know that this is not an ordinary storm. They know something's going on and somebody needs to own up.

Verse seven, and they said to one another, come, let us cast lots that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us. So they cast lots and a lot fell on Jonah.

And they said to him, please tell us, for whose cause is this trouble upon us? what's your occupation? Where do you come from?

What's your country? And what, of what people are you? So it's like they're saying, what have you done, man?

Who are you and what have you done? Or whose fault is it? Because you know, one of my favorite, least favorite verses, it's a portion of it, numbers 32, 23.

[39:05] I can't ever remember if it's 32, 23, or 23, 32, but it gets me there, right? What's God say? you can be sure your sin will find you out.

Plain and simple. Know it. It's happening. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow. Just know. So don't ever feel secure in your sin.

Because we're going to answer. And it says, the lot fell on Jonah. What's the lot? For you and I today, it's draw your straw.

I think, no, come on, how's that work? Right? The lot is cast into the lap. every decision is from the Lord.

He can have you choose the short straw. Because guess why? Your sin will find you out. And if that's how he chooses to work, that's what we're going to get.

[40:22] So Jonah's busted, right? And they're asking what's the deal? Is it you? You know.

Tell us. You know what the deal is. Right? So Jonah says to them, I'm a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.

And God he's witnessing. Finally.

What kind of a witness are you? Oh, I fear the Lord, the real God, the God that created everything. I fear him. Yeah, right.

You're running in the opposite direction. I thought, it's kind of like sitting in the bar, half-baked, of a witness.

[41:51] He's witnessing, but he's a horrible witness. But what does my life look like? And again, it doesn't have to be drugs and alcohol. It can be how I treat people.

It can be the language I use. Again, name your poison. I got my own. But how are we representing the Lord?

And then we try to share. So, do we stop to consider that? Right?

Jesus asks the hard question. Why do you call me Lord, Lord? And do not do the things I tell you. Hard question. Right? Jonah says he's a Hebrew. He's, again, speaking of that covenantal relationship with God.

[42:56] But his life doesn't look like that. We claim Jesus, but does my life look like that? That's the question.

Right? written in Romans. Paul says not all Israel are Israel.

He's like, what? If you read the context, that's like saying not all Catholics, not all Baptists, not all Presbyterians, name your poison of a denomination or not all non-denominational lists, are Christian.

That's what he's saying. Just because my name is on a roll, just because I attend a church, just because I wear a label, doesn't mean I'm a follower of Jesus.

It means I've joined a club, if I can say that. not all who claim to be Christian actually are.

[44:26] What's life look like? James tells us you believe there is one God, you do well.

Golf clap. Even the demons believe and tremble. Do you want to know, oh foolish man, that faith without works is dead?

See, I think I've shared this up here before, I know I've shared it in Bible study. I've always believed in God. my whole life.

I was raised in a church and I believed. Made absolutely no difference in how I lived my life at all.

It was up here. 18 inches journey. One day I hear everything changes.

[45:37] becomes real. Right? Right? Right? Our faith, true faith, is demonstrated in how we live.

Not what we say, not where we gather, how we live daily life. James, again, I will show you my faith by my works.

Now, it's not working to get faith. It is the way I live life is evident, a reflection of true faith.

God. So, running from God, refusing to do what he says, demonstrates something vastly different and ought to be a concern.

And Jonah's finding out, right? He says, oh, I fear God. The God of heaven, the one who made the sea and the dry land.

[46:46] in spite of the sin, he's sharing the truth. God can use any of us.

Regardless of the sin, share the truth. we don't have to get all cleaned up.

We have to allow the Lord to clean us. We start where we are today and allow him to make the changes.

In the meantime, we share the truth in spite of ourselves. God is.

And that's what matters. Not my failings, who Jesus is. When I do a better job at how I live my life, it makes receiving that message more valid, makes the message more valid, but we're all sinners.

[48:20] We're all fallen, we're all broken, but the Lord would grow us in that process. So again, don't wait till we're better.

just continue to grow and move in that process. So then the men, verse 10, are exceedingly afraid and said to him, why have you done this?

For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the Lord, because he told them. We made, right? they know what it is supposed to mean to fear the Lord.

The world knows what it is supposed to mean to be a follower of Jesus. And when my life looks different from that, they know what we claim, and that it's not lining up.

what have you done? There's consequences. Verse 11, they said to him, so what should we do to you, that the sea may be calm for us?

[49:39] For the sea was growing more tempestuous, just getting more crazy. So what do we do? You're the prophet. You're the one that knows the real and living God, and you're running from him, so what are we supposed to do now?

Pick me up and throw me in the sea. Pick me up and throw me in the sea, then the sea will be calm for you, for I know that this great tempest is because of me.

You're right. My born-again pagan friend calls me to account. What can I say? You're right. I blew it. You're right. What can I say? You're right. You own it. Jonah's owning it. You're right. Throw me over. It's what I got coming. I'm going to But there's one other thing he could have done.

[50 : 54] And he didn't. He could have repented. He could have turned to the Lord and prayed, asked God's forgiveness, ask him to turn the boat around if they can.

But he doesn't do that. right? He's still thick. I can relate to unfortunately all too well. Nevertheless, the men rode hard to return to land, but they could not for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. So they're doing everything they can. Save themselves to save Jonah, save the ship, and the storm just keeps getting worse. Right? Again, the point being our best efforts aren't going to help.

You can roll all you want. You're not getting out of it. Isaiah 64, 6 tells us, all your righteousnesses, big word, all your best efforts, all your righteous acts are like filthy rags.

[52 : 18] They're useless. Everything I try to do is a waste of time. And these guys realize their efforts are getting them nowhere.

therefore. Therefore. That big word, therefore. I would assume most of you have heard this before, but whenever you see the word therefore, you're to ask yourself what?

What is it there for? It's a connection word. It connects what has just come to what is following.

What has just come? All my best efforts, the storm is getting crazier and crazier, and we know it's Jonah's fault. He wants us to throw him over.

We can't do that. That's wrong. So now they got the oars in the water, and all of my efforts are a waste. so what do I do?

[53 : 34] I cry out to the Lord. And they said, we pray, O Lord, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and don't charge us with innocent blood, for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you.

my efforts don't work. So what do I do? I cry out to the Lord. Now, we've talked about this before, at least over there.

When you see the word Lord in all capital letters in your Bible, it is the name of God. The great I am, the becoming one, the one who is whatever I need in any given situation.

It's who he is. He is all sufficient. He is Lord in all capitals. So they are acknowledging the person of God.

God's in the! So, in spite of Jonah's rebellion, we get, in the book of Jonah, we get one of the greatest revivals in all of the world's history.

[55 : 19] history. And it starts right here. I believe with this ship of sailors. They are calling on the Lord.

They are acknowledging who he is. and I think, again, what, you know, the greatest thing is that realization that regardless of my failings, how poor of a witness I have been, God can still accomplish what he has set out to do.

And he's doing that in spite of Jonah. He's using circumstances and tragedy and loss.

He can use anything he wants for his purpose, his desire that these guys would be saved. And so these men turn to the Lord.

And again, cry out for mercy, acknowledging their need and asking for forgiveness. And I think, there's the gospel. My personal position is, I think we'll see these guys.

[56 : 48] again, when storms come, our best efforts fail.

The best thing we can do is turn to the Lord. Verse 15, so they pick up Jonah and they threw him in the sea.

and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows.

Psalms 85, verse 9. Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him. Psalm 89, verse 9.

You rule the raging sea. When its waves rise, you still them. Storm stops immediately, proving Jonah's God is the one responsible.

[58 : 02] God shows himself strong on behalf of those sailors and their cry.

He demonstrates his reality to them. And again, he uses the trials, the difficulties, the storm to bring them to faith.

it's all subject to him. And I think, you know, it's like the disciples in the boat with Jesus when he calmed the waters.

You move from fearing the storm to fearing the Lord. again, God's desire.

Now, it says that they offered a sacrifice to the Lord. They worshipped because what was offering a sacrifice was a way of worship.

[59:18] So, they are worshipping. They're acknowledging the Lord. They're worshipping him. And they take vows. this was all after the storm had ceased.

What do we do? In the midst of the storm, I'm making all kinds of vows. Another song.

If you get me out of this, oh, great, oh, I'll never do it again.

Well, maybe. Right? We're pleading, we're making all kinds of promises until the Lord delivers us. And then, oop, it's gone. We go right back about our ways, and nothing changes. See, these guys have already been delivered from the storm.

[60:30] They understand and acknowledge it's God who delivered me. And they worship. And then they make their pledges because they know.

don't They know. They don't So, again, we take off, we go about doing our own things.

We ignore God's word, God's that impression he gives on my heart, whatever, however. whom the Lord loves, he chastens and he scourges every son who he receives.

He loves us too much to let us get away with walking away. again, the choices are ours, right?

Jonah could have owned this a long time ago. But God uses it as not a pleasant thing.

[61:53] And Jonah's not there. He changed his name to Bob. He's out there in the water doing this. forgive me.

I have those. There's more to come. Anyway. But the point being, I entitled this Grace and Mercy.

We think of Jonah as all about Jonah and the fish.

It's not about Jonah and the fish. It's not about Jonah and the storm. It's about God. His grace, His mercy using the trials, the difficulties.

Pagans are failings in our lives and in the lives of people right around us and maybe in China or Guatemala.

His heart's for people. And this is a dramatic illustration as to what lengths God would go to to reach the likes of you and I.

[63:21] I I I for the likes of you and I.

That's way more than throwing some dude in the ocean. It's grace and mercy. So just remember, go read Jonah.

Someday we'll get to part two. fascinating story. Story. Account illustration.

the whole one. One. The lengths that he would go to for the likes of us.

So let's pray. father, thank you that you love us, you know us and you love us anyway. thank you that you're not willing to leave us where we are.

[64:36] You'll receive us as we are and where we're at, but your heart is that none would perish, that all would come to repentance. You don't take any pleasure in the death of the wicked.

You want to see everyone come to a new forgiveness of life, to surrender their hearts to Jesus and acknowledge their need and receive the forgiveness that you freely offer that has been paid for at an incredible price for the likes of me, each one of us.

And you'll use anything and everything to get our attention if we would simply open our eyes. and as your kids, your desire is that our heart would be to serve you, to be involved in the local church where you would have us to be, to have a heart for our neighbors, to be obedient to what you call us to, to be in your word that we know what you call us to, so we could get to know you better, that you would change our hearts and make us more like you.

We've got lots of work that needs to be done, but we're grateful, thankful that you tell us that having begun the good work in us, you are faithful, all, and you will accomplish what you have set to do in our lives.

You'll transform us from glory to glory more and more into the image of your son. And Lord, we look forward to the day when we enter your presence and we'll be fully complete, shed of the sinful flesh and robed in your righteousness.

[66:42] So again, thank you for your word and that you would use it to teach us. In Jesus' name, amen. Thanks for joining us this morning.