

Getting the Heart of God

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[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word.

Take your Bibles if you would and turn with me to the book of Jonah. I've never known somebody that nobody really knew and they all had a bad opinion of him.

So they thought maybe he was gruff or hard or scary and they didn't really know him. I know that because I'm a little bit larger than most people, almost all of my life young people have said, Boy, you're a scary guy.

And people think I could be gruff and if you really got to know me you'd find out I'm probably just a big old marshmallow like kind of crusty on the outside. Do you ever notice that that's how God is?

Almost all my life. Everybody thinks he's mean. I grew up with the God of the Old Testament, was a really mean guy. The God of the New Testament, he's a lot nicer because that's Jesus.

[1 : 13] I grew up basically thinking that God was going to get me and judgment was coming and he's hard.

And I didn't think of him as an old man with lightning bolts in his hand, but a lot of people I knew did. And if I could today in Jonah chapter 4, I'd like to introduce you to God.

I'd like to introduce you to what the Bible says about him. And I'd like for just a few minutes if you could just lay aside all the junk you've heard. If you could just lay aside all the stuff you've heard and just let Jonah tell us who he is.

Let Jonah tell us who God is. Jonah was God's man. And if anybody had it rough from God, it'd be old Jonah. I mean, he went for a whale belly ride and he was whale puke one day.

And so if anybody ought to have a bad attitude about God, it ought to be old Jonah. Jonah's liable to tell us in this chapter, he's mean. He's tough. He's ugly. But then you're going to find out a whole different thing.

[2 : 15] And so I want you to get the heart of God today. I want you to understand him. I want you to know him. I want you to leave here as a born again. I think you're a born again believer.

You got a bad attitude about your daddy. I think you got a bad attitude about your father. You just don't know who he is. And so if I could, I'd like to introduce you to him today.

I know you say, well, I'm saved, brother. You don't have to tell me. I know about him. Yeah, I know. But maybe you have filled your head with a lot of bad information. So read with me if you would.

Jonah chapter 4 and verse 1. Now here's the story. You know this. Jonah was told to go to Nineveh. And he was told to preach to them that in 40 days their city would be overthrown.

And Jonah loved that message. But Jonah knew, and you'll find this out very clearly today, that God was not going to overthrow that city.

[3 : 09] The second he heard the message, Jonah was like, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. You're talking tough and you're talking mean. You're saying you're going to spank their fanny. Yeah, yeah, but I know you.

I know you. And so he ran. And he ran. And he ran and tried to get away from God. He got in the boat. And the boat was in the sea and everything was all messed up. And then they threw him out of the boat and a big old fish swallowed him.

And he's on his way down towards the bottom of the ocean as that fish is swimming down. And he's praying to God, get me out of here. I understand. I understand. And he gets right with God.

And a fish comes up and throws him out. And he goes to the city of Nineveh. And he preaches the message. He's not really happy about preaching the message because he just doesn't hardly believe the message is going to be what it ought to be.

Because he says, I'll preach it, but God ain't going to do it. And I don't like preaching what God ain't going to do because I'm an Old Testament prophet. As an Old Testament prophet, if what I say doesn't come true, my resume looks bad, but they could also kill me for not telling the truth.

[4 : 15] And so I told him 40 days and the city would be overthrown. And so I'm just afraid they're going to repent. I'm afraid God's going to be nice to them. And I don't know what I'm going to do. So the story is now they have repented.

They have repented. They have believed God. They have turned from their wicked ways. And they're fasting and they're waiting on God to step in and see what he'll do.

And so is Jonah. And so in Jonah chapter 4 and verse 1 it says, But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry.

He was very angry. The people had heard the message and had repented. I've been preaching a long time. And buddy, when people get right with God, I get really happy.

I mean, if I were preaching and the whole city surrendered to God and said they wanted to turn from their wicked ways and obey God, I'd be writing prayer letters. I'd be writing blog posts about it.

[5 : 13] I'd be so excited I wouldn't be able to contain myself. But he was very angry. Look at Jonah chapter 3 and verse 9 to find out what happened. They said, those Ninevites said, Who can tell if God will turn and repent and turn away from his fierce anger that we perish not?

They said, Hey, you've heard the message. What if we got right with God? What if we did everything we could to do what we ought to do? And what would God do?

We just have to wait and see. And verse 10 says that God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil. So God said, I don't want to do the hard stuff I was going to do to them anymore, that he had said he would do them, and he didn't do it.

They had put on sackcloth and ashes, which is a way of mourning. So you would put on this clothing that was a symbol of mourning. You'd set in ashes, throw ashes over your head.

They were hoping that God would turn from his fierce anger and not destroy them and not destroy their city. And God saw their works, and he decided not to punish them.

[6 : 21] Read verse 10 again. Jonah 3.10, God saw their works and that they had turned from their evil way. So God saw that they had turned from their evil way, and God said, I don't want to hurt you anymore.

I don't want to bring this evil on you that I said I would do. He repented. Remember, Jonah hates these people, and he wants them destroyed.

Jonah's a prophet, and he needs for his prophecy to come true, where he's a false prophet, and he can be destroyed. And God is going to tenderly help his servant learn more about him and his character in this chapter.

So in that first verse of Jonah chapter 4, verse 1, go back and read it with me. It said, it displeased Jonah exceedingly. I don't like what God did. And I'll ask you this question before I go to the next verse.

How often have you been angry at God for the things he's allowed to happen in your life? How often have you been angry with God because you don't like the way he handles things? How often have you rebelled against him and his will in your life?

[7 : 23] How often have you been angry because he didn't answer your prayers in the way you felt they ought to be answered? How often have you had the boldness to say to God, I'm angry, I don't like it a bit? Because Jonah did.

Notice God is wrong, but God, Jonah's wrong, but God deals with Jonah tenderly. You may have separated yourself from God, but he's tenderly dealing with you right now calling you back.

Listen to me. Some of you have grown cold. There was a time you believed. There was a time you prayed. There was a time you served God. There was a time you were on fire for God. Something's happened and pulled you away, and you're not where you ought to be.

And you've been angry with God, though you'd never say you were angry. You've been angry. You'd say, no, I would never say I've been angry with God. But you've been angry, and you've got a bad attitude right now towards God. I'd just like to help you walk through this chapter and see how God tenderly brings Jonah back to understand who he is and what he does.

Go with me to Jonah 4, verse 2. And he prayed unto the Lord and said, I pray thee, O Lord. Is that not what I told you back when I was in my own country?

[8 : 31] Therefore I fled. That's why I ran away to Tarshish. Because I knew that you're a gracious God, merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness and repentance of evil.

You don't like doing hard stuff and mean stuff. He says, God, let me remind you of why I ran. Everybody who's ever heard my story, Jonah says, they all think I ran because I was a bad guy.

They all think I ran because I just didn't want to obey you. They all think I was just rebellious. But the truth is, I knew you better than most people know you, and I knew what you was going to do, and that's why I ran.

And didn't I tell you that? The fact is, when I ran, I didn't just duck out of town. We had a prayer meeting. And I told you while I was praying. I said, now, God, you're going to send me to the river.

You're going to have me preach that message. Then you ain't going to do it. Because I know you. I know you, God. I know exactly how you are. You said 40 days, they'll be killed, but you ain't going to do it. Because I know how you are.

[9 : 32] Isn't that what I told you? Look at verse 2 again. Read it with me. That's what he says. He said he prayed to the Lord and said, I pray you, God. Was that not what I told you when I was back in my home city?

Didn't I say that to you? And that's why I ran. So Jonah says, God, that's why I ran. Jonah's got a real, live, vibrant relationship with God.

Jonah will tell God what's going on in his heart. It wasn't like Jonah's over here saying, I ain't talking to him. I ain't talking to him. I ain't talking to him. I'm mad. I'm separated. I'm not going to pray. I'm not going to church. I'm not going to read my Bible. Nope. I've had it.

I'm not. That isn't how it was. Jonah's like, man, you know, you told me what to do. I talked right back to you. You remember? I mean, I didn't hide. I told you why I wasn't going to do it. He's angry because he knows how God is.

That's the funniest thing in the world to me. I remember the day this verse 2 hit me. It totally revolutionized my life because I'd lived with this God I was afraid of.

[10 : 32] I'd lived with this God who was mean. I'd lived with this God who was wanting to punch me. I'd lived with this God who was going to take me to heaven and put me in Baptist purgatory. I'd lived with all this junk and all these preachers put over my head.

And this verse revolutionized my life. And Jonah said, I'm angry because you might threaten to overthrow, but I know you.

You're the forgiving type. I know you. I know you. Jonah knows that God is super kind. Jonah tells God that he knows it.

And he knows that about him. Read verse 2 with me. Would you just look at the verse? Please look at the verse. He prayed the Lord and said, I pray the old Lord was not this my saying. Isn't this what I told you when I was back in my country?

That's why I ran to Tarshish. Because I knew. I know you. I know you're a gracious God. You're merciful. You're slow to anger.

[11 : 30] You have great kindness. And you don't like doing bad stuff to people. God.

Jonah knows that God never wanted to destroy those people. So I think you might think God's up in heaven. Ha ha ha. Gonna burn me a few today. Ha ha ha. Gonna burn them, man.

Overthrow them shit ass. Let's get them. Ha ha ha. Jonah's like, no, you're not like that. You can even tell me to preach it, but I know it ain't the truth. I know you. Read the verse. He knows that God hungers to be kind and merciful.

If the people would just recognize him for who he is. And look at his answer. It's so funny to me. The argument that's going on between God and Jonah in this chapter is just crazy to me.

God's like, you go down there and tell them I'm going to destroy them in 40 days. And Jonah's like, I won't go down there and tell them that. I know you. You ain't meaning that. If I go down and say that, everybody's going to think it's going to happen.

[12 : 32] If I put that in my prayer letter that 40 days, they'll be destroyed. And I put it in my blog for 40 days. Watch this. They're going to be fried. Then you ain't going to do it. Because I know you.

That's the discussion going on here. Look at how he responds to God. You are gracious. I know that you are a gracious God.

Gracious means to grant a favor. To feel sympathy and compassion. To show mercy and to give us what we do not deserve. He said, God, let's be honest.

Yeah. You tell me to tell them you're going to kill them in 40 days. And I know good and well you're just really sweet. You ain't the killing kind. I love that.

Then he said, not only are you gracious, you're merciful. Look at the verse. You're merciful. The idea of loving deeply, having mercy, being compassionate.

[13 : 31] A deep, tender love. It's not giving us what we deserve. See, in grace, God's going to give them something they don't deserve. He's going to give them salvation.

In mercy, he's not going to give them what they do deserve. Death. That's what he did for us. You didn't deserve to be saved, but he gave you salvation. Say amen. You didn't get saved because of how good you are.

You got saved because he's a good God. Say amen. Praise him. And then, not only that, you deserve to go to hell. That's what you should have got. But God said, you know what? I'm not going to give you what you deserve. Give you mercy.

Then he said, God, let's just list your characteristics. You're gracious. You're merciful. You're merciful. And you are slow to anger. And I didn't, can I just tell you, I never thought that in my life when I was a kid.

I was always like, you better. See, I did live in a home back in the old, old, old days when daddies used belts and just tore your rear up.

[14 : 31] Nobody knew about the three lick rule. My daddy's rule was till I'm tired. And he was a big, hard-working farm man.

And he didn't whip me with a belt most of the time. He whipped me with a razor strap. You don't know what that is either. But back in the old days, he used to use this big old strap. About that wide, about that thick. And when it hits you, it was like a stick hitting you.

And I always thought, man, any second now my daddy's going to punch me. If he lifted his hand, I ducked. I was like, ooh, he's coming. That's kind of how I felt about, and none of y'all can say that your dad was like that.

I know. But he says, you're slow to anger. He doesn't get mad quickly. It's actually the idea of being indulgent. It's like you can push him a little bit.

He's slow to anger. He don't get mad. He's really patient. He just keeps being good to people in spite of how they're acting. He's of great kindness. Look at the verse.

[15 : 32] He's of great kindness. He's super good. He's kind and of great kindness. He doesn't like to see bad things happen to people. And then look at the last one.

I mean, I don't know if you noticed this. It's kind of redundant. You know, like saying the same thing over. Said you're gracious. You're merciful. You don't get mad easy. You're kind. Again.

I mean, everyone. I mean, you're good, good, good, good. Kind, kind, kind, kind. Kind, merciful, merciful, merciful, gracious, gracious, gracious. And he said, and you repent of doing evil. Well, that doesn't mean repent of doing sin. It means that bad things happen.

I mean, the city was going to be overthrown. People were going to die. He didn't get pleasure out of seeing that. But this is not a prayer praising God for these things. But rather, a lawyer's case that old Jonah's laying down.

So when he's praying, it isn't like he's saying, God, you're so good. He's actually saying, you're so good. It's different. See, the one would have been, I just know you're so good, God.

[16 : 34] I don't mind going and preaching that 40-day message. Because I know by the end of it, we'll have revival. Because that's how you are. Yeah, yeah. I'll go do it. I know what's going on. He's like, I don't like them. And you're going to forgive them.

We both know it. And I'll just go ahead and tell you how I know that's going to happen. I told you this. Fact is, I wrote Jonah 4-2 back in Jonah 1-1 and 1-2. I wrote it back then. I told you then how good you are.

Jonah knew too much about God to believe that his message would come true. God being good meant that his message didn't come true. Jonah's worried about how he looks at a prophet whose message didn't come true.

His friends back home are going to say, Why did you spare the enemies of the Lord? They're going to claim his message didn't come true so he's not a prophet. He knew before he started God was going to forgive him.

His reputation was more important to him than pleasing God. He knew in his heart, in his head, who God was and how he was. But it didn't affect his heart. Up here he knew.

[17 : 33] That's how God is. But down here his heart never had changed. His heart was not like his father's heart. Look if you would at verse 3. Jonah 4-3. Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, I beg you, God, take my life from me.

Kill me! It'd be better to be dead than alive because you're going to forgive them people. I just wish you'd kill me. If you're not going to kill them, just kill me.

Boy, he's a great Baptist pastor, isn't he? Amen. Wouldn't you like to have him? God said he's going to destroy you people. Kill them, God.

You're not going to kill them. I'm mad at you. I want them all dead. That's what's going on in the story. And he says, kill me. How does knowing God and his character affect you?

Do you know that what the Bible says in your head, but you don't see how to put that into practice in your life? How many of us in this room would say, oh, Austin, you're not telling us anything new.

[18 : 33] We know God's good. We figured that out. We know it up here. But see, Jonah knew it up here, but it wasn't down here. You would have thought Jonah would have been excited that they were all going to get saved.

You would have thought Jonah would have been like, woo, woo, this is good. God likes it. I like it. I'm having a good time. That's not what's going on. See, you can have head knowledge about God that's not affecting the way you live.

You get angry with God for being good to your enemies. Are you seeking God, learning from God, becoming more like God in your attitudes as you seek to serve and magnify him? So in Jonah chapter 4 and verse 4, look what happens.

Jonah, are you right to be angry? Look at verse 4. Then said the Lord, are you doing right getting to be so mad? Can you picture this with me?

Can you picture God on his throne? And then picture this puny little prophet over here, and they're having an argument. And Jonah's like, I know you.

[19 : 33] You're too good. And God just lets him run his big old mouth. And then God looks at him and goes, come on, Jonah. Is this good that you're getting so mad at me because I'm so good?

Do you really think it's good that you get so mad? I'm good. It makes you mad, right? Is that right? Is that good, buddy? That's what he's asking. Look at it. Read the verse. The Lord said, you really think it's good that you get so mad at me?

I mean, I know the whole story. I wrote the story, so it's okay. So look at what happens in verse 5. Jonah goes outside the city and sits on the east side of the city, and there he made himself a booth.

And he sat under the shadow until he might see what would become of the city. I just want you to picture this. As the story goes, Jonah didn't want to preach, got eaten by a fish, got puked out and went and preached.

God caused them to repent and get their lives right. And now Jonah and God have been having an argument, and Jonah's been telling him, I know you're so good. That's what makes me mad at you. What makes me mad at you is you're too good.

[20 : 34] I just don't like it. I don't like it a bit. Those Muslims ought to die. That's the way it ought to be. So now he's got through arguing with God, and he goes outside the city, and he puts up a tent.

You know, he's on the beach. He's got to have a little shade, and he sits down and says, let's see how God kills them. That's what the verse says. Let's watch God clean their clock.

Let's see it happen. Verse 5, so Jonah went outside the city, went out of the city, sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadows so he might see what would become of the city.

He was finished preaching. He now wants to see if God will really overthrow the city. So he builds a canopy and saves out of the sun and the heat. He's actually been a blessing to the people of Nineveh, but he hadn't been blessed.

He has challenged God and now wants to see what God will do. And so God, he's just such a good God. But he's got to teach his hard head a couple of things.

[21 : 32] So while Jonah's out there in the little canopy he made, overnight God makes this gourd plant, just jack-in-the-beanstalk type deal, grow up and cover his whole tent. So he's laying inside his tent, and during the night, covers his tent.

Look, read the verse. Covers his tent. And the Lord God prepared a gourd, and he made it come up over Jonah that it might be a shadow over his head to deliver him from his grief. It's hot, and he's mad, and he's in a bad mood.

And so God's like, okay, I tell you what, Jonah, I'm going to give you a little shade, buddy. So Jonah was really glad. Look at that. He can see it. Woo! Thank you, Lord Jesus.

I am your preacher, and you have put a gourd over my head. I really preach air conditioning in the tent. Thank you. Jonah is bitterly agonizing over how bad God is, making him look before his friends.

He's suffering in the sun and the wind and the desert air. Jonah's very happy when God sends the gourd. So he gets a good bit of shade there, and in verse 7, look at that.

[22 : 34] So God now prepares a worm that came up. God prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and he smoked the gourd, and it withered. So Jonah's in there saying, man, God gave me a shade.

He's whoosh, good stuff. All of a sudden, here comes a worm, cuts down a gourd that grew up overnight. And so now his gourd's dead, and it withered away. The gourd was not really to comfort Jonah, but to teach him a lesson.

You know how emotional Jonah is? I mean, this guy is like all over the place. He's a ping-pong Christian. Mad happy, mad happy, mad happy. He don't know where he's at. His emotions are everywhere. And so once the worm eats the gourd, God says, I think I'll send him a little hot air now.

So he turns on the air conditioner, turns it off, and turns on the heat. Look at verse 8. And it came to pass when the sun did arise that God prepared a vehement east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah.

He was about to faint. He's fainting. And he wished in himself to die and said, it's better for me to die than to live. My gourd's gone. The sun's hot. The wind's hot.

[23 : 40] I want to die. More worried about his own comfort than eternal destiny of souls. And so God asked him again another question. Verse 9.

Look at it. God said to Jonah, does thou well to be angry for a gourd? You really going to get this upset about a gourd? About a vegetable?

And Jonah goes, yes, I am doing the right thing to be so mad about the gourd. Yes, I'm right. God Almighty, puny prophet. It's a funny story.

I mean, yeah, I do right. I do right to the point of dying. Yes, I'm right. Warren Wiersbe said, a simple test of character is to ask what makes me happy?

What makes me angry? What makes me want to give up? You find out how your character is. Jonah tells God he's right to be angry enough to want to die over the loss of his gourd.

[24 : 39] God reminds Jonah he had nothing to do with the gourd. It was just mercy from God. It was just grace from God. So look at what he says in verse 10. Then said the Lord, you have pity on a gourd when you didn't plant it, you didn't water it, you didn't fertilize it, you didn't do anything to make it grow.

It came up in one night and it perished in a night. And you're right to be angry about that. Jonah still has problems with God's will in his life. Jonah's selfish. He wants what he wants.

He knew what God's will was about Jonah, about Nineveh, but he didn't like it or agree to it. So he ran. He found out God was in charge while he was in a whale's belly.

And he obeyed God, but it seemed it was never from the heart. Jonah was still living based on what he wanted. Selfish Christian. What are you focused on?

Are you focused on your comforts, your future, your pleasure? Are you actively seeking the will of God? Are you willing to sacrifice your comforts and pleasures? Or are you more like Jonah than you'd ever like to admit? Jonah chapter 4 verse 11.

[25 : 43] God asked you another question. Jonah, you got all upset about a gourd. So should I not spare Nineveh, that great city where there are 120,000 kids that don't know their right hand from their left hand?

And there's a lot of cows there, a lot of sheep, a lot of animals. Now you just want me to destroy them? So you're worried about a gourd.

You don't care about people. Jonah. God asked the question, should he not spare Nineveh? You know, he didn't spare his own son for us.

You know that, right? In Romans chapter 8 and verse 32, he spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all. How should we not with him also, how should he not with him freely give us all things?

How could a man of God be so hard as to want an entire city to be destroyed instead of being saved? The city's got 120,000 kids in it.

[26 : 49] Kids that are too young to know right from wrong. Deuteronomy chapter 1 verse 39 says, moreover, your little ones, which you said should be prey, your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil.

See, that's what the kids are. Their people have no knowledge between good and evil. And Jonah had compassion on people who had no compassion on people who would spend eternity without God in hell in punishment.

So interesting. I'm not going to preach about it, but some of you people are going to like this. He was even worried about the cattle. He's an animal lover. He said, I ain't going to destroy the city. You've got a lot of people and cows. You see, the Jesus, the story of Jonah is a picture of Jesus.

And so I want you to get the heart of our God. Have you seen the heart of our God? Have you understood how God said, go tell them in 40 days I'll kill them? And God's like, I know they're going to repent.

Yep, I know. And I'm going to save them. And Jonah looks back up and said, I don't want to go because I know they'll repent and you won't kill them. Fact is, I know you too well. I know good and well, you're just really nice.

[27 : 59] You're really good. You're super kind. You're compassionate. You're long-suffering. You don't like to do bad stuff. I know that. So I don't want to go. And God said, come on, Jonah.

You really think you ought to be angry about this? Yes, I ought to be angry about it. Yes, I should. Okay, let me give you a gourd so you can be comfortable. Woo! I like the gourd.

Thank you very much. Thank you, thank you, thank you, man. I'm enjoying the gourd. Hey, worm, go cut the gourd down. I can't believe you cut down my gourd. Can't believe it.

I am mad at you for cutting down my gourd. I wish I was dead. You're more worried about a gourd than you are all these people.

You're more worried about you than you are what I want, right? I mean, really, it's about you, not me, right? I'm God. You're Jonah. And you're more worried about you than me. And you're mad because I'm good.

[28 : 56] Man, I'm going to get you. Can I remind you that our God is a God of grace and mercy and salvation?

John 3, 16. You know by heart, but let's read it again. Open your Bible there. I want you to mark a couple of things there. Because in the New Testament, the sign of Jonah is what was given to Israel about Jesus.

And you need to know something about our great God. And you need to get his heart for lost souls. This is a missionary sending church. This is a soul winning church because we know God.

We know our God's up in heaven going. They're going to hell. And we're like, yeah, but if we can get there and preach to them, you'll save them, won't you? God's like, you got it.

You read the book of Jonah, didn't you? Say amen right there. John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

[30 : 02] Underline in John 3, verse 16, world. You can come up with any kind of Greek word you want to change the word world to something else. But my Bible says he so loved the world.

Then it says whosoever that whosoever believeth in him. Whosoever that believeth in him should not perish. But have everlasting life. Verse 17. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.

He didn't send his son so people would go to hell. He sent his son because people were going to hell. And he said, I'm going to send my son so people could be saved. Verse 18. He that believeth on him is not condemned.

But he that believeth not is condemned already. Underline that. Believeth not condemned already. Because he had not believed in the name of the only begotten son of God.

By the way, all of you were on your way to hell. Every one of you didn't believe until you did believe. And the whole world doesn't believe, but they can believe. And he loves the world. He wants them to be saved. 1 John chapter 2 and verse 2.

[31 : 08] Another verse. I wish you'd look it up. Write them down and check me out later if you want to. He died not just for our sins, but for the sins of the entire world. If you looked at John 3.16 and you heard somebody say, world don't mean world.

Well, read 1 John 2.2. He is a propitiation. The merciful offering given for us that took our place for our sins, but not for ours only.

But also for the sins of the whole world. He wants the world saved. He's the savior of the world.

1 John 4.14, since you're there. The Bible said, And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the savior of the, what's the word?

World. And then John 4.42. John 4.42. And he said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have heard him ourselves and know that this is indeed the Christ, the savior of the world.

[32 : 14] Now, you know, Jonah, he didn't want anybody to get saved. And Jonah was all about his own self, but Jesus was all about others. All about you being saved.

The Bible says in John 10.17, Therefore does my Father love me. John 10.17, I lay down my life. I lay down my life that I might take it again.

You need to understand, no Jew killed Jesus. No Roman killed Jesus. Jesus loved you and Jesus died for you because Jesus wanted to die for you and pay your sin debt. What the Bible says in John 10.17, verse 18.

No man takes it from me. I lay it down of myself. No man kills me. I give my life myself.

Jonah didn't love the people. Jonah loved Jonah. Even though Jonah was a prophet, even Jonah was a man of God, Jonah was hung up on Jonah.

[33 : 16] And God's got one complete attitude that's totally different than old Jonah's attitude. But Jesus isn't like that. Look when he died for you. Look at Romans chapter 5 and verse 6 with me if you would.

Romans chapter 5 and verse 6. For when we were yet without strength. Underline that. Without strength. You know when Jesus died for us? Well, we couldn't do anything about it ourselves.

We couldn't save ourselves. We couldn't get to God. We couldn't get salvation. There was no hope for us. We were without strength. You came this morning and you're still in your sin.

And you know you're not right with God. And you know you're not saved. And you don't know what you can do. You're like, I can't change. Good. You're at the right spot. Because you know who he saves? He saves those that are without strength.

Look at the verse. Yep. For when we were without strength in due time. On time. In time for all of us. Christ died for the ungodly.

[34 : 20] You were told that God's up in heaven saying, y'all better do right. No, he actually died for the ungodly. And basically, here's what he's saying. Y'all ain't never going to be able to do right. So I'll just save you while you ain't right.

That's pretty good stuff. Amen. He didn't look down and say, now Austin, if you'll quit smoking, cussing, drinking, dancing, going in to do, go to church, memorize the whole Bible, do a whole bunch of good stuff, I'll think about you. He said, no.

You stink. I know you stink. You're not strong enough to do anything. You're ungodly. And I'll die for you. Verse 7. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die. People wouldn't even die for a good guy.

But God would. Yet for a venture for good men, some would even dare to die. Maybe you'd die for a good guy, but he'd die for those without strength. He'd die for the ungodly. Look at verse 8. But God commended. God proved his love toward us.

And that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. You should underline yet sinners and circle the word yet. There's no turning over a new leaf. There's no starting to do a bunch of good stuff.

[35 : 20] We come to him helpless. We come to him ungodly. We come to him weak. He's a good God. And you've got to know he's a good God. He's a good God.

Jonah stepped outside the city to watch him die. Oh, Jonah's like, let's just go out here and get me a lawn chair.

Build me a little canopy. I'm on the beach watching the waves come in and out. And I want to see the city overturned. I want to see it overthrown. Jesus went outside a city to die on a cross.

When he didn't have to. And even those who were nailing him to a cross, he said in Luke chapter 23 and verse 34, Father, forgive them.

They don't know what they're doing. Father, forgive them. I want to sum the message up now, but I just want you to get this. He's a good God. He's a good God.

[36 : 21] If you're here and you're not saved, you're not saved because you have a false picture of the God of the Bible. If you're here today and you think God's mean and hard and wants people to die and go to hell, you have a false picture of the God of heaven.

If anybody ought to have been destroyed, it would have been the city of Nineveh. They were Jonah's enemies. Jonah wanted them dead, but God didn't want them dead. God loves the world.

You come to our church and you hear all this about missions and sending missionaries and getting the gospel to the world. And you might say, man, why is this church so consumed with it? Because when you get the heart of God, you got a heart that says, I love people.

Wicked people. Ungodly people. People without strength. Because my God loved the whole world and I love what he loves. I love what he loves. So a couple of lessons for me to remind you of from the book of Jonah.

I just may preach more out of Jonah. Even though I've finished, I may go back and catch some nuggets I've left laying on the surface. But hey, watch this. Number one, God's in charge of your life more than you'd ever like to admit. That's a big lesson in the book of Jonah.

[37 : 31] When Jonah ran, Jonah probably thought to himself, hey, I'm out of here. God won't do anything about it. I don't want to preach the message he wants me to preach. I know I'm saved. I know I'm on the way to heaven. I know I'm a man of God.

But I don't like what God wants. And God's like, it's okay. But I changed those that are mine to be like I want them to be. So he grabbed old Jonah when he was running.

Put him in a whale's belly. But it wasn't to hurt him. It was just to get him back where he ought to be. He put him back on the right track where he ought to be. But when he got on the right track, he still didn't have a good attitude. And in Jonah chapter 4, if I was God, I'd have just drop kicked him right there.

I'd have just said, you dingbat, I can't deal with you. I can't put up with you. But God's like, how about a gourd? How about a worm? How about a strong wind?

You really think you've got a right to be angry? I can't understand you, Jonah. And he ends the whole book of Jonah on that. So let me tell you this. If you are born again, you understand this.

[38 : 29] He that started that work in you is going to finish that work. Christians can't live what they want to live. If you're a born again believer, he's at work in you. He's going to put you back on the path. He's going to work in you until you really get right with him.

And you can take the nice road or the hard road. You can be well puke if you want to be. Or you can have a gourd go up and then go down. Or you can have a wind blowing. Or you can just say, no, you know what? He's my God.

I'll surrender to him. I want to live my life for him. I can run from God, but I can't hide. That's a good one. Some of us really think, I'll get away from God.

I'll get away from church. I'll get away from the Bible. I'll get away from all of this. But you can't hide. Here's another big lesson in the whole book. God forgives those who will call on him and trust him. I love that.

But in the story, you really think, until you get to Jonah chapter 4 and verse 2, that the story is about Jonah's hard head and Jonah's disobedience.

[39 : 27] But the whole story is really about how he's going to do something in Nineveh. And you wonder what's going to happen. But God's going to show his love. God's going to do, he's going to love.

And he's going to forgive anybody who calls on him. So here's Nineveh. Wicked, dirty, vile Nineveh. They hated the people of God. They did horrible things to him.

That's why Jonah wanted them dead. And Jonah was like, God, if I take your message over there, they'll get right. See, because God's a God of tender compassion.

I remember that day I was praying. I was like, God, I can't live up to you and what you want out of me. I've been saved. I'm on my way to heaven. I've been trying to preach and teach and build churches and do stuff for you all my life.

I just can't never measure up. I just can't never measure up. I never think you like me. I never think I'm really close to you. And then I read Jonah 4.

[40 : 28] In verse 2, and I said, wow. That ain't the God I know. I'm not the God I know. I read that verse thinking, wow.

Jonah knew. I always thought of you as the guy who put Jonah in a whale's belly. I never thought of you as the God who was so sweet, merciful, gracious, full of kindness, long-suffering.

I never thought of you like that. And it changed my view of my great God. It went from legalistic, beat you over the head.

I used to be afraid. You know, I used to tell people, I don't really want to die and go to heaven. Because I'm afraid when I get there, he's going to whip my rear end. Because you've heard that all your life.

Like Baptist purgatory. It's like Baptist purgatory. You get to heaven, you've got to go through a whipping first. And I read that, I realized, I ain't going through a whipping. He's a good God. By the way, since I know my God is a God of tender compassion, I should be compassionate.

[41 : 33] I should love people the way God has given his love. I should be willing to love. Here's a big lesson from this book. Things and comforts are never as important as God's will.

And man, do I have a comfortable life. I drove here in a wonderful vehicle with wonderful air conditioning. And the heater will even work when it gets cold. I live in Georgia. I mean, that's pretty close to God's kingdom.

Amen. And I go to a wonderful church. And I've got wonderful friends. And I've got a Sunday school class that's just ridiculously fun.

I mean, honestly, it's like my highlight. I mean, I just got this wonderful life. And all these comforts. And sometimes I'm too, I don't want to tithe. I don't want to give.

I don't want to spend my stuff. So here's some questions you need to answer. Do you agree with God that people without Christ are lost? Do those people in China go to hell because they've never heard the gospel?

[42 : 40] I wonder what God would say. I think if we had a Jonah in this room right now, he'd be sent. I'd go to China and tell them Chinese.

They've been taking our jobs long enough. And we don't want them to go to heaven. But I know you, God. If I went, they'd all get saved. Do we have compassion for those who are lost? How are we showing our compassion?

How are we showing our compassion? Are we praying that the gospel will go to the people in every part of the world? And are we helping to get it there? I mean, if you had God's heart, you'd...

You understand God doesn't want anybody to go to hell. He don't like doing bad stuff. He repents of evil. Do we have a concern for those in our great cities where there's so much sin and so little witness?

Cities all over the world, no preachers. There are young people in this room. God wants to use you. He wants you to wake up and realize he wants to send you to a city and share the gospel with them.

[43 : 40] Boys, so we're sinners when they repent and trust the Savior. But we kind of like Jonah. I don't want you to save anybody but that one. Shouldn't God have forgiven the city of Nineveh?

Because that's basically what he asked Jonah, you know, at the last of the book. What do you think, Jonah? Jonah's kind of like, nope. I was hoping it'd all be dead. That's what I was hoping. I built my little tent out here so I could just watch them burn.

I was hoping for it. Is that our heart? So you're in our church. First off, if you're not saved, today is your day to be saved. If you're not saved, today is your day to be saved. You can be saved.

You can go to heaven. He loves you. You say, I've messed up. You don't know who I am. You ain't as bad as Nineveh, buddy. You ain't that bad. He loves you.

But if you don't get saved, you're going to go to hell for all eternity. You need to be saved today. If you're a Christian and you're away from God, why don't you come to him right now and say, God, I'm tired of running, tired of playing games.

[44 : 42] If you're a Christian, why don't you come and say, God, here's my goods. Here's my money. Here's my comforts. I just want to do your will. Life's not about me. It's about you. Why don't you come tell him?

Why don't you come tell him, Lord, I want to help send the missionaries. I want to help witness to my neighbors. God, I want to make a difference in my life. Why don't you make that decision?