Study of Jonah - Part 4

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[0:00] Now, seeking the Lord's blessing, we'll turn to the part of Scripture we read, the prophecy of Jonah, and chapter 4.

And verse 10. Then said the Lord, thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither maids did grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night.
And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?
And should not I spare Nineveh? Should not I spare Nineveh? Now, we've been looking at the remarkable history of this man of God, the prophet Jonah.
And we saw how he was already an established prophet in Israel in the first half of the 8th century, before God sent him on this particular commission to the city of Nineveh.
[1:36] And the book of Kings only mentions him once, but it tells us there that he prophesied concerning the extension of Israel's territory.

And that prophecy came to pass. And so he was well established and recognized as a prophet of God before this command came to him. But this command changed his whole life, because God told him to rise up and to travel east, right into the heartland of Assyria, to the capital of it, to Nineveh.
Now, this was a difficult task for Jonah, and we'll see why in a moment. But we looked at how he responded by fleeing from the Lord's presence, trying to get away from the command. And we saw how God dealt with him in order to bring him back to his place of obedience.
We saw him first in the belly of the ship, where he was there prayerless, in a kind of prayerless depression. And then we saw him in the second belly, the belly of the sea, after he had been cast into it by the sailors.
And there we heard him beginning to pray and to cry for mercy. And then we saw him in the third belly, which was the belly of the quail, where he prayed in thankfulness to God for delivering him and for preserving him alive.
[2:58] And at the end of chapter 2, we're told that the Lord spoke to the great fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land. And as soon as that happens, God's word comes again to Jonah.

At the beginning of chapter 3, it came to him a second time. How thankful we should be that God is so patient with us in his dealings. The first time he disobeyed, but God still in his mercy comes the second time.
He didn't throw him away like a useless vessel, like someone whom he could never use again. But he came back to him and said, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee.
And instead of a but, what we have now is a so. So, the first time it was, but Jonah went. This time it is, so Jonah arose and went unto Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord.
Because his lesson was learned. It is better to obey than to sacrifice. It never prospers to disobey the Lord. And Jonah discovered that. However, alluring it was to go to the other side of the world, away from the task that he had to perform, still it was better to do God's will.
[4:13] He discovered that, so off he goes to Nineveh. Now, although that's so, still there's something not right. Jonah has been brought to the place where he'll do what the Lord tells him to do, but still in his soul, he's not reconciled to the task that he's got.

He has trouble regarding it. He would wish that he wasn't going. And he would still desire, somehow, possibly, to avoid it.
And so God is going to deal with that as well. And when God deals with a thing, he deals with it thoroughly. He's not just going to deal with the fact that Jonah didn't do it, but he's also going to

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deal with the reason why Jonah didn't do it.
He goes down into the heart, into the motive. That is the way that the Lord deals with us. Now, God deals sometimes with our disobedience before he deals with the reason for it.
I'm sure most of you know that as parents. Sometimes maybe you have children that disobey. And the reason they're disobeying, or one reason may be that they don't understand the thing that you've asked them to do.
[5:24] Now, it's important to get the obedience even before they get the understanding. Now, the understanding is important, too, but the obedience is primarily so. And that's the way it is with God, too.

When God says, do this, he expects us to do this whether we fully understand the consequences or the reasons for doing this. So he'll deal with the disobedience first, but then he'll come round to the reason why.
And so he's going to come round here with Jonah to the reason why. Now, I want to look with you, as the Lord enables us, at four things. First of all, what Jonah had to do. Then, secondly, how the city of Nineveh responded.
And then, thirdly, Jonah's problem with that. And finally, God's dealing with him. Now, first of all, Jonah's commission.
And we have it in verse 2 of chapter 3. Now, that's Jonah's commission.
[6:30] Go and preach to it the preaching that I command you or the preaching that I give you. Give them my word. Give it from me and give it from me to them.

It wasn't Jonah's task to go on to make a platform for himself, for his own ideas or his own speculations or his own opinions on everything in the world.
It was Jonah's task, quite simply, to tell them what God would have them know. He wasn't there as a speculator or as an interpreter, but as an ambassador.
Tell it. Tell it as I give it. He is an ambassador for the king, and he has to declare the message that God has to give the people. That is a simple duty, and that's the duty that lies upon every minister of the gospel still today, to tell the message as God himself gave this message.
And is it not the same duty that lay upon the Lord Jesus Christ? Was he not primarily an ambassador for his own father? Was he not sent by God the Father?
[7:39] How often you find Christ in the gospels saying words to this effect? Have you ever thought about them? My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

The words which I speak, I speak not of myself. The Father gave him the words. And that brings before us Christ as the prophet of God the Father, or the ambassador, who came to give the preaching that the Father gave him.
And every word which Christ spoke was the preaching which the Father gave him to preach. And is it not a marvelous way to view the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ?
And does it not put the Father in a glorious life too? To think that these words are the words which the Father gave to the Son. Not mine, not my doctrine, but his.
Not my words, but the words which he gave me. And that is the duty still to say what God has given us to say. Now what did God give him to say? Well we have that in verse 4 of chapter 3.
[8:48] Because we are told that Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey. And he cried and said, yet forty days and Nunavie shall be overthrown.

Now although it does not sound like it. Although it does not look like it. I would like to say that there is mingled judgment and mercy there. You have both. There is the judgment of God in it.
But there is the mercy of God in it too. Now the judgment of the Lord is obvious. Forty days and Nunavie shall be overthrown. Now Jonah isn't going to hide what we could call the darker side of the good news.
He's not going to hide or to mask. Or in any way to excuse these dark truths of God's righteous judgment. That God must punish iniquity.
That he will punish wickedness. He doesn't hide it. He declares it. Because it is the preaching that God bids him. And it is the preaching that God bids us still today. And it was the great ambassador of God, Christ himself, who proclaimed this so clearly.
[9:54] It was he who brought to light more fully the doctrine of hell. In its most awful and terrifying aspects, no one in the scriptures spoke as much about it or spoke as clearly concerning it as the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

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Search the scriptures and you'll find that that is so. And if he revealed that truth and if he proclaimed it and did so fearlessly, then we must too.
That one day we shall be overthrown. That if we do not repent and if we do not turn to God, then we ourselves shall be judged. We shall be condemned and we shall be punished with everlasting damnation from the Lord.
That is the dark side or the dark truths which are brought before us in the scriptures. And remarkably, the Nunavites grasped it and they laid hold of it. Jonah doesn't veil it.
And these people hear it and these people believe it. Now, it's a strange thing because many people put a gloss on this. And they will try and hide these kind of truths because they think it is more acceptable to the carnal man.
[11:04] And they feel that the gospel is somehow more attractive to the natural man if you mask the truth of eternal punishment. Now, friends, that is not so.

And it can't be. There's something in the heart of a natural man that revolts at the idea of trying to hide this truth. That is the reality.
Because deep down in every man's conscience, there is the fear and the idea that the prognosis for ourselves is worse than we think it to be. We all believe somewhere deep down in our hearts that we're fooling ourselves if we think that everything is just going to work out automatically.
And that God is just going to bless us anyway. Or that God is going to let us off the hook. You have an inbuilt fear in your conscience, in your soul, that it is worse than that.
And that the truth is more serious than that. And you can't really stand anyone trying to pick up the Bible and trying to tell you that it's not really that way when you know it is. And you can read it for yourself there.
[12:08] Well, it is there. And that is the way it is. And there's nothing to be gained by hiding it. By putting a veil over it. But everything to be gained by revealing it and by showing it.

After all, what is more inclined to make me seek some way of escape than to know the terrifying nature of the doom that lies in front of me? Is that not what Jonah revealed to the Ninevites?
That there was judgment impending from God. And so I say that to you too. As part of the word that the ambassador gives to speak. That there is judgment awaiting all of you who do not turn to the Lord Jesus Christ.
He proclaimed that. But then again, he proclaimed mercy too. Now in one way, that is just implied. And implied in this, why do you usually give a warning?
Unless you're giving some kind of opportunity to change. And when 40 days are given for Nineveh before it shall be overthrown, that means that there is a time of repentance.
[13:19] The whole reason for giving the message is so that people will change. That they'll come to their senses. That they'll rethink. That they'll call upon the name of the Lord and come to a better frame of mind.

That's the whole reason for giving it. Or else, why wait at all? Why not just let the 40 days pass in silence without any message or without any warning. And then the deluge to come upon them.
Why not? Well, because God is merciful, gracious, slow to wrath. As Jonah says concerning him. I knew that you were a gracious God.
And merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. And that surely is the significance of the 40 days anyway. 40 in the scriptures constantly means probation, testing.
40 years in the wilderness for God to test what the Israelites were like. After Christ's death, Jerusalem had 40 years before God's destruction came upon it.
[14:21] 40 means time, opportunity, probation, testing. And that may in all probability have even been known to the Ninevites. Because some of these numbers had a common significance amongst all these people of the ancient world.

And maybe when they heard this man from the belly of the whale saying that in 40 days time God's judgment shall come upon this place. They knew that and recognized even the number to mean that there was an opportunity for repentance.
That there's space to change and time to turn to God. And so there was mercy in these words too. And that is the gospel still.
Judgment mingled with mercy. The dark side and the light side that God would have proclaimed. Now how does he proclaim it? Well he proclaims it as it should always be proclaimed.

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He cries it. It's urgent. Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey. And he cried and said yet 40 days and Nineveh shall be overthrown.
[15:25] He spoke the message as one who felt the message. It wasn't as though he was giving some kind of lecture on trigonometry or something of that kind.

That he could speak about dispassionately and be detached about it. It was something that he believed and was persuaded of. Because he was involved in it himself. As a man who had tasted of the goodness of God.
And who knew himself of the judgment of God. And its awful doom. He was involved in it. Wrapped up in it. Persuaded of it. And therefore he spoke. He believed.
And therefore he spake. And what could ever give passion to a prophet. But believing the word that he speaks. And it is in believing that the passion is given.
And that is why we so often fall short. In bringing this news to people. We are passionless about it. Because sometimes our hearts are just not won over entirely by it.
[16:23] We are somehow detached from it. And we live our lives apart from it. If only the truth of God's eternal judgment. And eternal blessedness. Would so grip our hearts.

That we would be moved by it. Then we would cry. He didn't speak. He didn't whisper. He didn't discuss it. But he cried. As a dying man to dying men.
That was how he brought the word to them. And then again he preached it simply. Yet forty days. And Nineveh shall be overthrown. It is a simple message.
It is not difficult to understand. It is not inscrutable. It is not a perplexing mystery. The great truths of God's word. The great truths of God's word are simple. And they are simple to take.
Simple to understand. Jonah didn't go through Nineveh. Leaving everybody scratching their heads. And wondering what was that man talking about. It was perfectly plain.
[17:21] The message that he gave was plain. That if they did not turn to the Lord. With all their heart. And follow him. That they would come under the wrath and judgment of God.

And it is that simple still. And God forbid that I should veil that. Or that I should obscure it. Or make it appear somehow or other. That there is another way.
It was simple. Simple to understand. And he proclaimed it authoritatively. Thus saith the Lord. This is God's message. It is not a collection of ifs. And possibilities. And contingencies. It is this, this and this saith the Lord.
And it is authoritative. It comes from God. And that is how Jonah spoke it. As the living word of the living God.
[18:17] Who does not change and who cannot lie. That is how he spoke it. Now it wasn't easy to speak it. Because as God himself reminds Jonah. It is a great city.

Arise verse 2. And go to Nineveh. That great city. And preach to it. The preaching that I bid thee. And the first time God asked him to go.
He used the same words. That great city. And it was a great city. It was the capital of the Assyrian Empire. And its ruins are still there.
In fact they weren't excavated. Until the middle of the 19th century. And there is still major work. On going there continually. It was a marvelous city.
And it was a three day journey. To pass through it. We are told in verse 3. That Nineveh was an exceeding great city. Of three days journey. Now I think that that means.
[19:13] What we would call greater Nineveh. We speak of greater London. Or greater Glasgow. When we say greater Glasgow. We take in Bears Den. And regions that are round about it.

Now greater Nineveh. Included three smaller cities. That were just outside it. In a triangle. And greater Nineveh. Would take about three days.
To pass through. In preaching the gospel. It was a vast city. And a terrifying city. Because the people were fierce. They were warlike. And in their battles and wars.
They had a reputation for cruelty. And being inconsiderate. And many of them. Preached the preaching. Preaching that God. Had told them to preach. It was no easy task.
But. Perhaps it's better to do it. Than to be in the belly of a whale. Jonah goes. It is better to do. What the Lord asks us to do. Whatever it costs. And he begins to speak the word.
[20:10] And when he goes there. I'm sure few listen. But as he cries. And as he preaches. The mercy and the judgment of God. The people gather. One after another. They gather. Crowds begin to appear.

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And word goes to the king. And everybody's listening. Here is the man. Three days. Three nights. In the belly of the whale. The man who resisted coming. With this message.
Here he is. And he's proclaiming it. And this has its own effect. Upon the city of Nineveh. And let's look. Just very briefly. Secondly. At Nineveh's response.
We're told. In verse five. That the people of Nineveh. Believed God. They believed God. And they believed him.
As it were. From top to bottom. From the top of the nation. To the bottom. Because we're told. That the word. Even came to the king. In verse six. And he arose. From his throne. Laid his robe.
[21:07] From him. And covered himself. With sackcloth. And sat in ashes. And he said this. Let man and beast. Be covered with sackcloth. Let neither man.

Nor beast. Herd. Nor flock. Taste anything. Let them not feed. Nor drink water. Cry mightily to God. Every one of you. And turn from your evil ways.
And from the violence. That is in your hands. Because who can tell. If God will turn. And repent. And turn away. From his fierce anger.
So that we. Perish not. It's. A conversion. Of a whole city. Now many ask. Well.
Were they all. Truly converted. Well. I don't know. If they were. It is possible. That some. Had a kind of. Outward repentance. Like Ahab had. You remember.
[22:01] That God said. That certain things. Would come upon. King Ahab. And he humbled himself. There and then. Before God. So God. Took his judgment away. Or he kept it away.

For a while. But it came on him later. Maybe some. Repented like that. They changed. Because of fear. But they were never. Actually won over. To the love. And service of the Lord.
But many. I'm sure. Were. Perhaps even most. Were. And of course. Here we go again. Some people say. Well there's no word. Of this. In the Assyrian archives. And in all the thousands.
Of clay tablets. That have turned up. There's no word. Of this national repentance. Or whatever. Well. That may well be. But again. It's worth remembering.
That for hundreds of years. There was no mention. Of King Sargon of Assyria. Anywhere. At all. On tablets. Or monuments. Anywhere.
[22:57] At any time. No mention. Except for one mention. In the prophecy of Isaiah. Chapter 20. Verse 1. There the name Sargon appears. And so of course. Everyone doubts.

Whether such a person exists. Now. It is known. That there were three Sargons. Reigning. With that name. Over Assyria. Why is it. That if something.
Only appears. In the Bible. People say. It is not true. But the minute. Another witness appears. Oh well. It's true. After all. Why is it. Why is it.
Always like that. Because the natural man. Is opposed. To God. Naturally opposed. To God. That is why. The whole. City of Nineveh.
Changed. Greatly changed. By the power of God. What a marvelous thing. For anyone to see. What a wonderful thing. That a city can change.
[23:51] And a city can be transformed. And what's more. John. I knew it could be. Strange man. We'll come to him in a moment. But he knew it could be. I knew. He says. That you are a gracious God.

And merciful. And slow to anger. I knew it. He had that kind of belief. In the power of God. What a change. Maybe that would make. In ourselves. If we believed.
In the power of God. I mean. If we really believed it. Not as an abstract. Creed. Or a principle. Or an axiom. That we carry around. In our head.
But as something we felt. And was laid heavily. Upon us. That God changes people. That God can change. A city. That God can change. A country. Overnight.
He can change it. From top to bottom. That Tony Blair. Or the Queen. Or whoever. Can lower themselves. And humble themselves. In sackcloth and ashes. And be brought.
[24:44] To proclaim. The law of God. To be respected. And honored. And the Sabbath day. Observed and kept. And you're all saying. In your hearts. Some chance of that. Well that might be the problem. That might be the problem.

If we knew. God was a God of grace. And if we lay hold. Of how powerful he is. And how merciful. Then maybe. We would see such things.
Or that the Lord would give us. To pray for revival. For rebirth. For renewal. For refreshing from on high. To pray for it. Earnestly. That we might see it.

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And know it. As the work of the Lord. Now. A great change. And you would have thought. Everyone would be happy. And you would have thought.
That the happiest man. In the whole world. Would have been Jonah himself. But here's the strangest thing. Of all. We read in verse 1. Of chapter 4. That it displeased. Jonah.
[25:40] Exceedingly. And he was. Very. Angry. Now here's a man. That I would say. Had the most. Fruitful. Ministry.

That anyone ever had. In such a short period. Of time. Seeing a whole city. Of at least. A hundred and twenty. Thousand people. Change. In a matter of days. And he is exceedingly.
Angry. That such a thing happened. He's displeased. It's almost impossible. To understand. Why? Why is he angry? Well.
He says to the Lord. In verse 2. Was this not what I said? Was this not what I said? The first time you called me. And asked me to go. Did I not say to you then.
That I knew. That you are a gracious God. Merciful. And slow to anger. I said that. Because I knew it. I knew. Your power. To change people like that. I knew your greatness.
[26:38] How slow you were to anger. Compared with ourselves. How compassionate. And merciful you were. And that he says. Is why I went to Tarshish. Because I didn't want to see.

These people change. And you say. Well what does that mean? And how could a man of God. Possibly say that. That I didn't want these people. To change. Well.
You may think. That's beyond your understanding. But. I wonder if you've ever thought. Like that yourselves. Have you ever thought. Of someone. As being beyond. God's mercy. Or have you ever. Have you ever thought. Of someone. In such a bad light. That you almost. Didn't think it was right. If that person. Was changed. Because you thought. Well. That person. Has done this.
Or he said that. Or he's lived a life like this. He's been responsible for this. This and this. And am I just supposed to believe. That just like that.
[27:34] He can be changed. And transformed. And made a man of God. And made a son of God. And given the dignity. Of a child of heaven. The laborers in the vineyard.

Felt like that. They felt. They were hard done by. When God rewarded. Other people. Better than themselves. They felt hard done by. It's the spirit.
Of the Pharisee. The elder brother. Felt it. When the prodigal son. Came home. And he was given a welcome. He felt. Hard done by. It's possible.
For a spirit. Like that. To come in. But you have to go back. Of that. Or go deeper. And ask. What causes that spirit? Well what causes that spirit. Is that you've somehow.
Forgotten. What you were yourself. Or that you've forgotten. What you really are. Before God. And it's very easy. For us to do that. It's easy for us.
[28:30] To think that. We deserve. The goodness of God. And that other people. Are just past his mercy. Or they're beyond it. We lapse.

Into thinking. That we. We deserve it. And we just forget. What we are. Ourselves. We forget it. Do you believe.
That you are not worthy. Of being saved. Or do you think. There was something in you. That just had to attract. God's kindness. There was just a little. Something that was bound. To have some claim.
Upon God's mercy. Or his kindness. Do you think that? Or do you genuinely. See yourself. Just as bad. As the next person. You know that doctrine. We call it part of Calvinism.
But it's just simply. A gospel truth. Total depravity. Just teaches us. That we're all the same. It's a reductionist thing. It brings us all down. To the same level. I've got no claim on God.
[29:26] You've got no claim on God. I'm a sinner. You're a sinner. If it's worked out. Worse in my life. Than it has in you. That's just because. God has kept it back. From revealing itself.

In your life. More than he has in mine. Do we believe that? Do we genuinely believe it? That all these people out there. Are just like us.
We like them. And we are capable of atrocities. We're capable of sin. We're capable of it all. Do you ever wonder why. In countries like Bosnia.
And you have people. Serbs and so on. One day. They're living side by side. In a village. Giving each other food. Buying in the same shops.
They know each other. They mingle with each other. And in the twinkling of an eye. They're cutting each other's throats. Massacring each other's families. These things were latent in their hearts.

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[30:22] And I suppose. They didn't even suspect it themselves. If the monster in all of us. Was let loose. How fearful it would be to see it. How fearful it would be to see it.

Jonah forgot that. Well. You can too. And so can I. We can all forget that kind of thing. Jonah feels so angry. And the Hebrew word is extremely strong.
He is angry. He is seething. And he prays. A strange prayer. He says. Therefore. He says. Take my life from me.
For it is better for me to die than to live. These men. He says. Have destroyed our country. These men. Have been cruel to our people. And now.
They are to be spared. And changed. And transformed. I don't understand the disease. Take my life away. Because it is better. For me to die. Than it is to live.
[31:20] What an unusual man in a way. When you contrast this prayer. With the prayer that he had inside the whale. There he was humble. He didn't deserve a second chance.

He didn't deserve life. He is just casting himself upon God's mercy. And if God would be gracious enough. Just to let him live. And now here he is.
Not empty of self. And full of God. But empty of God. And full of self. He is not praying to live. He is praying to die. Because these people. Were not good enough.
To be changed. And the whole thing. As far as he is concerned. Put such a cloud. Upon the work. And the justice of God. That he just cannot. Understand the whole thing at all. Now.
I think it is important. To notice this too. You would never expect. A man. With Jonah's experiences. To go through these things. You would have thought. That if a man like Jonah.
[32:15] Goes inside a whale. And God takes him out. And deals with him like that. Well. That this is going to be the man. Have you got a spiritual question? Ask Jonah. Have you got a problem?

Ask Jonah. As though. If you go through these things. You can never have a problem. Or you can never fall again. Well. Let me tell you this. As clear as I can.
That however high. You attain. In your Christian life. You are not beyond a fall. And you are not beyond. Being a failure. And becoming a failure again. Not at all.
There are some kind of teachings. Going around. About second blessings. And so on. And I don't deny. Forms of second blessing. But some kind of teachings. Go around. That say. More or less. That you are raised up above.
Beyond these things altogether. Well you are not. Jonah passed through. Great teaching. Remarkable teaching. And yet. You find him like this. A matter of days later.
[33:11] You find him like this. That's us. That's us. That's what's in our heart. He never. You can never rise so high like that. That you can't fall like this. And that's what we learn.

From Jonah. Now. The interesting thing is this. How does God deal with him? Last of all. How does God deal with him?
Well God asks him a question. And the question is this. Do you do well Jonah? To be angry? Verse 4. In chapter 4.
Do you well. To be angry? Are you right? Or is it good? To be angry? Even as you are angry just now. Now notice God asks a question.
God doesn't say to him. You shouldn't be angry. You shouldn't be angry. Jonah. He doesn't say that. Neither does he say. It's bad. To be angry. Jonah.
[34:08] He asks him a question. Do you do well. To be angry? God often deals with us. Just like that. He puts us. To looking at the thing.

Yourselves. It's not always a matter. In the spiritual life. Of being spoon fed something. This. This. And this. But God goes around. A thing. To get us to look at it.
Ourselves. And to get us to learn. And to think about it. Jonah says. Let me ask you. Is it right for you. To be angry. In the way that you are. And Jonah doesn't even.
Answer. No response. But actions speak louder than words. What he actually does. He doesn't answer. Is he goes up to the east of the city. On a hill.
And there he builds himself a booth. Now a booth is just a kind of trellis. He would have laced some branches together. To make himself. A kind of shade. And he sits there.
[35:03] In the booth. What for? To wait. To see. What would happen. To the city. To wait. To see. What would happen. To the city.

That's remarkable. He knows the people have changed. But he's determined. To take his ground here. You see. I'm going to wait.

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And see. If this judgment comes or not. Because if this judgment comes. Then. I can understand that. But if it doesn't come. I don't understand it at all. As far as I am concerned.
This judgment. Must come. To satisfy my sense. Of what is right. And what is proper. He doesn't even answer the question. Up he goes. And makes himself a booth.
To sit. And to watch. Until these 40 days are up. Because Jonah has his fixed view. Of how God has got to work. And nothing's got to intervene with that. And we can be like that. We can have our fixed patterns.
[35:59] For the exact way a thing is to be. And God doesn't work to our patterns. He doesn't work to our timetables. And we can find ourselves behaving very irrationally.

When we expect God to work just the way that we want. He sits. And he waits. Now God doesn't ask him the question again. He goes round it another way.
What God does is this. He prepares a gourd. Now that's a plant. People think probably a castor bean plant.
A perennial that grows very quickly. And can rise to a height of around 10 feet or so. But it has leaves like a palm tree. But bigger than a palm tree.
This gourd or this plant. Rows up over Jonah. God prepared it. Verse 6. The Lord God prepared a gourd. And made it to come up over Jonah.
[36:56] That it might be a shadow over his head. To deliver him from his grief. Now the heat in that part of the world can be intense.

It can rise at certain times of the year. To well over 100 degrees. And Jonah was hot during the day. But he was determined. He sat there. And he sat there.
God in his mercy prepares a gourd. Now friends. God's patience is a wonderful thing. And Jonah can only see the blackness of Nineveh. But really.
He's as black himself. The amount of things that God has to prepare for him. To get him to his place. God has to prepare a fish for him. To swallow him up. God prepares a wind.
To bring him to his proper place. God prepares a gourd. God prepares a worm. All these things God prepares and puts in place. To teach his own child. Because his own child deep down is no different than any of the Ninevites.
[37:54] God works and God prepares. Because God loves Jonah. And although Jonah is in the way he is. God has patience towards him. Isn't it a strange thing.

That people who experience God's patience. Can show so little of it themselves to others. Isn't it strange. We're told that Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.
Exceeding glad of the gourd. That God gave him in his patience. When God could have said Jonah. That's it. Enough's enough. God makes him a gourd.
And Jonah's glad about it. And he sits there waiting for the destruction of others. Isn't it remarkable. How blind we are. To the things that we should see.
How blind we can be to these things. God is so patient towards Jonah. And Jonah has zero tolerance towards the people of Nineveh. None at all.
[38:52] But God's not finished with him. Jonah was glad of the gourd. But next morning. God prepared a worm. Another preparation. He prepares a worm.

And this worm. And this worm smites the gourd. The plant. So that it withers away. This worm attacks this gourd.
So that the plant. Just withers away. Almost as quickly. As it appeared. And not just that. But God. Prepared a vehement east wind.
When the sun arose. And the sun beat upon the head of Jonah. So that he fainted under the heat. Now that east wind. They call the Sirocco wind. Now when that wind comes.
This east wind. It can raise the temperature. Apparently anything between 16 and 22 degrees. So that if it was over 100 anyway. You can imagine the leap in temperature.
[39:50] Which this Sirocco wind brought from the east. God sent it. God sent it. Jonah felt it. But it was for his good. Gourd. And it started to beat upon his head.

One minute you see. He was happy that the gourd was there. The next minute. He's got no gourd. It's destroyed. And the sun is beating hot. With a hot east wind upon his head.
And Jonah's back to square one. He puts up the same prayer. It's better for me to die than to live. Better for me to die than to live.

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You know some people feel like that. When their ideas don't work out. When their expectations of God's justice don't work out.
What's the point of going on? There's no use. No point going on at all. Better for me to die than to live. And notice how he swings. This is a man that's out of his place.
[40:47] He's swinging between being exceeding glad one minute. To wishing he was dead the next. And he just swings like that. When God makes a provision for him. He's exalted with it. But the minute he loses that provision.

He can't handle it at all. His mind is so out of sorts. He's spiritually perplexed. And he's spiritually depressed. Strangely. Because people have turned from their sins.
Turned from their sins. But he's got a lesson to learn. This time God comes back to her. A second time. And he says. Right. Jonah. Now again. Let me ask you.
Do you well. To be angry. And this time. Jonah's out with it. He says. Yes. He says. I do well. To be angry. And I do well. To be angry.
Even unto death. Now isn't it remarkable. That the Lord. Doesn't cut him down. There and then. At least he's honest. With the Lord. The first time the Lord.
[41:44] Asked him. He didn't answer. He just got up there. And waited. Until the city was destroyed. But the second time. God asks him. He says. Yes. He says. I'm right to be angry.

I'm right to be angry. Even. Till I die. Because. Of what is happening here. And God says to him. You had pity.
He says. On the gourd. And you felt sorry. For yourself. Too. Yes. But you also felt sorry. For that plant. It was giving you shade. It grows up.
In a day. And he says. It vanished away. You felt sorry for it. It had life. Yes. It did. But it's just a plant. At the end of the day. Jonah. It was a plant. But you feel sorry.
For that plant. It gave you shade. And you feel sorry. To see it die. And what's more. It was. As the Hebrew says. It was a sun of the night. It was just a transient thing.
[42:40] A thing that appeared. For a minute. And passed away. And what's more. God says. You didn't put out. Any labor on it. You didn't have to cultivate it. In any way. You didn't make it grow.

He says. You did nothing. To that gourd. He says. And yet you feel sorry. And you're angry. That that gourd. Was taken away. And he says.
Should I not. Spare. Nineveh. That city. In which there are more than. Six score persons. More than. One hundred and twenty. Thousand people.
That are so spiritually ignorant. That they can't discern. Their right hand. From their left. And he says. And also. Much. Tackle. Because I labored on them.
God says. I labored on them. I made them grow. They're people like you. Jonah. People like you. At the end of the day. Whatever they've become.
[43:35] They've all had a past. They were children. Raised with their mothers. Or with their fathers. I looked after them. I gave them bread. Their sins. Jonah. Weren't against you.

They were against me. And I still fed them. And I still cared for them. And I still watch over them. And I give them this message. Because I'm not willing.
That any of them should die. But that all of them. Should come to repentance. I made them. Jonah. I created them. I gave them life. I made them in my image.
And in my likeness. With a rational soul. I made them. People. I nourished them. I watched over them. And you think it's right.
To be angry about the gourd. And should I not spare Nineveh. That great city. Teeming with people. Multitudes. Whom I brought into this world.
[44:30] As well as much cattle. That's not a little thing. God cares for cattle too. God cares for the animal world. And so should we. Should I.

He says. Not spare. That city. Should I not spare it. Isn't it a remarkable thing. Sometimes people can feel more pity.
For animals and plants. Than they can feel for people. Sometimes because we've just lost sight. Of what we are ourselves. We lose our compassion. For men. Because we've become inflated.
About ourselves. Newton said. There. But for the grace of God. Go I. Write that. On the ceiling. Above your bed. Write it as God says.
On your forehead. Or upon your arm. Let it be on your door. Let it be everywhere. That there. But for the grace of God. Go I. To that drug addict there. To that prostitute there.

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[45:25] Or to whoever it is. Or wherever he lives. There. But for the grace of God. Go I. And when that's in our heart. We cannot feel sorry.

At the change. Over any people. We cannot. Did Jonah learn this lesson? He wrote the book. And he wrote the book. Because he learned the lesson.
You'll notice the book ends on a question. Why? Because Jonah's got no answer. That's why. When Jonah thinks about it. He's got no answer.
God had mercy on him. And what had his whole life recently been. But one example after another. Of being useless. And God doing something with him. In spite of that.
That was his whole life. And how strange for him. To turn around. And to say. What about that person? Jonah wrote the book. And he wrote the book.
[46:23] Because he learned his lesson. And he wrote this book. When God brought him low. To see what he was in himself. And to see more of God's mercy. And God's loving kindness.

Let me close just with this. I've gone on a lot longer than I thought. But if you are here tonight. And you can't discern. Your right hand from your left. Spiritually. If you are spiritually ignorant.
And cut off from God. Well. You hear the voice of a compassionate God. In that book. You hear the voice of a God. Who will bring punishment.
Make no mistake. But a voice of God. Who beseeches you. In spite of your enmity. Your past. And your waywardness. Whatever it be. To come to himself.
And he won't be paltry. With his reward either. He will give you. So much. More than I. Not only more than I can say. But more than I can begin.
[47:22] To think. A great God. A merciful God. May you come. To know. Let us pray. Lord our God.

Bless to us. Our meditation. Upon thy truth. And guard us. From thinking. More of ourselves. Than we ought. Humble us. By an awareness.
Of our sinful depravity. And grant us a heart. For the poor. And the needy. And may we never. As people. Or as a church. Lose our vision.
For the multitudes. Of the lost. Scattered throughout the world. For if we have become. Careless about them. Then it shows. That we have become. Proud. In ourselves.
Have mercy. For Christ's sake. We pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
[48:18] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen.

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