

Mission Accomplished?

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Preacher: Rev. Murdo Campbell

[0 : 00] Well, good morning and welcome to our service this morning. We welcome you, as we always do, in the name of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. I'm glad you could be with us this morning and I love being here with you. It's always nice to see you and to see you away at the back.

And also welcome to those who are watching online. We welcome you as well. And we do pray that as we gather around God's Word this morning, that our time will be blessed. I'm not sure of many intimations. I wanted to highlight that the Deacons Court and the Kirk Session are not meeting tomorrow night.

It's actually the 31st of May, which is a week Monday. I think it's at 7pm. But check your emails, Office Bearers. We're not meeting tomorrow evening. We're meeting the following Monday.

Also to highlight to you as well that after the service, just to remain seated and you'll be directed to leave the building by one of the office bearers.

So we're going to begin our service this morning by considering the words of Psalm 103. We're considering the words of Psalm 103, the first two verses in Gaelic.

[1 : 09] I'll read them first of all in English. Psalm 103 is a psalm that reminds us about our gracious God. The God we are worshipping this morning is a God of all grace.

He shows us mercy and he is gracious towards us, not because we deserve it, but because he is gracious. And this psalm, when you read through it, it reminds us of how gracious he is, that he forgives us all our iniquities.

He heals our diseases. He redeems our life. And he blesses us with an abundance. And Psalm 103, it begins with the words, O thou my soul, bless God the Lord, and all that in me is, be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless.

Bless O my soul, the Lord thy God, and not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee. We'll read the verses in English.

O man in Bianich, Ousenich, in Jehovah Moor, Molloch gach nie in Tivs da iem, An am nuvem marrish ghar. O man in Bianich, f■nenich, Jehovah Moor do iem, Na jeich hainich na t'chilliken, A jownich hout in trea.

[2 : 24] So these verses of Psalm 103, to God's praise. O man in Bianich, A jownich hout in trea.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[4 : 43] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Oh yeah, there's one over there.

Just making sure so I don't say boys and girls. So, well, it's lovely to see you all and I hope you had a good week in school. I'm sure you love school, don't you? You all love school.

Yes? Yes, they do. Danny loves school. I know he does. But you know, as we begin a new week, remember Sunday is the beginning of a new week. The Lord's Day is the first day of a new week.

[6 : 37] The Lord's Day is the first day of a new week. So, as we begin a new week, I brought something with me this morning that I wanted to show you. Now, if you can see it where you are, can you see it? This is a chopping board. It's a lovely present that I was given by someone in this congregation a couple of weeks ago.

I'm not going to tell you who it was. I don't want to embarrass her. But it's so nice that I wanted to show it to you. And what's written on the front of it is a poem.

Now, I don't know if the poem is going to go onto the screen. I'm not sure. But, you know, when I read this poem, I thought, well, it's a great poem. And when I read it, I read it and read it and read it. And I thought, I've read this somewhere before. I just don't know where I've read it before. And so I kept reading it until I finally worked out where I had seen it before. And I wonder if you know where it's from or who wrote it.

I'm sure maybe it tells you there on the screen. But I'll read the poem. It says, This hill, though high, I covet to ascend. The difficulty will not me offend. For I perceive the way to life is here.

[7 : 40] Come, pluck up heart. Let's neither faint nor fear. Better, though difficult, the right way to go. Than wrong, though easy, where the end is woe.

So, do you know who wrote that poem? Now, if you can read the thing on the screen, it tells you who wrote it. Any ideas? A man called John Bunyan.

A man called John Bunyan. And the poem is from a book that John Bunyan wrote. The book is called The Pilgrim's Progress. So, The Pilgrim's Progress was written by John Bunyan.

And John Bunyan, he wrote The Pilgrim's Progress while he was in prison. He wrote The Pilgrim's Progress hundreds of years ago. But he wrote it while he was in prison. And he was in prison because he was a preacher.

He preached the gospel. So, he was a minister. And he was put in prison for preaching the gospel. And I'd encourage everyone to read The Pilgrim's Progress. It's a great book. And there's also The Pilgrim's Progress for children.

[8 : 44] So, I'm sure you can read it too. It's a wonderful book about a man called Christian. And so, in The Pilgrim's Progress, there's this man called Christian. And he's on a journey. He's going from the city of destruction.

And he's traveling all the way to the celestial city. And this poem that's on the screen, it was written when Christian came to a hill. A big hill. Now, I'm sure you've all climbed a big hill before.

And you've maybe stood at the bottom of the hill and looked up and thought, Oh, it's a long way to go. Well, this man, Christian, he came to a hill. And the hill was called Difficulty.

That's what the hill was called. It was called Difficulty. And at the hill, there was a path that went right up to the top of the hill. And the path was called Difficulty as well. But there was also this path to the side of the hill.

And that was an easy path. And so, there was a difficult path and an easy path. And the difficult path, it was very narrow. But it went up towards eternal life.

[9 : 47] The easy path, it was actually a path called Destruction. And it led to death. And that's what the poem is about. It says, Better though difficult, the right way to go, than wrong though easy, where the end is woe.

So, the difficult way is to go up the hill, isn't it? The easy way would be to go on the path round the hill. So, it says, Better though difficult, the right way to go, right way is up the hill, the narrow path, than wrong though easy, where the end is woe.

And you know, that's what Jesus reminds us. Jesus says that there is a broad road, and there is a narrow road. Jesus says that the broad way is the easy way.

And the easy way is the way of sin. But the narrow path, the difficult path, like the uphill struggle, that's the way of salvation. The broad way is the way of death.

The narrow way, uphill, is the way of life. The broad road, as it says in the poem, it ends in woe. But the narrow path, uphill, as it says in the poem, it's the right way to go.

[11 : 01] Better though difficult, the right way to go, than wrong though easy, where the end is woe. And you know, this morning we're going to be reading from the book of Jonah. And as you know, I'm sure you all have heard of Jonah before, haven't you?

Jonah was the man, what happened to Jonah? Did he go in the right direction or the wrong direction? Did he go right or wrong? He went the wrong way, didn't he?

Jonah didn't go the right way at first. Jonah was told by God to go one way. He was told to go to Nineveh. But Jonah went the opposite way. He went to Joppa. He went the wrong way.

And it ended in woe. He ended up in the belly of a big fish, like a whale. And Jonah, in many ways, Jonah should have read the pilgrim's progress. Because he would have learned, like we've learned this morning, that better though difficult, the right way to go, than wrong though easy, where the end is woe.

So we remember that. You remember that there are two paths to life. There's the narrow path and it's difficult. It's like an uphill struggle. But there's also the broad way that leads to destruction. [12:13] And that doesn't follow in the footsteps of Jesus. The difficult path follows in the footsteps of Jesus. And it leads to eternal life. And that's the path we all need to be on. That's the path we need to walk on.

The difficult path that follows in the footsteps of Jesus and leads to eternal life. So will you remember that? Better though difficult, the right way to go, than wrong though easy, where the end is woe.

Okay, you remember that, will you? So we're going to read the word of God. We're going to read in Jonah, the book of Jonah, and chapters 3 and 4.

So let us hear the word of God.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.

[13:23] So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey, and he called out, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them. The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes.

And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, By the decree of the king and his nobles, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything.

Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.

Who knows? God may turn and relent, and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish.

When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

[14:45] But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country?

That this is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish. For I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live. And the Lord said, Do you do well to be angry? Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there.

He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city. Now the Lord God appointed a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort.

So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered. When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah, so that he was faint.

[15:57] And he asked that he might die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live. But God said to Jonah, Do you do well to be angry for the plant?

And he said, Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die. And the Lord said, You pity the plant for which you did not labour, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night.

And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 Persians, who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle.

And so on, may the Lord bless that reading of his own holy word. Well, let's come before the Lord in prayer. Let's pray together. Gracious God and loving Heavenly Father, we give thanks this morning that this is where we are found, and this is what we are doing, that we are found on mercy's ground, and that we are seeking to praise Thy name.

And we confess, O Lord, that our praise is not what we want it to be, that in many ways we are silent when we want to be singing. And we want to be lifting up our voices in praise and adoration of Thy name.

[17:24] For the Lord of God who is gracious, who is long-suffering, who is abundant in goodness and truth. And Lord, we bless and praise Thee this morning, that we are able to enter into Thy

presence, and that we are able to know and experience the presence of God.

For Thy promise is, as it has always been for Thy people, that when we draw near to God, the Lord, one who shall draw near to us. And our prayer is this morning, that as we come to this throne of grace, that we would come boldly, and that we would come experiencing mercy, and finding grace to help in our time of need.

That whatever may be in our experience, whatever is in our cup, whatever has been allotted to us in this past week, or even in this past year, that we would look to the God of all grace, the God of all comfort, the one who is able to sustain us and strengthen us, even in our trials and temptations. And we thank Thee, Lord, for Thy faithfulness to us, that there are a God who never changes, a God who remains our constant, that despite the passing of time, and the changes in our health, the changes in our circumstances, the changes in all our situations, we give thanks to Thee, that Thou art the God, who has revealed Thyself to us in Thy Word, as the one who never changes, and who says to us, I am the Lord, I change not.

Help us then, we pray this morning, or to come humbly before Thee, to realise that we have a great God, and a great King, one who is able to do in us and for us, exceedingly abundantly above all, more than we could ask or even think, and that Thou art able not only to work in our own lives, but in the lives of those who know Thee not, who are still strangers to grace and to God, who are still walking in darkness, who have no thought of eternity.

[19 : 18] O Lord, we give thanks that the book of Jonah gives us such a hope, and such a reminder that there are a God who is able to deal with us so graciously, and so lovingly, and so compassionately.

And we pray that as Thy people, that we would not hold the Gospel to ourselves, but as Paul said, that if the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost.

But the God of this world, who has shone into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, our prayer is that more and more, that they would know that light, that they would walk in that light, that they would experience the light of the world, that is Jesus Christ.

Because Jesus says to us in the Gospel, I am the light of the world. Whosoever believes in me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. O Lord, bless us then, we pray.

Bless this congregation. We thank Thee for them. We thank Thee, Lord, for their faithful witness, that Thou wouldst encourage them, and strengthen them, Lord, that Thou wouldst keep them, as Thou art able to do, the God who promises to keep our going out and our coming in.

[20 : 31] Remember them, Lord, we pray. Remember Thy servant Thomas, we pray for him, as he resumes his ministry here. And we pray for Una and the family as well. Help them to settle here again, and to know Thy presence and blessing, that as they continue to sow in tears together, that they would reap in joy, that Thou in Thy grace and mercy wouldst open the windows of heaven, and pour out blessing upon them, that people who are in this community would hear the Gospel, and that their soul would live.

And Lord, what we pray for them, we pray for all our congregations, throughout our denomination, and throughout the ends of the earth. O Lord, we plead that on this Lord's day, on this day of resurrection, a day that reminds us that we do not worship a Saviour who is dead, but one who is risen, one who is exalted, one who has put all his enemies under his feet.

O Lord, our prayer is that as he speaks throughout this world today, that Thy word would not return to Thee void, but accomplish in the thing whereto Thou descended, or that there may be arrows from the King sent out to pierce hearts, to bring people to their knees, and Lord, that Thy light as it is sent forth, that it would be a guide to those sitting in darkness, to bring them into that most marvellous light.

O Lord, remember us, we pray. Remember, Lord, those in the congregation laid aside, those receiving treatment, and we know there are so many. And we pray, Lord, for those who are struggling, struggling mentally, physically, or spiritually, those who feel isolated and alone.

O Lord, we give thanks to Thee, that in whatever we are going through, that Thee are the one who knows, who knows our rising up and our sitting down. O Lord, one who knows our thoughts, and even the brokenness of our own heart.

[22 : 26] O Lord, we remember homes this morning, where families have been torn apart by death. And Lord, we ask that Thou wouldst bring comfort, bring healing, bring help.

O Lord, we are reminded day by day, that vain is the help of man, and that it is better for us to put confidence in the Lord, than to trust in man. O Lord, help us, we pray Thee then, to look to Jesus, and to know that He is the author.

He remains the finisher of our faith, that He never changes, and that He promises never to leave us, and never to forsake us. O encourage us then, we pray. Bless the Sunday school, Lord, as they meet after the service, that Thou wouldest encourage them.

Bless the children. O we thank Thee for them. These young lives, Lord. O we pray, that Thou wouldest claim them as Thine own, that they would be the next generation, that follows after the Lord, and that even generations yet unborn, that they too would praise and magnify the Lord.

O keep us, we pray, keep the evil one from us, because we know that He goes around like a roaring lion. We know that He is even present here today, trying to steal the seed from of our heart.

[23 : 40] But Lord, we pray, that as the seed is sown, that it would not fall by the wayside, or among the thorns or unto the rocky ground, but that it might fall into that good soil, which Thou has prepared.

Prepare our hearts to hear Thy word. Prepare our eyes to see Jesus, that we would see none other save Jesus only, that we would see Him in His word, and that we would respond in praise and adoration, that we would all leave here today saying, that it was good for us.

It was good for us to have been here. Lord, bless us, we ask, pity us, shine Thy face upon us, direct us, we ask, and lead us by Thy Spirit, for we ask it in Jesus' name, and for His sake.

Amen. Amen. Well, if we could, with the Lord's help, and the Lord's enabling this morning, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, in the book of Jonah, Jonah and chapter 4. The book of Jonah, and chapter 4. And if you read again in verse 3. So Jonah chapter 4, and verse 3. Therefore now, O Lord, this is Jonah speaking, Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die, than to live.

[25 : 01] And the Lord said, Do you do well to be angry? Do you do well to be angry? We often say that all good things come to those who wait.

All good things come to those who wait. Now I'm not sure that this applies to our study, in the book of Jonah. And yes, it was a study, in the book of Jonah.

We began this study, years ago. I had to look up when, because it was actually, a long time ago. It was in August 2019, and it was at a Thursday prayer meeting, in the church hall.

But back then, I thought that we would just go through the book of Jonah, in maybe a few months. I would be, take the second Thursday of the month, and I would preach through Jonah. And while we managed to cover chapters one and two of the book of Jonah, we covered them quite quickly.

And where we saw Jonah, in chapters one and two, he was called and commissioned, and commanded by the Lord, to go to Nineveh. But as you know, Jonah was a disobedient disciple, and he ended up being in the belly of a big fish.

[26 : 13] And he was there for three days, and three nights. But in our study of Jonah, we, or I should say I, I left Jonah, in the belly of the big fish, for not three days and three nights, but for three months.

I left him there from October 2019, until January 2020. And then as you know, 2020 was the year of COVID, which delayed our completion of the book, even further.

But you know, some of the office bearers, they'll remain nameless, they wouldn't let me off with it. Because every time we met, as a Kirk session, or as a deacon's court, they would always be asking, when are you going to finish Jonah?

I mean, you started it ages ago, when are you going to finish it? To the point that it became this ongoing joke, that at every deacon's court, and every Kirk session, they kept saying to me, well Murdo, you've never finished one of the shortest books in the Bible.

And you know, I was repeatedly told that, during the March communion in 2016, the Reverend David MacLeod, he was here, he's the minister in North Harris, and he managed to preach through the book of Jonah, in three days.

[27 : 22] And I have taken, three years. But you know, as my role as inter-moderator, is coming to a close, which I have mixed feelings about, by the way, I'm glad you're getting a minister, but I'm sad I won't see you, much more.

But you know, I thought, I better finish what I started, a long time ago. And so this morning, we're looking at Jonah chapter four. And I want us to consider this concluding chapter of Jonah, under

three headings.

Jonah's type, Jonah's tantrum, and Jonah's teacher. Jonah's type, Jonah's tantrum, Jonah's teacher. So we'll look first of all at Jonah's type.

Jonah's type, look at verses one and two, of chapter four. But it pleased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, O Lord, is not this what I said when I was yet in my country?

That that is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish. For I knew that you are a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster.

[28 : 35] Do you know, the book of Jonah is, it's about a lot more than a prophet, who ran away from the Lord, and was swallowed by a big fish. Because the book of Jonah is actually about Jesus, and the gospel.

In fact, the book of Jonah is about the Great Commission, and we'll consider that in a moment. But Jonah was a type of Christ. He's a type of Christ, because when Jonah ran from the Lord, in chapter one, and repented before the Lord, in chapter two, he was then recommissioned by the Lord, as we read there, in chapter three.

And Jonah, he finally went to Nineveh, to proclaim the message, that he had originally been called, commanded, and commissioned by the Lord, to preach. And when Jonah arrived, in the city of Nineveh, which was 500 miles, miles east of Israel, it was near the modern city of Mosul, in Iraq. And so when Jonah arrived, as we read there in chapter three, he preached a message of God's imminent judgment. Jonah preached the message, 40 days, and Nineveh will be overthrown. 40 days, and Nineveh is going to be destroyed. And as we read in chapter three, the people responded, not as you would expect, they responded in faith, and repentance.

[29 : 57] That's what we read, in chapter three, at verse five, the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them, to the least of them.

The people of Nineveh, they believed Jonah's message, and they responded in faith, in the promised Messiah, and repentance of their sin. So they responded in faith and repentance.

But you know, we have to question, why? Why did they believe Jonah's message? Why did they respond in faith, and repentance? Why did Jonah say to them, and why did what Jonah said to them, why did that make them respond, in the way they did?

Why did they believe, in Jonah's message? And I say this, because the thing about the people of Nineveh, was that they hated God, and they hated God's people.

In fact, the people of Nineveh, they were known for their hatred. They were known for their exploitation, of helpless nations. More than that, the people of Nineveh, they partook in idolatry, they committed prostitution, they performed witchcraft, and they were an extremely proud people.

[31 : 09] And so, it leaves us with a question, what was it? What was it really, that caused this hardened, and hateful people, to respond in faith, and repentance, at the preaching of Jonah?

Because, all we're told, in Jonah chapter 3, is that Jonah preached, a message, and all we're told that Jonah said, was, 40 days, a Nineveh, will be overthrown.

And do you not think to yourself, well, surely Jonah said, more than that to them. Surely he said, more than those words, 40 days, and Nineveh, is going to be destroyed.

And well, I believe he did. And I believe he did, because Jesus, because Jesus, confirms that Jonah said, a lot more, than these few words, of imminent judgment. Do you know, when Jesus, addressed the people, of his day, in Luke chapter 11, he said, this generation, is an evil generation. It seeks a sign, but no sign, shall be given, except the sign, of Jonah. No sign, shall be given, except the sign, of Jonah.

[32 : 21] Now, let's just pause there, for a moment, at what Jesus said. No sign, shall be given, except the sign, of Jonah. Do you know, I know that many people, maybe, you're one of them, this morning, whether here, or at home, or watching online.

And you know, there are so many people, that refuse to commit, their life to Jesus Christ, and confess him, as their Lord and Saviour, because you want a sign. You want a sign.

You want a Damascus Road experience. You want to see, the bright light, in the sky. You want to hear, the voice from heaven. You want to be told, with absolute certainty, and clarity, you are a Christian.

You want a sign. But as you listen, to the words of Jesus, Jesus said, to those who seek a sign, no sign, shall be given, except the sign, of Jonah.

No sign, shall be given, except the sign, of Jonah. And Jesus, he went on to say, for as Jonah, became a sign, to the people, of Nineveh, so will the son of man, become a sign, to this generation. [33 : 28] Jesus says, the sign of Jonah, is actually, the sign of Jesus. The sign of Jonah, is the sign of Jesus. Because Jesus, asserted and affirmed, that Jonah, is a type of Christ.

And that the story of Jonah, is all about Jesus, and the gospel. Now when we say, that Jonah was a type of Christ, it doesn't mean, that all that Jonah, did was Christ like, in every way.

As we know, Joseph, and Moses, and David, and Solomon, they were all types of Christ, in different ways. But they weren't always, Christ like, in their conduct. Just like Jonah, wasn't Christ like, in his conduct.

He was a disobedient, disciple. But you know, if the sign of Jonah, was the sign of Jesus, then what was the sign of Jonah, to the people of Nineveh?

And I want to suggest to you, that the sign of Jonah, was the death of sin, and the promise of resurrection, to new life. The sign of Jonah, was the death of sin, and the promise of resurrection, to new life.

[34 : 36] And I say that, because when we consider, both Jonah, and Jesus, they moved in the same direction. They moved in the same direction. Jonah, Jonah's movement, was down, down, down, right down, into the belly, of the big fish.

Because when you read through chapter one, and I'd encourage you to read through, the book of Jonah, it won't take you long. But when you read through chapter one, it says that Jonah went, down, to Joppa.

Then he went, down into the ship. Then he ended up, down, down, in the depths, in the belly of the big fish. So Jonah's movement, was down, down, down, until he was in the belly, of the big fish.

Or as Jonah describes it, in chapter two, he went, down, down, down, into the depths, of the grave. And as you know, my friend, that's where Jesus went to.

That was the movement of Jesus. Jesus went down, down, down. Because in the humiliation of Jesus, Jesus humbled himself, from the crown of glory.

[35 : 40] And he humbled himself, down to the cradle in Bethlehem, and all the way down, to the cross of Calvary. It was down, down, down, from the crown, to the cradle, to the cross, down, down, down, from glory, to Golgotha, to the grave.

And you know, the sign of Jonah, was the movement of Jesus. Down, down, down, from glory, to Golgotha, to the grave. And what's remarkable, is that as Jonah's type, Jesus compared, his death, and burial, to Jonah.

Jesus said, just as Jonah was three days, and three nights, in the belly of the great fish, so will the son of man, be three days, and three nights, in the heart of the earth. So Jonah went down, down, down, into the belly of the fish, for three days, and three nights.

And Jesus went down, down, down, into the depths of the grave, for three days, and three nights. But the story didn't end there either, did it?

Because you remember, that when Jonah was delivered, from the belly of the big fish, or the belly of the grave, as Jonah described it, Jonah was vomited up, out, of the belly, of the big fish.

[36 : 56] He was, what you could say, resurrected, from the grave, out, of the belly, of the big fish. Jonah was brought, up, out, of death. Brought from death, to life.

Which as you know, was the same movement, as Jonah's type. Jesus Christ. In the humiliation of Jesus, it was down, down, down. Glory to Golgotha, to the grave.

But on that first Lord's Day morning, and here is the hope of the gospel, on that day of resurrection, and exaltation, Jesus was brought up, up, up, out of the grave, resurrected, from the grave, he was brought from death, to life.

And so when we look at the book of Jonah, we have to see that the sign of Jonah, is the death of sin, and the promise of resurrection, to new life. The sign of Jonah, is the death of sin, and the promise of resurrection, to new life.

And so when Jonah went to Nineveh, to proclaim, the message he had been called, commissioned, and commanded, by the Lord, to preach. The people of Nineveh, they responded, in faith, and repentance, because Jonah, not only preached, about God's imminent judgment, Jonah preached, the gospel to them.

[38 : 14] He preached, the gospel, of Jesus Christ. He preached, about the death of sin, and the promise, of resurrection, to new life. And remarkably, as we read, in chapter 3, the people of

Nineveh, who were known, for their hardened hearts, and their horrible attitude, towards other people, they responded.

They responded, in faith, and repentance, at the preaching, of the gospel. Why? Because the gospel, of Jesus Christ, my friend, it is able, to change hearts, and transform lives.

It's able, to change the hardest, of hearts, and to change, the attitudes, of the most horrible, of people, and you know, my unconverted friend, both here, and at home, Jesus said, that those, who seek a sign, no sign, shall be given.

And no sign, will be given, because God, has already, given you a sign. God has given you, a sign, in the sign of Jonah. He's given you, a sign, in the death, and resurrection, of Jesus Christ.

He's given you, the greatest moment, in this world's history. He's given you, the gospel, in all its, all its fullness.

[39 : 36] And this morning, my friend, you're being called, to respond, to the gospel. And you're to respond, in faith, by believing in Jesus, every word he says, but also, in repentance.

That's what Jesus says. His opening words, in his ministry, were repent, repent, and believe, in the gospel. And you're being issued, the same call this morning, from the book of Jonah.

Repent, and believe, in the gospel. But you know, what's really interesting, is that when the people, of Nineveh, responded, to the message, of Jonah's type, Jonah responded, with a tantrum, which is what we see, secondly.

We see Jonah's tantrum. So Jonah's type, and Jonah's tantrum. Jonah's tantrum, we'll read again, from the beginning, of chapter four. It displeased Jonah, exceedingly, and he was angry.

And he prayed to the Lord, and said, O Lord, is not this what I said, when I was yet in my country?

That this is why, I made haste, to flee to Tarshish. For I knew, that you are a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding, in steadfast love, and relenting, from disaster.

[40 : 52] Therefore now, O Lord, please take away, my life from me. For it is better for me, to die, than to live. And the Lord said, do you do well? To be angry. Now as we said, the book of Jonah, is all about, the message of the gospel.

It's more than just, this prophet, who ran away from the Lord, and ended up in the belly, of a big fish. The book of Jonah, is about Jesus, and the gospel. But more than that, the book of Jonah, is about the great commission.

The book of Jonah, is about the great commission. And of course, the great commission, it's found at the close, of Matthew's gospel. Where, prior to ascending, to heaven, Jesus said to his disciples, he said to his disciples, all authority in heaven, and on earth, has been given to me.

Go therefore, and make disciples, of all nations, baptizing them, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them, to observe all, that I have commanded you.

And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the world. And as you know, when Jesus issued, the great commission, he issued it, not only to his disciples, in the first century, but also his disciples, here, now, in the 21st century.

[42 : 10] Because the great commission, is that, we are to go, with the good news, of the gospel. We're to preach, and proclaim, the death of sin, and the promise of resurrection, through Jesus Christ.

We're to make disciples, not converts, but disciples, of all nations. And this great commission, my friend, it's as relevant, to us today, as when Jesus, first declared it, to the disciples.

But you know, what we have to understand, from the book of Jonah, is that Jonah, was also given, the great commission. The great commission, was declared to Jonah, because Jonah, was first of all, a disciple.

But he was a disobedient, disciple. As we said, in chapter one, Jonah is running. In chapter two, Jonah is repenting. In chapter three, Jonah is recommissioned.

In chapter four, Jonah is raging. And Jonah, he was running, repenting, recommissioned, and raging. And Jonah was raging, why?

[43 : 15] Because of the grace, and mercy of God, shown towards, the people, of Nineveh. Jonah was raging, because of, God's care, and God's compassion, and God's concern, for the people of Nineveh.

Jonah was raging, because he had to preach, to the people of Nineveh. Now, Jonah, is having a tantrum. And he's having a tantrum, because, the people of Nineveh, have now responded, to the gospel, and faith, and repentance.

But you know, we read this, and in our minds, we can't understand, why Jonah is raging, and having a tantrum. Because we would think, well, it's amazing, that the people of Nineveh, these hardened people, who had hardened hearts, and hatred towards, other people, isn't it amazing, that they're converted?

Isn't it amazing, that this missionary, from Israel, he traveled 500 miles, to the people of Nineveh, to preach, and proclaim the good news, and they're all converted? Isn't that amazing?

It's amazing, that they've heard the gospel, they've responded to the gospel, and they're repenting, in sackcloth and ashes. And you know, if we were to ask Jonah, Jonah, isn't this amazing? This people, who have never heard the gospel, they're all saved.

[44 : 29] And you ask Jonah that, and Jonah says, no. It's not amazing, at all. You know, we look at it, and say, isn't it amazing, that this great commission, to make disciples, of all nations, is coming through?

And that the church, is extending from Jerusalem, to Judea, to Samaria, to the uttermost parts, of the earth. Isn't that good news, Jonah? And Jonah says, no. That's not good news, at all.

Why Jonah? Why? What's wrong with you, Jonah? Can't you see, this is great. Why are you so angry? Why are you raging, and having a tantrum, that the Lord has shown compassion, and been gracious, and merciful, to these sinners, and that they're converted, and their lives are changed?

Why are you so angry? And you know, if Jonah were to answer us, he would tell us, that the people of Nineveh, are not worthy, of this message. They're not God's people, he would say to us.

They're not Jews. They're not Israelites. Israelites. We are Jews. We are the elect nation. They are outcasts. They don't deserve this.

[45 : 39] And you know, my friend, you have to understand, that at this point, in Israel's history, the Israelites, they were a proud nation. They had forgotten, about the grace, and mercy of God.

And as a result, they wanted to keep, the light of the gospel, to themselves. But that was never, God's plan. That was never, God's purpose. That was never, God's promise, of redemption.

Because in God's, covenant promise, to Abraham, long before Jonah, God promised, that the gospel, of grace, and mercy, was to go to, all the nations, of the earth.

The Lord said to Abraham, through your seed, through your family, all the families, of the earth, will be blessed. They will all experience, the blessing, of salvation.

And through that, covenant of grace, with Abraham, the Lord called, and he commissioned, and he commanded, the nation of Israel, to be a light, to all the other nations.

[46 : 39] You know, we touched on this, last Lord's Day, in our study, of the book of Zechariah, if you're following, on Sunday evenings. Zechariah was given, the vision of a golden, lampstand. And that's what the Israelites, were to be.

They were to be a light, to the nations, of the world. They were to let, the gospel light, shine, through their witness. So that the nations, would be drawn, to the light.

And come to the light. And walk in the light. And have fellowship, with the light of the world, who is Jesus Christ. But instead, what did they do?

They hid their light, under the bushel. They kept the light, to themselves. They veiled the light. They veiled the gospel. And they became, a proud nation.

They thought that they were, a cut above everyone else. That they were up here, and sinners were down there. And instead of being, outward looking, and outward facing, they were inward looking.

And always thinking, about themselves.

[47 : 38] Instead of being, a church, for the world. They became, a club, for themselves. And that's why Jonah, didn't want to go to Nineveh.

He didn't want, the people of Nineveh, part of his club. Because they, weren't Israelites. They, weren't descendants of Abraham. They, weren't children of Israel. They, they weren't worthy, of this message.

And so in Jonah's mind, the ungodly people, of Nineveh, didn't deserve, the Lord's salvation.

They're not worthy, of the light of the gospel. And that's why Jonah, ran away.

That's why Jonah, went west to Joppa. When he was called, and commissioned, to go east, to Nineveh. Jonah didn't believe, that salvation, is of the Lord. Jonah believed, that salvation, was all because, you were a Jew.

He believed, that salvation, was because of the family, you were brought up in. Or the home, that you were part of. Or the privileges, that were given to you, as a child. Or the opportunities, that were

afforded to you.

[48 : 41] Or the community, that you were part of. It was actually, in chapter two, that Jonah discovered, that salvation, is of the Lord. He discovered it, in the belly, of the big fish. And Jonah confessed that.

And yet, after running, and repenting, and being recommissioned, you come to chapter four, and Jonah is still, raging. And he's raging, because he still believes, the gospel is only, for certain types, of people.

And as you know, my friend, that's not true. That's not true, at all. As Christians, you know, we can often be guilty, of forgetting, that salvation, is all of grace, and all of God.

I would never, stand here, if it were not of grace, and not of God. As Christians, we can be guilty, of judging people, or even having preconceived ideas, about people, thinking, well it's impossible, for them to be converted, because of their background, or their upbringing, or the culture they were part of, or because of their addictions, or their problems, in their life.

As Christians, you know, we can be guilty, of being closed, and cold, instead of being warm, and welcoming. As Christians, we can be guilty, of making our Sunday gathering, a club, instead of a church.

[50 : 08] A church for all people, for whosoever. Are we a people, for the whosoever? And you know, it's so sad, because I hear so many, Christians, excusing themselves, from the Great Commission, because they say, that our villages, are full of incomers.

They say, that the island, is full of people, who don't want the gospel, or care about the gospel, or church, or they don't understand, our culture. They weren't brought up here, so they won't come. But you know, my friend, that should never, be an obstacle, for the gospel. That should always be, an opportunity, for the gospel. This gospel, is able to save, to the uttermost.

Because salvation, is of the Lord. It's not of us. It's all of grace. Which means, that we have a great message, to proclaim. And that there is no sin, too dark, or too dirty, that the Lord, is not able to deal with.

Salvation, is of the Lord. And it's all of grace. And you know, this is something, Jonah needed to be taught. And it's something, we need to be taught too. It's something, I need to be taught too.

[51 : 22] Which is why, we see lastly, and briefly, Jonah's teacher. Jonah's teacher. So Jonah's type, Jonah's tantrum, and Jonah's teacher. Jonah's teacher, look at verse 9.

But God said to Jonah, do you do well, to be angry for the plant? And he said, yes I do well, to be angry. Angry enough to die. And the Lord said, you pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being, in a night, and perished in a night.

And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 Persians, who do not know their right hand, from their left, and also much cattle.

As we said, and as we've discovered, the book of Jonah, it's much more than, a man who ran away from God, and was swallowed by a big fish. The book of Jonah, it's all about the grace of God, towards lost sinners.

It's about the wonder of Jesus. It's about the preciousness, of the gospel. It's about the great commission, to make disciples, of all nations. And what's remarkable, is that the book of Jonah, was written and recorded, for the purpose, of confronting, and challenging the Israelites, about their view of mission, and their adherence, to the great commission.

[52 : 47] Because the truth is, as we said, the Israelites, they had no view of mission. They had no interest in mission. And they were failing, to be obedient, to their great commission.

And like Jonah, they needed, to be recommissioned. They needed, to be redirected. They needed, to be reformed, in their thinking. They needed, to be taught.

Just like we need, to be taught. that God's grace, is much greater than us. God's grace, is much greater than us. And Jonah's teacher, showed Jonah this, because the Lord, asked Jonah, about his view of mission.

The Lord asked Jonah, what's your view of mission? And he said, the Lord was saying to him, do you do well, to be angry? Jonah was asked, about his view of mission.

Jonah was angry, the thought of mission. And the Lord says, do you do well, to be angry? He was angry, because God, was a gracious God. He was gracious, to Nineveh.

[53 : 51] And yet God, was not only gracious, to Nineveh. As we read in chapter 4, God was gracious, to Jonah. God was so gracious, to Jonah, that he preserved his life, in the belly, of the

fish.

And he protected, his life, under the plant. And that's what Jonah, had forgotten. He had forgotten, that God is gracious. God is greater, than Jonah.

In fact, that's how the book of Jonah ends. It ends with God, teaching Jonah, and us, that salvation, is of the Lord, because he is gracious.

That's the message, of the book of Jonah. Salvation, is of the Lord, because he is gracious. That's what we read. The Lord said, you pity the plant.

You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night, and perished in a night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than, one hundred, and twenty thousand Persians, who do not know, their right hand from their left, and also much cattle.

[55 : 04] Jonah was angry, but God is gracious. God is gracious. And you know, it was actually the same with Moses. Moses was angry.

He was angry with the Israelites, for making a golden calf. But the Lord was gracious. In fact, the Lord preached to Moses, in Exodus 34, wonderful chapter.

The Lord preached to Moses, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love.

And David, he confirmed this in Psalm 103, which we'll be considering shortly. And then Jonah, he knew this to be true, because he said there in verse 2, he said, I knew that you are a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love.

Do you know, my friend, as we finally conclude, our study in the book of Jonah, we need to remember, that the book of Jonah, it's all about the gospel, of Jesus Christ.

[56 : 13] The book of Jonah, is about our great commission, to all nations. The book of Jonah, is about God's grace, towards lost, and hell deserving sinners.

The book of Jonah, is about that, no one is worthy, to be saved. No one is worthy. But God is gracious.

God is gracious. And through the book of Jonah, we have received, the sign of Jonah, which is the death of sin, and the promise, of resurrection, the promise, of eternal life, through Jesus Christ. It's a wonderful book. You've waited a long time, to hear chapter four. All good things, come to those, who wait.

But my friend, that's not true. The gospel, is one good thing, that you don't need, to wait for. Because the gospel, has already come.

[57 : 19] It's already here. And the gospel, never says to you, wait. It never says, stay where you are. It never says, don't come.

No, no, no. The gospel, always says, come. And it says, come now. Don't wait. Don't wait, till you're worthy. Don't wait, till you feel better.

Don't wait, till you're a better person. No, no, no. Come now. Come now. Because as you know, life is uncertain.

Death is sure. Sin is the cause. But Christ is the cure. And the gospel says, come now. Because now is the accepted time.

And today, today, today, today, is the day of salvation. Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us.

[58 : 22] Let us pray. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee, the Lord, one who is gracious, and who does not deal with us as we deserve, but one who deals with us in loving kindness, and mercy, and grace.

And help us, Lord, as thy people, to proclaim that message, never to keep it to ourselves, but to let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good work, and glorify our Father in heaven, and our prayer for those who have still not come, who are still waiting, or that they would see that the call is now, and the plea has come, that they would come today.

That as the psalmist said, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart. O Lord, be gracious to us, we pray. Bless thy truth to us. Remember us, we ask, as homes, and as families, and continue to speak to us.

Go before us, we ask, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning, by considering the words of Psalm 103.

