

“Jonah” Pt 10

A Wayward Prophet

Jonah 3:1-10

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Jeff: Why don't we pray and then we'll get started. Gracious God, we are thankful for this day and for the blessings that You give to us. Lord, You do provide for us a bounty of blessings, and they start in the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, we are thankful to possess every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Him. And Lord, we are delighted that His justification is ours, that His adoption is ours, that His sanctification is ours, and so on. Lord, we are thankful then to be united with Him and to share in His blessings.

Lord, we ask that You will make us mindful of this, because we oftentimes migrate into thinking that we please You by doing good things, and we don't. We have pleased You in no way, shape or form. But Christ has, and so, Lord, we endeavor to live our lives in His likeness. We endeavor to be conformed to the image that You have built into humanity and that was restored in Christ. We endeavor to live after His likeness, and that involves obedience. And so, Lord, we ask that You would make our lives fruitful, even as we follow You in the dictates of Your precepts.

Lord, we ask now that You'll bless us as we study Your word. Father, we're thankful to gather together and open it and study it ourselves and to be together as we do it. It's a wonderful fellowship one to another as we find ourselves in Your word, that place wherein we can stand. And it's a place wherein we can take delight in a world that is really amorphous in terms of its own moorings. Lord, we know that the world is in some ways a delight because it's a place that You have made. And we also know that it's a dark place because of sin. So Lord, keep us from the darkness and ever keep us in the light.

And Lord, we certainly pray for Don and ask that You will bless him as he has this doctor's appointment today. We ask that the result of it would be a good, clean bill of health. And we pray, Father, for many more years for Don.

Lord, we ask that You would bless my wife Tabitha and that You would strengthen her. And Lord, we pray that You'll give her life, and we pray that You'll give her the strength of faith to bear up under her trial. And Lord, I pray that our family would be a strength to her and to our church as well.

Lord, I pray that You will bless us now in these moments and turn our hearts and our eyes toward Your word and fill us with Christ. We ask it in His name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Jeff: All right. Well, today what we're going to do is that we're going to look at—I think we left off somewhere around here; that would be the second point on your outline. And so let me have you turn with me to Jonah. I'm going to read from Jonah chapter 3, so let me do that now; Jonah chapter 3.

“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.’ So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD.

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“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 said He would do to them, and He did not do it.”

Ted Wood: This is the word of the Lord.

Brave Men: Thanks be to God.

Jeff: All right. Well, let’s pick up here in our discussion with *the nature of sin*. And let me ask the question as soon as I get myself situated here. What is the nature of sin? When we think about sin, how do we describe it? How do we define it? Maybe those two ideas are certainly different. Certainly, if we think we can define it that means we think we can lay hold of it. But if we can only describe it that means we can’t necessarily get our arms around it in total. But we can have some level of understanding about what it is.

Hermann Bavinck says this: *“Sin is not a substance in itself, but that sort of disturbance of all the gifts and energies given to man, which makes them work in another direction—not towards God, but away from Him.”*

And I think that’s an interesting thing. We might think of the definition of sin or the description of sin the way the Westminster Standards describe it. It’s either a sin of omission or commission. We are either told to do something that we don’t do, or we omit something that we are supposed to do. And so the idea here then is that we are not going toward God, but we are going away from God.

And I really think that fits with Jonah, and here’s the reason why. It fits with Jonah because remember where we’ve been with him. We’ve been at the very beginning with him as he went down to Joppa, down into the ship, down into the cargo hold, down into a deep sleep, and down to the roots of the mountain. And remember that when I took you back to that whenever we were in that chapter, I said to you that there is this repeated downward motion that’s in the Hebrew; it’s down, down, down. And you can see some of that reflected in the English translation. But that’s the idea; there’s a downward movement. And that’s Jonah moving away from God.

Now I think for all the technical stuff that we can think about, we’re going to think about a few things that are a little bit more technical today when we think about sin. And I think that when we think about sin, if we think about sin as moving away from God rather than toward Him, we’ve got a pretty good handle on it. We’ve got a pretty good handle on what it is.

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And basically, if I can say this, it means that we are moving away from Him because we are moving away from His will. Now what is His will? His will is captured for us in His word. So when we are moving away from God’s word then we are moving away from God.

And that’s where the standards that I told you about earlier come in, for instance the sins of omission and commission. You know, a sin of commission is when we commit sin when God has told us not to do it. Or a sin of omission is when we leave off some duty that we’re supposed to do. And in those ways we transgress the word of God and move away from Him.

And so Jonah was moving away from the will of God—not written, because that came for Jonah in spoken form; he was obviously a prophet in the Old Covenant. So the word of the Lord came to him in a way that it doesn’t come to us. And he was told, “You need to go down to Nineveh and speak to those people there this message that I’m going to give to you.” And he said no; he moved away from God’s will.

So Nineveh was in the same boat when you really think about it. I mean, when you think about Nineveh, Nineveh was moving away from God. Like the prophet they were moving down and down and down to the point where God took notice of them and said, “I’m going to judge this people; I’m going to punish them.”

We see that elsewhere in the Scriptures, right? We see it in places where God is pretty explicit about it, and we see it in places where He’s not so explicit. But we get a good idea that this is what’s happening here.

For instance, one of the places where I think we get this idea is when God speaks to Abram and tells him that he’s going to own the land of Canaan someday. But God says, “I’m not quite finished dealing with the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the stalactites,” right? (*Laughter*) Those kinds of ites. And so he says what? He says that in another 500 years or so—and it turns out to be 430 years—is when God moves Abraham into the land and uses him and his posterity to punish the Canaanites.

And so Nineveh is in the same boat. God is taking notice of them And He is going to bring judgment upon them. But He’s gracious in that He sends His prophet first before judgment, so that they may repent.

All right, so Nineveh is in the same boat. And here’s the message that they receive: “*Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown!*”

Now sin is not that complicated, is it? I mean, when you think about it sin is not that complicated. You might say that it is ethical drift, and then it’s sinking. It’s ethical drift; you take on water as you drift away from the Lord, and you begin to sink.

I’m going to give you an illustration of this; I hope it’s helpful. Think about the Titanic. You know, every time I see that movie I hope that the boat doesn’t sink. (*Laughter*) You know, inevitably it does and it’s the same old ending. But I want you to think about this. Remember how at the beginning of the ship there was damage sustained by the iceberg? And there were supposed to be these bulkheads that would keep out the water. They could keep out the water and stabilize the ship. Many of you probably know more about this than I do. But the idea is that what happens is that the front part of the

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ship begins to take on water. And when it takes on water, though the rest of the ship is sealed off, there is such damage done to the ship that what happens? It begins to sink.

Now here’s my point in this. We can’t segment off parts of our lives and say, “You know what? This is a little treasured sin to me. I’m just going to keep this part. Everything else is pretty good in me but this part. And it’s something I’ll get hold of at some point in time. But right now I’m going to just let it go and I’m going to delight in it every once in a while.”

We know we’re not so bold as to say that kind of thing. We’re not so bold as to say, “I’m just going to take up that sin and delight in it now!” No, but we do justify it, don’t we? We justify our sins in a variety of ways. And you probably have your own way of justifying your own sins.

But the point is, that’s like rot to you. And it will not go without effect. John Owen, a great Puritan of the 17th century, used to say this. He used to say, “You either need to kill sin, or sin will kill you.” And it’s one of those things that I think is a pretty straightforward statement.

It takes some fleshing out if you think about it. In other words, what’s the difference between partial apostasy—a partial falling away from the Lord or a moving away from the Lord—and a full apostasy—that is, a no-return apostasy; you’re heading away from the Lord and you’re not coming back? What’s the difference? The difference is repentance.

Think about Judas and Peter on the night that Peter denied Christ and Judas betrayed Him. What was the difference? My guess is that if you would have run into them that very night, had you run into them on the street, if you would have run into them you wouldn’t have been able to tell the difference between a partial and a full apostate.

But I’ll tell you how you could tell the difference. In the end you could tell the difference because Peter repented of his sin. Repentance is the difference between full and partial apostasy. And you know, that’s the end of somebody who doesn’t kill the sin, somebody who doesn’t turn back to God. And that’s pretty frightening. That’s a boat. But when you’re thinking about your own life, that’s another matter.

So anyway there’s this idea that you take on water. Did you have your hand up earlier?

David Miller: I do have a question.

Jeff: Yeah.

David: Okay. The Bible says that “*Without faith it is impossible to please God.*” Does that imply that with faith it is possible to please God?

Jeff: That’s a good question. It is impossible to please God without faith, because if we have faith then we have Christ, okay? And if I have Christ and I’m in union with Christ, then Christ has pleased God on my behalf. My life is growing in His likeness, but not to merit anything before Him, not to please Him in a way that is meritorious. Christ has already pleased Him meritoriously on my behalf.

David: But you have to admit though that if you are consciously moving down away from God, that is less pleasing than moving toward Him and toward His word.

Jeff: So let me add this. Take Peter for instance, when the Lord goes to him and says, “Peter, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you. And when you

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turn back, strengthen your brothers.” And so here is Peter. He is obviously the Lord’s; he belongs to the Lord; he obviously has faith. But he turns back. He not only turns back but he denies the Lord; he denies being with the brethren; he’s moving away from the Lord.

But he belongs to the Lord. We don’t know this; we only know this because the Lord told us this, right? But you’re right; there’s a sense in which he is displeasing the Lord. But we need to remember that if he really belongs to Christ, and in the case of Peter, Christ has already and will please the Father by not only being righteous in his place, but also being a curse-bearer in his place. And so Christ has pleased the Father meritoriously on behalf of Peter.

Now Peter is certainly displeasing the Lord. But you need to think about the way a believer who is situated in Christ either pleases or displeases the Lord. It can’t be salvifically. It has to be like a child/parent relationship.

So for instance, your child does something that displeases you; they’re walking away from you in that regard. There is no danger of you saying, “Get out of my house; you are no longer my son

!”, right? You say, “You’re displeasing me and you’re not going to be able to do the very thing that you want to do. I’m going to take it away from you. You’re going to be punished,” right? But you don’t take away your love that has been set upon them, right?

In fact, even in instances where people have had to put their children out of the house, you talk to them and they’ll say, “I love him as a son and I’ll never stop. I’ll do almost anything for him. But I’ve got to let him hit bottom.”

You see, that’s the Father’s love for those who belong to Him. Can I borrow that for just a minute? I know he always has this. But there are a couple of places that are just really rich. Let me read them and then I’ll let you respond.

Transcriber’s Note: Jeff refers to Jordan Obaker’s copy of the Westminster Standards.

Jeff: One is at the end of chapter 17. I suppose I should look at the topic and then I’ll know where I am. This is in the section on “The Perseverance of the Saints.”

“Nevertheless, they may, through the temptations of Satan and of the world, the prevalency of corruption remaining in them, and the neglect of the means of their preservation, fall into grievous sins, and for a time continue therein, whereby they incur God’s displeasure and grieve His Holy Spirit, come to be deprived of some measure of their graces and comforts, have their hearts hardened and their consciences wounded, hurt and scandalize others, and bring temporal judgments upon themselves.” So they may fall into sin and find that that’s their condition.

But I want you to know that in the very next chapter, “On the Assurance of Salvation,” in the last section it says this. *“True believers may have the assurance of their salvation in diverse ways shaken, diminished and intermitted.”* In other words, if you look like the last section, your assurance of salvation is going to be in diverse ways intermitted and shaken. *“As by negligence in preserving of it, by falling into some special sin which woundeth the conscience and grieveth the Spirit, by some sudden or vehement temptation, by God withdrawing the light of His countenance, and suffering even such as fear Him to walk in darkness and to have no light. Yet are they never utterly destitute of that seed of*

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God and the light of faith and the love of Christ and the brethren, and that sincerity of heart and conscience of duty, out of which by the operation of the Spirit, this assurance in due time may be revived, and by the which, in the meantime, they are supported from utter despair.”

So for instance in my own recent experience I’ve been working with a guy who had made a profession of faith and was excommunicated from his church because of drugs and all kinds of other accompanying sins, and came to us. He came to us and we contacted his church, the church that excommunicated him, and we worked with them. And it took several years, but he was eventually restored. And so that’s a beautiful thing, right?

But the question is, do I believe that he was a believer and then lost his faith and then found his faith again? No. If I believe that way—which I do—I believe that he was a child who had walked away from his parents like Jonah in this text. And he had turned to face his Parent and to walk back toward Him. And so that’s kind of how I view things. Go ahead.

David: So I understand all that.

Jeff: Good.

David: So what about the commands of Christ that we supposedly cannot keep? The ones we cannot keep such as “*Love the LORD your God with all your heart and soul and mind?*”, and “*Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect?*”

Jeff: We tell ourselves that.

David: Yes, we tell ourselves that we can’t do that. So I have this idea that our quest is to do what God wants us to do. God doesn’t do what He commands us to do for us. He gives us the quest to try to do what He commands us to do. And I’m trying to factor that into pleasing God through faith by keeping His commands at our side and then going in that direction.

Jeff: So there are three uses of the law, okay? There are three uses of the law. There is the political use of the law. There is the pedagogical use of the law, and there is the practical. Now the practical is called the normative, but it doesn’t have a p, so I say that it’s the practical use of the law. *(Laughter)* But technically it’s the normative use of the law.

The political use of the law is the law of the Old Testament. And it has a general equity to any government today. In other words, we don’t want to reinstitute the theonomy of Israel because that would be wrong. But we do believe that the laws of the Old Testament have a general equity. In other words, there is a compatibility of those laws in terms of their principles that we can apply today. Let’s not worry about that now.

There’s a pedagogical use of the law: for instance this is Galatians 3. The law led me to understand that I’m a sinner in need of a Savior. So that’s the pedagogical use of the law. This is the law that we apply to unbelievers, right?

But the practical or the normative use of the law is what we talk about when we talk about believers. Believers have this normative or practical use of the law in this sense. I’ve been saved by the Lord Jesus, okay?—not of my own doing but His doing; I’ve been

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saved. Faith is a gift; repentance is a gift. And all of the accompanying graces are now mine because of the gift that He has given. So I’m His son.

However, He said, “*Walk before Me and be blameless.*” “*Obey My commandments,*” those kinds of things. It’s not in a pedagogical sense, not in a sense that He says to me the believer, “Obey My commandments so that you can be Mine.” No, no, no. He says, “Obey My commandments because you are Mine.” In other words, “because you are My child this is how you are to act,” right?

Getting to your point, what I think you’re saying is that He has given us a quest to look like Him. But you feel like there are some impossible commandments that He has given. And I would say to you that when you look at the bar of “Be perfect as I am perfect,” what you are to see is Christ and the embodiment of the law in His life. And what you’re to do is to say, “The normative use of the law is to direct me to how to look like Jesus Christ.”

And so I would say to you that to talk about commands that are given to us that God knows are impossible is probably not the best way to think about that. Christ has been given to us as an example and as sort of the *telos* or the goal of our obedience. And so we’re always to strive to look more like Christ by the obedience of the law that He has given. Does that make sense?

David: So I guess my question is: Why, if we are doing everything that God tells us to do, following His example and His perfections in our lives, as far as we know from studying Scripture every day, why would that not be pleasing to God, as opposed to not doing those things?

Jeff: Why would that not be pleasing to God as opposed to—

David: Our displeasing Him? In other words, we either please or displease God. Isn’t that true?

Jeff: Yeah.

Jordan Obaker: I think you had made a comment earlier that we can’t please God in and of ourselves; it’s only through Christ. I think he’s saying that you can’t please God. So I think it’s through Christ when we follow God’s word, that is pleasing to God.

Jeff: If I did, I misspoke. What I was trying to say was salvifically. Savingly we can’t please God, but Christ can. And we please God salvifically as Christ has pleased Him. So we please Him standing in Christ. But that would be because the law has driven us to see that we can’t please Him but only Christ can. And He is pleased if we stand in Him. But now we’re talking about that we’re already in. Does that make sense?

David: Yes. The only reason I’m struggling is because I do prison ministry. And one of the common questions is: “What can I do to break out of the cycle of recidivism? Because every time I come to prison I get close to God and study His word and do everything right. Then I go back out and I fall away.” So the only thing I can say is: “Well, just stay with God. Practice dealing with temptation while you’re in here when it’s easier. Then when you get out it should be easier to deal with temptation.”

Jeff: Let me come back to that because I want to speak to that. But you had something as well.

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Brave Man: Yes. I was just going to mention that Kevin DeYoung has a really good book; it’s called *Holiness*.

Jeff: Yeah.

Brave Man: And it’s a pretty easy read, and he tackles the subject really well. He uses Scripture to back his arguments.

Jeff: Yeah. I’d recommend the same. We’re actually going to use that book in our church school in the next rotation. We’re using Sproul’s *Holiness* now.

I’ll tell you what: I’ll never forget this. I was sitting in a maximum security prison with my brother-in-law. We were sitting in the room together and we were watching TV. Remember that show “Intervention”, where they would actually show people shooting up. The family would come and have an intervention with them.

We were in there talking. As I turned on the TV and he started watching the show he started shaking. And he told me, “I’m getting the shakes; I’m not watching that.” He said, “Jeff, in the prison I do well. But outside the prison I’m afraid; I’m afraid to be let loose.”

And I said, “It’s the same thing. I’ll put it in Christian terms. The four walls of the prison can’t be your Holy Spirit.”

Ted: Yeah.

Jeff: Right. And even if you’re not a believer, the four walls of the prison can’t be your virtuous conscience. Whether you’re an unbeliever or a believer, you have to make some hard decisions about how you’re going to live your life. But the beautiful thing about being in Christ is that there is a Holy Spirit that enables us to follow the law of God so that our lives might be conformed more and more to His image. And we do that traveling along—three steps forward, two back—but we do it.

Ted: And also, once again, I mention the church.

Jeff: Yeah.

Ted: When we’re put into Christ we’re put into His church. Who’s the fellow who does “The Chosen,” about Jesus as the Chosen? What’s his name? You don’t want to speak to that.

Jeff: I don’t usually expose myself to the Second Commandment being broken in that way. *(Laughter)*

Ted: There are people who haven’t understood it in that way. R.P.s tend to be rigid. But anyway, the point he makes is that he has a struggle. He says, “Well, how do you get closer to God? You read the Scripture and you spend time in nature.”

Jeff: Absent from the church, right?

Ted: Where did the church go?

Jeff: Yeah, right.

Ted: I mean, in the prison are the walls that keep you controlled. A lot of people are in prison. Most are in prison because of the lack of ability to postpone gratification with self-control. There’s a lot of immaturity that really has nothing to do with how spiritual you are. You’re just an immature person and you have to grow into that.

Jeff: Yeah.

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Ted: A. A. is a way of kind of getting there; it gets you there with discipline. But you need to be in the church, in fellowship with the church—in worship, studying with the believers. That’s the body of Christ.

Jeff: Yeah.

Ted: And we don’t mention it. Protestants don’t see a need for it. It’s really just a help; it’s not essential.

Jeff: Right.

David: So go to church, volunteer, find out what God is moving toward. The thing that has impressed me was that they always ask me, “What ministry do you know?”

Ted: They shouldn’t.

Jeff: So let me say this.

David: I show them that verse in Colossians: dead to sin, alive in Christ. I tell them, “Live your lives before men. Don’t try to tell them that you’re dead now. Just do what God tells you to do.”

Jeff: Yeah.

Ted: The church is not just another thing to do to be good. It’s a supernatural place.

Jeff: Yeah. Do you remember the last time we were together a couple of weeks ago? I was talking to you about what’s happening in our culture. I said that there was a time when the big question was: Is sin sickness? And I said that question is out the window. And I talked to you about this expressive individualism that’s in our culture today. And I said to you that one of the things that we need to understand is that we used to work according to this idea of imitation, of mimicking. In other words, we used to train up our children to mimic or to conform to culture.

Let me give you a brief example of that. If you’re a farmer you’re going to teach your little guy to plant in the spring, not in the winter, because if he plants in the winter he’s going to be a failure because he can’t make the winter be spring, right? So he has to conform. If he’s going to be a farmer he has to learn the rhythm of nature, right? He has to learn the patterns of general revelation; he has to submit to those, right?

Today we have people who have decided this, and it starts with Rene Descartes: “*I think, therefore I am.*” It’s a turn inward. And the turn inward has done us very little good. Why? Because what culture has now said is that the authentic you is the you that you discover in here. And what happens when the you that you discover in here doesn’t conform to the outward?

For instance, what if inwardly you say, “Even though I’m in a man’s body, I’m a girl?” All of a sudden now you don’t fit into the broader culture. So what do you have to do? You have to make culture, the external world, now change and accommodate your internal understanding of yourself, because if you don’t you’re not going to live authentically. If you say, “I’m in a man’s body but I’m a woman, and then I just conform, I’m not living authentically.”

See, that’s what we’re up against today, right? And this is where our culture is. Our culture is here; you know it as well as I do. If somebody has an inward stir about something, if somebody says, “You know, I really am a cat,” all of a sudden the world has

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to accommodate to this person’s understanding that he’s a cat! We are living in the idea that the world can be changed; it can be subject to me, this whole idea.

And technology has done this to us, right? Technology has really done this to us. Why? Think of the farm illustration again. I mean, I have to make sure that I plant at the right times. Why? Because nature is against me. But if I learn how to manipulate nature and I can control nature, I can have irrigation systems and so on; I can control that. All of a sudden nature becomes putty in my hands to some extent, right? Now I don’t have to worry about famines like I used to, and so forth.

And that’s where we are. The whole idea is that the world is now shapeable. And it’s shapeable according to my understanding of what’s inward, my understanding of what makes me authentic.

Now if that’s the case, the church is the only forming institution left in the world. I want you to think about that. The church is a forming institution. We believe that there are means of grace. We believe that God has carved out one day in seven wherein we worship Him. For instance, on that day we have the preached Word and we believe that Word is a forming Word. And we could go on about this. I won’t, but my point is that the church is a forming institution in an amorphous world. And that’s something we’d better take to heart really seriously, because we’re never going to argue anyone in the right direction by telling them what we feel inside, because they’re going to tell us, “Well what I feel inside is this.” We need to capitalize on the fact that the church is really the last forming institution in the world.

Don Nemit: Ted’s point about the church is a great point because when Peter wept, he wept when he sinned against Jesus three times. And when Mary saw Christ’s resurrection He said, “*Go tell My brethren and Peter to meet Me in Galilee.*” He was then brought back into the church. And then the three times: “Do you love Me? Do you love Me? Do you love Me?” And He physically knew him, and He drew him back into the church, because who is the church? It’s Christ, and we’re all there. So we can unlock these points and go into these big, fancy words. But it’s all Christ.

Jeff: It is all Christ. But if we don’t understand what’s happening around us we’re going to be adrift, just like the world is, because we’re not going to know what’s going on with them.

John Gratner: Isn’t there another institution out there that has what they say are the same objectives, that being the Islamic faith that it’s trying to establish? They wouldn’t use the same words, but in the sense that we are to prevail against the gates of hell and establish the church, they too are trying to establish Allah-ese, if you want to put it that way.

Jeff: Yeah.

John: And in many ways they are more strict than what we would call the church—rightly or wrongly—about certain things we say are immoral. We say that our morals come from the Scripture; so do they. It’s a slightly different Scripture coming from Abraham; not just slightly.

Jeff: Right!

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John: It’s just that someone not in either of those camps has us lumped together in that sense in the rejection of God, however you name that God, outside of atheism, for example. (*Unclear*) That’s not to discount or to counteract anything that was just said. But in the global scale here this quest is not what goes on in the rest of the world.

Jeff: You know what, though? I would say this to you. I would say that the Islamic faith is oftentimes in the same boat in terms of their techniques as the progressive left-wingers that are trying to force people with thought control, right? I think the Christian church is different in the sense that we pray for our enemies. We take the road of humiliation rather than exaltation. And I think the danger is that there’s a group in the church today, and it’s sort of like the manliness group, the masculinity group. I’m all for masculinity; I’m a man; I’m happy to be a man! But there’s this whole idea of “We’re men!”, right?

There’s this podcast out there that’s called “The Pugilist,” and it’s by a pastor. And I’m always struck by it because doesn’t it say in 1 Peter 3 that one of the qualifications is not to be a pugilist? What in the world, you know? But in my mind it’s like the idea of trying to fight the world with the world’s weapons.

John: Certainly that’s the case, and that’s the exception of that system.

Jeff: Yeah.

John: Yet the outside doesn’t buy into either idea.

Jeff: I totally understand and I agree.

John: We have to be careful how we couch the parties against everyone.

Jeff: Yes, I agree. Yes, Gary?

Gary Craig: Speaking of the Titanic, a similar case in point is this. I don’t know who’s following the Titan that went down.

Jeff: Yeah.

Gary: And they had that disaster. The whole thing was designed by an organization of political correctness. The guy said that he didn’t want the submarine to be designed by these bearded white men. He said they wanted to be inclusive and all that stuff, and they built everything all wrong. They built it out of fiber and stuff that doesn’t stand under compression very well, and they made a whole bunch of other errors. That may have matched their inner privilege. In reality it was a hard lesson.

Jeff: Yeah, that’s a hard lesson. Well I’ve got to get rolling. So let me pray with you and then we’ll pick it up next time.

Father, thank You for the day, for the blessing of life in Christ. So Father, as we think about the matter of sin in the world, in our own lives and in the lives of those around us, we just pray, Father, that You will apply the only cure to that, whether it’s us or the world, and that’s Christ. And Father, we pray that we would do it lovingly, winsomely, gently. We pray that we would do it in humiliation and not in aggression. And Father, we pray that we would do it to Your glory. And we ask it in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen. (*Applause*)