

“Jonah Pt 14”

A Wayward Prophet

Jonah 4:1-11

The Rev. Jeff Stivason, Ph.D.

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Jeff: Let me read Jonah 4. I was going to say John 4, but you’d really think I was lost.

Jonah 4: *“But 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? 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. 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 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 a hundred twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?’”

I want to start by asking a basic question. I want to talk to you for a minute. I want us to start by thinking about the question of who is God? And I want us to think about that question because that question is first in order of what we’re doing. When we think about Jonah we need to stop and we need to say, who is God? Who is man?

And basically that’s the configuration that John Calvin starts with in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. He starts with the basic question: who is God? And then he moves to the question: who is man? And he says that the only way that we can understand who we are is by understanding who God is.

And it’s interesting. We think to ourselves that this is a basic question, and we know this. But when you think about how this question has been answered in church history it’s sort of surprising how little the church knew or even now knows God. One anecdote that you’ll appreciate, Ted,—and I was just thinking on the way how thankful I was for Ted, how he just came up to me and said, “You just take off”—anyway, I’m digressing.

Anyway Ted will appreciate this example. *Knowing God*. Who wrote that book, Ted? Do you know *Knowing God*?

Ted Wood: J. I. Packer.

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Jeff: J. I. Packer.

Ted: a low church Anglican.

Jeff: A low church Anglican. That’s why I knew you’d like it.

Ted: Would you like to know some more? (*Laughter*)

Jeff: What did you say? “Would you like to know some more?” Do you know how many books that they were going to print of that book when it first came out?

Ted: Was it a small number?

Jeff: It was a terribly small number. And it was a terribly small number because the publishers told J. I. Packer that they didn’t think there were enough evangelicals who wanted to know God in order to warrant a large printing.

Brave Men: Wow!

Jeff: And then it turned into a classic, and thankfully so. But let me go back a little bit. If you go back to the Middle Ages, into the 1500s, and there was a guy there by the name of Greg Beal. And Greg Beal formulated the first—or at least what we think was the first—basic formulation about covenant theology, the theology of the covenant.

And Beal basically said this. He said, “*God is so naked in His sovereignty.*” That is, He is so all-powerful, “*that when He created He needed to take upon Himself a covenant so that He could restrain Himself,*” because left to Himself God could do absolutely anything. And so what God did was that He put a covenantal leash on Himself, a covenantal leash of mercy, so that He in His naked sovereignty wouldn’t destroy all that He created.

And so when you think about this conception of God in the Middle Ages, it’s basically this picture of a man who can’t control himself. And He needs to put a leash on Himself in order to do so. And really, if you want to know some of the deep roots that affected Martin Luther, it was Beal that actually affected Martin Luther, because Martin Luther was so terrified of God because who is to say that He can’t just take off that covenantal leash and do whatever He will? And so that was one of the reasons why Martin Luther was absolutely terrified of God.

But that’s one conception. And you might say to yourself, “Well, I mean that’s one conception. Surely that’s kind of an anomaly.” But that’s not an anomaly; it’s really a trend that has persisted out of the Middle Ages. And it hasn’t only affected Christianity. For instance it certainly has affected Islam.

For instance, I don’t know if you’re aware of this. But Islam believes that Allah ascribed to himself mercy. That’s the language of the Koran: He has ascribed to himself mercy. That is to say that God again was so powerful that He took upon Himself the attribute of mercy. It was sort of like He went into a store for a god and picked out a few things to wear, you know?—mercy being one of them. But that means that if that’s not part of God, God can take that off.

And we might think: Well, that’s an example of the Christian faith out of medieval theology. And that’s an example of the Islamic faith, again out of medieval theology. But maybe some of you know a guy by the name of Karl Barth. And Karl Barth is actually really influential even in evangelical circles. And he’s the kind of guy that kind of

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reappears all the time. And as he reappears as a liberal theologian will manifest his presence within Reformed or evangelical circles.

And he had a doctrine called *actualization*, the actualization of God. And basically what Barth said was this. He said that God is so free—doesn’t this sound very familiar? —“*God is so free that God can ascribe to Himself any nature He chooses.*” And that means that God is not merciful. That means that God is not just. That means that God is free, and He has ascribed to Himself all of these attributes.

And I guess the thing that I want to think about is the question of who is God? Do we think of God in these kinds of ways, no matter whether it’s medieval Christianity, whether it’s the Islamic faith, whether it’s liberal Christianity, or if it’s evangelical and Reformed Christianity that has been affected and infected by any one of these other influences? The question is: who is God? Is God Someone that’s stable? Is God Someone that’s steadfast? Or is God so frightening, so absolutely sovereign in His dealings with Himself that He can ascribe to Himself an entirely new nature?

And I think that’s the first thing that we have to ask when we come to a text like the one we’re looking at now, because when you look at the text that you have in front of you, one of the things that you discover is that God is the One who is absolutely steadfast in this text. And it is not God that is unstable.

It’s Jonah that is unstable. It’s Jonah who is so angry that when he sees the manifestation of grace in the lives of people he is ticked. He doesn’t want people to experience mercy. He would rather that God put off mercy and put on something entirely different, and wear something entirely different as He deals with this people.

And yet God who is so rich in mercy did not ascribe it to Himself, but this is who He is.

Don Nemit: Amen!

Jeff: And so I think that one of the things that again we just need to think about when we come to a text like this one is who is God? And you know, we can talk about God’s attributes—those attributes that we don’t share with Him and those attributes that we do share with Him. But the fact of the matter is that what we need to talk about at the very beginning is that God is God. And all that God is is God; He doesn’t ascribe anything to Himself. He is who He is. And because He is who He is we’re treated in the way that we’re treated.

Now that means for instance that we need sometimes to sit back and to reflect a bit about what’s happening in a story. And I think that when we do that we’ll be paid richly for it. So what Is God like? Well I think we’ve been saying what God is like. But let me just focus in on one thing.

When we talk about God we talk about God being just. And God is just. But one of the things that we realize is that sometimes people don’t get justice; they get mercy. And the question that we have to ask ourselves is this. We’re going through *The Holiness of God* by R. C. Sproul in our church school on Sunday mornings. And Sproul makes the point that no one gets injustice from God. People may get mercy but they don’t get injustice, right?

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And here’s the way I would apply this to Jonah. Jonah is angry because these people got mercy. There is no injustice in God. In other words there was no injustice rendered to the people of Nineveh nor to the people of Israel, nor to Jonah himself. There was mercy rendered, but Jonah wanted something else.

And that raises the question. What did he want?, because as he preached repentance—that message of repentance—and they repented, and if they did repent—and we’ll discuss this for a minute; this was a genuine repentance in that generation—but if they did repent, that means that they set their eyes in that generation on the Messiah to come. And so they overturned themselves in repentance.

Now if that’s the case, they received mercy. Why? Because Christ would receive the punishment for them at the proper time. So they would have set their eyes on Christ. So they wouldn’t have received injustice, nor would there be injustice rendered because justice would have been satisfied in Christ as they looked to Him.

Now that’s a big if. I realize that we’re not all on the same page with what happened to the Ninevites. But you see the point. The point is that there is no injustice in God; there is justice with God. And that’s the thing I think that we have to remember here.

Now when we pick this up with Jonah, one of the things that we realize is that God is showing us the kind of character that He is. I don’t know about you, but probably many of us in this room grew up with the parody style of John Wayne rather than any other figure. If you were a product of the ‘60s or ‘70s your dad was probably of that Maverick style, or you got a little slap on the back of the head. He told you to get in line or you were gonna get a little boot in the butt. (*Laughter*) But whatever.

But that’s not the parenting style that God does, even though sometimes it does look like that; we’ll see that in just a minute. But God is good, and so God is more of a patient, kind and slow to anger kind of parent. And so He asks the question; He simply asks Jonah a question. And this is a good parenting style. And so He asks Jonah a question. “Let Me ask you a question.” And what’s the question? He says, “Do you have reason to be angry? Do you have a good reason to be angry?”

Now remember, this is what we talked about the last time. Is your anger righteous? Now I want you to think about that from another angle. Is it causing good? In other words, is your anger the source of good? That’s another way to ask about righteous anger. You can think about righteous anger the way we thought about it the last time. This way is consistent with that way. But here’s a way of asking yourself, and maybe this is a good thing to think about for a second. This is a good way to think about that box that I drew up here. And I said, “Write this anger stage within the parameters of justice.” And so the question to ask yourself when you’re good and angry about some particular issue is to ask yourself: Is my anger causing good, or is my anger causing what is bad?

And when I say, “Is my anger causing evil or what is bad?”, the question has not only to be related to society or to my family or to the people involved at work, or whatever. But the question has to be asked: Is my anger causing me some harm?

Now that’s really the issue, isn’t it? Because when we thought about this last time we thought about righteous anger and we thought about it from a variety of perspectives. But one of the things that we have to ask ourselves is: Is my anger causing harm in me? And I

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think this is the most dangerous problem of all with righteous anger, because we may be able to manifest our righteous anger and seem to be indignant about something and keeping ourselves within the walls of justice, the borders of justice. But inside we’re becoming more bitter. And I think this is the problem with righteous anger. We can let it consume us.

And the reason I bring this up now is because when you watch what happens to Jonah, Jonah is being consumed by his anger. It’s becoming quite a black hole in him, and everything gets sucked down into him. And so God asks the question: “Is it good for you to be angry? Is it right for you to be angry? Jonah, is your righteous anger good? Is it causing good?”

And then God leaves him alone; He leaves him in silence. And when He leaves him alone He sort of distances Himself from Jonah, and what does He do? He causes a beautiful vine to grow. “OH, this lovely vine!”, you know?

And you know as well as I do what Jonah is thinking. He sits underneath this vine, and as he’s watching the city he’s saying to himself, “God finally gets it,” right? “All things are by the providence of God. This vine is by the providence of God. And out in this hot, steamy desert I’m watching this city, and God has finally listened to me. He’s a good God; He’s so good!” Right?

And then the next day comes and God appoints a worm. Don’t you love this? God appointed the vine and then God appointed the worm. And the worm comes and eats the vine.

Ted: Right. The blessing for the worm occurs through the vine.

Jeff: Blessing for the worm. Yes, Mike?

Mike Davis: If you ever think that God doesn’t have a sense of humor, all y our gotta do is read this story. (*Laughter*)

Brave Men: Amen.

Jeff: I mean, if He sits up in the heavens and laughs at kings, what is He doing with Jonah the prophet at this point? And here’s the other thing, right? I’ve said this to you before. In Amos 3:7 “*God does nothing without first revealing it to His prophets.*” And I think that’s sort of a general principle.

Now here’s the thing, right? I’m sure that Jonah didn’t see this worm coming; you know what I mean? I’m sure that it was just a blind side kind of event. But anyway the worm comes and devours the plant, and now Jonah is without the vine for shade.

And you have to just sop. And for those who love to read providence, for those who love to tell us what God is doing in any given situation because they can tell what God is doing,-- Don’t you have those people in your life?

My all-time favorite story is a lady who came to me when I was going to Westminster. I was driving back before I crossed Pennsylvania once a week, and I ran into a snowstorm. And she came to me on Sunday and she said to me, “Pastor Jeff, God is telling you something.”

“Oh, what is He telling me?”

And she said, “He’s telling you that He doesn’t want you to go to Westminster tonight.”

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And I said, “How do I weight that? I’ve had a bad snowstorm, but I’ve had nine other sunny days of travel. How are you weighing that up?”

Anyway, there are people who love to tell us what God is doing. And unless God tells us what He’s doing, it’s hard to tell what he’s doing, okay? There’s a maxim for you. And the idea then is that here’s Jonah. Maybe he’s thinking to himself: Hey, God finally gets it. But the worm comes. Now how is he going to explain that providence?

Oftentimes that happens to us, right? We are caught in two contradictory providences. We don’t know the mind of God, so we can’t explain it. My idea is that Jonah could have gained a little insight in terms of his attitude.

But anyway, then what happens is that an east wind brews up—hot wind. And he now has no shade, hot wind, and he has a request. “Let me die!” (*Laughter*) “I just want to die!”

You know, that’s kind of amazing in itself. But what happens now is that he gets to this. I want you to think about this. Now he is to the end of himself.

Have you ever been brought to the end of yourself? I’m sure you have, because if you’re here as believers you’ve been brought to the end of yourselves. I’ll never forget how I came to faith in Christ. I won’t rehearse the story, but I’ll tell you what. God just did one thing after another. He just did one thing after another and brought me to the end of myself. And what He did with me is that He said, “You know what? I’m going to take this person out of your life. And then six months later I’m just going to take this person out of your life.” And then a little while later, less than six months later, my wife end up in the hospital. And He said, “Now I’m going to take this person.”

And do you know what? I found myself in the hospital reading the Scriptures. I even did describe it to people this way. I said, “I’ve come to the end of myself. I have no power,” right? “These people are dying around me. Here is my fiancée in the hospital. I just don’t have any strength for this.” And so He brings you to the end of yourself.

Here’s Jonah. Jonah has been brought to the end of himself and he says, “I just want to die!” And God as a good Parent comes back and He says, “Do you have a good reason to be angry?”

“Yes, I have a good reason to be angry!” (*Laughter*) Do you see what’s happening here? These two questions are book ends. “Do you have a good reason to be angry?”

“Yes.”

“Okay, I’m going to leave you.” And then all of these things happen. And God leads him to these things. And then when he comes to the end of himself God appears again and says, “Do you have a good reason to be angry?”

“Yes, I have a good reason to be angry.” And we’re supposed to ask if there is some question. Any change in Jonah at this point? No. There doesn’t appear to be any change in Jonah at this point. He appears to be the same.

Now I want you to think about this. What has God been doing? God has been trying.

You know, I said that one time and somebody came up to me and he said,—not here!—“God doesn’t try to do anything. Didn’t you ever hear of a lambled expression?” (*Laughter*) It’s a form of speech; you know what I mean? The Bible says, “So-and-so

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shot a random arrow,” okay? Anyway, I’m not sensitive about that though it happened sixteen years ago, but whatever. *(Laughter)*

Ted: And you’re not even angry about it.

Jeff: I’m not angry about it! *(Laughter)* That’s right! I’m good and calm! *(Laughter)*

Chuck Mathe: You have a good reason to be angry. *(Laughter)* So he’s trying to give Jonah a perspective.

Now think about it, right? This is what we do as parents in our better moments. We sit down with our kids when they’re upset about something. And we try to say, “Here, would you put these glasses on for just a minute?”

And how do we do that? We do that by asking them questions. We do that by trying to explain certain things to them that might give them a better way of viewing the situation, and so on. But what we’re trying to do is that we’re trying to give them a perspective.

And this is fascinating, isn’t it?, because God could just zap Jonah and it would be all better. But He doesn’t do that. God is a parent. And He is a long-suffering, kind and gracious parent. Don’t you wish that you could relate to God? You could cause a Mercedes to grow up in the driveway and give it to your kid. And then the next day it just rusts and falls apart. *(Laughter)* Something like that, right?

But here’s the point of this. The point is that God is showing us that He deals with us like we deal with our kids. And I want you to take this in the best possible light; I want you to understand me when I say this. God is willing to fail in order to show us how much He loves us.

The idea is that God never fails, right? He always succeeds in doing whatever He does. But here is this perception. Jonah is not listening to God the Father. It looks as if the Father is failing to communicate and give perspective. And the point is that God is doing this for a redemptive purpose. And I think sometimes that is to me quite a lesson. When I think about parenting myself, it’s quite a lesson because I think to myself: If I’m a good parent, then everything I do has to succeed, right? If I’m a good parent I have the talk that I have to have with my kids. They have to walk away going, “Wow! Dad was so wise!” *(Laughter)* “That was tremendous advice! I’m so thankful for him! God, let me thank You for my dad!”

And you know that’s not the way it happens, and so they get way older, like maybe 75. And they go, “You know what? You were pretty smart!” *(Laughter)* You know, something like that.

But anyway there is this giving of perspective. And God is trying to give Jonah perspective. He’s trying to give him lenses; He’s trying to help him to see forward. That’s what God is doing here.

Now what’s the methodology that God is using? The methodology that God is using is a down-up methodology. It’s basically an *a fortiori* augment. How much more, right? If this, how much more? So you see that with what He’s going to say next.

But let me simply say that what He’s attempting to do as a parent is to tear Jonah inside out. He’s attempting to try to get Jonah. The best thing that we can do for anybody is to get someone outside of themselves when we’re trying to talk to them and give them a different perspective.

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Why? Because we say that this person has such tunnel vision. They're in an echo chamber; they're only hearing themselves or others who agree with them. We've got to get them outside of themselves. So God is trying to get him turned inside out.

Now what is the vine's purpose? As we think about this top down, what is the vine's purpose? The vine's purpose is to demonstrate the Creator/creature distinction. Who has the power to create?

Don Bishop: God.

Jeff: Yes. He kind of sets Jonah up for this *a fortiori* argument. In other words, “Jonah, who created the vine? Who destroyed the vine?” God. “Who has the power to create? Jonah, who are you? A creature,” right? The idea is that there is a difference between the Creator and the creature. “And Jonah, don't forget your place; you're a creature.”

And so God is setting him up. He's setting him up for what's to come next. And here I want to read to you Romans 5:6 and following: “*For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man, though perhaps for a good man someone would dare even to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*”

Now this is the bottom up idea. And that is “Jonah, if I have power over the vine, and if I care for that and tend that and take that away, don't I have the power to care for these people in Nineveh? Of course I do! And I'm caring for them by sending you to them.”

Now let me ask this. Do you know the two books in the Bible that end with questions? One of them is Jonah. The other one is Nahum. And Nahum is the next book about Nineveh. And that's a book about the destruction of Nineveh. It ends with a question. Both prophecies dealing with Nineveh end with a question! And one is a question to the prophet, and the other is a question to Nineveh. And the point is that I think what you see is God's fatherly care coming full circle, right?

And there's a lot we could say about that. But let me bring it to you and ask you this. When you look at this *a fortiori* argument—this idea of moving from the bottom up—“Don't I care for this vine? Shouldn't I care for these people in Nineveh?” We have to ask ourselves: Do we resemble God?

And that's what we're being asked in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matthew 5:46 this is where He ends with “*You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*”

But look at what He says; this is in 46. “*If you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more do you do than others?*”

Do you understand? If you do this and that's it, what do you expect to get if you greet your brothers or love your family? But if you love your enemies as well, as God is telling you to do, that's being Godlike. And the point is the same as the point being driven home to Jonah. “If you only love the Israelites, what good is that? And I love these Ninevites.”

And we're asked the same thing in the New Testament. What good is it if you only love your family, your brothers, your closest friends? If you do not love your enemies as

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God loves, you’re not being Godlike; that’s the idea. And so here He is, exploring this with Jonah.

The idea is that we’re really balancing the question. Who is God and who am I? And God is the One who is stable and just and good. And I am the one who is unstable, unrighteous, angry. And I don’t know about you, but I think that really ministers to me when I deal with others, especially when I deal with the society around me. And I’m going to go to *Lessons Learned*,” but let me pause. You guys have been exceptionally quiet today. And so I’ll give you a chance to respond before I move to the lessons, because we can probably make it through these fairly quickly. But are there any questions that you have?

Ted: I was thinking that God loves His enemies and we don’t.

Jeff: Yes.

Ted: So therefore it is not possible to love your enemy unless God loves that enemy in you and through you.

Jeff: Yeah.

Ted: And it’s union with Christ.

Jeff: Excellent, yes.

Ted: So all attempts to make a better world are minimal at best.

Jeff: Yeah. When you think about *The Four Loves*, you think about *agape*, *phileo*, *eros* and *storge*—*storge* basically being the affection that a dog has for his master, or that a master has for his dog, *agape* being that love that is found only in Christianity. And then the other two are friendship and love in marriage.

It’s that *agape* love that stands above all the others, because think about it. I mean, how do we love? I’ll tell you how we love. My guess is that nine chances out of ten—I’m going to say ten, Paul; I’m going to say ten on this—I’m going to say that most people marry their wives because they say, “Now that’s a fine-looking woman!” (*Laughter*) And then they decided to get the melon, right. It wasn’t “Well she has a good mind!” You know, it’s nothing like that at all. And most of the time we were attracted.

And that is not *agape* love, because *agape* love is when the ugliest woman comes into the door. And God says, “I love that woman,” right?

Ted: Yeah.

Jeff: That’s *agape* love. There is nothing in her to love that’s visible, and really even invisible. And love goes out because love resides in the lover. And so that’s what we’re called to do: it’s to love unlovable people. And the reason why we’re called to love unlovable people is because God has made us to be lovers of that sort. The love of God resides in us, and so it can go out from us to unlovable people.

That’s *agape* love. When you think about it, it’s hard to do.

Ted: It’s humanly impossible.

Jeff: Humanly impossible, unless, as you said, you have the love of Christ dwelling in you.

Ted: And the way I look at it is that it’s not me loving that person, but it’s Christ in me loving that person.

Jeff: Yes, that’s right.

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Ted: It’s not Christ helping me to love that person. It’s actually Jesus Himself doing the work.

Jeff: Yeah. There’s actually a passage in Philippians that says as much. He talks about loving with the affection of Christ. Here it is: “*How I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus!*” I mean, think about the *of* there. “I long for you with the affection that belongs to Christ Jesus; with His affection I love you.”

Ted: It’s not the affection he’s modeling.

Jeff: No.

Ted: It’s the actual supernatural—

Jeff: It’s the actual affection because I’m united to Him.

Ted: Yeah.

Jeff: Yeah. We used to love the bishop; we still love the bishop. The bishop was one of the guys that we used to absolutely love here. I’m sure many of you remember him. There’s a guy like that in our circles—the Reformed Presbyterian circles; his name is Dr. Spear. And he was my systematic theology professor. He was the kind of guy that you wanted to be like when you grew up. And I remember him preaching a sermon on the affection of Christ, on this very thing. And would you believe that it was nearly one of the last sermons that he was preaching, because he developed Parkinson’s? So he doesn’t get in the pulpit much anymore. But would you believe that he did not record that? It’s one of the foolish things in life that you reflect back on and say, “That was dumb!” But anyway, anything else before we go on? Yes, John?

John: In thinking about this I find it fascinating—and I think it’s worth dwelling on a little bit—that If Jonah is the author, he wrote this down. (*Laughter*)

Jeff: Yeah.

John: And if he wasn’t the author, someone else was telling Jonah the story. Well, either way one seems to be a bit more powerful. If Luke was consulting Peter, at some point Peter didn’t say, “By the way, could you leave out the whole denial?” (*Laughter*) “Make sure you put that in.” (*Laughter*) It’s one of the internal validations that this is true. We don’t say stuff like that about ourselves.

Jeff: Yeah.

John: And especially if we want an opportunity to leave that out.

Jeff: Yeah.

John: But Jonah doesn’t edit any of this stuff out. You know, if you look at the beginning he makes some clear statements about who he thinks his God is—the Creator of heaven and earth.

Jeff: Yeah.

John: The sea and the dry land. So he doesn’t think he’s the Creator; he knows his God is. You look at chapter 2. You look at all the Scripture, all the truth in that. What did he want his readers to think when he wrote this book? I’m not saying I have an answer to that; I just think it’s worth thinking about as we read from left to right, looking backwards from right to left. But what was Jonah trying to say here to the Ninevites? And I presume that he didn’t write this book to the Ninevites. He wrote it to his people, the Jews.

Jeff: Yeah.

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I think that’s worth reflecting on. As you said, if we only love ourselves, then what good is that? Our God is still the God of everyone.

Jeff: Yeah.

John: So it’s an interesting thing that if Jonah was the author that he chose to end with this question, unless inspiration really means that you must write down this word, and it takes the human factor out.

Jeff: Sure.

John: It doesn’t seem to be that way. But if you leave that human factor in, it kind of leaves you shaking your head that Jonah wrote this down.

Jeff: Yeah. You know, John, that’s a great point. And it’s a great point because I think it really is one of those lessons that you learn by reading the book that isn’t necessarily in your face and sort of in neon lights, and this is how a man actually acts. We have this idea that a man never admits that he’s wrong. I don’t know if that’s an unspoken rule, but we have this idea. “Do you know where you’re going?” “Yeah!”

Ted: I thought that was wives. *(Laughter)*

Jeff: This is the Brave Men. *(Laughter)* That was Ted Wood. *(Laughter)* You know, I think it’s that guys kind of dig their heels in. And even when they’re wrong they kind of dig their heels in.

Here’s an example, like you just articulated. Here’s a guy who is wrong and recorded it for all posterity. And you know, if this was our story maybe we would put a little addendum in there. “Now let me explain a little bit why I did this,” right? Do you know what I mean? Or “Here’s what God said that brought me to my senses, just so everybody knows that I was brought to my senses.” He doesn’t do that. He just kind of leaves it bare before us that “I was an idiot.” Yes?

Mike: I was going to say that what it says to me is that I’m an idiot. And God poured out His grace and mercy in spite of me.

Jeff: Yeah. And in fact it’s definitely in spite of me, because as in the lessons that John mentioned, the fact is that he knew God as Creator. He knew that God created that vine that he lost in a day. I mean, this is not news to him. And yet he acted in spite of what he knew.

Don Nemit: Jonah is the opposite of Jabez. I love the prayer of Jabez, and I just went back and reflected on it. He was a poor old soul. But he asked “to expand my territory.” He asked the God of heaven to expand his territory. The lesson is to take the goodness that God gave him where? Anywhere! And here’s Jonah, breaking it in and wanting to hold it in Israel. Two great lessons.

Jeff: Yeah.

Don: Do you want to be a fool, or do you want to be righteous? I’ll follow Jabez.

Jeff: Yeah, right. Okay, we’ll finish up this next time really quickly at the beginning and Gary will get you a new outline for next time. Actually in two Fridays.