

30.7.23 am Jonah the Obedient and disillusioned prophet

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Date: 30 July 2023

Preacher: Wilf Urquhart

[0 : 00] Good morning everybody and welcome to our service this morning. A special welcome to any visitors who are with us. I see a few and a few old faces as well.

You're very welcome to be here. We have a holiday Sunday school. That goes out after the second singing. The children are welcome to come down to the front here where Pat will be speaking to them as a children's talk.

So please don't be shy young ones. Tea and coffee are served in this room after the service. So if you're able to stay behind, please do so. The Gaelic service at 6pm will be led by Mr Hamish Taylor.

And then we will have an English fellowship meeting at 7.30pm. Of which I haven't spoken much with Wilf on this, but I presume we'll be getting a bit of testimony from Wilf and Pat.

Both of them, yes. Two for the price of one. So please do come to that if you are able. Please note there will not be a community lunch tomorrow.

[1 : 04] It's normally held the last Monday month, so it will not be taking place tomorrow. Other meetings, more or less as usual through the week, the ladies' fellowship meets tomorrow night.

Little Fishers on Tuesday from 10 to 12. Road to Recovery on Tuesday night at 7 o'clock. And the prayer meeting will be held here in person and on Zoom at 7.30pm, to which all are very welcome. The minister, I understand, should now be back on Tuesday. And he will be taking the services, God willing, next Sunday at 11 and 6.

Slight delay to their return. I think most of you will know that Shona took seriously ill and was flown away. And just asked the congregation to keep praying for her.

David and Mary went down to the hospital in Glasgow yesterday to provide a bit of support to her family. So we can keep praying about that situation going forward.

[2 : 05] But it's now my pleasure once again to welcome Wilf to our pulpit. For any visitors who are here, Wilf and Pat were missionaries in Burkina Faso with WEC for many years.

And then they were representatives for WEC in Scotland and they're good friends. And we welcome them both to our service and to our fellowship. And pray for God's blessing upon the service this morning.

Thank you. Thank you and my welcome to you as well. It's lovely to have visitors. I know they're visitors because I met them on the way in.

And they admitted that they were visitors. It's lovely to have you wherever you're hiding. But you're very welcome. Could I add another information?

On the table on your way out, there is a sign-up sheet. Now, several people have expressed interest in the work amongst the Burifur people.

[3 : 08] Now, we would like to give you information as often as we get it. But we can't do that if you don't give us your contact details. So this sheet will be on the table on the way out.

Please put your name, postal address, postcode, email address, etc. And we will be delighted to send you information as it comes available to us.

There are a number of WEC publications on the table on your way out. Please look at them. And if you want to take some away with you, that's less for us to take away.

So help yourself. As we begin our service, our call to worship comes from Psalm 95. O come, let us sing to the Lord.

Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving. Let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise.

[4 : 14] For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods. In his hands are the depths of the earth. The heights of the mountains are his also.

The sea is his and he made it. His hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and let us bow down and kneel before the Lord our maker.

For he is our God and we are the people of his pasture. Let's worship God by singing from Mission Praise number 473.

It will all appear on the screen for you. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. No merit of my own, I claim, but holy trust in Jesus' name.

Number 473. Let's stand and worship God. Let us worship God by singing from Mission Praise number 473.

[5 : 20] My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

No merit of my own, I claim, but holy trust in Jesus' name.

On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.

When we lead in this earthly race, I rest on his unchanging grace.

In every wild and stormy day, my anchor holds and will not fail.

[6 : 27] On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.

In my wish, come, the land of blood, are my defense against the flood.

When earth the holy hope, I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.

When the last countless voice shall sound. Oh, may I then in him be found.

Lord, in his righteousness alone. For all others shall stand, all other ground is sinking sand.

[7 : 48] On Christ the solid rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Our Father and our God, we come before you this morning with thanksgiving and praise in our hearts.

Thank you for who you are. Thank you for who you are. Thank you for what you have done for us.

Thank you that you are the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the one who rules in authority in this world.

Father, we thank you that you are the King of kings. Thank you that you have sent your son. To take our place on that cruel cross of Calvary.

Thank you that we are redeemed. Thank you that you have made us anew. you. Thank you that we sinful sons of Adam have been made new creatures in Christ.

[9 : 04] Not because we're good, but because you have drawn us to yourself. You have helped us to see our hopelessness and our uselessness and our sinfulness, but also to see the wonder that there is in Christ. Father, we lift up our hearts in praise and in worship to you this morning. We want to say thank you for that day in our experience when you brought us out of the darkness of sin into the glorious liberating light of the gospel.

Thank you, Lord, for the way you have led us to thank you, Lord, for that wonderful promise, lo, I am with you always.

And we thank you for that, Lord, that even in the difficult moments when things have gone wrong, your promise is still, I am with you always.

And Father, we want to thank you for that this morning as we lift up our hearts to praise you and to thank you and to give you the adoration of our hearts.

And we would ask that you would take from our minds anything and everything that would disturb us or distract us from worshipping you.

[10 : 42] So grant a real sense of your presence. may we be more aware of your presence than of the people sitting beside us.

May we know that you are here to minister to us and we give you the praise and the thanksgiving of our hearts in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. Now it's my joy to invite my better half to come and talk to the children. Come on up, boys and girls, if you would, if you want to.

I want to just say at the beginning what he said, although he's the pastor and the preacher and all of that and my husband, he didn't tell the truth. I am not his better half.

Hi, boys and girls, how are you doing? Okay? Yeah? You're on your holidays? And the boys and girls that are out there and haven't come, are there any boys and girls out there haven't come forward?

[11 : 50] No? This is good. Well, this is week three of the stories about the bitter for people, isn't it? Yeah?

Who remembers the very... Give that boy a... I could do... Well, I've got things here that I want you to take away today.

Right? Anyway, so you can... Well, we can all have them in the show. Well done, Samba. Right, so Samba became a Christian and what happened after that? Who was here the next week when we... Remember, Samba asked somebody to go and help him. Anybody? Remember he and the... Ben. Brian. Ben was the one that... Oh, well done.

Ben was the guy that got Sam, Samba first, but then Samba came to the Lord and he asked to send somebody to help him and that was Brian.

[12 : 47] And he was just eleven and there was a boy down sitting around here somewhere and he was eleven year old and it was great because I was able to make a point that maybe God would call him when he was just eleven to be a missionary.

Okay, tonight, this morning, there's another story and it's about a man called Kumpi. I'm never going to remember that.

No, but I do agree with you because it's difficult. It's all right. When the story unfolds, I'll tell you his new name. Okay? Because he's got a new name. All right?

And that's much easier. Well, I'll tell you it now and you might remember it. Samuel. Samuel. We know Samuel, don't we? Yes. He's in the Bible, wasn't he? God spoke to Samuel when he was a wee boy as well.

I didn't need to get into that. But anyway, there we are. Right. Where's my bit of paper? Because I've only got a few minutes. I've taken too much already. All right. Samuel.

[13 : 49] We'll just call him Samuel. Samuel lived in a village, a periphery village, miles away from everywhere. Right? And he was there and he was a periphery at the others where.

He made offerings to the idols and all of it because he didn't know Jesus. But he had a dream. Now, the Bireford people were very strong.

If you had a dream, it was the spirits talking to you. So if you had a dream, it was ever so important. So he had a dream. And in the dream, he saw that God seemed to tell him to go out of his village in the morning, take his stuff with him, walk to the Ghana border.

And the border, Bukin Afasa was there and Ghana was there and the border was a big river. And he got over that river in a canoe. It was lots of fun. Both did it often, even taking a wee motorbike with him.

I didn't like it much. But he went across and he was to go across the river and then he was to walk to the nearest town called Tuna. That was a town in Ghana.

[14 : 56] And when he got there, he would see and in his dream, he just saw this man and he was standing like this. Right? Okay, are you watching? Are you watching me?

He was looking like that. In his dream, he saw that and he thought, I've no idea what that is.

Anyway, he felt like God talked to him. So in the morning, he got up and got all the crowd of the village to him and he says, come on guys, I've got something important to tell you.

I've had a dream and he told them the dream and he says, I'm going. So he went, he walked, he crossed in the canoe, got to the other side, walked to the village, got there and there was in the marketplace in the village in Tuna and there was a lot of people and they were all gathered round and right at the front, there was a white man, he'd never seen a white man before and here was a white man and you know what, this white man was speaking his language and he had this thing out there, he was reading from a book, what book do you think he might have been reading from?

He was reading from a Bible, he was reading from a book and he was speaking his language. He thought, this is incredible. Samuel, so he went forward and he said to the guy, how come you can speak my language and all this kind of and he said, well I've learned it and he asked Samuel to come and to stay with him because he had a little Bible school going there in Ghana for Griffiths and so Samuel went there and he heard about Jesus and he heard that he didn't need all these idols and everything anymore because Jesus had come to set him free and he even loved him and I hope you know that, sure you do.

So he did that and he's learnt and then he was told, go back now and tell your whole village. So he did all the journey back again, okay, over in the canoe, he got there, are you still listening to me?

[17 : 05] Are you still up? That's okay, don't let the young attention wander, I'm only got a minute or two to go. When he got back there, in the morning after he got back, he gathered the whole village together and he told them, what do you think he told them?

That he'd had quite a good journey and the canoe wasn't any good, you know, what do you think he told them? What do you think was the important thing that he would tell them? His dream.

That he had learnt about Jesus, he gave his heart to Jesus and he was a Christian and he had good news, better than the ferry was working on it or whatever, he had good news and you know, he told them all.

And to that, what happened was there was a really strong church in that place because of the story of Samuel.

Samuel did what he heard in the dream. And in that village, even now, there's a very, very strong, beautiful church.

[18 : 18] The boys and girls learn about Jesus, the young people hear Jesus talking to them, many of them have become pastors and there's a church, a really large church because Samuel did what he heard in the dream that God gave him and took him there.

Now, the main point for us to remember in this, let's see what I wrote down. There it is up there. Phew. Lost my bit of paper there. Dreams.

We can see from that that Jesus, God through the Son, the Lord Jesus, loves every single person in the world.

And many of them haven't heard. Many, many thousands of people still haven't heard about Jesus. And that's the important thing.

You take that right in mind. You take that. You Christians, you know Jesus. If you follow him, say, God, do you want me to help telling people that don't know about you?

[19 : 30] Because that's when, Wolf at the beginning, when he spoke, he talked, he had that verse, Lo, I am with you always. Why is he with us always?

Because we obey the first bit. He's alive forevermore and then he says, now go, go. That's when he's with us. You've got to follow him. So maybe the Lord Jesus would like you guys, one day, to be somebody who, yes, follows Jesus, but who tells other people.

So do you think you can do that? Right. What we want is everyone to hear. So just remember that, okay? And that'll do because my time's up, right?

Right, oh, normally said that. Now, are you going to Sunday school now? After the singing. After the singing. Well, can somebody from Sunday school just pick these up?

We were in the charity shop in Clachen down there and I was talking about children's books and it's good to read them. We bought these.

[20 : 39] They were 50 pence each and we bought them. So I thought we'd buy them, make them available. You guys can borrow them and read them and share them, okay?

I'll leave them and your Sunday school personal take them, okay? Thank you. Well done. You can go back to your seats now. Don't forget Samba and Brian and Samuel.

Thanks for listening so well. Do I need to continue? We're going to sing permission praise number 178.

Go forth and tell. Three verses from 178. Let's stand to praise God. consig.

Amen. Go salv 1990s and south go along. To all the gracious Fang, gain playing health ID.

[21 : 49] In favor, inole appreciated wrote To all the nations came, O faith, Christ Jesus, Savior, Lord, and King, That all around His worldly ways may stay.

No more can tell, God's love embraces all, He will in grace respond to all Who walk, how shall they call If they have never heard The gracious invitation of His word.

Go forth and tell, Where still the darkness lies, In wealth or wealth is still assured, He does give us, O Lord, A startled heart and mind, A love like His wish, And the Lord shares for all mankind.

Go forth and tell, The doors are more than wide, Share those good gifts, Let no one be denied.

Be blind, live and survive, As Christ your Lord shall choose, Your ransomed paths are His so glory years.

[23 : 44] Go forth and tell, O church of God arise, O in the strength which Christ your Lord, Salmon's promise, Till the nations His great name adored, And serve Him for all mankind.

Our reading this morning comes from Jonah, Chapters 3 and 4.

3 and 4, Because the evening service, As you know, Is in Gaelic, But which I had not picked up, Was in Gaelic. So I'm going to try and do the impossible this morning, And compress two 30-minute sermons into one.

And I hope your dinner doesn't get burnt. Jonah chapter 3. Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, Saying, Arise, Go to Nineveh, That great city, Call out against it the message that I tell you.

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.

[25 : 18] 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, 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.

He issued a proclamation, And published throughout 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 hand. 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 didn't do it.

[26 : 34] But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, And he was angry, And he prayed to the Lord and said, O Lord, is this not what I said When I was yet in my country?

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

Therefore, now, O Lord, Please take my life from me, For it's 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 would see what God, 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.

[27 : 41] 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, And 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 up 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 120,000 persons, Who do not know their right hand from their left, And also much cattle.

[28 : 44] Amen. And may God bless the reading of his holy word. Let's pray. Our Father, We thank you for your word.

We thank you, Lord, That we have been able to read it, And to understand it in a measure. Thank you, Lord, That it exists in our language.

Help us, Lord, Never to take for granted This priceless treasure That you've given to us, Your word. Lord, We thank you for it.

And we thank you, Lord, That as we read it, Day by day, It ministers to us, It speaks into our lives, It strengthens us, It upholds us, It guides us.

Father, We thank you for this Wonderful treasure That you've given to us. And, Lord, We would pause for a moment To think of those Who do not have This great treasure That we have.

[29 : 57] And, Lord, We pray for those Who are still waiting For your word To be translated And made available to them. And, Father, We pray for those Who are seeking To translate your word That you would give them The ongoing strength, Linguistic accuracy, And all that is needed To see the task Right through to the end.

So that other people groups Who have not heard From your word Before Will hear And be able to understand. And so, our Father, We commend this great need Into your care. And, Father, This morning We want to pray For Shona Davidson Who's been taken To hospital In Glasgow. And, Father, We commit And commend her Into your care. We pray, Lord, For the doctors, The specialists, And the medical personnel Who will be Seeking to help her. And, Father, We pray that you would Give them the wisdom Needed. And, Lord, That you would guide them In the treatment That they prescribe. And, Father, We pray that soon Shona would be restored Fully to health And strength And find her way Back amongst us again.

[31 : 17] Lord, Be with her. Grant her, Lord, A real sense Of your peace In that hospital bed There in Glasgow. Just be with her, We pray.

And, Lord, We would pray For Finlay McSween, Donald McSween's brother. And, Lord, We commit him To you Who today Was taken ill And taken up To Stornoway.

Father, We commit him Into your hand. We don't really know What the problem is, But we thank you, Lord, That there are those there Who will be able To diagnose That problem.

And, Father, We pray that Finlay Would know Your peace And your strength. And that he would know That there in that Hospital bed.

He is not alone That you, Your presence Is there with him. And, Lord, We pray that he would know Your peace And your strength. And, Father, We pray for others In the congregation Who are not well.

[32 : 18] Any who are not able To be with us this morning Because of illness Or some other Thing that is holding them back. Father, We pray that you'd be With them where they are And encourage them And help them to know That you are with them And you will watch over them.

And so, Father, We commend them Into your care. And, Lord, We thank you For the gospel And we pray for the gospel As it is preached And proclaimed Across our island chain And further afield Across Scotland Throughout the UK And across the world.

Father, We pray for the preaching Of your word That it will bring forth fruit. That men and women, Young people, On hearing your word Will understand That it is you Speaking to them And not just Some preacher But your Holy Spirit Ministering to them Through your word.

And, Father, We would pray that For the many parts Of the world Where the gospel Has not yet penetrated. And we pray, Lord, That soon The knowledge of the Lord Would cover the earth As the waters Cover the seas.

Granted, We pray, O Lord, Because we know That your love Is for Whosoever Will. And they are in Every country Of the world.

[33 : 52] Lord, Send messengers To them To bring the good news Of the gospel. And, Lord, If it be your plan And purpose That even From this congregation Here You would call Someone to go May they know That it is you Who is calling.

Thank you, Lord, That you're calling Servants to go out Into the far Flank corners Of the world Bless their ministry And encourage them And may they see Fruit for their labours.

And so, our Father, We commend Our service Ongoing into your hand And pray For your blessing Upon it Because we ask it In the precious Name of Jesus.

Amen. And now we're going To sing in Gaelic From Psalm Number 9 Lord, Thee I'll praise With all my heart Thy wonders All proclaim In thee, Most high, I'll greatly joy And sing Unto your name When back My foes Were turned They fell And perished At thy sight For thou Maintainst My right and cause On throne Sat judging right.

These verses Let's sing them To God's praise. The must Thank you.

[36 : 03] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. You are not alone. Many of us are in the same boat. Let's pray. Our Father, we pray that you would take from our minds any disturbing, distracting thoughts and help us, Lord, to listen to your voice through your word. We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

[38 : 50] Anyway, we're going to look this morning at Jonah the obedient and disillusioned prophet. It's a strange title to have because originally I had had the obedient prophet and the disillusioned

prophet was to be in the evening. I had not understood about the Gaelic.

This is very encouraging. When I was reading it this morning, in chapter 3, verse 1, it says, The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time. That's fascinating because it means that God had forgiven him for his disobedience.

Jonah had been disobedient. He had run away from God, or tried to. He had run away in the opposite direction to which he was called to go. And here, God's word comes to him a second time. God wasn't finished with Jonah.

Sometimes we think when we mess up that that's it. We've gone too far. God is no longer going to use us because we have disobeyed what he has said to us.

That is a lie from the devil. Because there is forgiveness with God. And if we acknowledge and confess our sins, what does scripture say?

[40 : 35] He is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us. God spoke to him again. God recommissioned him.

Now, I was thinking earlier today, earlier this morning, that maybe God would sort of backpedal a little on what he was sending Jonah to do.

Because after all, Jonah had failed. Maybe God was going to give him something easier to do. Not so. If you look at the beginning of chapter 1, look at the beginning of chapter 3, the commission given to Jonah in 1, and the commission given in 3, are identical.

There is no difference whatsoever. God is still calling Jonah to go and to do what he had originally told him to do.

God recommissioned him. And I read into that, God forgave him. Isn't that wonderful? God would not have recommissioned him if he hadn't forgiven him.

[41 : 51] And Jonah was forgiven. That doesn't mean that he wasn't still fearful. Because I think he was.

And we'll see that as we go along. But God recommissioned him because he wasn't finished with him. And I would say there is forgiveness for disobedience.

God forgave. God pardoned. And God restored. Now maybe in your Christian life, in recent days, you've failed.

You've fallen. You've done something that you know is wrong. And the devil comes with his lies. And he accuses you. And he tells you that God is not going to use you anymore because you've been disobedient. But with God, there is forgiveness.

[43 : 05] And we see the Lord commissioned Jonah the second time. Secondly, Jonah responds in obedience.

Wouldn't it have been better if he'd done that at the beginning? And we could have skipped half of the book. If the book started at chapter 3, and he hadn't been a disobedient prophet, but he was disobedient.

He did do what he shouldn't do. But Jonah accepts now what God has given him to do. And you know, in acceptance lies peace.

If you fight and struggle against God's will, you will not have peace. I can guarantee you that.

One hundred percent. Because I know I've done it. If you go against what God has got for you, you will not be filled with peace. You will be disturbed.

[44 : 14] And you will know that you're going down the wrong road. Stop. Don't go any further down that road.

Jonah was called again. He was still going to the same people. God hadn't changed his commission to him.

It remained the same. The people of Nineveh were still wicked, still depraved, still godless, and furthermore, they were still the enemies of Jonah's own people.

So what is there to like in that? Nothing. And yet, Jonah is now going. He responds in obedience to God, in accepting God's will, no matter how difficult it is, no matter how impossible it may seem.

With God, there is a way forward. With God, there is always a way forward. And if you are thinking otherwise, then let me tell you, that thought is not coming from God.

[45 : 34] That thought is coming from the enemy because he seeks to discourage. He seeks to turn God's children away from what is God's will for them.

And I can think as a younger Christian, when I went out as a missionary to Upper Volta, and I challenge you to find that on the map if you can, because you'll have a hard job and I won't explain

why.

But there were difficulties and I shrank back from them. I was frightened. How was I who had been nothing but a simple postman in Inverness, how was I going to learn French?

I was bad enough at English. But the Lord undertook and my year in France almost became my lifetime in France because I loved it.

You see, what God does if we go forward in faith, God goes with us. You will never be alone when you're doing God's will.

[46 : 55] Never, never, never. The time when you'll be alone is when you go in your own way. And that's dangerous and I encourage you not to go down that road.

I must rush on. Thirdly, Jonah preaches and Nineveh responds. It's in 3, 4 to 10.

The people of Nineveh were renowned for their hardness and their wickedness and their depravity. And yet, when Jonah preached God's word, what happened?

There was citywide repentance. People turned from their wicked ways. Was that because of Jonah? Not at all. It was because of God's word.

What does God's word say? You know Jeremiah 23, 29, is not my word like fire and like a hammer that does what?

[48 : 00] Breaks the rock in pieces. Now, rocks are very hard but God's word is harder, stronger, more powerful.

God's word can break down the hardest of hearts. Look, he's broken down yours. I'm not saying you're the hardest but the fact that you're here this morning suggests to me that God has broken into your life and you now want to follow him and to worship him.

Praise the Lord. Don't often say that in the free church but maybe we should more often. Praise God for what he's done in our lives. Do you remember that day when you came out of darkness into God's light?

I actually came out of physical darkness into brilliant light. I actually did. It was underneath the blankets on the bed and I asked God to forgive me.

And this brilliant light, I don't know where it came from but it was God breaking through. Wolf Eckert's hard heart was broken by God's word.

[49 : 24] I heard the gospel that night and that would have been on July, I know, September, September when? 58, see, that's my secretary.

September 58, God's word broke through into my heart. Oh my, what a difference it made. The darkness went, the light came and that's what's happening here in Jonah 3 verses 4 to 10.

God's word broke through but notice the word was still judgment. God did not change the message when he recommissioned Jonah.

The message given in one, the message given in three is yet 40 days and Nineveh will be destroyed. Judgment. Maybe you've been witnessing to colleagues at work or neighbors and you're getting no response whatsoever.

Let me assure you that God's word is working. It's maybe a wee bit like the potatoes I planted. It takes a long time to come through but they come through.

[50 : 59] And God's word, when it is working, it will come through. Keep witnessing. God's word broke through and Jonah, the reluctant prophet, the bearer of that news.

And fourthly, we notice Jonah's anger at God's compassion. Now I struggle with this.

I'll be quite honest, I find this difficult fault. Because here's a prophet of the Lord preaching God's word, God wonderfully breaking through.

And what do we read? Jonah was angry. Why? Why was Jonah angry? Surely the very reason for him preaching God's word is that people would come to faith.

And he was preaching it into a very dark, hostile situation. So, why was Jonah angry with God?

[52 : 24] And I think you can put it down to one word. And it's a word that we know. It's pride. Pride.

Jonah had said that there was going to be judgment. God had responded in mercy, in love, and in grace, and Jonah couldn't accept it.

Now, if you understand that, talk to me afterwards, because I find it difficult to understand. This is this reluctant prophet, angry, wait for it, angry, because God is working in response to what?

To Jonah's preaching. So, why is Jonah angry? And I think it comes down, as I said, to his pride, because he had said judgment was coming on the city of Nineveh, and God relented of what he

was going to do, and he did something else.

He came through in grace and in mercy to the people of Nineveh. Don't let's be led astray like Jonah was.

[53 : 51] I come to my final point, and I've called it a lesson in divine love. It's the last verses from five to the end of chapter four.

Despite Jonah's anger, and despite his disillusionment, God still loved him.

I find that precious. Jonah was, he was not fulfilling the vows he made when he became a prophet. He was turning aside from them. God was at work. He was angry. But why was God at work? It was through Jonah's preaching.

So why was he angry? Because he was the one who was preaching God's word, and the Holy Spirit was taking that word and applying it to the hearts of the listeners.

[54 : 57] and there were amongst those listeners some of the hardest people on the face of the earth. They were renowned for their wickedness and yet God's word broke through through Jonah.

Is God finished with Jonah? Not at all. Look at your Bible for a moment. chapter 3.

No, I missed it. Yeah, sorry. Chapter 4, verse 6. Now the Lord appointed a plant. Now keep your finger there and go back to the last verse of chapter 1, verse 17.

And the Lord appointed a great fish. Why was the fish appointed to save Jonah? Why was the plant appointed to save Jonah?

He was being disobedient, yet God in love was looking after him. And Jonah found it very difficult to take that in.

[56 : 16] And he took himself outside of the city to watch for God's judgment to fall, to watch for God's working in Nineveh.

And the poor, disillusioned man did not recognize that God was already at work in grace and mercy and peace.

And ironically, it was through the preaching of Jonah that it all took place. But Jonah is disillusioned. Jonah is rebellious. When I was preparing this word, I was puzzling over something positive to say at the end.

But this is the way the book ends. This is the situation that we come to, that Jonah has preached, God has worked, Jonah can't accept it, and he takes himself out of the city where God is at work, where the people of Nineveh would have welcomed him with open arms to come and to teach them God's word.

[57 : 30] What did he do? In high dungeon, he goes away out and he sits down and waits for God's judgment to fall. He couldn't accept that God was being gracious.

He couldn't accept that God was being merciful. God had to work according to his message. But the silly, disillusioned man could not see that God did just that.

He worked through Jonah's message of judgment and brought repentance. Tell me, my friend, have you yet come to that place of repentance?

Many people in Nineveh came to repentance. Have you? I don't know how old or how young you are, but don't put it off.

Don't keep putting it off. Jonah is, I'm afraid, a very bad example at the end. Jonah turned his back on what God was doing and he went away a disillusioned and a sad man.

[58 : 50] And that is all that we have to say about him. But it says here, and I found this interesting, in the last verse of the book, verse 11, and should not I, God speaking, and should not I pity Nineveh, that great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle.

What does it mean, who do not know their right hand from their left? left. You know that this is your right hand.

You know that this is your left hand. So this is not referring to adults. Who is it referring to then? These young folk that were listening to Pat a few moments ago, some of them are really bright buttons.

They would know exactly what the right hand and what the left hand is. So who is it referring to? It's referring to children. Under fives or under fours who don't know their right hand from their left.

Now, if there were 120,000 children, young children in Nineveh, what was the population of Nineveh? It was not 120,000.

[60 : 23] I wonder what it was. I ask the question because I don't know. Was it double, treble, quadruple that? I don't know. But it was a lot more than 120,000.

And God, through the preaching of Jonah, was bringing many of them to repentance and faith in God.

God. And as I close, my closing question to do would be, have you come to that place of faith in God?

It will be the most important step that you will ever make in your life. If you have never made it, then I plead with you, talk to somebody before you leave this auditorium.

talk to somebody. Get help because God loves you. God wants to be part of your life.

[61 : 30] God wants to use you. Do not follow the example of Jonah. And this is possibly why Jonah is one of two books in the Bible that ends with a question.

turn your eyes upon Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.

Let's pray. Amen. Father, we thank you for your word. Thank you, Lord, that your word is the truth. Thank you, Lord, that you have been speaking to us through your word. And, Father, we pray that if there are any with us today who are still unsure of being in Christ, that Lord, you would give them the courage to speak to someone here in this gathering and ask them, how can I become a child of God?

Lord, grant it, we pray, that none would leave here not knowing your love personally. we ask it in Jesus' name.

[63 : 06] Amen. We're going to draw our service to a close by singing from Psalm 43. Psalm 43 verses 3 to 5.

Then will I to God's altar go, to God my chiefest joy. Yea, God, my God, thy name to praise my harp, I will employ.

Let's stand and praise God. Amen. sing it in God's song.

To God, my God, my God, my name, to praise, my heart, my God, my God, my God, thy name, to praise, God's God ■■■■■■.

discourage me and why with a sinful dark love disquieted in me still trust in God for him to bring good cause I yet shall have he of my countenances the help my God that doth me save and now may the peace of God which passes all understanding go with you and with all whom you love now and forevermore amen you see ever to use

[65 : 40] Leben to be try to go with you and another