



EXPERIENCING GRACE AND MERCY

JONAH 2:2-9

Grace and mercy are two biblical terms we tend to use interchangeably

- But they are the two primary biblical principles that are at the heart of God's history with mankind
- It is also at the heart of the book of Jonah
- Jonah is not just a story about a rebellious prophet of God and a miracle fish but God demonstrating His grace and mercy
- To the sailors, Jonah, and the citizens of Nineveh

Grace and mercy are two biblical terms we tend to use interchangeably

- Mercy is not getting what we deserve, and Grace is getting what we do not deserve
- **Luke 23:39-43 NLT** 39 One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, “So you’re the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you’re at it!”

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- **Luke 23:39-43 NLT** 40 But the other criminal protested, “Don’t you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die? 41 We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn’t done anything wrong.” 42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom.”

Grace and mercy are two biblical terms we tend to use interchangeably

- **Luke 23:39-43 NLT** 43 And Jesus replied, “I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise.”
 - Mercy was the forgiveness of the thief’s sin
 - Grace was being with Jesus in paradise
 - Both are undeserved and unearned

Grace and mercy are two biblical terms we tend to use interchangeably

- Jonah was a rebellious hearted prophet of God
- Don't ever be surprised Christian how far a rebellious, angry heart toward God will take you
- Jonah found himself needing desperately the mercy and grace only God could provide – but running from it
- God drove Jonah there – does that bother you?

Grace and mercy are two biblical terms we tend to use interchangeably

- Chapter 2 is a summary of the process and prayer Jonah prayed in the heart of his sin

Jonah 2:2-9 NLT

- Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from inside the fish. 2 He said, “I cried out to the Lord in my great trouble, and he answered me. I called to you from the land of the dead, and Lord, you heard me!

Jonah 2:2-9 NLT

- 3 You threw me into the ocean depths, and I sank down to the heart of the sea. The mighty waters engulfed me; I was buried beneath your wild and stormy waves. 4 Then I said, ‘O Lord, you have driven me from your presence. Yet I will look once more toward your holy Temple.’

Jonah 2:2-9 NLT

- 5 I sank beneath the waves, and the waters closed over me. Seaweed wrapped itself around my head. 6 I sank down to the very roots of the mountains. I was imprisoned in the earth, whose gates lock shut forever.
- But you, O Lord my God, snatched me from the jaws of death! 7 As my life was slipping away, I remembered the Lord. And my earnest prayer went out to you in your holy Temple.

Jonah 2:2-9 NLT

- 8 Those who worship false gods turn their backs on all God's mercies. 9 But I will offer sacrifices to you with songs of praise, and I will fulfill all my vows. For my salvation comes from the Lord alone.”

Jonah 2:2-9 MSG

- Then Jonah prayed to his God from the belly of the fish. He prayed:
 - “In trouble, deep trouble, I prayed to God. He answered me. From the belly of the grave I cried, ‘Help!’ You heard my cry.

Jonah 2:2-9 MSG

- Then Jonah prayed to his God from the belly of the fish. He prayed:
 - “You threw me into ocean’s depths, into a watery grave, With ocean waves, ocean breakers crashing over me. I said, ‘I’ve been thrown away, thrown out, out of your sight. I’ll never again lay eyes on your Holy Temple.’

Jonah 2:2-9 MSG

- Then Jonah prayed to his God from the belly of the fish. He prayed:
 - Ocean gripped me by the throat. The ancient Abyss grabbed me and held tight. My head was all tangled in seaweed at the bottom of the sea where the mountains take root. I was as far down as a body can go, and the gates were slamming shut behind me forever—

Jonah 2:2-9 MSG

- Then Jonah prayed to his God from the belly of the fish. He prayed:
 - Yet you pulled me up from that grave alive, O God, my God! When my life was slipping away, I remembered God, And my prayer got through to you, made it all the way to your Holy Temple.

Jonah 2:2-9 MSG

- Then Jonah prayed to his God from the belly of the fish. He prayed:
 - Those who worship hollow gods, god-frauds, walk away from their only true love. But I'm worshiping you, God, calling out in thanksgiving! And I'll do what I promised I'd do! Salvation belongs to God!"

Jonah had the same great need as Nineveh – grace and mercy

- And this is what Jonah was wanting to withhold from them
- I wonder if Jonah every really felt the need for God's grace and mercy
- He understood it intellectually from the sacrifices (*mercy*) and from the land and promises (*grace*)
- But had he ever found himself in a situation where that was all he had

Jonah had the same great need as Nineveh – grace and mercy

- We Christians are very good at being self-sufficient as we should strive for that and not be lazy with what God has blessed us with
- But we must be very careful of religious pride and judgement

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress

- At least briefly, Jonah was conscience in the fish – long enough to realize that God has saved him
- Keep in mind that when Jonah refers to the distress of the past, he means the time spent in the water, not the time in the fish
- The water is the threat of death, and the fish is the refuge of salvation

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress

- The cry of distress is past tense (*in the water*)
- The voice of confidence and thanks is present (*in the fish*)

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - In spite of his guilt

- Why is Jonah here?
 - **Jonah 1:3 NLT** But Jonah ran away from the Lord
 - It wasn't accidental but a deliberate act of rebellion
 - Jonah's distress was the fruit of his own guilt

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - In spite of his guilt

- **Psalms 107:10-15 NLT** 10 Some sat in darkness and deepest gloom, imprisoned in iron chains of misery. 11 They rebelled against the words of God, scorning the counsel of the Most High. 12 That is why he broke them with hard labor; they fell, and no one was there to help them.

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - In spite of his guilt

- **Psalms 107:10-15 NLT** 13 “Lord, help!” they cried in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. 14 He led them from the darkness and deepest gloom; he snapped their chains. 15 Let them praise the Lord for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them.
- In spite of our guilt, God still responds in faith

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - In spite of His judgement

- Don't play chess with God – he always knows the next plays
 - Jonah played his chess pawn piece by running from God
 - God played his chess king piece with a checkmate storm that beat all other storms

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - In spite of His judgement

- Jonah knew it was God who threw him in the water, and it was God who heard his prayer
- God did not do this to be mean but to be able to bless Jonah's life and the lives of the people in Nineveh, but it is still judgement
- He never brings us into affliction merely for the sake of punishment

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - In spite of His judgement

- His purposes always include redemption
- **Job 36:15 NLT** But by means of their suffering, he rescues those who suffer. For he gets their attention through adversity.
- **Romans 6:23 NLT** For the wages of sin is death (judgement)
 - but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - In impossible circumstances

- Have you ever felt, or do you feel yourself sucked so deep you know you're done for
 - Like Jonah just wave after impossible wave
 - God let the circumstances become impossible before he delivered Jonah

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - In impossible circumstances

- Do you limit God by limiting what you think He can or will do?
- What if Jonah had decided he was too far for God to hear or care?
- What if Jonah decided God could not react quick enough?

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - In impossible circumstances

- **Vs. 7 NLT** As my life was slipping away, I remembered the Lord. And my earnest prayer went out to you in your holy Temple.
 - This is repentance
 - He didn't tell God how he wanted it done
 - He didn't put any conditions on it

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - In impossible circumstances

- **Jeremiah 32:27 NLT** “I am the Lord, the God of all the peoples of the world. Is anything too hard for me?”
- “On a hill far away stood an old rugged cross” – is anything too hard for God?

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - In stages

- We must get out of our head and assumption the all or nothing of answered prayer
- God sometimes answers in stages, not all of which are comfortable
- Imagine you are on the verge of financial ruin because of your spending habits
 - You cry out to God, and someone blesses you in a Dave Ramsey Financial Course

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - In stages

- Jonah never complains about the great fish
 - He accepts it as God's first step of deliverance
 - Don't disregard or disrespect the partial works of God
 - A fish's belly is better than weeds at the bottom of the sea, even if it isn't yet Palestine

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - To firmly set our faith and obedience in Him

- Jonah learned an important lesson – if you leave God, you leave mercy
- **Vs. 7-8** 7 As my life was slipping away, I remembered the Lord. And my earnest prayer went out to you in your holy Temple. 8 Those who worship false gods turn their backs on all God's mercies.
 - Jonah remembered the Lord – this would be repentance

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - To firmly set our faith and obedience in Him

- **Vs. 9** But I will offer sacrifices to you with songs of praise, and I will fulfill all my vows. For my salvation comes from the Lord alone.”
 - Jonah knew God alone was responsible for his salvation from the sea
- Do you know this truth this morning – Your salvation is from God and Him alone

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - To firmly set our faith and obedience in Him

- **Psalms 50:15 NLT** Then call on me when you are in trouble, and I will rescue you, and you will give me glory.

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - To make us merciful like Him

- God's mercy is not confined to Israel but extends to any people who will trust him and repent of their sins
- **Romans 10:13-15 NLT** 13 For "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." 14 But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - To make us merciful like Him

- **Romans 10:13-15 NLT** 15 And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, “How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!”

We see in these verses, God answering His child's cry of distress - To make us merciful like Him

- We sometimes look at these verses as if they are meant for missionaries called too far off countries
- It is really a message to all of us that are sent into whatever place you find yourself to be God's gift of mercy and grace to a lost and dying world
- Hell will be a real eternal place of suffering so let your mercy flow to as many as God allows

Can you hear God saying to Jonah -

- I had mercy on you in spite of your guilt
- I had mercy on you in spite of my own sentence of judgement
- I saved you from impossible circumstances
- I delivered you in the nick of time
- I commanded a fish to save your life

Can you hear God saying to Jonah -

- You were filled with a song of thanksgiving for my mercy and vowed your loyalty to me
- Jonah, Jonah - be merciful, even as I have been merciful to you!

The main point in Jonah was also the main point for Jesus

- **Luke 6:36 NLT** 36 (*You*) Be merciful, just (*in the same way*) as your Father is merciful (*to you*).
- Are you being a “Jonah” or “God’s agent of mercy” wherever you are planted?



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Announcements

- Asian Hope new newsletter on bulletin board
- Wednesday service, 7:00, Cold-Case Christianity lesson three
 - Resist Conspiracy Theories
 - Know When Enough is Enough
 - Prepare for an Attack

Announcements

- Trustee Meeting this afternoon at 5:00



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