

## *Tenacious Grace: God’s Relentless Love for the Nations (Jonah 1-4)*

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The book of Jonah provides a riveting picture of the gospel. God demonstrates His love for the nations even while they are yet enemies—He tenaciously mediates His grace through a reluctant prophet. In many ways, the narrative reflects the history of Israel—as portrayed through the life of one of its prophets. Throughout the book, we meet the fickle and rebellious man that God used to deliver His grace to the nation of Assyria. In many ways, Jonah represents the nation of Israel, whom the Lord had set apart to be a light to the nations—a people for His own possession, intended to magnify His glory by living out the covenant made with Yahweh. However, neither Jonah nor Israel is the central focus of these four chapters. ***The book of Jonah is ultimately about the character and glory of God—His persistent grace and His sovereignty over all things.*** Throughout the book of Jonah, we will see that God displays His sovereign grace in four different ways: through judgment, in salvation, through the preaching of repentance, and finally, in His patience with His people. As the events unfold, we will see that ***God expresses His mercy and grace in salvation through judgment.*** This will be true of Jonah, Israel, Nineveh, and each one of us. As a result, the book of Jonah shows us a glimpse of the gospel—something that is most clearly displayed in the person of Jesus Christ. He obeys the word of God, and yet He experiences the Father’s wrath on our behalf. ***We will see that God’s grace and mercy toward us is most clearly expressed in our salvation through Christ’s judgment. After all, it is in the life of Jonah (which anticipates that of Christ) that we see God’s tenacious grace and relentless love for the nations.***

### **1. GOD DISPLAYS HIS SOVEREIGN GRACE THRU JUDGMENT**

*There are two ways that we see God’s sovereignty over judgment: **First**, He commissions Jonah to preach judgment against Nineveh, and **Second**, He commissions the sea to execute judgment against Jonah.*

#### **A. The Lord commissions Jonah to preach judgment against Nineveh (1:1-3)**

**[1:1-3]** *“Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me.” But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.”*

- In the opening verses, *the Lord commissions to Jonah to **preach judgment against Nineveh***. Yet, we see that Jonah does the complete opposite. In fact, he not only **ignores** the Lord’s instruction, he attempts to **flee** from the presence of the Lord.

In order to understand the significance of his commission we must learn more about **Jonah** as well as **Nineveh**

- Little is known about **Jonah** except that he was the son of Amittai—and previously mentioned in **2Samuel 14:25** where he predicted the expansion of Israel’s borders under the reign of Jeroboam II. (Jeroboam II ruled in Israel 200yrs after David, and 60yrs before Assyria captured Israel and took the nation into exile.)
- Nearly 100 years before Jonah, **Elijah** had challenged the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel and purged the northern kingdom of idolatry. Unfortunately, in the years between Elijah and Jonah, most of the remaining prophets had compromised themselves. But, in Jonah’s time, God mercifully raised up a host of prophets (Isaiah, Micah, Hosea, & Amos) who were jealous for His glory and sought to reform the nation. God compelled them to preach repentance to sinful Israel in order to prepare the nation for the coming exile.

**Second**, we must learn more about **Nineveh** in order to understand God’s judgment and Jonah’s reticence:

- **Nineveh**: In the 8<sup>th</sup> century B.C., Assyria was a rising super-power and Nineveh was its greatest city. Nineveh was extravagantly wealthy and boasted of some of the most lavish gardens in the world. Nineveh was an Assyrian stronghold and most likely its capital.
- The **Assyrian army** was notorious for brutality and used terror as its primary tactic. Not only did they use

battering rams and fire to destroy enemy cities, but they mutilated their prisoners by decapitation, cutting off limbs, impaling prisoners, and burning people alive. They starved and enslaved enemy populations, abused women and children, and forced prisoners to walk a humiliating “death-march” back to Nineveh.

Given these facts—and our understanding of the human heart—it’s not surprising that Jonah is rebellious.

**B. The Lord commissions the sea to preach judgment against Jonah** (1:4-16)

**[1:4-16]** *“But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. So the captain came and said to him, “What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.” And they said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. Then they said to him, “Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?” And he said to them, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, “What is this that you have done!” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them. Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?” For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. He said to them, “Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you.” Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. Therefore they called out to the LORD, “O LORD, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you.” So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.*

There are a number of truths worth noting in God’s judgment of Jonah:

First, we see that **God is sovereign over creation and sovereign over judgment.**

- He commands the wind and the waves according to His will, and they obey Him!!
- He hurls a great storm upon the sea and it threatens the lives of Jonah and the sailors. In doing so, He uses creation as a means of waking up an apathetic sinner and bringing the arrogant to their knees.

Second, we see that **Jonah is apathetic about his disobedience and unconcerned about God’s wrath.**

- Not only did Jonah ignore the word of God and then attempt to flee from His presence, but now we find him fast asleep. **He has silenced his conscience by ignoring his sin and resting his eyes.** However, God would not be ignored and the sea of His wrath would not rest. The pagan sailors realized that the sea was not calming—so the captain woke Jonah up and rebuked him for sleeping.
- Even seasoned sailors were fearful—they realized that this was no ordinary storm. They cried out for deliverance—desperately trying to appease the God of the sea. They threw every ounce of cargo overboard in order to lighten the ship. It was their only source of income. Yet, they assumed that they would die, except they hurl it overboard.
- Jonah should have been afraid of God’s wrath, yet he was not. He should have forsaken his sin, yet he did not. Things would have to grow worse before he would repent. Ironically, the pagan sailors were more aware of God’s wrath and more eager to repent—even if their means of doing so was misguided. **This was a rebuke upon Jonah, as well as Israel, that pagans were more ready to respond to God.**

**Application:** *What aspect of God’s word are you currently disobeying? Is there a secret sin that you’ve*

*embraced, yet remain apathetic about the Spirit’s conviction & unconcerned about sin’s damage to your life?*  
Third, we see that ***Jonah is self-serving in his suicidal response to God’s judgment.***

- The sailors determine that Jonah was running from the Lord and responsible for their demise. While these were not innocent men, the Lord was primarily judging Jonah. When the sailors found out that he was a Hebrew prophet who served the God who “created the land and the sea,” they were terrified.
- [The phrase (v.10) ***“What is this you have done!”*** is the exact phrase God uses in Genesis 3 when He confronts Eve for her sin. Thus, poetically, it serves as an indictment to Jonah (and Israel).
- In v.11, things grow worse. The sailors ask how they might appease the Lord so that He would withdraw His wrath from them. Jonah’s response, while seemingly selfless, is actually selfish. He instructs them to throw him overboard so that God would restrain the sea. He believed that his “assisted suicide” would result in the judgment of Nineveh since he would then be unable to preach Israel’s greatest enemy.
- At first, the sailors ignore the prophetic word and attempt to save themselves. ***They tried to reach the land by rowing hard—yet their best efforts were unable to deliver them.*** It is only when they “cry out to the Lord” and obey the prophetic word (something that Jonah should have been doing), that they are spared from destruction. When they threw Jonah overboard, the sea immediately grew calm. In sacrificing Jonah, the sailors were delivered from God’s wrath. In essence, God provides mercy and grace toward the pagan sailors in their deliverance through Jonah’s judgment.

**Application:** Ways that you might be self-serving? Trying to protect your image, reputation, or comfort? ***Frustration at your children’s behavior***—not because they are disobedient so much as the fact that they reflect you poorly. Or trying by our own efforts to deliver ourselves from a mess we’ve gotten ourselves into?

***In this chapter on God’s Sovereignty over Judgment, we see much about Jesus Christ.***

***First***, as the new and greater Jonah, Jesus: obeys the word of the Lord and fulfills His commission to preach repentance to all nations, starting in Jerusalem (Luke 24). [Gethsemane: “Not my will, but yours be done...”]

***Second***, as the Son of God we see that He is Lord of Creation. In Matthew 8, He exercises the power and authority of Yahweh in commanding the wind & the waves by calming the storm and delivering the disciples.

***Finally***, as the one greater Jonah, He lovingly sacrificed himself on our behalf. While we deserved to experience God’s judgment for our sin, Jesus Christ was thrown into the sea of God’s wrath so we could live. He absorbed the fury of God’s wrath for us, & appeased the Father in a way that our own efforts never could.

**Application: Unbeliever:** “Have you taken refuge in Jesus Christ by turning to Him for salvation?” The sea of God’s wrath is building up and will eventually overtake you, except you take refuge in Christ by faith. **Believer:** “What heavy burdens of sin do you still carry?” Only Christ’s death could appease the Father—and His death sufficiently did so. ***We can rest in knowing there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ!***  
In ch. 1, we saw that God displays His sovereign grace thru judgment. Next, we’ll see that...

## **2. GOD DISPLAYS HIS SOVEREIGN GRACE IN SALVATION**

In ch. 2, ***God delivers Jonah from judgment.*** His deliverance is initiated in 1:17, but not consummated until 2:10 when he is fully-restored. In 2:1-8, the Lord takes Jonah to the brink of death and breaks his pride before restoring him to life. ***In other words, Jonah experiences a figurative death and resurrection inside the fish.***

[1:17-2:10] ***“And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, saying, ‘I***

*called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. For you cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me. Then I said, ‘I am driven away from your sight; yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.’ The waters closed in over me to take my life; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped about my head at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!’ And the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon the dry land.”*

**First, God initiates salvation by appointing a great fish to rescue Jonah from the sea of His judgment (1:17)**

- The Lord sent the fish to swallow up Jonah as a means of **deliverance** and **discipline**. God’s heart was postured towards grace and mercy—*albeit a loving act of salvation through judgment*.

**Second, God takes Jonah to the brink of death to humble him and provoke him toward repentance (2:1-9)**

- In the belly of the fish, **Jonah desperately cries out to the Lord**. His **pride has been broken** and he is **near the point of death**, and **assumes that he has been rejected by the Lord**. The phrase “in the belly of Sheol,” means in the place of death. His experience provides a vivid picture of his spiritual depravity.
- **He is completely overcome and cries out for mercy**. The language used (“at the foot of the mountains” and “the land whose bars closed upon me forever”) signifies both physical and spiritual death—like his sin, the water and seaweed threaten to take away his life and he is unable to save himself. He acknowledges God’s judgment (v.4), but believes that the Lord will provide deliverance and restoration (“I shall again look upon your holy temple” and “you brought up my life from the pit”)
- In this, he **demonstrates a degree of faith and repentance** by acknowledging the vanity of idols and renewing his commitment to the Lord (vv.8-9). He expresses gratitude and promises devotion.

**Third, God consummates salvation by restoring Jonah to life (2:10).**

- Figuratively speaking, Jonah experiences “death and resurrection,” all by the sovereign power of God who reveals the hopeless nature of his sin and his inability to save himself. In this way, God humbles Jonah before restoring him to life. Jonah expresses **gratitude toward God** as the author of salvation!!

As we’ll see in 3:1, God restored Jonah so that he might preach to Nineveh in order that it might be restored.

**In this chapter on God’s Sovereignty over Salvation, we see much about Jesus Christ.**

**First**, we see a connection to Christ in that Jonah felt rejected by the Lord even though he was not forsaken. Yet, Jesus Christ was abandoned by His Father when He experienced judgment on our behalf: He cried out from the Cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” He was forsaken so we could be reconciled.

**Second**, Jonah’s experienced of being “entombed in the belly of the fish” was similar to Jesus’ experience of being “entombed in the heart of the earth.” In Matthew 12:38-42, Jesus implies that He is the one greater than Jonah, because His death and resurrection would lead to life. **Similar to Jonah, He would spend three days and three nights in the place of death, and like Jonah God would restore Him to new life in order that He might bring salvation to the nations.** However, Jesus warns the scribes and Pharisees that “the men of Nineveh” will rise up at the final judgment and condemn the stubborn leaders of Israel. If Nineveh had a responsibility and eagerness to repent, then how much more should the nation of Israel who has received the message of an even greater Prophet who is also the Son of God!! *We have the same responsibility.*

**Application:** Salvation is something that we don’t deserve. In fact, we deserve quite the opposite. We should regularly **praise God for the salvation that He has provided**. And, we must ask ourselves whether the men of Nineveh will rise up in our defense, or whether they will rise up to testify against us for our lack of repentance

In ch. 3, we will see that God’s deliverance of Jonah was for the purpose of bringing the gospel to Assyria!

### **3. GOD DISPLAYS HIS SOVEREIGN GRACE IN THE PREACHING OF REPENTANCE**

#### **A. God re-commissions Jonah to preach judgment on Nineveh (3:1-4)**

**[3:1-4]** “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. 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!’”

- The Lord gives Jonah a 2nd chance to obey His word. [*Isn’t that how the Lord often treats us?*]. He sends Jonah to preach against Nineveh in order that *they might turn and experience God’s grace*. God provides opportunity for faith and repentance. We see that **God is both patient and persistent!!**
- This is an amazing picture of the gospel: *God is going to provide salvation to Nineveh through the figurative death and resurrection of His prophet*. The Lord restores both Jonah, as well as Nineveh.

***Ironically, the King of Nineveh preaches a clearer gospel message than Jonah does***—Jonah knew the grace of God, but he fails to preach it. Yet, **God was not restricted by Jonah’s half-measured obedience**. God often works through the most unexpected means, and He is never handicapped by our shortcomings and sin. He brings grace to the nations despite Jonah’s rebellious heart. He often does the same despite our shortcomings.

**Application:** Isn’t it encouraging that God uses us despite our shortcomings and sin? ...***When you’re afraid to share your faith with that next door neighbor*** who appears to be an unbeliever, or ***that co-worker that is living in open sin with no thought of God or His hatred of sin***. God even uses us when we struggle to find the right words to say or when our lives contradict our message. This should be ***especially encouraging to parents—since we know that God is sovereign over the hearts of even our children and their future***.

#### **B. God’s word leads Nineveh to faith and repentance (3:5-9)**

**[3:5-9]** “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.’”

There are a number of things worth noting here:

- **First**, Notice how God’s word impacts the King of Nineveh—His does not remain hard-hearted. Upon hearing the word of the Lord, he immediately grieves over his sin and models genuine repentance. This is a striking contrast to Jonah’s (& Israel’s) short-lived repentance.
- God uses the preaching of His word to lead sinners to repentance. In **Romans 10:17**, the Apostle Paul writes, “...*Faith comes by hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.*” Thus, we see that God’s primary instrument of producing faith is through His word. He ***is sovereign over the proclamation of His word, as well as the response that it effects—either faith and repentance or hardness of heart.***

**Application:** *When God convicts you of sin and self-centeredness, is your repentance genuine or short-lived?*

#### **C. God relented from His judgment when the people repented from their sin (3:10)**

**[3:10]** “When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.”

- God spared Nineveh because of their faith in Him and their repentance from sin. The king of Nineveh

led his people in repentance. Similarly, the King of Kings has given us the ability to turn from our sin.

**Connection to Christ:** In sparing Nineveh, God revealed His heart for the nations. In the *Abrahamic Covenant*, He promised to bless Abraham and through him, all the nations of the earth. Thus, by saving a remnant from Nineveh, God revealed that He has been at work in bringing the nations to repentance so that one day *“men from every tribe, and tongue, and nation” will worship His Son around the throne (Rev. 5:7-9).*

God would also save a remnant from Israel through the purging judgment of exile. Yet, God’s covenant love was not merely for Abraham or Israel; **it was for every nation who would be blessed through Abraham’s Offspring—Jesus Christ.** Jonah believed that God’s plan would find its culmination in the blessing and prosperity of Israel—and yet God intended another Son to be the ultimate fulfillment of His plan. It was Jesus, not Israel, who was the Son of Promise, descended from the line of Abraham. It was Jesus, not Israel, who was a light to the nations and the great **Prophet and Preacher of Repentance.** It was Jesus, not Israel, who experienced separation from God in order to secure the salvation of all nations. Jesus experienced a literal death and resurrection in order to make enemies into sons and daughters.

In ch. 3, God displayed His sovereign grace in sparing Nineveh from judgment. In chapter 4, we will see that..

#### **4. GOD DISPLAYS HIS SOVEREIGN GRACE IN HIS PATIENCE WITH HIS PEOPLE**

##### **A. First, He endures the rebuke of a self-centered prophet** (4:1-3)

**[4:1-3]** *“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? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.”*

- Jonah grows angry with the Lord for sparing Nineveh: Literally: **“It was evil to Jonah a great evil, and it displeased him.”** He has lost control of his emotions and is being driven by them. Fortunately, God’s character is consistent—both in His judgment and His compassion.
- Here, we see a portrait of God’s character: He is “gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in covenant love, and turning from judgment.” These are incredible qualities—and found throughout Scripture. Jonah seems to be quoting **Ex. 34:6-7** where God reveals Himself to Moses, *“The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the children’s children, to the third and fourth generation.”* Moses’ response was worship; Jonah’s was rebellion and anger.
- He refuses to submit to the will of God, and is once again **suicidal**. His reaction reveals **self-centeredness**. He is blinded from seeing the goodness of God. Yet, God’s method of rebuking Jonah is through searching questions that require him to examine his heart. The problem is that **Jonah wants to be judge instead of God.** He is characterized by a lack of true repentance, is calloused toward the lost, & fails to extend God’s grace to others. He is prone toward sin, unrighteous anger, despair, arrogance, hard-heartedness, self-justification, and fickleness despite God’s grace and mercy toward him.

**Can any of you relate to any of these?** Do you **ever justify your sin**? How about when your “small sin” prevents you from worse sin? Or, you grow bitter toward your spouse b/c they don’t help out around the house as much as you do? You worked hard. You deserve to come home and relax!! Or maybe you experience self-righteousness, b/c you don’t struggle with the sorts of public sins that other people do? **What areas of your life do you see the prideful sins of self-pity, self-entitlement, or self-righteousness?**

**Connection to Christ:** Thankfully, God’s character has not changed. He is still merciful toward sinners.

Sometimes it’s hard to understand how God’s mercy and judgment, which are seemingly opposites, could coexist in one Person. Throughout the Old Testament, God’s desire to be merciful runs alongside His holiness and wrath, and in Old Testament terms, they are hard to put together. However, biblically-speaking, we see these two great realities—God’s mercy and God’s justice merging at the Cross. Romans 3:23 speaks of God as being, at the same time, *“the Just and the Justifier” of men*. He is both *the Judge and the Guilty Party (for us)*, as well as the Lord and the Servant; *the Giver of Life, as well as the One who Gave His Life in order to save ours!!* The qualities expressed in Exodus 34 meet together in the person of Christ when God condemns His own Son in order that we might be reconciled to Him.

• ***B. God rebukes the self-centered prophet and demonstrates His faithfulness*** (4:4-9)

[4:4-9] *“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.”*

- The Lord rebukes the narrow-minded nationalism of both Jonah and Israel. He is nauseated by their self-centeredness and failure to extend the grace that He has given to them.
- He uses this living parable in order to teach Jonah a lesson about what really matters. Selfishly, Jonah has been more concerned about his own discomfort than the lost souls of Nineveh. Hypocritically, he rejoiced at his own deliverance, yet grew angry at God’s grace to Nineveh. And here, he expresses a disgusting measure of self-pity. He has more sorrow over the destruction of a plant than he does over the judgment of lost souls. He is ungrateful, irrational, and self-centered—and God teaches him that his frustration is unjust. The Lord is sovereign to extend compassion and justice whenever He desires.

**Application:** Do you ever consider God unjust when life doesn’t go the way that you imagined? It’s easy to grow frustrated toward God when we experience unexpected health issues for ourselves or our children, or we get passed over for a promotion that we worked hard to receive. Life seems unfair when you remain single while others enjoy marriage, or when you have a difficult marriage while others seem to have happy ones. For each one of us, the situation is different—yet the temptation is the same. We are sometimes tempted to think that God is unjust, life is unfair, and that things would be better if God would let us make the decisions. *Sadly, we tend to weep more over our own disappointments and discomfort than for lost souls headed for hell!!*

• ***C. God reveals that He is absolutely sovereign in all things, including His extension of mercy*** (4:10-11)

[4:10-11] *“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 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?’”*

- The final verses of the book illustrate the main point: God is completely sovereign over all things, including the extension of His mercy.
- In fact, we find that everyone in the book who receives mercy is completely undeserving of it: the sailors, the fickle prophet, the people of Nineveh—and the people of God. The Lord was sending a message to Israel, that He alone is the author of salvation and that He has a heart for the nations. No one *deserves* His mercy, yet He extends it according to His will. He has the authority to extend either mercy or judgment toward whomever He desires. We see the Apostle Paul confirm this in Romans 9.
- Fortunately for Jonah, Nineveh, Israel, and each one of us, God is patient and persistent. He extends His grace—His tenacious grace—toward us so that all nations might know His relentless love for sinners.

**In restraining His judgment and extending His mercy, God declares His glory!! His sovereign grace**

**shows itself in saving whom He wants to save and judging whom He wants to judge.**

Is. 48:9-11 “For *my name’s sake* I defer my anger, for *the sake of my praise* I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For *my own sake*, for *my own sake*, I do it, for how should *My name* be profaned? *My glory* I will not give to another.”

### **CONCLUSION:**

Throughout the book of Jonah, we have seen that God is sovereign over all things: He is sovereign over judgment, sovereign over salvation, sovereign over preaching and its effects, and finally, we have seen that He is sovereign over the extension of His mercy. In every case, His sovereignty accentuates His patience and His grace. This is evident by the way that He has treated everyone in the book of Jonah. Yet, ***it is in the person and work of Christ that we most clearly see God’s gracious love for the nations.*** Every one of us deserves to experience God’s wrath, and ***yet we have experienced God’s grace and mercy in our salvation through Christ’s judgment.*** We have no greater reason to celebrate—and no greater message to communicate!! Therefore, let us praise God for His kindness, and commit ourselves to proclaiming Christ as we extend His grace to people from “every tribe and tongue and nation.”