

Jonah #5: Jonah's Attitude

by Ed Miller

The sermon explores Jonah's struggle with anger and disappointment despite experiencing God's mercy and transformation.

Duration: 54:10

Scripture: Jonah 1:17, Jonah 4:1-3, Jonah 4:10-11, Matthew 6:33, Luke 11:29-32

Topics: "Heart Transformation", "Gods Mercy"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the fourth chapter of the book of Jonah. He addresses the questions that arise from Jonah's apparent lack of change in his heart towards Nineveh. The preacher emphasizes that God's purpose in dealing with Jonah's heart was to transform him into a sign. He highlights the progression of Jonah's journey, from surrender to understanding the undeserved mercy of God, to becoming a sign of Jesus to the Ninevites. The preacher concludes that God is not finished with Jonah and will bring him to a deeper understanding of the divine end, which is the satisfaction of his heart.

Transcript

And I believe with all of my heart that it is in God's heart to tie all these things together and to clinch His great revelation in our heart. As we come again to share together from the pages of this precious revelation, this precious book, there is a principle of Bible study that is absolutely indispensable, and that is total reliance upon the Spirit of God, helpless dependence. God delights to meet with us and unveil Himself to us.

He has promised that He would meet with those who would come in childlike faith. And so I invite you again to bow with me as we commit our time unto the Lord, and let's trust Him together to show Himself in a way that clinches all that He wants to accomplish in our hearts. Let's bow.

Our Father, we do thank You again that You've gathered us in this place, every one. We thank You for the way already that You visited us. We thank You for Your marvelous presentation of Yourself through the children, and just such a miracle that You have done in bringing all of this together.

We pray now as we look again in Your Word that by Your Holy Spirit, You would get beyond the sacred page, and that You would get beyond any human words that are spoken, and that You would communicate with us each one and corporately, and make Your heart known unto us. We thank You in advance that this is Your delight. Shine forth, Thou who dwells between the cherubim.

We ask to see Jesus once again. In Jesus' precious name, Amen. I'll ask you, if you would, to open your Bibles, please, to Jonah and the fourth chapter.

We look now at this final chapter, and let me just sort of review. I'm sure you're familiar with all that we've touched upon. The theme of the book has to do with God dealing with the crisis in the heart of one man, a prophet.

And God reached down to this prophet who had an anti-missionary heart and a non-missionary heart, and God determined that He was going to turn this man into a sign. And by the grace of God, He has given us the revelation of that process. Listen again as I read from Luke chapter 11.

As the crowds were increasing, He began to say, This generation is wicked, it seeks for a sign, and yet no sign will be given unto it but the sign of Jonah. The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. And we've tried to show how this marvelous book unfolds the process by which God turns a man, a woman, His child into a sign.

The story begins with Jonah running from the presence of the Lord, resisting the idea of being a missionary channel. In fact, he had no clue about all of that. And God brought him to the place where he finally knew the life of Jesus.

In chapter 1, God chased him down to the place where he made full surrender. In chapter 2, God did the deeper work and taught him that He was on level ground with all those that needed the undeserved mercy of God. He needed it.

He needed it. God put him in the shoes of the heathen until he realized it. And then in chapter 3, we saw that God surprised him and raised him from the dead, gave him a life that was not his own, and he became a sign.

He became Christ unto the Ninevites. They heard the gospel. They heard from his preaching the wrath of God.

They saw in his person their only hope of salvation. He was a picture of Jesus. And because they saw Jesus, they repented.

That brings us to chapter 4. As we've suggested, God's not finished with him. God must bring him now to understand the end of everything. He must change his focus and change it forever.

And God will bring him now to understand that the divine end is the satisfaction of his heart, as our children so wonderfully told us. Jonah chapter 4. As we come to Jonah chapter 4, the first thing that hits us are a thousand and one questions about this chapter. And the first question that came to me was, why didn't the book end in chapter 3? I thought, I speak as a fool, that would be a better ending.

Why not just end with chapter 3? God has mercy on the Ninevites. They see Christ finally in a man raised from the dead. They see the life of Christ, a half a million people turned to the Lord.

The disobedient prophet has become the obedient prophet, and everyone lived happily ever after. That's how chapter 3 ends. I wanted to write in my Bible after chapter 3, mission accomplished.

And then I looked at chapter 4 and I said, not quite. What's this all about? And then the second question has to do with that. What in the world is going on with Jonah? This man was raised from the dead.

If we follow the spiritual principle, he's come to the place where he surrendered everything. He's embraced the grace of God. He's identified with Jesus in his death, his burial, his resurrection.

He's experienced supernatural life. And we look in chapter 4, the man is angry and he's depressed and he's pouting. And he wants to die.

Is that a way for a man who's just been raised from the dead to act? Especially it's confusing when you tie it in to those spiritual truths. Didn't he learn anything from the storm? How could you be in a place like this and not learn something from the Lord? Three days and three nights in the belly of the fish. And when you turn to chapter 4, honestly, it looks like he's right back where he started.

It looks like there's been no change in his heart that he still hates Nineveh. And he's still anti-missionary and non-missionary. He said, well, what's all this change? How's he conformed to Christ if this happens? Has he forgotten all the mercy that he received? And so I don't know if those questions struck you, but as I came under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to study this chapter, those are the questions that beg to be answered in my heart.

And as I looked at that, I said, what is this all about? The work of Jonah is not quite finished. There's yet a work of transformation that needs to be done. Now, to get to the heart of the Lord in this chapter, I think it's important to at least look at Jonah's attitude.

Look at what is going on in this man's heart. Now, don't get me wrong. I'm not going to try to take him off the hook.

I'm not going to try to defend Jonah. But I think it's very important that we understand what's going on in his heart. What is he thinking? After all he's been through, after all he's tasted of the goodness of God, the Lord has chased him down.

The Lord has done a deep work in his life. By undeserved mercy, he's been raised from the dead. He's been used in a mighty way.

What happened? Let me try to set before you some possibilities. I'm going to ask you to follow along as I read the first five verses. It greatly displeased Jonah and he became angry.

He prayed to the Lord and said, Please, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my own country? Therefore, in order to forestall this, I fled to Tarshish, for I knew that You are a gracious and a compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in loving kindness and one who relents concerning calamity. Therefore, now, O Lord, please take my life from me. Death is better to me than life.

And the Lord said to him, Do you have a good reason to be angry? Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it. There he made a shelter for himself and sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen to the city. It greatly displeased Jonah.

It. What's the it? Well, if you go back to 310, when God saw their deeds that they turned from their wicked way, God relented concerning the calamity which He had declared He would bring upon them. He did not do it.

Now, evidently, Jonah was disappointed that God didn't judge Nineveh. He said He was going to judge within 40 days, and He didn't do it, as Rick Baker would ask, What's that all about? Well, those are the kinds of questions you need to ask. Clearly, Jonah is angry about the way things turned out that God didn't judge.

Let me suggest some possibilities, and along the way, to make it intensely practical. I'll try to take the facts and look at the principle side, and then we'll move in the book, in the chapter, to God's preciousness. May God help us as we do that.

Well, one reason God may have included this chapter, I'm not saying this is everything or this is the answer, but one reason He may have included this chapter is to teach us that resurrected Christians haven't arrived. I mean, you've got to see that when you read this chapter. Just because we've surrendered to the Lord, just because we've embraced pure grace, and just because we've experienced the life of God living in us, that doesn't mean that there won't come a day when we have a controversy with the Lord.

That doesn't mean that as living Christians, we won't someday be found angry and depressed. And pouting and complaining and wanting to die under some gourd. Maybe that's why He gave us the chapter, so we don't get the idea that resurrected Christians have already arrived.

I know that's a fact, a Bible fact. And I know it's a fact for those who have most known the Lord. You don't have to be a seminary professor to know that at any moment when you take your eyes off the Lord, anything's possible.

Any Christian is capable of any sin at any time when he takes his eyes off the Lord. I like to think God's begun to teach me some of these principles. I've surrendered my life to Jesus.

I've tasted a little of the pure grace of God. I've experienced some of the life of God in me, if I take my eyes off Christ, get out of my way. It's amazing how the flesh will sometime come back again.

And it seems like we've come so far, and we're never going to have that again. Maybe that's why God gave us this chapter. But I think it's a little deeper than that.

That's a principle, of course. But I think that Jonah's anger had to do a little bit with the confusion that he didn't know what the real issues were. Even though God had done all that for him, he still lacked direction in his life.

He lacked focus. He lacked purpose. He didn't seem to have the single eye, the one direction.

Some try to explain his anger by saying that his issue was ministry. That's my issue. I'm a prophet of God.

And somehow all of this experience that he went through was affecting his ministry. He was in danger of losing his reputation as a prophet. He was a prophet of God.

God said in Deuteronomy 18, the law concerning the prophet. How do you know a prophet's true if his word comes to pass? And he goes out there and he says, in 40 days Nineveh will be overturned. And it didn't happen.

And that was his issue, his ministry. Some think, Jeremiah 28, 9 says, when the word of the prophet comes to pass, that prophet will be known as one the Lord has sent. And so Jonah may have thought, my

reputation as a prophet is at stake here.

God's ruined my ministry. I might as well die. There's nothing else to live for, my whole ministry.

That's the issue. I'm going out with the word of the Lord, and then it doesn't happen. Forty days come and forty days pass, and God didn't do what God said he's going to do.

I have two comments to make about that possibility. The first comment is this. It's true.

It's a Bible truth. The balance is true. In many cases, before the Lord can really use a man or a woman or a work, he has to destroy their reputation.

That's often very, very true. God loves us too much to let our reputation as a servant of God get in the way of serving God. And if he has to shatter our reputation, he's going to do it.

Our Lord Jesus himself was of no reputation. And he's not going to let our reputation hinder us. If that's the case in this book, that's probably open to question.

My second comment about that is, unless Jonah was afraid of returning back to Israel and looking like a false prophet when he got home, I don't see how that would apply to him. And the reason I say that is because I don't really think Deuteronomy 18 meant anything to the Ninevites. This is the evidence of a true prophet.

I don't think they're going to say, well, look at that. Forty days have come and gone. He promised we'd be incinerated.

Didn't happen. What a false prophet he is. Well, they'd be happy if it didn't happen.

They wouldn't be thinking about, oh, what a terrible guy. He didn't fulfill his word. They wouldn't be thinking about that.

So I don't know if the fullness of Jonah's anger can be understood in terms of that. But I think when you read the record, Jonah had many issues. He was running in a lot of directions.

And one of his issues was ministry, my name, my reputation, my prophecy. He had another issue, another possibility. Results.

He didn't see results from his preaching. He was ignorant. I don't mean stupid, though that might be true too.

But ignorant. There was something he didn't know. You know, we assume, by the way, chapter 3 ends and chapter 4 begins.

We assume that Jonah was angry because he knew that God forgave the Ninevites. That he knew that they repented. Get the idea that Jonah saw all the people in sackcloth, and saw them putting sackcloth on the cows, and sackcloth on the dogs, and on the cats, and every animal's in sackcloth.

Let me ask this question. Did Jonah know they repented? Think about it. Did Jonah know that they repented? According to the record, he was only in the city one day.

Or at least it's implied that he left after that day. He only had ministry for a day. And when he went in, he knew what they were like.

They were a wicked people, like our young people sang about. They were a terrible people. I think the last thing Jonah ever expected was that they'd repent.

I mean, he went in to preach, and these are a wicked people. And he thought, as one of our teens gave testimony, that they would just blow it off. He didn't expect them to repent.

And he didn't know when the fire was going to fall. I have an idea. When God didn't say, go back again, he couldn't get out of there fast enough.

And then he set up his little booth, you know, his shelter. And he sits over on the hill. Remember, if the descriptions are correct, there was at least one wall a hundred feet high around.

Probably five walls a hundred feet high. And he's on the outside. He's waiting for smoke.

He's waiting to see what happened in Sodom and Gomorrah. He's sitting out on the hillside. It takes time for that repentance.

It takes time for the Word to get up to the king, and for the king to give a proclamation, and for that proclamation to be carried out. And he's sitting behind a hundred foot wall. I don't think he knew that they repented.

There's no evidence that he knew. I can't imagine any heart, even Jonah's, as anti-missionary and non-missionary as it was. I can't picture any believer who knows that somebody in reality turned to the Lord, and not be thrilled with that.

I can't imagine if Jonah knew a half a million people, in reality, turned to God, that his heart wouldn't have been thrilled. I think his issue was wrong. I think he said, I preached and nothing happened.

Isn't it amazing? When Jonah thought God was doing least, in reality, God was doing the most. And I think that's part of being raised from the dead. I think the idea is that God will not let you know what He's doing.

And God didn't let Jonah know how God was using him. He was bringing a half a million people to the Lord using Jonah. And Jonah didn't even know it.

Very seldom will someone who really knows the life of Christ realize how God is using them. The results are his business, not your business. They're his business, not my business.

The results belong to the Lord. And over and over again, those who are raised from the dead, it will seem like nothing's happening. God's not doing it.

Where's the great work of God? I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall when God told him. You say, did God ever tell him? Sure He did. He wrote the book.

Right? We know He knew. I'll bet he was so embarrassed and so ashamed when he said, oh God, I didn't know. I didn't know you used me.

I thought I preached and nothing happened. I thought you didn't use me. His issue first was my ministry, my prophecy, my service.

God said, Jonah, that's not the issue. Now I'm angry because there's no results. Jonah, that's not the issue.

The issue is not the results. It's deeper than that. Now I'm sure all these things overlap.

I know Jonah hasn't arrived. And at any moment when we take our eyes off the Lord, we can fall. God brings us to the place where we say, well, all right, my reputation means nothing and my ministry means that's not the issue.

I can't look at that. And I can't look at the results. Jonah, it's even more basic than that.

Jonah had another issue. Theology had to do with the knowledge of the Lord. Remember, Jonah didn't have a clear view of the Lord.

It was tragically deficient. Jonah had this idea that the attributes of God clashed, that they didn't reconcile. In verse 2 of 4, I knew thou art a gracious God and a compassionate God, slow to anger, abundant in lovingkindness, and on the other side, one who relents concerning calamity.

You're so gracious and loving and kind and compassionate and merciful and forgiven. You don't have it in you to judge. You're too soft.

You're soft on sin. And of course, all of that calls into question God's holiness and God's unchangeability and so on. He thought that was the issue.

It's God's nature. It's God's character. I don't understand how this, and I don't understand God, and He's too big.

One illustration that that's not the issue, did you notice? Now, we know that's His view. God's attributes contradict one another. Wouldn't you think God would straighten that out? God ignores it.

That's not the issue. The issue is not theology. God doesn't try to justify Himself.

It would have been so easy for God, and I speak as a fool. If I were God, I'd have put my arm around Jonah and said, Jonah, come here, sit down. Let me talk to you.

You are confused about my love and my holiness. Let me straighten you out. And I would try to explain how they blend together and how a holy God can be just and justifier.

I'd try to put that together. I'd say, Jonah, what you don't know is they repented. You expected me to judge them because they're wicked.

You thought they didn't get judged because I'm soft. What you don't know is they repented. God could have explained that to him.

Not a word. You know why? Because theology is not the issue. God doesn't try to defend Himself.

God doesn't try to straighten them out. God doesn't try to get them to balance all of those attributes of God. He doesn't say a word about that because He's reaching down.

There's a deeper problem. Jonah, the issue is not you. It's not ministry.

Jonah, the issue is not results. Get your eyes off results. Jonah, the issue is not theology.

Making sure that you have this great creedal statement and that you're orthodox in every expression of your knowledge of God. That's not the issue. Jonah had another issue.

Talk about leaning unto your own understanding. Jonah wanted to understand what was going on. And he didn't understand.

And he made his understanding the issue. And Jonah honestly believed with all of his heart. Don't forget, he's not some wicked man.

This is a prophet of God. He has come to surrender. Embrace the grace of God.

He's raised from the dead. But he honestly thought, God made a mistake here. God made a mistake here.

And the reason he knew that is because he knew better than God. God never consulted Jonah on this whole issue of what he was going to do. Now, before we get too hard on Jonah, remember, it's our natural hearts to lean on our own understanding.

And over and over again to believe that we know better than God. I'll just take it out of my own life so I don't convict you. I think God hasn't saved some people that I think should be saved.

And I know some people that are still sick that should be healed. He didn't do it. I think he's wrong.

I speak as a fool. Understand that. I think God took some people home that I think should have stayed on the earth.

I know better. God didn't do it my way. God closed some doors that I was sure should be opened.

God opened some doors that I thought should be left shut. God didn't provide those things I thought he should provide. That promotion.

That advance. That raise in salary. That life partner.

God's not doing things the way I think they ought to be done. Great day. If God only knew the good I could do for his name and cause.

He'd let me win the lottery. How I could use that for him. Jonah thought it would be better for all concerned if God did things his way.

It'd be better for his name. It would be better for his reputation. It would be better for God's honor.

It would be better for God's glory. It would be better for the people of God. Israel would certainly be better for them.

The 120,000 infants that God spared grew up, got married, had babies. Their babies grew up, became soldiers, and attacked Israel. Jonah was right.

What he feared came to pass. But he thought he knew better than God. And he was leaning on his own understanding.

And did you notice where that led him? To this depression. Look at verse 3. Now, O Lord, take my life from me. Death is better than life.

Verse 9 or 8, When the sun came up, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head. He became faint and begged with all his soul to die, saying, Death is better than life. He desponded.

If ever there was a day of Jonah's, it's today. I am amazed at the emails and the letters and the calls I get from depressed people. There's a spirit of heaviness on the people of God today.

I can't believe it. And all these counselors and psychologists and psychiatrists, and everybody's running here and there and taking this pill and that pill. I'll tell you the cause of Jonah's depression.

And I'll tell you the cause of all depression. No exception to this. It's not knowing what the real issue is.

It's not having a focus. It's believing we know better than God knows, and His ways are not higher than our ways. We think we know best.

And I'm going to sit here until God sees it my way. That's what Jonah said. I know what should be done, God.

You're not doing what should be done. And I'm depressed about it. And I'm going to sit under here, under this tree, until I die.

And sadly, some Christians are under the gourd, and they're going to stay there until they die, because God won't do things their way. Two times God asked, Do you have a good reason to be angry? Notice what He didn't ask. He didn't ask, Do you have a reason? Because He could have come up with a reason.

Yeah, I got a lot of reasons. Do you have a good reason? There is no good reason to be angry with the Lord. There is no good reason to be angry with His will.

If He's put you in a place and He's allowed something in your life, you bow down by His grace and thank Him for that. He, believe it or not, He knows best. He knows more than we know.

In order to communicate His heart, God said, Look, you don't have the right issue. It's not you. It's not ministry.

It's not service. It's not your reputation. It's not results, what you're seeing.

It's not having good theology. It's not your own understanding of what should be. You're going in all these crazy directions, Jonah.

And God then says, I'm going to reach down, and I'm going to touch bedrock, and I'm going to do the last change in making a sign. He has learned to surrender. He has embraced the grace of God.

He's been raised from the dead. He's learned to live by the life of God. But He hasn't seen this, and He's still aimless.

He's running after missions and running after ministry and running after a reputation and running after good theology and trying to straighten all this out and understand the will of God and all that kind of thing. And God uses the gourd. God uses the plant to settle forever the basic issue and work in Him the final

change.

Let's look at that together, and God help us to see it. Verse 5, Jonah went out from the city and sat east of it, and there he made a shelter for himself, sat under it in the shade until he could see what would happen to the city. And so the Lord God appointed a plant, and it grew up over Jonah to be a shade over his head and deliver him from his discomfort.

And Jonah was extremely happy about the plant, but God appointed a worm when dawn came the next day, and it attacked the plant, and it withered. If you want to know what that worm looked like, I don't think I'll ever forget that. But when the sun came up, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on Jonah's head so that he became faint and begged with all his soul to die, saying, death is better to me than life.

Then God said to Jonah, do you have a good reason to be angry about the plant? And he said, I have good reason to be angry. Even to death. Then the Lord said, you had compassion on the plant for which you did not work, which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight.

Should I not have compassion on Nineveh, the great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know the difference between the right and the left hand, as well as many animals? What's that all about? What was God trying to accomplish with this wonderful plant? Appointing the plant, appointing the worm, appointing the east wind, commanding the sun to shine upon it. What is that all about? What did God accomplish with that object lesson? God had to raise Jonah to a new level, to a new height. He had to raise him up where he would learn to rest in that which was enduring and solid.

Jonah's attitude was all confused. He had no direction. He still had no... He didn't understand the eternal issue.

Notice, if you would, at the end, chapter 4, verse 11, as the book closes, God says, Jonah, I want you to see one more time your own heart, and then I want you to see my heart. And it was the revelation of Jonah's heart that did it, and the revelation of God's heart that did it. That's the final change.

At the end, chapter 4, verse 11, God called attention to three things. The city of Nineveh, 120,000 infants, and many animals. Jonah didn't seem to care much about a half a million people.

Jonah didn't seem to have much care about 120,000 little babies that hadn't reached the age of accountability. Jonah didn't seem to care very much about thousands of innocent animals that would be destroyed if God judged the city. But he was extremely happy about one plant whose life was a day, a moment.

Now, you can't compare human life with animal life. Man created in the image of God, destined to live forever. You can't compare that with animal life.

Just so, you can't compare animal life to plant life. Just before Hashua, I ran over a rabbit. It did.

It killed me all the day long. I just felt so bad that I ran over that silly rabbit. It's his fault.

But I ran over a rabbit, and it bothered me a lot. I don't think I would have felt that way if I ran over a daisy, or a dandelion, or even a rose. I just don't think I'd have had the same emotion if I killed a plant that I had when I killed that rabbit.

My dad, my stepdad, just lost a sheepdog. Him and the dog, they're one. They just lived together, and he lost it.

I'll tell you, it tore him up. It tore him up all the years he was with that dog, and then he lost the dog, and that was a big thing to him. And here is Jonah.

He has no compassion on human life, and no compassion on animal life. But he's in love with this plant. And God begins to show him His heart.

And He begins to show him where his affection is. And then God continues the object lesson, and He sends a worm. Or the Hebrew might be a species of worm.

It might be a lot of these little creatures. And this worm comes, and I don't have time to develop it, but how many times God will, in order to enhance the affections of our heart, raise up, for a moment of time, something that we love, and then wipe it out, blast it the next day. He's not afraid to blast our garden, to unsettle us from finding any comfort in that which is rooted in this earth.

What an apt illustration of the vanity of life, this gourd which is rooted in this earth, whose life is just a moment, and it fades away, and Jonah is all attached to this thing. And then God sends His east wind. And the purpose of the east wind and the hot sun was to make Jonah faint.

Because if God is going to reveal Himself, He's going to... don't despise it when God brings you to helplessness, when God makes you faint. Every forward step in helplessness is a forward step in the knowledge of God, and in the not sure revelation of His own heart. Now let me show you what I think is the great revelation of this gourd.

He thought His issue was His ministry. He thought His issue was His reputation. His issue, He thought, was results.

His issue, He thought, was having a good theology, understanding what should be happening, and all that kind of thing. God says, let me give you the real issue. Chapter 4, verse 10, You had compassion on the plant for which you did not work, and which you did not cause to grow, which came up overnight and perished overnight.

Jonah, verse 6, Jonah, why were you so happy about the plant? And the answer is, I'm paraphrasing, but this is the point. Because, God, you don't understand, that plant ministered to me. It made me happy.

It gave me comfort. It brought me pleasure. It satisfied my heart.

And then God raised him to the level above, and He said, study your joy. What makes you so happy? Jonah, what you don't understand, you thought the issue was the missionary, you. It's not about you, Jonah.

You thought the issue was them, the Ninevites. It's not even about them. It's about me, Jonah.

It makes me happy. It brings me pleasure. The goal is my joy.

Don't you see, Jonah? What? The reason you were happy is because it brought you joy. The reason I'm happy, that brings me joy. And Jonah saw for the first time that the goal, the direction, what he was missing, he had all these other issues.

And the issue now, how to satisfy the heart of God. To satisfy Him. His joy.

What makes Him happy? What pleases Him? And in that moment, God worked that final change. The question comes, and we'll close with this, did it work? Was Jonah changed? Captain Joe or whoever it was, he said it worked. It did work.

Let me give you two evidences from chapter 4 that Jonah was changed. That it worked. The first evidence is this.

He wrote the book. He wrote the book of Jonah. And did you notice how he wrote the book? He's not trying to protect his reputation anymore.

He knew that Ed Miller would think he was a big jerk when he read this book. And he didn't care. Because it's not about him anymore.

And the way he wrote the book tells us that there was this glorious change. And did you notice how the book ends? God gets the last word. And the law of silence is over Jonah's lips.

He doesn't say a word. It worked. This book, like the book of Acts, stops.

But it doesn't end. It goes on. And Jonah had come to the place, I've surrendered to the Lord.

I've embraced the grace of God. Christ lives in me. And now I understand all those issues, all those changes, all those attitude things.

I don't have to worry about results. I don't have to worry about my reputation. And I don't have to worry about my theology being all straight and connecting all the dots.

And I don't have to worry about that. And I don't have to worry about understanding. All I have to worry about, have I brought pleasure to Him? Have I satisfied His heart? And He had a new direction.

And may I suggest, brothers and sisters, as we leave Hoshua, this is the sign, and no other sign will be given to this generation. God is looking for a people who have surrendered. God is looking for a people who have embraced the grace of God, salvations of the Lord.

God is looking for a people who have identified with the Lord Jesus in His death and burial and resurrection and are allowing Christ to live in them. And God is looking for a people who don't have issues but have a direction. I live to please Him.

I live to satisfy His heart. If God works that in us, thousands will come to Christ. That's the sign that He has given.

That's what He's doing in our hearts. That's what He's doing in our lives. It may take many storms for us to get there.

It may take a few of these to get us there. Many gourds may have to be clipped down as God moves your affections from the things of this world, the changing, fading, passing things to His heart. But once we see those great principles, that's the sign.

And may God work it for us individually and corporately. Father, we thank You so much that You had the last word in this book and that Your child was brought to silence and worship and humility. Thank You for

clipping our gourd.

Thank You for the east wind and for the storms and for the fish and for all the ways You work in our heart to conform us to the Lord Jesus Christ. Lord, we know You want to reach the world and You want to go to the mission vehicle. And by Your grace, we offer ourselves as missionary channels.

Go in us, individually, in families, and corporately as the expression of Christ in the world. Have Your sign, we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

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