

# Angry With God

by J. Glyn Owen

---

*The sermon explores the mystery of Jonah's iniquity and God's mercy, highlighting the importance of trusting God with our reputation and our lives.*

**Duration:** 50:55

**Scripture:** Psalm 46:1, Psalm 103:8, Psalm 136:26, Jonah 4:4-11, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28

**Topics:** "Anger"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the story of Jonah and his rebellion against God. He highlights Jonah's desire to die and his grumbling because of his discomfort. The preacher emphasizes that Jonah's rebellion and sulking are a result of his lack of shelter. Despite Jonah's spiritual lapse, God pursues him and renews him spiritually. The sermon also mentions God's timing and the probing question He asks Jonah about his anger.

---

## Transcript

We're grateful to the Lord for this lovely day, this lovely morning in which to meet again in his sanctuary. And we turn this morning to the concluding study in the book of the prophet Jonah. I don't know how eager you are to get away from Jonah.

Some are loath to come to him. But we have learned quite a number of lessons as we have pondered over these three chapters to date. And I trust that as we come to the last chapter, we shall again find that the Lord has really something to say to us here.

You might find it useful, therefore, if you keep the book open in front of you, because I'm going to be referring to the text as we work our way through. Angry with God, angry and angry with God. That's our subject.

That the events recorded in this chapter should ever have taken place points, I believe, to the dark mystery of iniquity in the life of this man who was a prophet of God, and evidently a man who was a good man, but a man who at this point in his life is certainly sinking to a new low of rebellion. That God should nevertheless have seen fit to pursue the prophet and to deal with him even in the face of this most serious spiritual lapse is a matter of great joy and thanksgiving to all of us who ponder these things seriously. That God should go after this sulking, soured man, this prophet gone wrong, and not let him go.

Just as he brought him up from the depths of the sea in chapter one, so now he brings him up from the depths of despair and out of the clutches of a death wish in chapter four, and brings him back and renews him again spiritually this, I say, is a matter of great grace. So that the mystery of iniquity is countered in this chapter by the ministry of the Almighty and the ministry of God to his servant is effective in delivering him out of the bondage of his iniquity. Now let's look then first of all at the mystery of iniquity and then we'll turn to the ministry of the Almighty.

The mystery of Jonah's iniquity, beginning with verse 10 and going on to chapter four and verse three. Put in a nutshell, the chapter first unfolds the imponderable mystery that a man believed what Jonah believed, who had experienced what Jonah had already experienced, who had been privileged to be the mouthpiece of God in a movement of his spirit that was going to turn a whole city of the dimensions of Nineveh in penitence to God, that a man of this background and of this experience should find it in his heart to be angry at his God to the point that he wants to bully the Almighty to dance to his tune and even to blackmail the Almighty that if he doesn't, it'll be a very bad day for him. This, I repeat, is a mystery before us, the mystery, the sheer mystery of iniquity.

It is a mystery of a miraculously delivered rebel, a graciously pardoned and subsequently honored man of God now turned sour and sulking and yet I'm very much aware as I say that that it may well be that some of us are in that condition this morning. It is very rare to preach the word of God and to expound it but that there is someone in the house of the Lord who's sulking and churlish and sour with God. And in your spirit there is a spleen.

I trust and pray most sincerely that if there is anyone here this morning in that spirit that you will find this word of God through the prophet Jonah in chapter four like a shaft from the throne casting light across your way and that it will win you back as certainly to a place in the heart and in the mind and in the purpose of God as it brought Jonah there. Now let's look first of all at the cause of Jonah's anger. Verse 10 in chapter three.

When God saw that what they did, that is the Ninevites, how they turned from their evil way, God repented of the evil which he had said he would do to them and he did not do it. God had threatened imminent judgment, judgment in 40 days. He never even said that he would not judge them if they repented.

But the message via the prophet Jonah was this, in 40 days Nineveh is to be judged. Now the prophet Jeremiah very clearly enunciates certain principles that always underlie God's threats and God's promises. The context may not always refer to them but the prophet tells us that there are certain principles which are always operative when God threatens or when God promises.

Let's read it. Read this passage, it's found in Jeremiah chapter 18 verses seven to 10. I'll read it from the RSV.

If at any time I declare, says God, if I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation concerning which I have spoken turns from its evil, I will repent of the evil that I intended to do to it. And then, and if at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom that I will build up and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, not listening to my voice, then I will repent of the good which I have intended to do it. Put in our current terminology, all God's threats and promises are morally conditioned.

You break the rules, you transgress the moral principles involved, and if God has made promise to you as parents bringing their children to baptism, you transgress the law, you break your oaths and your promises, then says the Lord, I am free. There is no good in it. Or on the other hand, if I have promised judgment to you and you repent and you cease to be rebellious, then I will forget about my threat of judgment and I will come to you in mercy.

That's what the prophet Jeremiah says. It's a principle written into the word of God, whether you find it in different places or not, it is there, says the prophet. Now, in the case of the arrogant and grossly perverse Ninevites, God had threatened to meet their unchecked sin with imminent judgment, judgment in 40 days.

But you remember what happened. Jonah went not simply as the herald of the message, but he went, as Jesus tells us in Luke 11, 30, as a sign. This implies that Nineveh knew something of what had happened to Jonah.

He was a sign to them. A sign of what? A sign of the power of God, saving him from the belly of the fish, saving him from the depths of the Mediterranean, and a sign not only of the power of God, but of the grace of God. And this man goes himself a message, his very existence a sign.

He goes and he declares to Nineveh, 40 days and Nineveh will be destroyed. You can imagine the Ninevites listening, knowing evidently what they knew about Jonah. Jonah's God is the living God.

He was first angry with his prophet, and he would not let him run away and get away with it, run away from duty. He pursued him, but he was in charge of the deeps. He was the Lord who could provide the great fish.

He was the Lord who delivered him again, and he was the Lord who had mercy upon him. This God is a God, the kind of which we've never heard before. Our gods of idols and idols don't come up to this.

And in the marvel of God's grace, the people of the utterly rampantly pagan city of Nineveh repented. Everybody was pleased, except Jonah. We read in verse one, but it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry.

Now look at the complaint which Jonah expressed in what is supposed to be his prayer to God. Some prayers, you know, are only prayers in name. They're not prayers in content, and they're never prayers in spirit.

Only in name, we call them prayers, but they're nothing of the kind. Here is a prayer that was never a prayer. And he prayed to the Lord and said, I pray thee, Lord, but listen what he does.

Is not this, it's an argument. He's throwing things back into the teeth of God. Is not this what I said when I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee the Tarshish, for I knew that thou art a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and repentant of evil.

The angered prophet now explains the reasons for his initial rebellion and refusal to be the herald of God's judgment upon the pagan city of Nineveh. It was not that he disagreed with God's anger against Nineveh. No, no, no, far from it.

He thought that Nineveh should have been judged a long time ago. And he would have been perfectly happy to announce judgment upon Nineveh if we rightly judge from his spirit and attitude. But what grieved Jonah and inspired his attempted flight to Tarshish was the fear, no, the deep conviction that God is slow to anger.

And if the people of Nineveh will show any signs of a change of heart, that God would repent and not judge them. And Jonah felt that that would not be playing true to him. He was angry.

Now, why should he be angry? Let's try and enlarge upon this for a moment because I think it is important to the whole picture. Why should Jonah be angry that God would not carry out his threat upon Nineveh? Why should he be angry that God should show mercy toward Nineveh? Many reasons have been suggested. I want to choose two of which I believe two of the most important and the most worthy perhaps.

The first possible explanation is related to what we may call Jonah's exclusive nationalism. Now, Jonah was rightly, rightly aware of the greatness, of the uniqueness of his Jewish heritage. He knew the history of the nation.

He knew that God had called Abraham. He knew that God had made promises through Abraham. And he was aware of the privilege that was his as a member of that nation.

But he became very nationalistic. And he saw, or at least he thought he saw, that in the light of God's calling to Abraham and to the nation through Abraham and to successive generations of Abram's children, he thought that he could see that God's purposes were exclusively for this community. And he excluded everybody else from the mercy of the God of Abraham.

And he shut everybody else out. And what made the thing, what made the spirit more tragic, of course, was this that Jonah owed so much to the mercy of God. Jonah was not only a creature being sustained by God, but he's been miraculously saved from death by God.

And he's been honored again by God in being called the second time to be his prophet. But this exclusivism has got into his bones. And he can't possibly imagine God having mercy on the Ninevites when the Assyrians, of which Nineveh was the capital city, when the Assyrians at that very moment were such a menace to Israel.

Now, before you judge him too harshly, let's be very careful because, you know, this iniquitous weed can too easily grow in your heart and mine. I'm not so sure, but that all of us at some time or another have resented God showing mercy to people that we didn't like. Sometimes it's been people of a different color skin.

Sometimes it's been people from another segment of society. Sometimes it's been people who are culturally not our cup of tea. And sometimes in particular, and I think these folk feel more or less justified, but God should have mercy upon people who have made war or are meaning to make war against our nation.

Touches a raw spot. Oh, let him have mercy upon other people, but such and such a nation is a menace to us. Our very existence is at stake.

How can God have mercy upon these people? As the Ninevites were a threat to Israel at that time. You have it in the New Testament, of course. You have this spirit.

It was a sheer mystery that shook the very foundation of the early church that God should have mercy upon a Saul of Tarsus. Now Saul was the arch persecutor of the Christian church. And he had massive intellectual powers as well as means of morally persuading people.

He was a gigantic mind and had a big heart and was willing to spend and be spent for his cause. Even as a Jew, he was a Pharisee before he became a Christian. That God should have mercy upon the arch persecutor of the Christian church was a staggering moment in the experience of the early church.

How can it be? You remember, there was no one in Jerusalem willing to have fellowship with Saul when he came there first. I'm wrong, there was one. It's one of the saddest chapters in the whole history of the Christian church.

Saul comes to Jerusalem and all the saints are giving him a cold shoulder and they're keeping away from him. He's the persecutor, you see. Well, what's he doing here? Is he going to pray in the name of Jesus? Is it genuine? Can we trust him? There was one man, Barnabas, who put his arms around him and called him brother Saul.

No, no, this spirit didn't die with Jonah and it hasn't expressed itself only in Jonah. There can be an exclusivism in your heart and mine this morning as rabid and as awkward and as wrong in the sight of God as ever appeared in Jonah here. But it was wrong in Jonah and it is wrong in me and wrong in you, wherever it appears.

There's a second reason. The second probable reason, and there may be two, of course. These two may have to go together.

There was the fear of his own reputation as a prophet. Now, this was not without some basis to it. You see, in the book of Deuteronomy, chapter 18 and verse 22, we read these words.

When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.

And that's Deuteronomy 18 and verse 22. So evidently, you see, Jonah thought like this. If I'm going to announce judgment to Nineveh and to say that it's coming in 40 days and it doesn't come in 40 days, well, then the people are going to brand me as a false prophet and so here I am.

My good name is gone. My character is lost in the day. You say that's very reasonable.

Well, now hang on for a moment, will you? Hang on for a moment. Who is Jonah? What has God done for Jonah? What does Jonah know about the power of God? Anything? Of course he does. Rarely did a man, a human being, know the power and the grace of God to take care of him as Jonah did.

Jonah was thrown into the depths of the Mediterranean and he describes himself swimming down the bottom of the seas with a seaweed around his neck, God cared for him. God sent a fish to bring him up and he kept him in the belly of the big fish for three days and three nights and then delivered him safely on land and then God called him back into his service again and God made him his mouthpiece in Nineveh

and he saw a movement of the Spirit of God, the kind of which few people ever see in a lifetime. Can't I trust a God like that with my reputation? See, that's the point.

Now again, don't let's be too hasty in judging Jonah though we have to do it here but you see the point is, can you trust your reputation in the hand of God to do something that is rather difficult? I find that when it comes to a matter of sheer consecration, there are many people who are prepared to put their bodies, even their businesses, even their homes and their children in the hand of God who keep their reputation in their own hands. Listen my friend, if you want to be a servant of the most high God in very truth, there comes a point when you have to put your reputation, your supposedly good name into his keeping and let him look after it and if he can bring you up from the depths of the sea and send his large fish, he can look after your good name, he will vindicate you in good time, never mind what men think. I would never be in the ministry if I didn't believe this but it was taught me in my very early Christian days.

My father in God was charged with an immoral wrong and everybody talked about him and he wouldn't open his mouth until the day came when God stepped in. God stepped in and when God steps in, the man is cleared, the man is clean and if God knows he's clean, then that's the only thing that matters but it's a very humbling thing for those who dishonor and disrespect the servant of God and have a share in castigating his name and they don't understand what's going on. The point is you see that Jonah has gone through all these experiences without learning to trust his God.

You and I can do exactly the same thing. We can go through all the experiences of life not seeing God, not recognizing what he's doing for us and though there are miracles that have happened in our lives, we're forgetful of them and the climax of Jonah's prayer is terribly sad at this point. We read in verse three, therefore now, O Lord, take my life from me.

I beseech thee for it is better for me to die than to live. In his prayer in the waters of the Mediterranean and in the belly of the great fish, Jonah's concern had been to live. Now he prays to die.

In the former prayer, he spoke of offering a sacrifice to God with a song and of unflinchingly honoring the vow that he had made when he was in the deep but here he's forgotten all about his vows. Here he's sulking, he's rebellious, he's gone totally wrong. Frankly, brothers and sisters, if you were God, I know I shouldn't talk like this really, forgive me, will you? If you were God, if you stood, if you sat on the throne of the universe and your people were more godly and more honoring of you when they're in trouble than when they are honored, what would you do? Wouldn't you keep the kettle boiling? Wouldn't you keep them on the edge of a volcano? Wouldn't you keep them awake, worrying about this and about that if worry brings them more into your arms and more to your feet? Let me tell you, one of the things that is breaking in upon my soul these days is this, it's the mystery of the fact that we have so many days and nights and weeks and months and years that are free of trouble because when we are free of trouble, the tragedy is we all too easily forget our God but when trouble comes, when the storm comes, when we're in the depths of the ocean, all we cry to God but not afterwards.

See, it all shows the marvel of God's mercy. We've sung it, we've sung these words, the love of God is broader than the measures of man's mind and the heart of the eternal is most wonderfully kind that he has grace toward us even when we forget his most gracious dealings toward us but here we have the mystery of iniquity. Now let's turn to the other side, the ministry of the Almighty from verses four to the end of the chapter.

The rest of the chapter then deals with a gracious ministry of God in order to deal with the problem of his sulking servant. Do not miss the point that the grace of God is such. He will not let Jonah go yet.

He will no more leave Jonah in the bonds of iniquity than he would leave him in the belly of the fish. Now don't miss that. You can get so involved with the fish that you miss the other things in this great book.

God would not leave him in his sulks any more than God would leave him in the sea. God personally ministers to his sullen servant in order to bring him out of this dark and dismal spirit of his and renew him again. Oh, our God is a wonderful God.

Since there ought to be worship ascending from our every heart this morning just because of this portrait of God, our God is a wonderful God. Now there are five movements in the drama of this ministry of the Almighty to the weary, wobbly prophet Jonah. I shan't have time to enlarge upon them, but I want you to see them.

First of all, there's a probing question in verse four. The Lord said to Jonah, do you do well to be angry? Isn't the Lord merciful? Oh, I'm repeating, but I mean to repeat. Why not slap the man across the mouth and tell him to shut up? It's the Lord of all creation talking to this sulky, soured man.

And God comes reasonably to him and says, Jonah, come and let us reason together. You do well to be angry. Is it a good thing? The Hebrew can be translated in two different ways.

Are you very angry or are you right to be angry? And I believe that it's the second that takes the emphasis. Is this anger of yours rational and moral and proper? Taking that as our key, we may well need to stress something else here. God is asking, I believe, with the emphasis on the personal pronoun you.

Do you, Jonah, do well to be angry? No one has the right to be angry with God. And it is a sin for us so to be anywhere, anytime, under any circumstances, but for Jonah especially. Jonah, with his experience, Jonah, where he's been and where God has brought him out from, Jonah, the servant of the Lord, honored despite his sin, that Jonah should be angry.

I say, it's almost unbelievable. Whilst Nineveh is rejoicing in the mercy of God, and the angels of God are rejoicing over every one sinner that repents, here is this prophet of the Lord, sulking and sour. I say, that's sin, isn't it? The question struck home with Jonah.

And the response was this, silence. Has God ever made you silent? Has he ever got you before his throne and you've really been stunned to silence? But now, wait a moment. I want you to see that beyond Jonah's silence, there was action that spoke louder than words, which means that he hasn't changed his attitude.

I read in verse five, then Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there. What for, Jonah? Listen, he sat under it in the shade till he should see what had become or became of the city. Now notice what we've got here.

It makes a sad picture. This tragic man moving outside the city and going to a lookout post, as it were, to see if God really would hear his objection. And rather than have mercy upon Nineveh, if God would still change his mind because Jonah wasn't willing, and send his judgments of fire upon the Ninevites.

The next thing I want you to notice in the way God deals with him is God's gracious provision. Now, he takes him in hand and deals very gently with him at first. Verse six, the Lord God appointed a plant and he 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. Jonah's changing his mood for a moment. He was glad because of the plant or the gourd.

Now, get the point. Following his probing question comes God's gracious provision. God would assure the soured, angry man that he, that is God, still cared for him.

Cared for him despite his continued sin as he cares for you and for me this morning. And he first meets Jonah's anger by more kindness to Jonah. We are told in the book of Romans to overcome evil with good and to overcome hatred with love.

God is one who acts like that and the more awkward Jonah gets, God will do him another favor and he causes this plant to grow. Look at it. Over and above the booth that Jonah had made for himself, God caused this plant to grow.

Now, I call it a plant. The KJV, I think, calls it the gourd. The NIV speaks of it as a vine.

Well now, it was probably the racinus plant as it is called or the castor oil plant. A rapid growing plant with huge broad leaves springing up in a couple of hours with huge leaves that could shelter you even from a storm of rain as well as from the sunny blast. The same God who prepared a fish to save Jonah when he was in the water now prepared a gourd to save him under the sun.

And Jonah's spirit for a moment brightened. Now moved to the next phase of the drama, an unwelcome action. Jonah didn't like this.

Verses 7 and 8. But when dawn came next day, God appointed a worm. See, our God is sovereign. The God who appointed the whale appoints a worm.

Doesn't always need a whale, a big fish to deal with us. Sometimes a little worm will do. And God is the Lord of the worms.

God appointed a worm which attacked the plant so that it withered. When the sun rose, God appointed a sultry east wind and the sun beat upon 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.

Poor, poor Jonah. Now though the rapidly developed plant or gourd had assured Jonah of God's continued care and of his infinite capacity to provide, there in the blazing sun outside of Nineveh as back in the waters of the Mediterranean, God now had a further lesson to teach him. And God goes on.

He moves. So the Lord who prepared the plant prepared the worm. And the worm began to do its work for God.

And the plant began to wilt and to wither. And Jonah saw it. And it was becoming hotter and hotter.

And as the plant withered, Jonah began to wither. And physically he's becoming exhausted, almost at the point of death. And angry.

And so we come to the fourth movement here. God repeats his question. I found that one of the marvelous things about God is the way, the timing of his questions as much as the way he asks them.

And you have that right here too. I have no time to enlarge upon it this morning, but the timing as well as the content. God said to Jonah, Do you do well to be angry for the plant? And he said, I do well to be angry.

Angry enough to die. I am angry and I'm rightly angry. And you can't find fault with me for being angry.

I am angry enough to die. But now don't miss this. However vehemently Jonah would try to justify himself before God, Jonah's anger was unwholesome and his whole attitude irrational.

It was not wholly due either to an altruistic love of Israel, nor to a justifiable fear of his own reputation. His anger was widespread and deep and sinful. Now let me bring that up.

When God asked Jonah in verse 4, Do you do well to be angry? It was in connection with God having mercy on Nineveh. When God asks the same question with a little addition in verse 9, you notice it is with reference to something quite different. He asks him now in verse 9, Do you do well to be angry on account of the gourd or the plant? Aha! So God sees that the occasion of Jonah's anger now is not simply that God is having mercy on Nineveh, but God has taken away one of the most important things in his comfort.

God had given him this gourd and he was a little comfortable in his lookout post when he was waiting to see if God would change his mind and bow to his prejudice. Now God takes the gourd away and Jonah is unhappy and angry with God because God has taken his comfort away. Brothers and sisters, I'm afraid I tremble when I talk about this.

I don't know what's coming our way economically. I don't know what's going to happen in our society. I don't know how well you and I are going to have it over the next 10 years if we live.

I wonder how many of us will get angry with God if we lose the standard of living that we now have. The way I find people dancing and shouting and getting angry and cross to maintain their standard of living, it makes me wonder what some of the supposed saints of God will say to him if they can't have three, four cars and a few other things. Do your comforts mean so much to you that when they're taken away, you had nothing to do in the provision of them, not in the maintenance of them, but if God takes them away, you get angry with the Almighty? And God have mercy on us.

We're in a bad way. We need grace and we need repentance. God is aware of a man's dishonesty.

You see, look at the illogicality of this. I'm sorry I have no time to go into it, but look at this. He's wanting to die, he says.

It's better for me to die than to live. But he's grumbling because of a little discomfort. Poor old John, how illogical you can be.

He's grumbling because he hasn't got shelter. And yet he says, I want to die. No, you don't want to die.

You want to bully the Almighty and blackmail him by threats. But do what you want him to do. Now God comes and the fifth movement, the fifth part in this whole drama is God applies the whole lesson to himself.

He's been in charge of everything that has taken place. Now he's going to wrap it up and he's going to apply the lesson with one massive, masterly stroke of ministry. Look at verses 10 and 11.

And the Lord said to Jonah, You pity the plant for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in the night and perished in the night. And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city in which there are more than 120,000 persons who have not known, sorry, who do not know their right hand from their left and also much cattle. Answering Jonah's attempt to justify his anger and his death wish, God comes to him and says, Jonah, I want you to recognize that your sense of values are topsy-turvy.

You think more of your own comfort than of the salvation of 120,000 in Nineveh. Could that be said of some of us? Now let me repeat it like this. God turns to this attitude that he's showing, that Jonah is showing.

God turns to address it and he turns the whole attitude of Jonah to good account. He says something like this, Are you angry, Jonah, that the good should have been destroyed? Why should you show such concern about this insignificant plant? It grows in the day and it withers in the night. And you didn't do anything to cause it to grow and you didn't do anything to maintain it.

Why, why are you so angry? Oh, says Jonah, but it comforted me. It kept me from the heat and it made me comfortable. That's exactly what God wanted to hear because he is really condemning himself with his words that his comforts should be taken away.

And he was a sinner and a rebel at that. Now says God, okay, you're a sinner, you're a rebel and you grumble when your comforts are taken away. Nineveh is a sinful place.

Cannot I and have I not the right to be angry that you want me to deny them the comforts of my mercy? Have I not the right to do what I please with my creatures? The good sprang up in the night and is gone in the night. Here are men and women and boys and girls made after my image. A whole city of them.

Pagans, it is true. Ungodly, it is true, just like you, Noah. Jonah, haven't I got the right to be angry that you, my prophet, should object to the mercy that I'm showing towards my own creatures made after my image, however sinful they may be? Glaring at Jonah throughout all this is the fact that whatever has happened to him to date, however deep the plow has gone in dealing with him, it's not gone deep enough.

Oh, I'm not suggesting that the repentance of chapter 2, going into the end of chapter 1 and chapter 2, I'm not suggesting that Jonah was not genuine. He was genuine as far as he went. I'm not suggesting that his consecration was not genuine.

It was genuine as far as he went. But what I want to say is this. He didn't go far enough.

In fact, there are more deaths to die than Jonah had realized. It is no wonder that Paul said, I die daily. There are some Christians who believe that they can escape with one death, one crisis of death to self, and it's all over and done with, and it's just joy and whistle from there on.

Brothers and sisters, that's not biblical religion. I die daily, says the apostle. And what God is showing Jonah is this, that the death of two chapters back has to be repeated right here.

He's got to die to his own self-will. He's got to die to a concern about his comfort and his reputation, and he's got to put himself into the hand of God and just trust the Almighty and obey. It's a difficult lesson to

learn, but it's important.

But God won, and I've got to close with this. The ministry of the Almighty more than matched the mystery of iniquity in the prophet's foul heart. You say to me now, now, preacher, hang on.

How do you know that? Where does it say that? Where does it say that Jonah's spirit changed? Where does it say that he was renewed? I can't read it, can't you? Hands up, those of you who can't see it. As one man over here is holding on another there. Well, I'm surprised at you.

Put your spectacles on. Do you think that Jonah would have written this book if he had not repented of his sulks and been renewed in his spirit? Let me put it to you in the form of a question. If you had rebelled like Jonah, and if you had spoken to God like this, and if you had been angry with God not once but twice, and if God had pricked your bubble and disclosed your heart to yourself and humbled you, would you then, short of the grace of God, write all the details down for future generations to read it and to be warned? Would you? No, you wouldn't, my friend.

You would not. The very fact that we have this book of Jonah written in all its details means this. Jonah found grace.

God overcame. The man was revived and renewed again. The ministry of God was greater than the mastery of sin.

Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, and Jonah comes out of the doldrums. We're not told more about him, but I suggest to you that the very fact that he was prepared to write down these gruesome details about all his sin for subsequent generations to read means that he's more concerned now to glorify the grace of God than to look after his own reputation. And if you don't believe me, you try it.

Write out your sins of this last week and give it to me, and I will read it from the pulpit of Knox next Lord's Day, and I'll see if there's anybody here who's got enough grace for that. I don't think so. If there is, it is somebody whom God so wrought upon that he's a new creature, he's out of the doldrums, and he's being honest with God, and he's concerned only with the glory of God and the good of people.

No, I don't invite you to do that writing. I'm not serious. But we close with this.

My friends, it's all so easy for us to sit in judgment upon this dear man. I feel very guilty when I call attention to the sins of saints. But you see, God has put this on record because he wants us to learn from these things.

How's your spirit today? What are you angry about? Don't be dishonest with God. Be open. Confess your sins.

Acknowledge your wrongs. Tell him that you're all twisted up inside if you are. And bosom your cares at his feet.

He's more merciful than you ever dreamt. And let him pardon your transgressions and renew your spirit. And the God of Jonah will prove himself faithful again in a 20th century setting.

Let us pray. Oh, Lord our God, we thank you for this new day. Not just because the sun is shining.

This is pleasant to us in the flesh. But because you are the God of today. And you are the unchanging God of Jonah.

You're alive today. And your power is not shorn nor lost. And your grace has not vanished or evaporated.

But you're a God of grace today. So that we can be open with you and honest with you and confess our sins before you and find that our sins are never too great for you to deal with. Oh, Lord have mercy upon us.

And teach us your ways. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/4/SID4741.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/j-glyn-owen/angry-with-god/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**