

Grace and Prayer: How God works with and for His People

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Date: 30 June 2019

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[0 : 00] Thank you, worship team, for putting our hearts and our voices in the worship that it needs to be in.

We thank you for this morning. It's a hot day. My sleeves are rolled up. We've got the fans going. All the windows are open. So we will pray that the Lord keeps us where he needs to and keeps us cool.

Turn in your Bibles, if you would, again to Jonah. We are in Jonah. I'm starting at the end of chapter 1.

Remember, chapter and verse divisions are man entered. We'll start at verse 17, and we'll go through 3-1 in our reading today.

We will do all of chapter 2 today and in those two bookends of the narrative. Again, if you do not have a Bible, the Pew Bible, who remembers the page number?

[1 : 18] I say it every week now. 774. Yeah. So the entire book of Jonah in your Pew Bible is 774 and 775. So it's all right there. So...

Just trying to put it there. Oh. Okay.

Jonah 1, 17-31. And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow 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.

[2 : 17] 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 over me to take my life. The deep surrounded me. Weeds were wrapped around 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. Oh, 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. And 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.

[3 : 31] Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time. Let's pray. Our gracious God, God full of infinite, marvelous, matchless grace, be with us today.

Send your spirit. Allow the words of the pages to leap not only into our minds, but into our hearts. And by your spirit, convict us as you wish.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. He was born in 1725 in London. His mother, who was a godly woman, who taught him to pray as a child, died when he was only seven years old.

He had only two years at school, and at the age of 11, his father, who was a sea captain, took him to sea for the first time. His seafaring life is well known.

It included being wrecked, becoming the captain of a slave ship. And also a slave himself to a black woman on the Guinea coast.

[4 : 45] He was rescued by a friend of his father, who was a ship's captain as well. The man had lit a fire of driftwood on the shore to attract attention of a passing ship.

In the providence of God, the friend of his father, who was searching for him, sent a longboat ashore to investigate, and the man was rescued. And then he was on a ship returning from Guinea across the Atlantic when it encountered a great storm that was threatening to engulf it.

This took place on the 10th of March in 1748. This is a quote. That 10th of March, says the man, is the day much to be remembered by me, and I have never allowed it to pass unnoticed since the year 1748.

For on that day the Lord came from on high and delivered me out of deep waters. The storm was terrific when the ship went plunging down through the trough of the sea.

Few on board expected her to come out again. The hold was rapidly filling with water. As he hurried this man to his place at the pumps, he said to the captain, If this will not do, the Lord have mercy upon us.

[6 : 06] His own words startled him. Mercy, he said to himself in astonishment. Mercy, mercy. What mercy can there be for me? This was the first desire I had breathed for mercy for many years.

About six in the evening in the hold, it was free of water, and then came a gleam of hope. I thought I saw the hand of God displayed in our favor.

I began to pray. I could not utter the prayer of faith. I could not draw near to a reconciled God and call him Father. My prayer for mercy was like the cry of the ravens, which yet the Lord does not disdain to hear.

In the gospel, he says, I saw at least a peradventure of hope, but on every side I was surrounded with black, unfathomable despair.

On the peradventure of hope, this man staked everything. He sought mercy and he found it. And this is what he wrote down on the 10th. It is certain that I am not what I ought to be, but blessed be God, I am not what I once was.

[7 : 24] God has mercifully brought me out of the deep miry clay and set my feet upon the rock, Christ Jesus. He saved my soul. And now it is my heart's desire to extol and honor the matchless, free, sovereign, and distinguished grace, because by the grace of God, I am what I am.

And then he quotes 1 Corinthians 15.10. But by the grace of God, I am what I am, is what that verse says. He suffered a stroke in 1754, and he retired from that business.

In 1764, he was ordained an Anglican priest, wrote 280 hymns that accompany his services. This is John Newton who wrote Amazing Grace.

And he wrote that in 1772. He also went on. He wasn't just saved. He lived a life of service, and not just earthly or heavenly service as a priest.

He helped William Wilberforce end slavery in the British countries and territories. It is my heart's...

[8 : 37] This is what he said. I'll repeat it again. It is my heart's great joy to ascribe my salvation entirely to the grace of God. Grace.

What a tremendously powerful word. Five letters in the English language. Only two in Hebrew, because it has these funky characters that just has a picture and then this other picture. And then five letters in Greek.

But a word full of meaning. John Newton simply called it amazing. Matthew Henry says, Grace is the free, undeserved goodness and favor of God to mankind.

That might be a common grace. And then there's efficacious, personal grace that he bestows onto his people. The unmerited favor of God. The same word in the Hebrew is translated favor throughout most of the Old Testament, where the king looks on favor of his subject.

Millions of hells of sinners cannot come near to exhaust the infinite grace of God. Samuel Rutherford. Alexander White says, Grace then is grace.

[9 : 50] That is to say, it is sovereign. It is free. It is sure. It is unconditional. It is everlasting. And then one more quote. Sinclair Ferguson. Grace is not a thing.

It is not a substance that can be measured or a commodity that can be distributed. It is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ. In essence, it is Jesus himself.

Grace is our main subject today. And with its corollary, we have prayer. Because we have a narrative that has the grace of God displayed throughout the prayer of Jonah.

You don't see that word favor or grace actually in the text. But oh, do we see the grace of God. It is basically a psalm. It is basically a psalm. When you read this second chapter of Jonah, you see the elements, every element of a psalm.

In fact, by great providence, my brother read Psalm 88 today. What a fantastic psalm to read. This despairing psalm.

[10 : 59] That it begins with salvation is from the Lord. To set the scene, let me recap for those that haven't been here. Let's go through what we've talked about.

First week, we did two verses. We did, the word of the Lord came to Jonah. And we talked about the word of the Lord coming to us. What does the word of the Lord look like when it comes to us? And what do we do with it?

Verse 3, But Jonah turned and ran. He fled the presence of the Lord. He tried to flee the presence of the Lord.

But he was not successful. And so we looked at what does rebellion and backsliding look like when we run from the Lord? And then we did the rest of chapter 1, at least up into verse 17.

And we saw last week the fear of the Lord because we saw the storm that the Lord sent. And what that caused in providence for the sailors and the people on board. And Jonah was called to preach to Nineveh and save a people that don't know God.

[12 : 00] And these people that didn't know God were already being saved before he ever preached a sermon. And now we have to deal with Jonah personally.

So God was saving and using by grace and providence he sent the storm. That might have been the first response of God. But there was a specific grace that needed to be sent to Jonah.

And he needed a wake-up call, big time. So to divide our time, I want to first look at a subject, sort of deductively, of what we have in Scripture.

We're going to look at God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. Because we have a narrative that traces grace, which is our second point, the grace of God. And then the prayer of Jonah.

And how do those two intermesh? So I want to set the stage with just this topic of how does God's sovereignty and man's responsibility play out in Scripture? What is this? And you could spend our whole time doing that.

[13 : 00] We're just going to hit some highlights. And then we're going to end again. Then we're going to go to grace. We're going to look at the narrative and see how, what does God's grace specifically do?

What are his actions to Jonah? The third point is, what does the prayer look like then of Jonah as he responds? What is our perspective as we see grace?

And we will end our time with just a brief look at the handmaiden to grace, or the flip side of the coin, which is mercy. If grace is God's unmerited favor for what we don't deserve, then mercy is not getting what we do deserve.

And so both, I mean, you really can't talk about one without talking about the other. And when you heard John Newton's testimony, he talked about mercy before he talked about grace. All right, let's get into it.

God's sovereignty and man's responsibility. I think it's important that we take a look at this topic. We're going to do so by just looking at a few scriptures and a few quotes.

[14 : 05] We always want to take clear scripture and help interpret unclear scripture with that clear scripture. That's the best hermeneutic or way to interpret scripture. The first declaration or deductive point is that God is sovereign.

He's not mostly sovereign. He's not sovereign up and to a point. And then he allows other sovereignty.

That's like saying water is mostly pure. But there might be a trace of cyanide or arsenic in the water. No, it is pure sovereignty.

It is pure control. It is a realm of all the earth and the heavens and below the heavens that he has control over.

We see this, you know, in the Genesis account, we see God, God acting, God speaking into existence. In fact, the only thing he's not the author of is sin.

[15 : 12] Scripture tells us that. That's, again, clear scripture. Don't say that if you're tempted, that you're tempted by God. But in an amazing way, God is able to take man's sin and still be sovereign over the circumstances of the sin.

Case in point, the death, burial, and resurrection of our Savior. So we have God's sovereignty, but yet we have man as a completely responsible agent.

Judas had blood on his hands. Judas was guilty. Judas had a price to pay.

But somehow God's sovereignty and man's responsibility are woven together throughout all of scripture. In fact, it's on every page of scripture if you look at it. I'll give you a few examples.

Joseph, Genesis 50, 20. This is an infamous passage where Joseph, of course, was the dreamer and his brothers didn't like his dreams.

[16 : 17] And so they resented him and they threw him in the pit and they eventually sold him. And he wandered his way to Egypt as a slave and in jail. And eventually, because he can interpret dreams because of the Spirit of God, God honored him.

God had favor or grace upon him. And he put him in the second in command. And then he gets to see his brothers again. And what does he say? As for you, Genesis 50, 20, you meant evil against me.

But God meant it for good. To bring it about that many people should be kept alive as there are today. He saved Egypt and Israel from a famine.

You meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. So somehow, God can take sin that he's not the author of and still work it.

Work it for his purposes. Glorifying himself in a way that we can't understand. You can't slice that and figure out how to trace it as humans.

[17 : 21] You know, the narrative of Nehemiah shows sovereignty of God and man's responsibility. The men went through Nehemiah in the past few years. You know, Nehemiah has the Jews following his commands to fight, yet trusting the Lord.

When they're separated on the wall, right? They're all on the wall. They're in different parts working on the wall. Providentially and by Nehemiah's wisdom, they're put in parts of the wall that are in front of where their house is.

So they're going to make that wall good. That's wise. But if there was an attack, they all needed to be together. And so Nehemiah said, In the place you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there.

That is, you have a responsibility to help. Our God will fight for us. You see the both. They're both there. God has a responsibility for us, yet he is doing the work.

He is the one that's saving. He has control. Back to Christ and Judas. Luke 22, 22. It's probably, this is probably the single verse that most theologians point at to say, This is so amazing, I can't even fathom.

[18 : 42] For indeed, the Son of Man is going as it has been determined. But woe to the man by whom he is betrayed.

God has foreseen and ordained that his Son would be offered up from eternity past. It wasn't God's plan B.

It didn't come about because, oops, I didn't know Israel wouldn't obey. That didn't happen. But yet, woe to the man by whom it comes. It is still Judas' betrayal and sin.

It's his sin. He's responsible for his sin. And he's not, he's not saved. Both are on every page of scripture. The great preacher Jonathan Edwards says, In efficacious, that means effectual grace, grace that actually converts.

In efficacious grace, we are not merely passive. Nor does God do some and we do the rest. God does all and we do all.

[19 : 49] God produces all, we act all. For that is what produces our own acts. God is the proper author and fountain.

We are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive and active. Perhaps the greatest specific or controversial subject of God's sovereignty and man's responsibility is salvation itself.

The chicken and the egg and how did this happen? And who did I pray and I earned my favor with God? Romans 9 through 11. If you want an extended treatise on the subject biblically, you need to read Romans 9, Romans 10, and Romans 11.

It's all there. Romans 9 gives us the potter and the clay. The clay answering back to the potter. How can I argue with the potter who designed and saved who he would save?

But yet Romans 10 goes through and says, How will they be saved unless someone is sent? Blessed are the feet of those who preach the good news. Romans 11 ends with, For from him and through him and to him are all things.

[21 : 01] So you have them all there. You go through the narrative and we just have to say, Lord, your ways are higher than ours. I can't let go of the fact that you are sovereign and I can't let go of the fact that I am responsible to respond and act.

That's where we are. I have two books on the subject. I've quoted one twice in your handout. That handout or that book is J.I. Packer's Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God.

This is a free advertisement, by the way. I'm not getting any money from any publisher. But it's there to borrow if somebody wants to borrow it. Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God. It walks through this idea that if God has the power to save, then we have every reason to evangelize because the power is there.

And it's not up to us. But we have to do it. We're called to do it. And that's the means by which God will use. That's what this goes through. And then the second one is, If God already knows, why pray?

By Douglas Kelly. So this is the bigger subject of, Why am I even praying God's sovereign? So these are up for loan if anybody wants to borrow them. Okay.

[22 : 16] Let's get into the grace of God. Let's get into our passage. Let's get into Jonah. Let's see this element, these elements of grace that we see. First, 117.

And the Lord appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. We will deal with the three days and three nights.

This is the first intentional sign that Christ refers to in Matthew and Luke, to say, This is the only sign that will be given. But God appointing the storm was the first moment of grace.

But this is the first one that is for Jonah. Jonah alone. I'm dealing with you alone. I am appointing a fish.

So let's look at the grace that is the fish. First of all, the fish itself. Now, we talked about this a little bit in the first study, that when we discussed this as a historical narrative, we said there are people that don't call it an historical, truthful, actual narrative, and it's parable because there's no fish that can swallow a man, and a man live.

[23 : 28] Well, actually, there's been two accounts. In fact, Pat handed me the article that discussed one of them, of a sailor in 1891 who was swallowed by a sperm whale and lived.

He was messed up for a while, but he lived. Also, there was one in 1771. And the term dog, the Hebrew word dog, D-A-G, not D-O-G, means fish, and gedol is great fish.

And this can be any sea creature. This can be whale. This can be actual gill-type fish from that kingdom. It can be either one. It doesn't really matter.

It's a miraculous salvation by a fish. Okay? It was a fish that was listening to God and swallowed. Now, the swallow is not eat.

It's shelter. The fish was sheltering Jonah and protecting Jonah and bringing him to his own right mind before the Lord and sin.

[24 : 40] Okay? So you finally find a fish that can do this biologically. Either way, you've got three days and three nights in a fish, in the belly of the fish, not just the mouth, with no oxygen, with no fresh water, and usually the accounts are three days you die without fresh water, not to mention digestive juices.

I mean, we don't have to get into it. The bottom line is he was preserved in the belly of a fish for a purpose. That was grace. That was God acting on Jonah's behalf without him realizing it.

Jonah actually thought when he told the men to throw me overboard, just kill me. I'm running from you. I deserve to die. These men, it's not their fault. Throw me overboard.

I'm willing to die. The fish was Jonah's salvation, the first part of Jonah's salvation. The second idea, or I shouldn't say idea, the second truth of Jonah's grace is that he was driven down.

It didn't say he fell down. It says he was driven down. God drove him down. If you recall, Jonah went down to Joppa, as the narrative in chapter 1 said.

[26 : 02] We talked about the geography lesson, right? Down to Jonah, to the sea level. He went down, it says, into the ship, and then he went down into the hull of the ship to go to sleep. And the character of our disobedience is we typically, we want to be in the dark, we want to run away from the light, we want to go down, and that's what we typically do.

When we're in sin, we go down. Well, he didn't go down enough. God is driving him to the depth of what his down really is.

He needed to know the extent of what his rebellion cost. I am driven away from your sight, verse 4. The waters and the weeds threaten my life.

And then we get to this third part. He is actually not only being driven down, he needs to see that he is on the brink of death. Not only is there the down punishment, there is the down recompense or the payment, which is death.

He had to see his end was death. He wanted to die, but I don't think he realized what the depth of what his death had to be.

[27 : 15] If you look at this, it says, he was driven away, waters and weeds threaten his life. Death, in fact, it was brought up, the pictures here are stark.

Death had to be part of the formula in some form or fashion. We don't know if he actually died or not, actually. There's no way to determine. He never says he lost consciousness in his narrative.

So we can't say he died, but he thought he was going to. Friends, if you have a sign that Christ says is the only sign that will be given is Jonah's three days and three nights.

He had to preach death, burial, and resurrection, and that's what he was going to do. And he would be the temple that they would pray to.

You have to find death in this passage. Jonah had to realize it was a death that was a death like no other.

[28 : 20] It's a death forever with bars on it. Look at the end of five and into six. Weeds wrapped around my head. At our study this morning, one of the men brought up, weeds wrapped around my head, like thorns wrapped around a head?

I mean, you think about this, and it's amazing. At the roots of the mountains. What are the roots of the mountains? It's figurative language for the lowest point you can go.

I went down to the land whose bars closed over me forever, in eternal punishment. You can't think of a place that you can't get out of on your own any worse than this one.

Yet, yet, the end of six. You brought my life out in the pit. This was a grace that he was shown this.

It was a grace that he drove him. It was a grace that he cast him, that he appointed the fish, and he brought him to the end that was himself. What did sin require?

[29 : 27] Sin requires death. But it was a grace that saved him. Verse 9, With the voice of thanksgiving, I will sacrifice to you what I have vowed I will pay.

Salvation belongs to the Lord. Jonah does not say, Because I prayed, you saved me. He says salvation is from the Lord.

Same words at the beginning of Psalm 88. It wasn't Jonah's good intentions deep down. It wasn't that God graded on a curve and said your sin wasn't that bad.

It was that God saved. So, do we react or bristle at the sovereignty or grace of God? I take you to Job at the end of this second point where you have some verses before you.

At the end of the matter, after all the discussion of the torture of Job, that was God-ordained, and God, you should say God-allowed, of Satan, with no reason given to Job at this point, Job 40, verses 1-8.

[30 : 44] And the Lord said to Job, after Job had sort of complained, Shall a fault finder contend with the Almighty? He who argues with God, let him answer it.

Then Job answered the Lord and said, Behold, I am of small account. What shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth. I have spoken once. I will not answer twice.

I will proceed no further. Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and said, Dress for action like a man. I will question you and you make it known to me.

Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be in the right? And at the end, in Job 42, after he took it like a man, right?

The Lord's discourse. Verse 2, I know that you can do all things and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted. Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?

[31 : 49] Which was what was said to him. Therefore, I have uttered what I do not understand, things too wonderful for me which I do not know. Hear and I will speak.

I will question you and you will make known to me. I heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eyes see you. Therefore, I despise myself.

I repent in dust and ashes. And only then, after that statement, is Job restored and is Job given everything but even more than he had before that he lost.

He prayed. Prayer, says John Newton, is the great engine to overthrow and rout my spiritual enemies.

The great means to procure the graces of which I now stand in hourly need of. And now we move on to the point. Let's look at the prayer. What is it that Jonah actually prayed?

[32 : 48] What does he recount? He's recounted the actions of what God did. Let's recount of what he prayed. And let's see what we can find here. Jonah 2, 1-2. Then Jonah prayed to the Lord from the belly of the fish saying, I called out to the Lord out of my distress and he answered me.

The first point is we pray out of distress. Do we not? Distress is one of the key tools in God's tool belt to break us to our knees and remind us of who we are.

Now, our distress, you could say there's two types. There's the distress we cause ourselves and then there's the distress of just being in this world. You know, in the bulk of David's life, except for his sin with Bathsheba, he is writing psalms of distress running from Saul.

How is it that a king is anointed king and yet he's running in his own country from people? That's distress. That's not fair. David had a right to say, God, this isn't fair.

You anointed me king. What am I doing? It's not how he prays. He prays, Lord, I don't understand this, but he at least, but he prays to the Lord. He brings this before the Lord.

[34 : 09] He doesn't complain to other people. He says, Lord, help me. I'm persecuted. I don't get it. You pray out of your distress, but now, if we look at that distress, we live in a fallen world and we're part of that fallenness.

So whether we counted our distress in general or we counted the specific distress like Jonah or David with Bathsheba where he directly caused his situation, we can still turn to the Lord.

We can still pray to him. As his people, we turn and say, Lord, I sinned. Even when we haven't sinned, we've sinned. We bring our flesh.

We say, Lord, in my distress, I can't see this. I can't do this. I just fought with my wife. I just did what I knew I wasn't supposed to do. I reacted. Why did I react?

Turn to him. Jonah prays in his distress. He calls out. The second thing we see is he prays with humility.

- [35 : 21] There is a humility to Jonah's prayer. Four through six, I am driven away by your sight. Why is he driven away? So think about this for a second.

Remember back in one, I am running from the presence of the Lord. Now, because of my sin, not only have I run from it, now I'm being driven further and further away from it.

I can't have that presence because of my sin. I ran from it. Well, guess what? You get what you deserve now. You cannot be in the presence of God with sin.

He will drive it from you. He will drive you to your knees and he will drive you to see, I am driven. If he says, I am driven, he knows it's because it was right that he was driven out.

He rebelled. He also knows his life is in peril because of his own doing. And he knows that there's eternal punishment where bars close on forever.

- [36 : 24] He's not complaining about that situation. He's just saying what is. I am in this position and I deserve it. But he prays with a view to holiness.

Verses 4 and 7 form a couplet surrounding this eternal death. I want you to see this. Then I said, I am driven away from your sight, yet I shall again look upon your holy temple.

Then we have the death, we have the forever, and he comes back and reviews and says, when my life was fainting away, verse 7, I remembered the Lord and my prayer came to you into your holy temple.

The temple is for what? What went on in the Old Testament in the temple? Sacrifice. There has to be a sacrifice for sin that allows him to still view and see the Lord and remember him.

I wonder what that sacrifice is because we don't see it in this passage. But we have somebody greater than Jonah that comes along and says, there will be only one sign given and it was the sign of Jonah, our Savior.

- [37 : 48] We have a sacrifice. sacrifice. We have a holy sacrifice that paid the penalty for sin for you and for me and it is there and it allows us to remember the Lord.

It's what allows us to pray. It's what gives us access. It allows us entrance into the throne room of God all the time, every time, any moment.

Whether it's devotions in the middle of the day or that Nehemiah prayer, I am in distress. Lord, help me. Help me right now in this moment. I can't, I can't answer back in the persecution that I am in right now.

Help me right now. We have holiness in view in our prayer and we have access to the throne because of the salvation that is in Christ. when Uzzah put his hand on the cart because he didn't want it to hit the dirt.

This was the ark, the cart that had the ark on it. He put his hand on the ark. He was killed in an instant and David was aghast. He was upset by it.

- [39 : 06] Our holy, the holiness of God requires a sacrifice for sin. And we have that sacrifice. He also prays, look at the end here, with thanksgiving.

Our character of our prayer honors God, it humbles us, it's in distress, we tell God our situation, there's a holiness that knows that somehow Christ, because of Christ we can go to the throne, but there's always a thanksgiving.

we never pray, I thank God for me. I thank you God that you made me. Do you ever pray that? Have you ever prayed that? No.

You thank God for him and for his actions. prayer and grace go together like hand and glove. Grace leads us to prayer, grace is the natural response to prayer.

And look at the thanksgiving he prays, with a voice of thanksgiving I will sacrifice to you. I have vowed what I will pay, salvation belongs to the Lord.

[40 : 20] Thanksgiving has to be an element and a tenor of our prayer. It's always there. Every true prayer has thanksgiving. when Jesus cleansed the ten lepers, Luke 17, you know the story, only one came back and praised the Lord and thanked him.

And Jesus says, did not, weren't there ten? Where are the other nine? And there was no answer. But Jesus says this to him, ten were healed, right?

Ten went away but one returned and nine left for good, didn't give thanks. One gave thanks and when he gave thanks Jesus says, rise, go your way, meaning rise because you were in a penitent position of thanksgiving.

Your faith has made you well. Wait a minute, I thought everybody was well. We are double well when we give thanks to the Lord.

We are helped when we give thanks. It's an amazing economy when we give thanks to the Lord and give him credit for what he's done. Loving a holy God is beyond our moral power.

[41 : 46] This is R.C. Sproul. The only kind of God we can love by our sinful nature is an unholy God, an idol made with our own hands. Unless we are born of the Spirit of God, unless God sheds his holy love in our hearts, unless he stoops in his grace to change our hearts, we will not love him.

To love a holy God requires grace, grace strong enough to pierce our hardened hearts and awakened our moribund souls. We see that same thanksgiving, that same cry for the God of salvation, of another that had a sin with blood on his hands in Psalm 51.

We've already mentioned it. It's David after Bathsheba. Verse 12, Restore to me the joy of your salvation and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will return to you. Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud your righteousness.

O Lord, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise, for you will not delight in sacrifice or I would give it. You would not be pleased with a burnt offering.

[43 : 07] The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. Do good design in your good pleasure.

Build up the laws of Jerusalem. Then you will delight in right sacrifices, burnt offerings, whole burnt offerings. The bulls will be made an offer on your altar. At the end of this prayer, Jonah is calling on vain idols and sacrifice and that I will pay the vows.

He has an eye to that there's still a duty that I have to do. The same vows and sacrifice that are at the end of two are the same vows and sacrifice in chapter one that the sailors said that they would do after the storm was called.

After the threat is over, somebody that is redeemed continues to offer worship and continues to do good. Not because it earns them salvation, because it is the right response.

And it is the right response to the mercy of God. His mercies are new every morning. Lamentations 3, specifically, verse 22, the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

[44 : 24] His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. Jonah 3, 1 says, and the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time.

Jonah 1, 1, the word of the Lord came, and he ran from it. And he rebelled. He has paid. He's actually restored without fully paying.

Only Christ could pay what he had to pay. And he's given a reset. He's given a complete reset, a redo, start over. That game didn't go the way I wanted to.

Start over. He's given it. Only God can do a great reset. It is a great and loving God. We talked about this.

I'll close with this one thought. You know, back in verse 8, actually, we have steadfast love.

[45 : 23] vain idols, you forsake the steadfast love when you honor a vain idol.

Guess who has steadfast, enduring love and grace. It is our God. He's a God of mercy. He's a God of grace.

And he wants you to pray to him. If you've wandered from the Lord and haven't prayed, pray. If you have rebelled against the Lord, pray.

In the name of Jesus, he will hear you. He longs to save. And you will be redeemed and able to serve him in goodness and mercy that will follow you all the days of your life.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Our gracious Heavenly Father, we can't really ascribe words accurately and that do justice to who you are.

[46 : 38] We are undone. We understand with Isaiah and with Peter seeing all the fish in the boat that depart from us, Lord, we are sinful.

But Lord, you have made a way. You have given us light. You have rescued us. You have shown us at the only position that can look up is the lowest of the bottom of the sea in the pit.

You have restored to us the joy of salvation. Why, Lord, did you do that? And can it be that we should gain an interest in your blood?

But we do and we have. And Lord, we honor you. We rejoice in your goodness. And Lord, the salvation of your son is great and we cannot fathom the depths that our Savior went through to save us.

knowing us before the foundation of the world. Would we rejoice and would we give you thanks. Amen. Amen.