

The God of the Second Chance

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Grab your Bibles and let's go to the old part of the book, going to Jonah. If you'll turn to Matthew, just go left a little bit and you'll find it pretty quick. It's at the end of the Old Testament. Uh, during my break, you may be surprised to hear this but I've only taken half of my 40th anniversary break, say, "Well, you were gone forever." I felt like I was, I really did, but I've only taken half of it and I don't know how to take the rest of it, to be honest but, uh, I'll figure out something.

Anyway, during that time, uh, three or four messages, I would just in my study time to time and three or four messages came to me and I thought, "I want to preach that again." And so I came to this text and I thought, "Here we go again." What a powerful parallel there is with Jonah's experience and our experience, and a powerful proclamation of the truth of God and how he deals with his children. So we're in Jonah 2, we'll begin in verse 1 and go through chapter 3, verse 3. The book of Jonah, chapter 2, verse 1, down through chapter 3, verse 3.

Jonah has been, um, thrown overboard. He was running from God, God said, "Go preach to Nineveh," and immediately he rebels. Immediately he turns his back on God's word, God's will, boards a ship for Tarshish, goes down into the bottom of the ship and, "I gotta get away from this." Now I'll say some more about this in a moment. There's been speculation about why did Jonah do that? Did he just, uh, hate the Ninevites so much he wouldn't go preach repentance that God might forgive them and spare them? I don't, I think it's, that's too simple. There's more than that. I think what you've got to understand is Jonah is a contemporary of other Old Testament prophets like Amos and those prophets had made it very clear that God was going to judge Israel using the mighty pagan nation of Assyria to do his work. And so Jonah knowing that Israel's destruction is at hand, is struggling with, is rebelling on the basis of, "How can I go preach for pagan Nineveh to be restored when my own people are about to be judged and destroyed? Why should they get to repent and be spared when my own Israel is not going to be spared, the prophets have already said?" And what the prophets said about Israel was due to Israel's backslidden condition that she would not repent, she would not give up her Baal worship, she would not give up her idolatries and her paganism that she'd begun to embrace. And perhaps in Jonah's mind also was this thought: if God will destroy Nineveh for her sin and she has no light," she didn't have the commandments, law of Moses, the prophets, the ceremonial law, she has none of that light and truth and God's gonna hold Nineveh

accountable, then he will really judge Israel because Israel is wicked and backslidden and she's had all that light and truth from God. So there's a lot going on in Jonah's mind other than, "I just don't want to preach to Nineveh," okay?

So God has in his providence Jonah thrown into the sea, it's a raging stormy sea, and then he's swallowed by a great fish. It's not mythology. It's not an allegory. It's truth. It really happened. You say, "Well, how can somebody be swallowed by a fish and coughed back up?" Well, it takes God to do that but if God is really involved, none of this is far-fetched at all.

Jonah 2:1,

1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the stomach of the fish, 2 and he said, "I called out of my distress to the LORD, And He answered me. I cried for help from the depth of Sheol; You heard my voice.

I want you to notice over and over his, his emphasis on going down, the depth, the, the, the deepness of his woe and terror and, and, and the, the judgment he feels. Verse 3,

3 For You had cast me into the deep, Into the heart of the seas, And the current engulfed me. All Your breakers and billows passed over me. 4 So I said, 'I have been expelled from Your sight. Nevertheless I will look again toward Your holy temple.' 5 Water encompassed me to the point of death. The great deep engulfed me, Weeds were wrapped around my head. 6 I descended to the roots of the mountains. The earth with its bars was around me forever, But You have brought up my life from the pit, O LORD my God. 7 While I was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, And my prayer came to You, Into Your holy temple. 8 Those who regard vain idols Forsake their faithfulness, 9 But I will sacrifice to You With the voice of thanksgiving. That which I have vowed I will pay. Salvation is from the LORD."

You can take these truths, take them right up to the New Testament and you see the conviction of sin and the glorious truth of grace salvation. Verse 10,

10 Then the LORD commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah up onto the dry land.

1 Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah [don't miss this] the second time [the second time], saying, 2 "Arise, go to Nineveh the great city and proclaim to it the proclamation which I am going to tell you." 3 So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three days' walk.

I call this "The God of the Second Chance." The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time but that's not fully accurate. He's not God of the second chance. He's the God

of the third chance, and the fourth chance, and the fifth chance, and the hundredth chance. For his children, he's the God of grace and forgiveness and mercy.

Jonah experienced this conversion, if you will, this being brought back to God because God is the God of the second chance. Some things I want to point out. I. Notice the reach of God's love. The reach of his love and as you look at chapter 2, verses 1 through 10, and Jonah just calls out over and over about his distress, the depth, the deep, the deep sea, being engulfed, out, he's at the root of the mountains, the bars of the earth were locked over him. He's every graphic way he can describe the deep depth of his rebellion and sinfulness and yet God found him there. You say, "But pastor, you don't know my life and you don't know how corrupt maybe I've been or how deeply I've been involved and have, have wrecked my life." I want to tell you, God can reach you there. God can reach you at the deepest depth of sin.

Well, I think actually God was reaching Jonah when he had him thrown into the sea. God was reaching Jonah when he had the whale swallow him. God was reaching Jonah through all of these events that are happening in his life. God was "getting his attention." Has God ever gotten your attention? Toil? Trouble? Heartache? Despair? You tried to drink deeply of this world and do your own thing your way, make your own rules, be the captain of your own ship, the master of your own destiny and your life is broken and ruined and heartache and heartbreak is yours? God's getting your attention just like he's getting Jonah.

But the thing I want you to notice about the reach of God's love, first of all, is God's love takes the initiative. God is a self-starter. God does not sit in heaven wringing his hands hoping that, "I hope somebody turns to Me today." God is the initiator. He reaches to us in love before we are saved and he reaches to us in love after our conversion when we have drifted away. When you are wallowing in the muck and the mire of sin and guilt, he comes to you. When you were dead in trespasses and sins, when you walked in darkness, when you were lost in utter darkness and total depravity, when you had no desire to look to him and no ability to come to him, when sin was the barrier between you and God, that's when in love he reached for you. You see, he came to save us when we could not save ourselves. I think there's an old gospel song that says, "When I could not come to where He was, He came to me." You see, he came to save us when we just couldn't do anything for ourselves. In mercy and grace, he stooped down to us, we were bound by the iron cords of sin and had no strength to look up, much less reach up to him.

Now in contrast, the wisdom of man has come up with all kinds of ideas that are backwards. Confucianism talks about living a good life and helping society be better and that's the basic meaning of life. Buddhism tells you that if you follow these teachings, that is, you take the initiative, you do these things and one day you'll be reincarnated until you reach, uh, this certain level, this state of nothingness, they call it. Hinduism basically the same thing, you, uh, do right and God will reincarnate you and bring you back into better forms until finally you reach what they call spiritual perfection. But in all of these, it's you taking the steps, you doing the work. What work is Jonah going to do at the

bottom of the sea in the belly of a whale? If God didn't reach out to him, he's sunk, he's done.

Then you have all these religions that have been of the wisdom of man: Islam and Catholicism and on and on and on we could go, all the way through to the jungle superstitions of tribal areas, even Judaism, that is incomplete Judaism because complete Judaism is combining the Savior with Judaism, but incomplete Judaism is just works. You take the initiative, you perform the work and then you can reach this new level, you can reach God. That's what they all say. But Christianity is the opposite of all of these. In very simple terms, 1 John 4:19, we didn't come to him, we didn't love him first, no, "We love, because He first loved us." First loved us. He took the initiative. You see, Christianity is right-side up, all the others are upside down. Mankind is born contrary to God and opposite of God so his thinking and his logic, his "so-called wisdom," is, is not right-side up, it's upside down. We have to go to the Bible and aided by the Spirit of God that comes in at conversion, enables to reprogram our thinking to get things back again right-side up and we realize his love is that love which takes the initiative.

2. Not only is, does he reach to us taking the initiative when we're in this depth of despair in our sin, his love is also faithful. He didn't just reach one time, he's not fickle about it, he didn't reach and then say, "I'm gonna hold you by a tether out here and if you don't do just right I'm gonna yank you out there and fling you away from Me." No, he's faithful.

2 Timothy 2:13 tells us, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself." That phrase "cannot deny Himself" is bursting with wondrous truth. The glory of salvation is that you are saved in Christ, chosen in Christ, predestined in Christ, elected in Christ, foreknown in Christ, called in Christ, and for you to be cast away when you've truly come to know Christ would be Christ casting himself away. I don't know about you but that's faithfulness. God cannot throw himself away and you're one with him through the merits of his Son Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ.

You say, "Pastor, how do I know He will come to me, then, when I, when I've grown cold? How do I know He'll take the initiative and reach to me in love when I'm backslidden, when I'm in my depths, when I'm at the bottom of my sea?" Well, he's faithful and he's faithful to send a forerunner. A forerunner. You know what a forerunner is, it's the, it's the word for herald. It was common in the ancient world when the king would be coming to a town or a village in his kingdom, he would have a forerunner, a herald to go before him to, to announce to the people, "You can't just act like you've been acting, you've gotta get ready, the king's about to be here." I mean, you don't just wear what you normally wear when the king comes. You don't just put yourself in the disposition of everyday life when the king, this is special. Get ready, get the city ready, get your family ready, the king is coming. Uh, John the Baptist, the Bible calls him the herald of Christ. He was the forerunner. He was telling everyone to repent and get prepared, the king is here, in that case, the King who is our Savior.

And God is faithful to us that he gives us a forerunner who prepares us to meet again with God, one that goes before God and prepares us to be reunited with God. What is this

forerunner's name? His name is guilt. Guilt. The Holy Spirit of God takes the word of God and presses it upon your heart and soul and you feel the guilt. "This is sin. I'm wrong. I need to repent. I need to be reunited with God." He's the faithful forerunner to prepare you to meet with God again and if the Holy Spirit did not bring conviction and bring guilt, you would never be ready for the King, you would never be ready to restore the fellowship. Listen, guilt is a blessed friend, guilt informed by the truth and used by the Spirit. It's a blessed friend. It's the medication that brings healing to our relationship with God.

Matter of fact, keep your finger in Jonah and go to Psalm 32, would you do that? Oh, over about, uh, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch to the left there in your Bible. Psalm 32. You see, that's what I have to do because I didn't grow up in church and learn those songs, you know, those songs that make you memorize the books of the Bible? See how much Miss Martha's helped you through the years when you learned those Bible songs? Psalm 32, notice the psalmist's words here, verses 3 through 5, "When I kept silent about my sin, my body wasted away Through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me." That's guilt. "My vitality was drained away as with the fever heat of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the LORD'; And You forgave the guilt of my sin."

Now I want you to understand something: guilt is more than just a feeling and an impression. It includes that because all men stand as guilty before God whether they feel it or not. It's a blessing that you can feel the truth about guilt, that you stand apart from God and against God and away from God and under the judgment of God if you're not his through Jesus Christ. And even as a Christian, guilt comes and a, assails you again because you've gotten away from God and it's a precious friend.

Pam reminds me there was a lady in our church many years ago and she left when a lot of other people were leaving our church and, uh, this lady was known to say, "I'm tired of going to church and feeling guilty." You don't have to. You can go to church and when the truth of the word of God convicts you, you repent and you don't feel guilty any longer. That's the way it's supposed to work. You don't get away from guilt, you solve the guilt with God. The psalmist said, "You forgave the guilt of my sin," and it goes away.

Now here's the thing with those of us who are redeemed but you're still packaged in your sinful unredeemed humanity and you still live on this earth in this sinful unredeemed humanity so you know what we have to be? Repenters. We walk and one of the things you must do – listen to me – one of the things you must do is stay hyper-sensitive to the conviction of the Holy Spirit and that guilt that he'll bring so that you can quickly and immediately repent and restore as you live your Christian life and you don't fall into any strongholds or ruts and patterns of rebellion against the Lord. But you know what? As a Christian I want that. I don't want to be left to myself. "God, don't let me ruin me. God, save me from me. Send me the conviction and the guilt to draw back close to You."

And then God in his divine providence allows things like our governments to go completely insane and begin to teach and proclaim and legislate things that are ungodly

and we start to feel the pressure and the threat and the persecution, and all of a sudden we are quicker at repenting and staying closer to God. All of a sudden we are more quick to be pure and genuine in our devotion to Christ. Trust me, brothers and sisters, this stuff that's going on in the world today and we're seeing in such a vivid way in Canada right now and that has been happening in our country, is in the sovereign perfect work of God, he is clarifying his church. Those who are not his will not handle it. They will go with the flow. But his true church will humbly, weakly, haltingly, repentantly, they'll stay with the stuff, they'll stay on the truth.

I've told you this before and I'm not a martyr and I'm not special. I hate this stuff, "Well, he's a committed Christian. Boy, she's committed." No, you're just Christian or you're not a Christian. You just are. But I hope you are and I hope I am reminding myself every day the things I have and the things I enjoy may be gone tomorrow because of my commitment to Jesus Christ. And you know what? That's okay because I enjoy those things but they're not my joy.

So hold loosely to these wonderful blessings of common grace. We may be okay for another few decades, I don't know, but tomorrow we may start loosing some of this stuff to keep our devotion to Christ. Saying all that in the context of God uses these things to help his people be sanctified and respond more quickly to the blessed herald, the forerunner, guilt, because we need to be, to get back, we need to be prepared rather for the King.

Well, thirdly, in the reach of his love, I can't make this a two-parter, you'll have to listen more quickly. Thirdly, under the reach of his love, his love is full of mercy. As you see this despair of Jonah, only, the mercy of God is that, that, um, capacity God has to feel deeply a compassion for the most undeserving and unworthy. Woo, that's good news! He feels deeply in compassion for the most undeserving and unworthy ones. I love that. God is committed to act on mercy but it's wonderful to me that my God looks at me and finds nothing, nothing in my natural being attractive to him at all, only offensiveness, and yet looks at me with a deep compassion for my state.

And that's the way he looked at Jonah. The Bible says God's rich in mercy. One of the things that theologians point out that, that in the balance of systematic biblical understanding you see over and over again, is that God is the God who sets conditions on his covenant relationship with his children. Are you listening to me? He sets conditions on the covenant relationship he has with those who are his and one of his conditions is that he will hold himself to have mercy on his children. My goodness, what a God. He will hold himself. He will hold himself accountable, if you will. God don't really need accountability but it's a, an anthropomorphism so we can grasp the truth of it. God holds himself accountable, "I will show compassion to those wretched, undeserving, unworthy ones. That's the covenant I'm making with My children."

This just tears me up. You sit there like a calf at a new gate while I'm preaching. My wife told me nobody knows what that means. I can't believe in Alabama nobody knows. Have

you ever seen a calf at a new gate? They'll just...look at it. They'll just nothing, there's just, it's no big deal to them. I've got to hurry on.

The restoration of his love is the second major point. Jonah comes back to the course God put him on before he ran to the bottom of the boat going to Tarshish. What's it say here in verse 1 again, chapter 3? "Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time." I almost see some humor in here, it's almost like God says, "Okay, Jonah, thrown in the sea, down to the bottom of the roots of the mountains, the darkness, the billows, swallowed by the whale, the anguish, the terror, the torment of that situation, now I've saved you, you've been coughed up on the beach, now let's try this again." Can I say, are you listening to me this morning? When God calls you back, you know what he's gonna say? "Get the book back out. What I've told you to be and what I've told you to do is right here, and I'm not changing a syllable. I wasn't wrong," God tells you, "I wasn't the problem. You repent and get back to enjoying and treasuring the truth of My word. Let's try this again." Amen? Young people, you get right with God, you go back to what the book says young people are supposed to be doing. He said, "Let's try this again." Husbands, you get right with God you go back to what the book says husbands are doing, heads of households ought to be doing and you say, "Let's try this again." Wives, you get right with God you go back to the book and say, "What does God say a lady's supposed to be doing?" And God says, "Let's try this again."

You know, look, you don't have to wonder about, "Well, what am I supposed to do?" It's right there. You exhaust this, we'll go to something else. And here's what you'll find: sweet, blessed peace and contentment from the Lord as you realign yourself with his truth. I use the phrase a couple of times lately but, um, when you, when you walk in harmony with the truth of God's word, it promotes human flourishing. You do better. Husbands do better. Wives do better. Children do better. Marriages do better. Brother Chad, businesses do better. It's just, it's just better. Now you might go to jail, Brother Chad, I'm not saying you won't but it's better. Even the persecution is, is, is accompanied by abundance of grace. When we align with the book it's just better.

So what a blessedness that herald is, that guilt that comes and helps us get back on track. You know, pastors have to have a lot of this too. You do understand God deals with me before he deals with you, you do understand that, don't you? And you need to pray that, "God, keep Brother Jeff right so he can be the best preacher so I can keep staying right." It's us together. It's not me against you or...it's us together.

Well, the restoration of his love. In love Jonah is restored back to what God originally told him to do. His life has been restored. He's back restored to the office of prophet he's been called to, and he's back restored to the specific commission to go to Nineveh. How God restores. Oh, how God restores. Oh, God. Israel was so rebellious so often and one of the plagues and punishments God put on Israel was insects. That was a big deal back in those days, you didn't have pesticides, and so very often the locusts would come and devour everything and, folks, in that culture when the locusts came and devoured everything, starvation was a very real possibility for everyone.

Joel 2:25, "Then I will make up to you for the years That the swarming locust has eaten." In other words, "When I restore you, I'm going to make it better than it was before. You've suffered for a while but I'm going to make it better again." That's our God. He's the God of restoration.

Well, a few things about this. Number or A in the outline under the restoration of his love, Jonah now has a greater Master than before. Jonah has a greater Master than before. Now look, God hadn't changed, it's just a figure of speech, but Jonah sees in God one who is greater than he ever thought he was before because of having gone through this experience. He's gone through the terrors and the horrors and the depths of his rebellion and sin. He has faced the terror of God's anguish and anger against him and come back out of that and been restored back to intimacy and God's grace and love. God's greater to Jonah than he was before. That's why God converts you so you can increasingly see your utter, sinful, wretched woe and the depth of the wrath and judgment you ought to receive, and then you begin to see the love and grace and compassion of a faithful God to cleanse you and forgive you of all that you are and all that you've been, and God gets bigger than he was before. Every week when you sit under my preaching, my hope and prayer is that God's bigger to you when you leave than when you came in.

Jonah has a greater Master now. He knows this God who's restored him, this God who has forgiven him is the God of majesty, power and glory. He knows he's the sovereign King of kings and Lord of lords. He knows he's the only true and righteous judge and he deals with sin, and he as the sovereign God can choose to either avenge our sin or forgive our sin. When we see this sovereign lawgiver and governor is our judge and realize in guilt that we're resisting him and rebelling against him, we know it is God's right to remit the penalty that's against me and when he does remit it and choose to remits it, it's a great glory on his part. Jonah knows a greater God, a more glorious God than he knew before. He has an infinite, sovereign, authoritative right to rule and dispose of me. It is his decision and his decision alone to hold me either as condemned or acquitted and his decision is final. There is no appeal. So to Jonah having gone to those depths, having rebelled, and God rescued him out of them and restored him in this love and grace and mercy, God is more glorious and majestic and wondrous to Jonah than ever before.

Well, Jonah has a, a great Master, Jonah also is himself a greater man than he was before. He, he's a better man than he was before. His sanctification has taken a quantitative leap forward having gone through this. He has a new and fuller understanding of his own fallenness. You know, I think what God does to you and I is that any of us who are true believers once we've repented and gotten back close to God, then we glance back at what we were doing or what we were saying or what we were being and it shocks us to look back on that. Then we go forward with more caution and more confidence in God and less confidence in ourselves. We become more like the psalmist when he says, "Search me, O God. Try me and see if there be any wicked way in me. I, I don't want to go down to those depths again. I want to get this right quick and stay close to You."

Remember Peter? Peter at the Lord's crucifixion denied the Lord three times, even cursed and said, "I don't know who He is. I'm not His disciple." Right after that, the Lord is

resurrected, he meets with Peter. Phenomenal. Here's what he says to Peter, it's that colossal failure and rebellion, "Peter, tend My lambs. Peter, shepherd My sheep. Peter, tend My sheep." That's where Peter's thinking, "Oh my goodness." You know, a lot of the apostles were fair, afraid to see the ascended Lord or rather the risen Lord because they were afraid he would judge them immediately for not being faithful at the end. It could be said that at the moment of Christ's death he had no disciples. Maybe one, the thief who was converted on the cross beside him. But after this colossal...what's God saying to Peter? He's saying, "See, now you have a better understanding of Me and you've got a better understanding of what you can do in your own strength. You're a greater man than you were before, Peter, because you get some things now that you didn't understand before."

Hugh Martin said when the Lord painfully chisels and polishes a living stone, it is for some special place in the temple and it will be seen to have acquired under his hand a special fitness for its place. I think the ministry God has called Grace Life Church to and Anchored in Truth ministries to is special but I don't want to go back through the polishing I've had to endure for the last four decades either. I'd rather do a little touch-up work along the way. Amen? Instead of the deep polishing, chiseling, humbling God has had to do.

So Jonah in gratitude is now, he, he, you see, here's what you've gotta know. You, you've been studying the 10 Commandments and the 10 Commandments are, are, are surrounded by this fiery smoking terror on the mountain, the people saying, "Moses, we'll talk to you but don't let us talk to Him. God's too fierce and the terror of Him is too great." Well, Jonah was moved by the deep terrors of the Lord in the deep and in the belly of the whale but that's not his true motivation anymore, the true motivation is the love and the grace that God has shown him. He's so grateful for the salvation and the restoration now he wants to be faithful to the Lord. He doesn't carry it out just right, by the way, we know from the rest of the book but at this point he's signing back up for duty.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:14 and 15, I'll just key on that phrase, "For the love of Christ controls us." Here's what Paul means, that word literally can be used in, in a criminal context of being apprehended, kidnapped. He said, "I've been kidnapped. I've been apprehended by the love of Christ." Have you? "Pastor, I've gotta tithe because as I learn about the love of Christ for this wretch, I can't help but tithe. Pastor, I want to help in my small group because as I learn about the love of Christ for me, I'm so unworthy, that's the least I can do." That's where Jonah is and Jonah's like, "Don't call me sold out. If you'd been where I've been and been brought out of that, you'd serve Him too."

It's a love motivation now. Jonah's a greater man than he used to be. God to Jonah is a greater God than he used to be and then, thirdly, and I'm leaving a lot out, okay? Thirdly, C, he had a greater message than he had before. He had a greater message or he rather has a greater message than he had before. You see in the belly of the whale in the depths of the sea, Jonah tasted the terrors of the Lord. He could say with the psalmist, "The Lord has chastened me sore but He's not given me over to death." Jonah knows that no device of man can prosper against the strong hand of the Most High. He has no fear of these

Ninevites. He'll go right up to the king, look him straight in the face and say, "You're gonna be roasted by God if you don't repent." When you've been where he's been, it, he knows the power of God, man, man can't bother you when you know the fear of God. Men are a bunch of little crickets and mice compared to facing God.

So he's seen the terror of the Lord so men don't intimidate him anymore, so now he can preach with a new confidence and he can preach with a new experiential knowledge of both the terror of the Lord and the goodness of the Lord in forgiveness. Wouldn't you have loved to hear Jonah preach? Now we have the message 40 days, if you don't repent you, you're gonna perish, but that doesn't mean there wasn't a, a body of truth with that main thesis of his message. I'd love to have heard the passion and the insight, the conviction of this Jonah having gone through what he went through. If God puts you through a lot, he's wanting to use you to do a lot, have a bigger impact for his glory.

He understands the terror of the Lord but wonderfully balanced with the goodness of the Lord in grace and mercy toward him, and that balance is so essential to this prophet. I, your pastor, I must preach against sin, I must preach righteousness, I must preach judgment, and as your pastor I can't do what Jonah did, I can't give you 40, 40 days or you perish. I can't give you 4 days or you perish. I can't give you 4 hours if you don't repent you're gonna perish. I can't give you 4 seconds and if you do not repent you will perish. But yet for you and I, for me as a gospel minister, I have a greater revelation this side of Calvary of the terror of the Lord and the grace and love of the Lord than even Jonah had. You see, in the Lord's crucifixions we understand some things Jonah could not see yet. We see the terror of the Lord in the cross. The cross illustrates the terror of the Lord like nothing else, that sin is of such a blackened woe, sin is of such a vile nature to this holy God, sin is such an astute offense to this holiness of God that God crushed and ravished the Son of God when he became sin in our place. You cannot contemplate the Son of God wracked in torment, the holy Prince of heaven destroyed by the Father as he became sin in our place.

My friend, that teaches you the terror of the Lord like nothing else but also it teaches us the goodness, the love, the mercy and the faithfulness of the Lord to his own. It's as if God said, "I told you in My word I've loved you with an everlasting love. There's never been a time in eternity past when I didn't know you and when I didn't love you. And I told you I would be faithful to bring you home to Me and if it takes the ravishing and brutalizing of My Son on the cross to get you back to Me, that's what I'll do."

So we see something of the terror of the Lord in the goodness and love and mercy and grace of the Lord like even Jonah could not see. And a wonderful part of that great goodness is that he is the God of the second chance, and the third chance, and the fourth chance, and the hundredth chance so why don't you and I this morning be restored to him one more time with a new resolve, a new conviction and a new intimacy, a new joying in him.