

**Just Mercy**  
***Salvation belongs to the Lord***  
***(Communion Sunday)***

***A Journey Through Jonah***  
***Mercy Justified***

Text: *(Various)*

*Jonah 2:8-9 Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. <sup>9</sup> But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the Lord!"*

*Psalm 3:8 Salvation belongs to the Lord; your blessing be on your people! Selah.*

*Revelation 7:9-10 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, <sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!"*

**Introduction:**

This morning we participated together in three important spiritual components of body life at PBC. *First*, we participated together in the baptism of several of our brothers and sisters and witnessed them testify that they have repented and turned from their sins to trust in Jesus and to follow Him as the Lord of their lives. *Then* we agreed together to willingly, joyfully embrace our covenant obligations to love and serve those who entered into a covenant relationship with this body of believers by joining our church and becoming members with us. *Finally*, we celebrated a covenant meal together that symbolizes what makes possible the first two things we did together.

Before we move on too quickly to the next thing on our personal or even spiritual radar – let us stop for a moment and reflect on the immensity of what we just experienced together.

People who at one time were enemies of the gospel and at war with God have been reconciled to Him and to each other. This morning, we witnessed something of cosmic magnitude – wicked sinners and haters of God have been

transformed into forgiven saints, been adopted as children of God, and have become fervent lovers and faithful followers of Jesus – simply because they tasted grace and drank deeply from God’s mercy.

And, if you have been thinking about Jonah’s silent conflict with God, there is something about what we have celebrated today that might bother you! How can God just forgive these people? How can He just act like their sin is no big deal and just dish mercy out to them? Where is the merit for all the mercy that stands behind, around, and underneath all that we have celebrated this morning? And more importantly, where is the justice in all of this?

When we honestly ask these questions, we find ourselves in the same boat Jonah was in with similar questions and possibly similar objections wanting somehow to understand how God could possibly be just in granting this kind of mercy to these kinds of people – people like us *who at one time were separated from Messiah, outside the boundaries of God’s people, totally alien to any of the magnificent covenant promises of God, without hope, and living in the world without God (Ephesians 2:11-12).*

And that isn’t the whole of it! We were dead in our trespasses and sins. We were bound under sin and joyfully sold ourselves to do the sinful desires of our flesh. We not only did those things ourselves, but we also gave hearty approval to those who did them (Romans 1:32). We were true sons of disobedience and justly condemned as children of wrath (Eph 2:1-3). And to make matters even worse, we were hostile to Christ and blinded by Satan so that we could not comprehend or embrace the gospel while we were perishing in our sinful state (2 Cor. 4:3-4).

Are you seriously telling me that just because one day these people started to feel bad about their sins, told God they were sorry, and promised God they would follow Jesus and try to do better – they got mercy??? Just like that??? How in God’s world is that remotely just?

How can these people get just mercy and nothing else – no wrath, no condemnation, no punishment? *Just MERCY???* How is this kind of mercy just? Justice demands judgment, not mercy! How can this be *JUST Mercy??*

God's answer to all of this comes from the mouth of a soul-drenched prophet at the bottom of the sea in the belly of a great fish who, after tasting mercy instead of judgment, shouted out "*SALVATION BELONGS TO THE LORD!*" (Jonah 2:9).

*But what does this amazing statement mean? Let us observe five powerful essential truths from this text.*

## **I. God is the Source of Salvation – "*Salvation is of the Lord*"**

- When Jonah found himself at the bottom of the ocean in the belly of a sea creature, he was out of options, out of air, and out of life. He was without help, and without hope of deliverance. And that was when God stepped in to deliver His sinning, struggling prophet.
- God is always the source of any real deliverance that comes our way, and He is the source of the most important deliverance we need – salvation from His righteous terrifying wrath.
- Ironically, Jonah found himself in need of deliverance from the very wrath that he so desperately wanted God to pour out on the Ninevites!
- God is the only source of salvation because:

### *A. He planned it before the foundations of the earth were laid.*

· *Ephesians 1:4–5: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love<sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,*

· *1 Peter 1:18–20: knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers not with perishable things such as silver or gold,<sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.<sup>20</sup> He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest the last times for the sake of you*

- *Revelation 13:8: and all who dwell on earth will worship it, everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.*

## **B. He designed it according to the counsel of His inscrutable wisdom.**

- *Ephesians 1:7–10: In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup> making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup> as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

## **C. He orchestrated it by His own marvelous provision.**

- *Hebrews 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*
- *Hebrews 9:12–14 he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.*
- *Hebrews 10:10 And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*

## **D. He enables it by His gracious means.**

### **1. By enlivening our dead hearts (Eph. 2:4-5)**

*But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—*

### **2. By enlightening our blind eyes (2 Cor. 4:4-6)**

*In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. <sup>5</sup> For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

### **3. By enabling us to believe by granting us two indispensable gifts:**

#### **a. He grants us faith to believe on His Son (Eph. 2:8)**

*For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, (Note: the “this” and the “gift of God” refers to “through faith.” Exercising Faith does not come by our own human effort but rather, it is the gift and enablement of God).*

## **b. He grants us repentance for our sins that leads to life**

*Acts 11:18 When they heard these things they fell silent. And they glorified God, saying, “Then to the Gentiles also God has granted repentance that leads to life.”*

- ***We don’t work for our salvation. (Titus 3:4-6)***

*But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared,<sup>5</sup> he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,<sup>6</sup> whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,*

- ***We don’t partner with God in our salvation.***

*Hebrews 1:3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,*

- ***We simply receive it from His hand, by His amazing grace, because of His immeasurable love.***

## **II. God is Sovereign over Salvation – “*Salvation belongs to the Lord*”**

- Jonah did not take issue with God’s ability to save and deliver. He took issue with God’s decision to grant mercy to the Ninevites and His decision to bring judgment upon the Israelites.

- Jonah had to learn that God is sovereign over the salvation that comes by His hand, the mercy that comes from His love, and the grace that comes from His heart.

- God grants salvation to whom He wills, where and when He wills, and by what means or agency He chooses.

- In this case, He chose to grant mercy to the Assyrians at a particular time in their history, in a particular place (Nineveh), and by a particular means/agent – a Hebrew prophet named Jonah.

- He did not consult Jonah in any of this nor does He consult us!
- God granted salvation to the worst and most immoral of sinners like the Ninevites, and He granted that same salvation to a self-righteous Torah-keeping Pharisee named Saul. And He continues to grant that same salvation to those same kinds of people today as evidenced among us this morning!
- Before any of these people (Ninevites, Saul of Tarsus, or even we ourselves) chose Him, God chose them, called them, enlivened and enlightened them, and granted them repentance and faith!
- Three texts support this:

*John 6:44, 65 – <sup>44</sup>No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. . . . <sup>65</sup> And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”*

*Ephesians 1:4–5: even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,*

*Matthew 16:17: And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.*

### **III. God is Bountiful with Salvation – “Salvation is from the Lord”**

#### ***A. His Atoning Sacrifice is Sufficient for All.***

*1 Timothy 4:10 For to this end we toil and strive, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.*

#### ***B. His Wonderful Salvation is Efficient for those He Foreknew.***

*Romans 8:29–30 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. <sup>30</sup> And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

### *C. His Gracious Invitation is Extended to all, and He saves all who call upon Him in Repentance and by Faith.*

*Romans 10:10–13 For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved. <sup>11</sup> For the Scripture says, “Everyone who believes in him will not be put to shame.” <sup>12</sup> For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, bestowing his riches on all who call on him. <sup>13</sup> For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”*

### *D. No one is prohibited from coming to Christ for Salvation.*

· God promises that “*whoever calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved!*” (Romans 10:13; Joel 2:32; John 3:16)

· So, who can do that? Anyone who wants to! Regardless of their religious creed, their moral or immoral deeds, or their social status or religious standing!

· The Scripture announces that “*whosoever will may come and drink freely of the water of life*” (Rev. 22:17).

· But, will God save them when they come and call upon Him?

· The Scriptures state God is not wishing that any should perish:

*2 Peter 3:9 The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.*

## IV. God is Satisfied in Salvation – “*Salvation is by the Lord*”

· Salvation from the Lord forgives every sin, cleanses every stain, converts the sinner, transforms the soul, and confirms the saint!

· When God saved us, He saved us to the uttermost!

*Hebrews 7:25 Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.*

· God’s salvation also sustains and sanctifies us to the uttermost!

*1 Thessalonians 5:23 Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

· How is this possible? How can God do this? Because of the Salvation, He Himself accomplished through the obedience and the death of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord!

*A. His righteous demands and expectations stated in the Law were fully met by the perfect, complete, active obedience of Christ, and His obedience was imputed to us (Rom. 5:15-19)!*

*B. His justice was fully satisfied by the vicarious penal atonement Christ obtained by dying in our place (Romans 3:21-26)! And the forgiveness obtained by this death was imputed to us.*

· The Law was kept perfectly and completely; the penalty was paid fully; justice was done! Just Mercy can flow!

· And because of these two stunning things Jesus accomplished on our behalf, God was Satisfied and we were made safe from God's just wrath by God's love and mercy!

· Salvation is *for* us, but it is not *by* us – not one part of it!

· Well, I'm sitting here trying to understand all of this and I can't seem to wrap my mind around all that is in Jonah's statement, "*Salvation belongs to the Lord.*" And to be honest, I am not sure how I should feel about all of this!

· Here is what Paul has to say to us when we struggle to understand this statement or struggle with how we should feel about this stunning, magnificent concept:

*Romans 11:33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! <sup>34</sup> "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" <sup>35</sup> "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" <sup>36</sup> For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

## V. God is Glorified through Salvation – “*Salvation is for the Lord*”

Romans 11:36 *For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.*

- At the end of our Bible, we are transported into the realm where God sits on His throne surrounded by all of His angels. Seated on 24 thrones are the elders who represent all of the people God has redeemed from both the Old and New Testament ages.
- Standing before Him and filling the entire scene as far as the human eye can see is a mighty throng of saints dressed in blazing white garments purchased by the blood of Christ and given to them by the grace of God. Listen to John describe the scene:

*Revelation 7:9–12 After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands,<sup>10</sup> and crying out with a loud voice, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”<sup>11</sup> And all the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God,<sup>12</sup> saying, “Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen.”*

- This innumerable throng is made up of redeemed people from every age of human history, from every nation, tribe, ethnicity, and language. And with a mighty shout, they lift their voices, and the entire universe resounds with their shout, “Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!”
- Adam is there with Eve beside him. Noah, Abraham, and Moses are there! David and Uriah are there. The Ninevites are there! And if you look closely, right in the middle of their group with his hands wrapped around their shoulders is Jonah, lifting his voice with theirs shouting from the depth of his soul, “Salvation belongs to our God!” And while he shouts, he lifts his finger and points to a greater, more faithful Jonah – Jesus, the Lamb of God!”

## **Conclusion: Will you be there on that glorious day?**

- The question this morning is simple – will your voice be there on that day? Will you be standing before that throne lifting up your own voice thanking Jesus and praising God that His salvation was granted to you?
- Have you called upon the name of the Lord for salvation?
- What does it mean to call upon the name of the Lord? What does it mean to believe on His name for Salvation?
- Calling on the name of the Lord is more than just mental ascent or vocal articulation – calling on the name of the Lord in a saving way involves:
  1. Repenting of your sins against God.
  2. Turning away from anything or anyone you are looking to for spiritual satisfaction or eternal salvation.
  3. Turning to God and trusting fully and wholeheartedly in Him for the salvation He has provided instead of the one you have made for yourself or are helping Him make for you (moral reformation; good works; religious ceremony or activity, etc.).
  4. Committing your whole life to God without reservation.
  5. Identifying with Christ unashamedly as your Savior and Lord.
  6. Following Christ decisively as His faithful disciple.
  7. Continuing and persevering in obedient faith.

· When all other means have failed, when all other persons have failed, when all other idols have failed, when all earthy power has failed, and when all hope has failed to deliver you from the emptiness and bondage of sin – there is a Savior who will save and deliver you!

· And this is His gracious invitation –

*Matthew 11:28–29 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.  
29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.*

*And when you come, you will receive “Just Mercy!”*