

Jonah: Big Fish

Bro. Kory Cunningham



Have you ever played that telephone game before? In the game, you get in a circle with several people. You have a message that you tell your neighbor, and they tell their neighbor, who tells their neighbor, and so on. When the message gets to the last person, you see if it is even close to the message you began with. I remember playing this as a kid, and it was amazing how much the message got distorted. The original message would be like, "Johnny went across the road to help an old lady get her groceries across." The next kid tells it to the next, until it has been passed around the circle. The last person is then asked to report the message, "Johnny rode his bike across the road to the guitar store, and he played a song." No! There was a little of the original message still in it, but everything else got kind of mixed up. That is how that game of telephone works.

As we look at God interacting with His people in the Old Testament, we see that He gave them an amazing mission and an amazing message. Somehow, as they began to communicate and think about that as a people, they really got it all mixed up. For instance, we read this great declaration from Genesis chapter 12. God said I am going to bless Abraham, which is the people of Israel, so they will be a blessing to the nations. The mission was that God was going to bless Israel so they would go and be a blessing. But as you read on in the Old Testament, you see that Israel somehow missed this. They understood they were being blessed. They thought they should be blessed, they deserved to be

blessed, but they forgot the whole missional aspect of the message, the part about going and blessing the nations. So, Israel just began to love themselves. I think they began to feel they deserved God's goodness and God's love and, really, no one else did. I think we will see the book of Jonah really highlights that very vividly for us. But, before we go to Jonah, let's see how Jesus uses the story of Jonah in His own ministry. That is what we are going to look at in Matthew chapter 12.

For some context for Matthew chapter 12, we see in chapter 11 that John the Baptist sends his messengers asking Jesus if He is the Messiah. Jesus says the blind see, the deaf hear; these outcasts are receiving My mercy and My grace. Go tell John that, which should trigger him to say the Messiah is here. Later in chapter 13, a man with a withered hand gets healed and as this is going on, as Jesus is administering to outcasts and outsiders, we see that the insiders, (the Pharisees, and the scribes) get very angry.

In this chapter, Matthew quotes that text from Isaiah about how Jesus would ultimately bless the Gentiles and how the Gentiles would hope in Him. We see a transition of the messages going to the nations, the message of Jesus going to the Gentiles. The reaction of God's people of Israel is that Jesus has a demon. That is what they say. The message is going to the nations, and the people of God are so angry that they accuse Jesus of having a demon. That is how mad they are that the outcasts are hearing the good news of Jesus Christ. They say ok Jesus, if you are doing this, how about giving us a sign? Notice the sign that Jesus gives them in verse 38.

Scripture

(Matthew 12:38-41)

"Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered him, saying, 'Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.' But he answered them,

"An evil and adulterous generation seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here."

Outsiders are becoming insiders. The Gentiles are receiving the message of Christ, and the insiders, the religious people, are angry with this. They ask for a sign to show them that these outcasts are welcomed into the Kingdom. Jesus said here is your sign; it is the sign of Jonah. In the sign of Jonah, He tells them three things.

1. You Are Evil

That is what he breaks out with! An evil generation demands a sign.

2. Shares The Gospel

Here is what the gospel is; just as Jonah was in the fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights. He is showing them the gospel. He is telling them it is coming where He will be crucified, lay in the tomb for three days, and will rise from the dead, just as Jonah was spit out of the fish.

3. You Will Not Repent

You will not repent, so you will face judgment, and in the judgment, Nineveh, these Gentiles that you despise, will actually speak judgment upon you. The reason is because they repented when they heard the news of God, but you are not repenting even though the very message of God, Jesus Christ, is standing in front of you.

Gospel Hypocrisy

What is going on here? Why does Jesus use this text? Let's look at what is occurring in 1st century Palestine before we go back to Jonah and find out what that book really shows us. We see gospel hypocrisy going on here. Let's define gospel hypocrisy. Gospel hypocrisy is enjoying your deserved mercy from God while denying mercy to those who do not deserve it. It is believing that you somehow deserve God's mercy and grace and others do not. That is the mindset of the Pharisees. That is the mindset of the scribes. We deserve God's mercy, it belongs to us. We are the insiders. We are the people of God. How dare these outcasts, these Gentiles, also receive the mercy of God. They don't deserve it. You see this all throughout Jesus' ministry. Outsiders, sinners, and tax collectors, were receiving grace. The Pharisees were angered by it because they were gospel hypocrites. They felt they deserved God's love, while other people, those who were against them, those who were not like them, didn't deserve the grace of God. So Jesus gives them a reference point. He gives them a sign, the sign of Jonah. In the book that Jonah, we will see Jonah, himself, was a gospel hypocrite.

We will see this unfold as we go back to the Old Testament to the book of Jonah. You know the story of Jonah. It is a very familiar story. In studying all 4 chapters at once, I think we have a bigger meaning to the book of Jonah. It is not just about a prophet that goes, repents, and then does what God tells him to and now he is faithful. I think the whole book is about an unfaithful prophet, and it is pointing to an unfaithful Israel.

We are going to make some applications of what it looks like to be a gospel hypocrite as we see Jonah, at this particular time, being a gospel hypocrite.

Scripture

(Jonah 1:1-3)

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against

it, for their evil has come up before me.” But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.”

1. It Runs From God’s Mission

God gives Jonah a mission, but look at verse 3, “But Jonah...” Jonah decides to run. That is what gospel hypocrisy does. The first thing a gospel hypocrite does is run from God’s mission to the nations. God shows up to His prophet Jonah saying He wants him to go to the Ninevites, your enemy, those pagan people who are completely wicked. You can read Nahum about them; they were wicked people. God directs Jonah to go and tell them about His judgment. The Word of the Lord, God’s mission to the nations, comes to Jonah. It is as if Jonah walks out of his house and sees Tarshish is in one direction and Nineveh in the opposite direction. Instead of going to Nineveh where he is supposed to go, he goes to Tarshish, the most distant place from where he is directed to go. Instead of going towards the mission of God, Jonah goes in the opposite direction.

Why does he do this? Why does he run from the mission of God instead of going toward the mission of God? The whole book of Jonah will show the reason. It will expose the heart of Jonah to us. I just want to stop and ask; why do we do the same thing? Why do we run from the mission of God to the nations rather than running toward the mission of God for the nations? When we leave our houses, why do we often disconnect our life from the mission of God? Let’s take the nations out of it. Let’s just say our neighbors. We have a similar commission, right? Jesus told us to go therefore and make disciples of all the nations. When we leave our houses, why do we go the opposite way instead of running toward that? We live for self; we only think about us. We love God’s mercy. We pray for God’s mercy. We enjoy His mercy. We enjoy His love. But we never think about

extending it to others. We never think about running toward the mission of God and actually making disciples with our lives. Why did Jonah run from the mission of God? More significantly, why do we run from the mission of God? As we expose the heart of Jonah, I think we may be exposing our own hearts. Parts of us might be acting as gospel hypocrites as well. We might not be following the mission of God because somehow we feel we deserve it and others don't.

But God's grace is still coming to Jonah. God is not finished with Jonah. We had a "But Jonah" moment where Jonah ran, now we have a "But God" moment. Verse 4 says, *"But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. So the captain came down and said to him, 'What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your God! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish.'"*

2. It Rests Under God's Judgment

The second thing we see about gospel hypocrisy is that it rests under God's judgment. Gospel hypocrisy rests under the very judgment of God. What's going on here? Jonah flees, runs from God's presence, runs from God's mission, and God brings judgment to him. God brings discipline. He sends this crazy storm. We know it is a bad storm because even the mariners (professional seamen, big burly men) were afraid, and they didn't get scared often. When they saw this storm, they recognized it just wasn't a bad storm; it was divine punishment on someone. Therefore, they were exceedingly afraid and cried out to their gods. They bring out the idols and try every way to escape this divine judgment. They understand things are very wrong in their lives. They cry out, we have to repent; we have to do something! All except for one man, there is one man in the bottom of the boat fast asleep. He wasn't worried one bit. Jonah was the one man

who can't see the very wrath of God, the very judgment of God. The judgment of God was actually upon him, yet he was completely oblivious to it.

That takes us back to that 1st century in Palestine where Jesus is standing before the scribes and the Pharisees who had no idea they were under the very judgment of God. They assumed everything was great with us. Everything is fine with us. We are doing all the right stuff. We are the right people. We say all the right things. The only people who understood judgment was coming were the tax collectors and the sinners who were coming to Christ. They were repenting of their sins, yet the Pharisees and the scribes, the religious people, the insiders, were doing no such thing. They never considered God's judgment could be upon them.

That is what gospel hypocrisy does. It convinces you that you have never been under the judgment of God. You think no, it can't be me because I am in church, I grew up in a Christian home, I am an insider, I've been doing everything right; I have Scripture memorized. I could never be under God's judgment. Yeah, I had that time where I felt bad and I said a prayer, but God has never been angry, He would never send me to Hell!

But here, we see God's judgment over Jonah, yet Jonah is sleeping. The only ones who are seeing the judgment of God are those who shouldn't care about it - the mariners, the outsiders, the Gentiles. The nations, in this situation, are recognizing the judgment of God. Jonah, who should know that he is under God's judgment and should repent, is fast asleep. He could care less. Then the mariners cast lots and figure out what evil has come upon them. Guess who the lot fell upon? It fell upon Jonah. They know Jonah is the one who brought evil. It is interesting that at the beginning of the book, Nineveh was evil. Now, Jonah is evil, and he's bringing evil upon everyone he is with. They say; what should we do? How do we relieve God's judgment? How do we get out from under this? Jonah says throw me overboard and you will escape the judgment. What is Jonah saying here? He is not saying throw me overboard so God can rescue me by a fish.

Jonah is actually saying kill me. That is how you can relieve God's wrath in this particular moment. Now, I what other option did Jonah have here? The first option should not have been to kill him. It should have been for Jonah to cry out to God and say I repent; turn the ship around and let us go to Nineveh. That is what Jonah should have done. Jonah was so against the nations, he so hated the nations that he said ok, what you need to do is just kill me. I had rather die than take the message of God to the Ninevites! That is how angry Jonah was about the thought of God's message going to the people he so hates. We are going to see this very vividly.

So of course, Jonah gets thrown overboard. Death is given to Jonah. But, we all know this moment of the story because we know the book is about Jonah and the whale. That is how we know the story; Jonah and the fish are connected. So Jonah gets thrown overboard, (again, this is a "but God" moment) but God sends a fish. God is still relentless towards even Jonah, his rebellious, gospel hypocrite prophet. He is still going after him. Jonah gets swallowed by a fish. He is in the belly of the fish, in the very judgment of God, and then comes this prayer.

I have always thought Jonah's prayer was an awesome prayer. This is one of those prayers you put up on your wall and say when you are in trouble, because Jonah got it right; his prayer was amazing. But as I look at the whole book, I decided this is not such a good prayer. I think it is actually the prayer of a Pharisee, the prayer of a hypocrite. I am going to show you why I believe this. I don't think Jonah is doing well here. I think he is still a gospel hypocrite even though he prays and sounds like he believes the right things. I think, in his heart, he still doesn't get the gospel. He still doesn't understand undeserved grace that he has been given. Listen to the portions of his prayer:

"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 out and you heard my voice." (Jonah 2:1)

Doesn't that sound good? I mean it sounds like Psalms, like David, so poetic.

"I went down to the land whose bars closed me up forever; yet you brought my life up from the pit, Oh LORD my God. When my life was fading away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to you, into your Holy Temple."(Jonah 2:6-7)

Wow, Jonah gets it! He understands and he is repenting; this is a beautiful prayer!

Now, I have always struggled with verse 8. Why is verse 8 in the prayer? What in the world is verse 8 meaning?

"Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love."(Jonah 2:8)

It is just odd...He is in the fish, repenting, going through how bad he is, and then he just throws in this thing about how idol worshippers, pagans, Gentiles, don't have the steadfast love of God. Why does he put that in the prayer?

Notice his next line starts "But I," Do you hear that? The pagans don't have Your love God, but I...

"But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!"(Jonah 2:9)

3. It Talks Rather than Does

Doesn't that sound great? Doesn't that sound so amazing? But we find that gospel hypocrisy talks rather than does. First, I want you to see the irony here. Jonah is in the belly of a fish under the judgment of God and he is praying out to God, seemingly repenting before God, but in his prayers, he says he is glad he is not like the idol worshippers who don't have God's love. He prays, I have thanksgiving, I make vows, and I make sacrifices.

But notice in chapter 1:14-16 what the mariners (the Gentiles; the pagans) are doing while Jonah is down in the hull of the boat. They called out to the LORD (something Jonah did not do) and said, *"O LORD, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you."* So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows."

Did you catch that? Notice what went on above, in the boat. The pagans, the people who don't know who God is, are now under the knowledge of God, they fear God, make a sacrifice, and make vows. Jonah is in the belly saying I will make a sacrifice; I will make a vow. Jonah is telling God what he is going to do, while the pagan Gentiles actually did what Jonah should have already been doing! Do you get the irony here? Jonah is saying I'm glad I am not like idol worshippers. I am glad I am not like those people who were in the boat that don't know You. I am glad You love me. I am glad I deserve Your goodness. Do you see the irony here? The very Gentiles, the pagans, who shouldn't know God, did the very thing that God's prophet should be doing in the belly of the whale. Jonah is just saying what he is going to do, while the Gentiles, the pagans, the outsiders, actually did what Jonah should have already done.

Gospel hypocrisy talks a lot. It sounds very theological. It sounds very good. We make a lot of promises. We say what we are going to do a lot but it doesn't really do anything. That was the Pharisees and the scribes. They had lengthy prayers. Often, their prayers would be thank you God for not making me like these sinners. That is basically Jonah's prayer. Thank you that I am not an idol worshipper. Thank you that I deserve Your love. It is the prayer of a Pharisee. That is exactly why Jesus is using the story of Jonah to the Pharisees. He is saying you guys are just like Jonah. You are gospel hypocrites.

What is your life like? Are you more about talking and praying, telling God what you will do? Or, are you already living out what Christ has commanded you do? That is a good self- evaluation. Do you say yes, I will pray for the nations, I will go to the nations, I will tell my neighbors about Jesus, I will be a good husband, a good father, I will try to please You? Is it about what you are going to do, or are you actually doing those things because you actually fear God? In this particular moment, Jonah has no fear of God. The only people who fear God are the Gentile pagan mariners, who used to be idol worshippers. Now they fear God and obey Him, and Jonah is doing neither. Just because you are in the right spot, just because you are in the right group, just because you have the right title, doesn't mean that you are actually faithfully obeying the Lord Jesus. That is what he is wanting the Pharisees and the scribes to see, and he is using the story of Jonah. As we see the heart of Jonah exposed, we find that Jonah is what I would consider a gospel hypocrite.

So, what happens? He is in the belly of the fish, and there is good news; God gives him grace and the fish spits Jonah out. Jonah gets grace and he receives mercy. The story continues in chapter 3:1-5, *"Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you.' So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, three days' journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey. And he called out, 'Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!' And the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them."*

Jonah reluctantly goes to the Ninevites in this horrible city, Nineveh, the capital of Assyria. They were the worst of the worst. They loved beheading people. They loved slaughtering people. They were violent. They were wicked. They were sexually immoral. They were pagans. Jonah goes in and says that in 40 days God is going to destroy this place. But what does the Bible say about the Ninevites? The Ninevites believed God. Unbelievable!!

There is a revival in Nineveh, from the least to the greatest. The next paragraph talks about the king who takes off his robe and puts on sack cloth. He is not sitting on his throne; he is sitting on the floor. He calls for a repentance for the whole country. The king says we are all repenting now because we all believe God; we believe the message you have just told us. When God saw what the Ninevites did, He relented from His anger, gave them mercy, and gave them grace. This is awesome! That is the story of Jonah. He didn't want to go, he has a change of heart, he goes, and there is a revival. Yes, Jonah got it! We are excited!

4. It Accepts Mercy for Self But Denies It to Others

But that is not how the story ends. If you look at how the story is arranged, the whole story is building up for chapter 4. We often skip over this chapter because we misunderstand it. But it is the whole point of the book. The whole book has been building to chapter 4, which gives this next point. Gospel hypocrisy accepts mercy for self while denying it to others. This is what gospel hypocrisy does. It accepts mercy for self while denying it to others.

Notice what happens in chapter 4:1, because we have another "but Jonah" moment. Listen to what it says. *"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry."* Notice what the writer is trying to do here. He is not just saying Jonah was angry, Jonah was upset, or Jonah had a frown. He is saying Jonah was so irate that he could barely even think straight. He is not just angry, he is exceedingly angry. He is not just exceedingly angry, he is exceedingly angry and displeased. Three words are used to describe the anger of Jonah. Why is he angry? He is angry because Nineveh received mercy. He is ticked off. So now, we are going to find out why Jonah refused to go in the first place, why Jonah ran away from God's mission to the nations. Listen to what he says in verses 2-3, and notice the first prayer. It was very lofty, very theological, and it sounded beautiful. It read like a psalm. This prayer is raw and truthful, and it is ugly. It says, *"And he prayed to the Lord and said, 'O LORD, is not this what I said when*

I was yet in my country? That is why I made haste to flee to Tarshish; for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live. "WHAT?! That should be our reaction at that moment...What? The best news ever just happened. A whole city of 120,000 people repented and came to the Lord, and Jonah's reaction is I hate every bit of this; this is exactly why I didn't go! I knew You were gracious. I knew You were merciful. I knew You were abounding in steadfast love. I knew You would give them grace, and what I wanted them to have was justice and wrath! I wanted them to be wiped off the face of the earth, and that is why I never went.

Gospel hypocrisy causes you to love mercy that is given to you, but in your mind, you deny it to others. Somehow, you think others do not deserve it. For Jonah, the Ninevites didn't deserve mercy. The Ninevites didn't deserve grace. The mariners didn't deserve mercy. They didn't deserve grace, because they were not the people of God. If you consider the whole book of Jonah, the only one undeserving of God's grace is Jonah! The one who knows God is running from God. The one who knows God is cursing God. The one who knows God is not repenting before God. If there is anyone in this story who doesn't deserve mercy, it is Jonah. But Jonah received mercy; he got what he did not deserve. But Jonah didn't see it like that. He always assumed he deserved mercy because he is an Israelite. He even said to the mariners, *"I am Hebrew."* In other words, I am of the people of God; I deserve God's goodness. But Jonah didn't deserve it any more than the Ninevites deserved it. That is the whole point of the book of Jonah. That is what God is trying to get Jonah to see. In Jonah, God is trying to get Israel to see that they don't deserve His grace and mercy. He is trying to get them to see that the nations don't deserve it either, but they should take it to them. They, who don't deserve it, should give it to others who don't deserve it.

If you believe you deserve it because you think you are good enough because of who you are, then you are going to deny it to those you think aren't good enough, those you think should not deserve it. We all have our own kind of Nineveh, our own groups of people, our own individual people, who we think just don't deserve the mercy of God, or the grace of God. If you're Republican, you think the Democrats don't deserve it. If you're Democrat, you think the Republicans don't deserve the grace of God. You believe they are all mixed up in their politics. You think they are ruining the nation, so you aren't going to take the gospel to them! We have groups of people, maybe it is the color of their skin, or maybe it is their lifestyle, whatever it is, you believe that group, for whatever reason, doesn't deserve God's grace. When you say that, you are ultimately saying that you do deserve God's grace. That is being a gospel hypocrite. The true gospel is that you don't deserve it. Neither do they; therefore, you go and share it. Because you have been given grace, you go and give grace.

The whole problem with Jonah is that somehow in his warped mind, he believed he deserve God's mercy and grace. He thanked God for it, yet in this moment, he is cursing God for giving it to someone else. That is exactly what was going on with the scribes and the Pharisees. They believed they deserved God's mercy and grace, and somehow the lame, the blind, and the mute didn't. Somehow, the Gentiles, the women at the well, the women caught in adultery, and the outcasts didn't deserve it. So, they were angry when they those people received it. That is what gospel hypocrisy does. You believe you deserve it while withholding it from others who you think don't deserve it.

Jonah is angry, but God is still gracious with Jonah. God asked this question in chapter 4:4, "*Do you do well to be angry?*" It is a great question. Hey, Jonah, you're ticked right now. Are you rightfully ticked? Are you right to be angry right now? Jonah doesn't answer. He just leaves. He sits outside, builds himself a booth, and watches the Ninevites; I think it is in hope that God will eventually kill them. He is just watching, angry, and mad.

Then, God begins to work in Jonah's life again. God appoints a plant and this plant grows up. It says that Jonah is exceedingly happy! He was exceedingly angry and now he is exceedingly happy. It is showing the two huge range of emotions here. He is exceedingly happy because this plant is shielding him from the sun; it is providing him shade. Then, the Scripture says the Lord appoints a worm and the worm kills the plant. Then the Lord appoints the wind and it blows the plant over. It says Jonah gets angry again and asks the Lord to kill him again! God asks, "Do you do well to be angry for the plant?" Jonah said yes, I am so angry that the plant died that I wish you would just kill me. God said ok, is this rightful anger to be so angry at the plant?

5. It Pities Plants Rather than People

Then comes one of the climaxes of the book, it is the big question in verse 11. God said, *"And should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and also much cattle?"* The last point is that gospel hypocrisy pities plants rather than people. For Jonah, his compassion was way off. He was compassionate towards a little plant that perished, but he was not compassionate to 120,000 image bearers of God who were going to perish. He cared more about plants than people. That is what gospel hypocrisy does. It causes our compassion to be warped. We care about things that don't matter, and replace it with things that really do matter. We don't care about people; we care about all kinds of other things, whether our team loses, or the little puppy commercials on TV that pull our heart strings, and we get really sad. Maybe we should be sad about some of those things, but it doesn't break our heart that the nations are going to die without Christ, that our neighbors might die without Christ! We pity things that are little and don't pity things that are huge. God says you need to get on board with my compassion. My compassion is true. I am compassionate towards 120,000 people. That is who you need to be concerned about. You need to be concerned about the nations. You need to be concerned about your neighbor. You need to be concerned about your boss. You need to be

concerned about your friend. You need to be concerned about your family. You need to be concerned about people that you may not think deserve grace. Well, you didn't either!! Therefore, you need to go and deliver grace.

That is what Jesus wanted the Pharisees to understand. Yes, outsiders are coming in to the Church, and the reason they are coming in is because of grace. But the reason you are in the Church is also equally because of grace. If you think you deserve this, you will never be about God's mission to the nations. But if you believe that you don't deserve any of this, then you are going to understand that no one else deserves it either. Therefore, you are going to take what you didn't deserve and give it to others who also don't deserve it.

Hopefully, what we have seen is gospel hypocrisy exposed through Jonah. Do you suffer from gospel hypocrisy? Here is what it looks like to suffer from gospel hypocrisy. You hate the nations, you hate your neighbor because you deserve grace and they don't. I don't think any of us would say that. We wouldn't say we hate our neighbor or the nations. We are not that much of a hypocrite, maybe. But do you realize that the other end of hate is apathy? I think we suffer from that more than anything. Gospel hypocrisy is being apathetic toward the nations. Gospel hypocrisy is being apathetic toward your neighbor. Hate and apathy will never lead to compassion. The point of the gospel is compassion, compassion towards your neighbor, compassion toward the people you share work space with, compassion. If you are a gospel hypocrite, you won't be compassionate. You will be apathetic or even hate filled. These are symptoms of a disease. The disease is you somehow believe you deserve the mercy of God. You deserve the gospel and you deserve God's love. Thinking you deserve it is the disease that will absolutely kill the mission of God.

The Cure

We have the symptom. We have the disease. What is the cure? The cure is in understanding the true gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a gospel of grace.

Jonah doesn't deserve the gospel, the Pharisees don't deserve the gospel, the Church doesn't deserve the gospel; no one deserves the gospel! We all deserve God's wrath because we are all sinners. We are all on a level playing field. You didn't deserve God's grace. Your children don't deserve God's grace. Your family doesn't deserve God's grace. We all need to get to that place where we realize we have grace because we didn't deserve it and neither does anyone else on the planet, but because I have it, I am required to give it. So I am going to go and give grace and mercy to everyone because I got something I didn't deserve and I want others to get what they also don't deserve, which is grace and mercy.

Have you ever notice how Jonah ends? It just stops. We have no idea what Jonah does. We don't know if Jonah repents, if Jonah comes to the right thinking; we have no idea, it just ends! Why does it do that? I think it ends like that because the audience has become Jonah. You are now Jonah, and you have a decision to make. What are you going to do in light of your own gospel hypocrisy? What are you going to do in light of the fact that you might possibly believe you deserve mercy and you are withholding mercy from those around you? What are you going to do? Are you going to repent? Are you going to start, now, to be a person who understands undeserved mercy and grace, and be a person who takes undeserved mercy and grace to the nations, starting with the person who is beside your driveway? The question is what are you going to do? It's not what did Jonah do or what happened; it is about what you are going to do in light of Jonah.

Hopefully, your response is to want to be about the mission of God. I want to give you three practical steps that could connect us to God's mission to the nations.

1. Pray

How many of you lately have prayed for your neighbor, prayed for a co-worker, or prayed for the nations? Apathy leads us not to pray. If we believe the gospel, we will start praying for our neighbors and friends.

2. Give

It is just really practical. Give towards the mission of the Church to take the gospel to all nations. Apathy leads to inaction, but there are many opportunities to give, no matter how small.

3. Go

God has asked us to go. He is not just saying go to Nicaragua, Thailand, Iraq, or other places; He is saying as you go, wherever you go, start being about my mission. As you go to work tomorrow, as you walk into your house today, as you go to lunch this afternoon, be about people, be about the mission of God.

Gospel hypocrisy says I deserve mercy and grace, but I am not going to give it to anyone else. That shows you don't understand the gospel. The gospel is undeserved to you. Therefore, that waitress who gets your order wrong deserves grace because you have been given grace. She deserves the gospel because you have been given the gospel. That neighbor who messes up your yard deserves the gospel. He deserves mercy. That person who lives a different lifestyle from you deserves mercy and grace. They deserve the gospel truth that there is judgment coming and there is repentance that can be had because Jesus died on a cross. He was buried. Jonah ultimately points to the resurrection in Christ. Because of this, those who don't deserve mercy can receive mercy.