

Jonah: More Than a Fish Story

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 25 July 2021

Preacher: Dr. Ralph Carter

[0 : 0 0] If you have your Bibles, I want you to turn with me to the book of Jonah. And we're going to look at the book of Jonah this morning, and I'm going to preach all four chapters this morning.

It's probably going to take two or three hours, but I know that you don't mind and you don't have anywhere to go. No, I'm teasing. I'm going to do it in about 30, 35 minutes. And there's a reason, because some books of the Bible you need to dissect and look at verse by verse by verse.

And some books of the Bible, to be honest with you, you need to start in chapter 1 and read them all the way to the end and then step back and ask yourself, what is God saying? And this is one of those kind of books.

You're actually better off, you'll understand the book better if you read it as a whole than if you dissect it into many, many different parts. How many of you remember the movie Forrest Gump?

How many of you actually saw that movie? Raise your hand real high, Forrest Gump. That's great. All God's people saw that movie, right? It's a great, great movie. I think it's probably my favorite movie of all time.

[1 : 0 0] I got a lot of favorites, but I really think that's right there near the top. It's probably the most quoted movie I can ever remember seeing in my lifetime, and I don't think I ever laughed harder or experienced a wealth of emotions more in any other picture than that.

There were times I'd just laugh myself silly, and other times, I mean, tears would be streaming down my face. It was just a heart-touching movie. Let me just test your memory on something, prove what I saw about her.

See if you can remember some of these quotes. Forrest used to say, my mama always said what? Anybody remember? Now, you're going to read it. You're going to get the clue, right? Well, go ahead and say it with me.

Life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get. Mama was a wise gal. She said, life is like a box of chocolates. You never know what you're going to get.

She also said, stupid is as stupid does. Remember that? And then he said of Jenny, me and Jenny go together like peas and carrots.

[2 : 0 2] And then in the end of the movie, when she's trying to convince him that she's not right for him, remember what Forrest says? He says, I'm not a smart man, but I know what love is.

That was a great statement, wasn't it? I remember so many things about that movie. Here are a few of my favorite things that occurred in that movie. You remember when he's on the park bench and people would come up and they'd sit down beside him and have those little conversations?

Wasn't that a great, great part of the movie? And remember when he went to play football at Alabama and he played for Bear Bryant and they gave him the ball and, boy, he was fast, greased, lightning. He goes around the end. He runs down the sideline, scores the touchdown.

They just forgot to tell him to stop. And he keeps running right out of the stadium. Remember that? And then, of course, he ran and ran and ran all across the West. And he comes to a place where he says, I think I'm tired.

I'm going to stop. Love that part. When he's on the bus with Bubba, his buddy who later, they started a shrimp business. And he says, here are all the ways you can fix shrimp. So many different things about that movie caught my attention.

[3 : 01] One of the best things, the ping pong scene now that we're in the Olympics. Remember when he plays ping pong and it's just incredible how fast he can play? Here's my question to you. Is that a movie about ping pong?

Is it a movie about football? Is it a movie about shrimp? Is it a movie about waiting on a bus or getting off a school bus or fleeing from bullies or standing at the Washington Mall?

It's not about any of those things. That's just things that set up the telling of the story, right? And here's what's at the heart of the movie, and you may have never thought about this movie that seriously before.

But if you really sat down and you gave it some thought, and I've had the opportunity to do that, you're kind of at a disadvantage springing this on you this morning. But if you sat down and thought about it, I think you'd probably agree with this assessment.

This is a movie about how a simple man can love so profoundly, and his love impacts the people who he interacts with.

[4 : 07] I mean, in a marvelous, profound way. Remember Jenny? Boy, how he loved Jenny. And how he loved his mother. And how he loved Captain Dan. And how he loved Bubba.

And then ultimately, how he loved his little boy through Jenny, right? It's a powerful, powerful movie. But it's not about any of those other things. They're just things we see as we watch the movie.

You say, why are you telling me this? Because that's the way it is with the book of Jonah. I want to tell you the story, and when I finish, I don't think anyone here will say, you took a liberty with that, because I'm going to try to tell you as forthrightly the book of Jonah in just a few minutes as I possibly can.

Here goes, you ready? Chapter 1, Jonah gets a call from God. God says, Jonah, I want you to go to the north and to the east, to Assyria, and I want you to preach.

I'm going to destroy that city in 40 days unless they repent. Go tell them to repent. You know what Jonah does? He heads west. He goes to the coast.

[5 : 12] He catches a ship. He's headed toward Spain. He's going to Tarsus. They don't get too far offshore until a great storm begins to prevail.

And the scripture says that Jonah, while others are scurrying about experienced seamen knowing their lives on the line, they're throwing cargo overboard. They're trying to lighten the load so the ship will rise in the water.

They're fearful it's going to be swamped and they'll sink. And they find Jonah asleep in the belly of the ship. Jonah, how can you be asleep?

Man, we're about to die. We're all calling out to our gods. We worship an assortment of gods. Why don't you call to your God? Maybe he'll reveal who's at fault here. Jonah turns to him and says, hey, I don't need to do that.

I know who's at fault. It's me. I'm fleeing from God. I'm disobedient to God. And so God has brought about this storm. If you want the storm to end, you need to throw me overboard. Well, they're reluctant to do that.

[6 : 13] They continue to lighten the load of the ship. Finally, there's no other alternative. Reluctantly, they throw him overboard. Immediately, the sea's calm.

He's drifting down through the waters to the very bottom, chapter 2 tells us, when God rescues him through a fish that we read about in chapter 1. He has prepared a great fish.

The fish swoops down and swallows Jonah whole. Incredible. You'd think he'd have been bitten by the fish, devoured by the fish. He swallows Jonah whole.

Chapter 2, he's in the belly of the fish. He's there three days, and he begins to pray, God, somehow rescue me. Well, God does just that.

He spits him up through the whale or through the great fish on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. He immediately goes to Assyria as he was instructed to do the first time.

[7 : 15] Chapter 3. He gets to Assyria. There are 120,000 people in this city. Now, just think with me, using common sense. No skyscrapers. No apartment complexes.

So, to have 120,000 people, you know this is an expansive city. He begins walking from one end of the city to the other, and as he walks, here's what he's saying and preaching.

40 days and Nineveh is going to be destroyed. 40 days and Nineveh is going to be destroyed. Hey, 40 days and Nineveh is going to be destroyed.

He gets to the end. He's actually hopeful that no one is going to heed his message. That's what he's hoping. They won't listen. God will rain down fire on them.

They'll be destroyed. He goes to this mountaintop, chapter 4, and he's perched on the mountaintop, and he's looking at the city of Nineveh. He's angry because he's already made up his mind what's going to happen.

[8 : 23] In his mind, he's thinking, I know, I know, I know. That's why I didn't want to come. God is going to relent, and God is going to forgive these people. And sure enough, that's what happened. They adorn themselves with sackcloth and ashes, a means of showing repentance.

They call out to God, and God is merciful. From the king down, everyone in Assyria, they repent of their sin, and God spares Nineveh. So here's Jonah.

He's angry as an old, wet horn. Let me ask you. I want to ask you to raise your hand. Have you ever been so angry you could just hardly spit?

I mean, you're just so mad. The veins are protruding in your neck. Your face, the countenance of your face is changed. Your fists are clenched. I mean, you're just angry.

And almost angry, can't even talk. Any of you ever been that way? Well, that's where Jonah is. He's that mad. God speaks to him, Jonah, why are you so mad?

[9 : 22] He says, Lord, back in Exodus 34, it says, You're compassionate and slow to anger and patient and long-suffering and forgiving, and you forgave the Hebrews back at Mount Sinai, and I knew this was going to happen.

That's why I didn't want to come here and preach. Well, he refuses to really say any more to God. And guess what God does?

He allows this vine to begin to grow, and it grows up until it covers Jonah's head and becomes a shelter for Jonah.

Jonah is now more pleased. He's out of the hot sun, the baking sun of the Mideast. He's shaded from the sun, a little more bearable now, until the next morning when he awakens, guess what?

God has prepared a worm, and the worm comes, and he eats this plant that's growing over Jonah's head. He devours the root, and the plant withers and dies.

[10 : 31] On top of that, God sends a scorching, the Bible says, scorching east wind, and now he's miserable.

Any of you ever been out in the desert? I lived in El Paso for about a year one time. Boy, it can get so hot in the desert, and when it's dry and the wind gets up and the sand starts blowing, and you've seen pictures of that in the Middle East, right?

Our soldiers in Afghanistan and those different places, Syria, different places. He is miserable beyond belief, and this time he just explodes, and he really takes it to God.

I knew this would happen. I knew this. I wish I could die. Boy, you better be glad I wouldn't, God, because I said, okie dokie. We'll just let you die right here.

But God doesn't. He's patient with it. And then God gives him this message. He says, Jonah, how is it that you're uncomfortable because this vine that was over your head and sheltering you from the sun has withered and died, and you didn't do anything to bring about its growth?

[11 : 39] You didn't plant it. You didn't cultivate it. It just appeared. And now that it's gone because of this worm and there's a scorching wind, you are just beside yourself and living, and you'd rather die than continue living.

When down below, there are 120,000 people. Now listen to this. This is a stinging indictment. Down below, there are 120,000 people.

Can you imagine how many people that is? You see Clemson Stadium on a Saturday, and it's about 80,000 people? You hack that again. That's 120,000 people.

He says there are 120,000 people. They're not uncomfortable. They're not just hot. There's not just a scorching east wind. They don't know their left hand from their right hand, and in 40 days, they're all going to die unless I intervene and rescue them.

And all you can think about is your own discomfort. Now that's the story of Jonah. Here's the million-dollar question.

[12 : 47] What's it about? What do you think God wants us to take away from that? I want to begin by telling you what the book is not about, two things it's not about, and I'm going to tell you one thing it is about.

And some of you may leave here a little shook because you'll say, you know what? I always thought it was about this, but really true it's not.

Let me begin by telling you this is not a fish story. All the part about the great fish is interesting, and it's real, and it's historically accurate, and I think it really and truly happened, but I want you to understand this.

This is not a fish story. And sadly, sometimes when we hear people teach our children, that's what they seemingly make this all about.

It's all about the great fish, and it's not. And sometimes in worship in certain places where guys don't handle the passage right, I've heard folks, even adults, preachers stand in the pulpit and talk about that great fish more than they talk about anything else, how God did it, and try to convince people.

[14 : 04] It's historically accurate. It's historically accurate because Jesus affirms it. Jesus says in the New Testament, even as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days, so the Son of Man will be in the grave three days.

That settles it. It happened. But I want to tell you something. There's no way you're ever going to make sense of that someone unless they see this as a miracle because that's what it is.

You understand it? It's a miracle. A fish doesn't swallow a man never had before that time, never has after that time, and the man not be devoured and live even further in the belly of the fish for three days.

That just doesn't happen unless, why? It's a miracle. So you either got to accept it as a miracle or you got to say, that didn't happen. I choose to believe it happened exactly as the scripture said.

It's a miracle, but here's the deal. That's not why God did it. He didn't give us this book so you would say, wow, how powerful God is because he created this fish in which a man could survive for three days.

[15:12] Is it true? It's true. But don't miss what the book is about. It's not a fish story. And I'm going to prove it to you right now. I'm going to show you something you may have never seen before.

And I want you to look at the scripture so if you got your Bible, I don't care what translation you're using, I want you to open your Bible and look at Jonah chapter 1 and verse 17. Now, as soon as you found it, you got that?

Look up and look at me. It's real important, just for a second. How many of you are using the King James Version? Raise your hand if you're using it. Anybody here? One there in the balcony? Anywhere else? New King James Version.

Anybody? One over here? One here? A couple back there? How many are using the NAS? One, two, three here? Anybody else? How about the Holman?

The ESV? A bunch with ESV, I'm sure. Okay. I don't care what translation. NIV. Oh, a lot of you NIV people.

[16:10] NLT. Anybody else? Okay. Down here on the front, a couple there in the back. Now, listen to me carefully. I don't care which translation you're using. It's all going to be the same in this sense.

The writer of Hebrews, or the writer of Jonah, rather, in Hebrew, is giving us chapter 1 and verse 17, and he's going to use a word that's going to be used repeatedly here in the book of Jonah.

Look at 117. I'm reading from the Holman, and the ESV says the same thing. The Lord appointed a great fish. Now, I'm talking about the word appointed.

Look at your translation and see what it says. You see what it says? If you're reading from the King James Version, prepared. NAS, designated.

NIV, provided. NLT, arranged. ASV, prepared. Anybody see anything different than that? That's what they all say, right? Now, let me show you something else.

[17:15] Go with me to chapter 4 and look at verse 6. It's where he describes this plant that grew over Jonah's head.

In my translation, remember what I said? It said in the Holman, the ESV, appointed. Chapter 4, verse 6, the Lord appointed a plant. Now, look at your translation, whatever it is.

Whatever it says in 4, 6, that's what it's going to say in 117. This is yes and no. You got it? Isn't that right? Everybody agree with that? Whatever word it used in chapter 117, he uses that same word in chapter 4, verse 6.

Now, go to the next verse, verse 7. The Lord appointed a worm. Again, whatever word is used of that worm is used of the plant, is used of the great fish.

Finally, go to 4, 8. God appointed a scorching east wind. Whatever word you use in 4, 8, it uses in 4, 7.

[18:18] In 4, 6, in 117. Now, look up and listen and get this. Stay on the page with me. These are all things that historically, realistically, authentically happened.

They are all miracles and they are all props of God in the telling of this story. And that's all they are. We get all worked up over the big fish, but the big fish is no more a miracle than the plant or the worm or the scorching wind.

Do you see that? I want to show you something you may not have thought about. How many of you have always marveled how fast kudzu grows? Well, I'm from Oconee County.

It'll just take over the world sooner or later, right? Kudzu? It'll cover every building inside you get a chance. It grows. In the mountains, I had a pastor one time, he was from Bat Cave and he told me in the mountains, we call it foot of day because that's how much it'll grow.

They come and they cut along the highway, it'll grow a foot before you come back the next day. I don't know if that's true or not. My wife has a begonia and you can take a cutting of this begonia and put it in water and put it in dirt and I want to tell you something, you come back three to four weeks later and that begonia will be this high.

[19 : 45] We've got two beside our front door. They just grow, you can't kill them. They just grow like crazy. Could a man hide beneath that begonia as fast as it grows and get shelter?

I'm going to tell you something. For a plant to come up out of the ground and to cover a man's head and he can make a shelter from it in a single day, that's a miracle. Would you agree with that?

That's nothing short of a miracle. A fish that can swallow a man and him be unharmed after living three days in his belly, that's a miracle.

Well, what about the worm? The worm doesn't get his just due, does he? The worm comes along and eats away at this plant and within hours, it dies.

That's a pretty powerful worm, wouldn't you say? God has given that worm pretty special powers. This scorching east wind, I believe, came absolutely out of nowhere. If there had been a meteorologist that morning, he wouldn't have said, hey, today there's going to be a scorching east wind.

[20 : 49] It's going to be tough on us here in Nineveh. God created that and it came out of absolutely nowhere. But understand this, each one of those are props in the telling of the story and the worm is not the story and the plant's not the story and the scorching east wind is not the story.

And the fish is not the story. Everybody with me? I want to tell you a second thing that's not. And this second thing is a mistake that some preachers have made.

I probably made it sometime in my life. We look at chapter one and see Jonah's saying, yes, I'll go and then his disobedience and then he's swallowed by the fish and he repents and he's thrown up on the shore and we say, how important our obedience to God is in accomplishing what God is wanting to do.

This is not a story about how important we are in God's will being accomplished. We way, way, way overemphasize Jonah's importance if you make that the teaching that comes out of this passage.

I want to tell you something. God could have resurrected Balaam's donkey from the dead and send him to Nineveh and in my estimation he'd have probably done a better job of preaching than Jonah did.

[22 : 15] If you think that city got saved because of Jonah's great preaching, you have missed this story. I want to tell you, he reluctantly, even after being swallowed by the fish, goes to Nineveh and preaches and I think it was probably as sorry a message as anybody has ever preached.

It's obvious by how he reacts in chapter four, he doesn't want these people to respond and so I can see Jonah now hands in his pocket 40 days and God's going to wipe you off the face of the earth and under his breath and I kind of hope he does.

40 days and Nineveh is going to be destroyed. 40 days and Nineveh is going to be destroyed and he does that three days and then he goes off and he pouts and he's hoping that God is going to bring judgment on but instead God shows absolute mercy.

I'm telling you it is not about how God needs us for his will to be accomplished. I want to tell you something. You need to obey God because if you obey God God will bless in your life and you will live close to God and know fellowship and communion with God and he is God and we need to obey him and bring him glory.

But if you do not obey him I want to tell you something. You will never keep God's will from coming about. He is sovereign and God is going to do what God desires to do and God desired to save Nineveh and Jonah was not about to get in the way of that occurring.

[23 : 58] So let's bring it home. What is this story about? One simple truth. Please understand this. This is a story about the incredible mercy and grace of God.

Did you get that? Had you ever thought that before? I hope so. This story is about one thing. The story of Jonah is about the matchless, wonderful, powerful love of God for humanity.

He loves sinners. He loves people who are way, way, way away from him. We may not give a nickel about them but God loves them.

It's about the grace and the mercy and the depths of the love of God. Now listen to me carefully. If I want to demonstrate how white white is, do you know how I do that?

I put it against a backdrop of black. There's no better way to show the whiteness of white than against the backdrop of black.

[25 : 04] There's no better way to show the blackness of black than to put it against the backdrop of white. Nothing contrasts black like white or white like black.

And that's what God does in this book. God is bringing us to chapter four so he can say to everyone in this room and to Jonah and to the people of that day and time, I want to show you how I love and I want to show you how you love.

I want to show you what concerns me and I want to show you what concerns you. Jonah, you're all about your comfort. Man, when that vine grew over your head and there was shade and it was blistering hot and you found comfort and shade, you were okay.

your temper began to ease because really and truly, Jonah, you know what you're all about? You are all about you. You are self absorbed.

You're the picture of what it is to be self absorbed. As long as things are good in your world, it's okay. But Jonah, look below you. There are 120,000, listen to this, older men like here this morning and middle-aged men and young men and young women and middle-aged women and older women and children and babies just like they're in Nineveh.

[26 : 37] Not to even talk about their livestock and their animals. And those people are pitiful. You know how God describes them? In chapter 4, just turn with me and look there.

Look in chapter 4 in verse 10. This is what God says. So the Lord said, you cared about the plant which you did not labor over and did not grow.

It appeared in a night and perished in a night. Should I not care about the great city of Nineveh, which has more than 120,000 people who cannot distinguish between their right and their left as well as many animals?

Boy, what a stinging indictment. He says, you're so concerned about that vine. Should I not be concerned about that 120,000? And this is what he says, who can't distinguish their left from their right.

You know what that means? They are spiritually blind. They don't have any moral, spiritual compass. Can I just ask you folk at First Baptist Pigs, are you aware how blessed you are?

[27 : 47] Not all of you, but many of you are like myself. You are raised in Christians' homes. You worshipped in a beautiful facility like this most all your life. You had copy after copy of copy of the word of God in your home.

If you don't have a sense of moral direction, it's your own fault. But there are billions of people out there in our world, about a billion Chinese.

They don't have a clue who Jesus is. They're about a billion Indians. They don't have a clue who God is. And we look at them and we judge them and we say, man, they do such crazy things and they're acting this way and that way.

And even people in our own culture who've never been exposed to the gospel, many of them. People like LBGQT. I mean, they do crazy things and we look at that and we say, my goodness, how could they be so perverted?

I'll tell you what, they don't know their left hand from their right hand. Do you understand that? They don't have a moral compass. They don't have a spiritual compass. And so they're lost.

[29 : 04] My friend, that's the message of the book of Jonah. Can I make three or four real, real quick? I mean, just about a minute, a point. Three or four quick observations.

Here's the first. First and foremost, Jonah is a picture. You won't like this. I don't like it. Of us. Jonah is a picture of me.

It's a picture of you. It's a picture of us. And when I say us, I'm getting personal. I'm not talking about people outside the faith. I'm not talking about humanity. It's a picture of those of us who claim to know God.

Because I got news for you. We're pretty self-absorbed. We say, I'm not like old Noah, man. I'm concerned about lost people. We're concerned about lost people in name. I mean, if we see pictures of people in countries who don't know God and they're perishing, we go like this.

Boy, that's bad. That's terrible. Sunsuit teacher really did a good job bringing that point home this morning. That mission speaker did a good job. Let's go get a cheeseburger. You want to? What's for lunch today?

[30 : 09] And we rush off to our comfortable little homes. Truth of the matter is, we get way more worried if the stock market suddenly collapses.

If the housing market suddenly collapses. Oh, that's what gets us upset. If one of us gets sick and has to go to the hospital, now that'll get our attention. Because, you see, we're pretty self-absorbed.

This is a book about us. It's a book about us. Secondly, people in our world are exactly like the people who live in Syria.

They're as lost as they can be. Sorry, I'm having trouble with this with my big old ears. They're just as lost as they can be.

They don't know up from down, right from left, and they're just lost. And that's the way it is with those folk in Assyria as well.

[31 : 16] Look at a third point. Like Jonah, we don't like them very much. If we're just really honest, we don't like the lost people of the world very much.

And we don't like them for the same reasons that Jonah didn't like them. And you know why he didn't like them? Because they were a threat to him. He knew that. In 722, Assyria is going to forsake God, and they're going to march south into Jerusalem and into Israel.

And they're going to defeat Israel. And it's going to collapse and be no more as a nation until 1948. I don't know if Jonah saw that coming or not, but he knew they were a real serious threat.

And that's the reason he didn't want to see them saved. He wanted them to perish because he didn't like them. And I'll tell you, they earned their reputation. They were a brutal bunch.

Man, they would scatter people. They weakened every culture, every country, every society they ever conquered. So they had earned their reputation. And if we'll be real, real honest, we don't like the lost people of the world today either, do we?

[32 : 25] What we like to do is find somebody who's kind of like us and share the gospel with him and see them be saved. But if they're really out there on the edge and they're way away from us and they don't have a clue about spiritual things, eh, they're expendable.

They're disposable. Fourthly and finally, and I close, in spite of how we feel, God loves them.

In spite of how we feel, boy, God loves them. And that's what the book of Jonah is all about. He's just wanting to pound home to Jonah and pound home to us how much he cares for people who are sinners.

And you know what? When his son comes on the scene in the New Testament, and we're going to get that in a few weeks, you're going to find the same thing is true of Jesus. He is a friend of sinners. He is a friend of sinners.

They may not matter to us, but they matter like everything to God. And because they matter to him, they should matter to us. I want to tell you something. The gospel is the gospel and it's good news for us.

[33 : 30] And it was good news for the Hebrews. And it was good news for the Assyrians. And I want to tell you something. It's good news for our world.

When I was a young man getting ready to go in the high school, I was at Raines Heights Baptist Church and in comparison to this building, I was on the next to the last row, about two or three people over on that next to the last row, sitting in the back, my right arm around the young lady, just trying to be cool.

And somebody had said to me, about two weeks earlier in a locker room, he went on to become a pastor. He said, if you were to die today, if we were to die today, I actually said, do you think we'd go to heaven?

We both had grown up in that church or were going to that church. And I turned to him and I said, Bruce, no way in the world I would. I know I'm going to hell.

Because I'm not right with God. I know I'm not. And I'm sitting on that next to the last pew and the pastors preached the message.

[34 : 51] And at some point, the Holy Spirit got a hold of my heart. And he convicted me. He showed me just how messed up I was. And boy, I was pretty messed up with somebody that age.

I was just running from God. Just crazy. And I got up out of that pew, left that young lady and came down that aisle and came right here to the front where the pastor was.

And I said, pastor, I need to be saved. I was already a member. The church had been baptized. He says, Frankie boy, that's what they call me. Frankie boy, you don't need to be saved. You just need to rededicate your life.

And thank God I had enough sense to know he was wrong and I was right. And I went over and I knelt about where that would be. And I just talked to God. I didn't know how to talk.

I just talked to God. And I said, God, I desperately need you to show me mercy and grace. I believe you died for me. And I'm asking you to forgive my sins. And right there in the moment, he forgot it was the greatest moment of my life.

[35 : 54] It changed everything about my life from then to this very moment in time. It changed everything. I am so glad that God loved this sinner like me.

And Jonah should have been so glad that God loved this sinner like him. And that he loved his Hebrew ancestors, predecessors. The gospel is good for everybody.

Amen? It'll save everybody. And it's good for you today. If you're here in this room and you've never received Christ, you may say, you know what? I just don't get Christians.

I just don't understand why they live, the way they live. I just keep messing up. And I just make a mess of my life. I'm going to tell you something. You need God in your life. You need what those Ninevites needed.

You need what I needed. You need the Lord Jesus Christ in your heart. And God loves you. And that's why he gave us this book, to let you know how much he loves you. Would you come to him today?

[36 : 53] Would you trust him today? If you're here, maybe you're already a believer, but you're just out there, man, as long as everything's good in my world, I'm good.

Would you allow God to break your heart? Would you allow him to give you a compassion for lost people that maybe right now you just don't have, but you'd like to have that? Would you leave your seat this morning and consider coming here and kneeling at the altar and doing business with God?

You don't need to talk to me necessarily. You just need to do what I do, come talk to God and say, God, here's what I need to get right in my life. We're going to stand and the instrument is going to play.

And I'm wondering if the spirit of God is dealing with you and if he is, would you come? As we sing or as we're not going to sing, but as they play, you come.

Let's stand. Let's stand. Let's play. Let's stand.

[37 : 53] Let's stand. Let's stand.