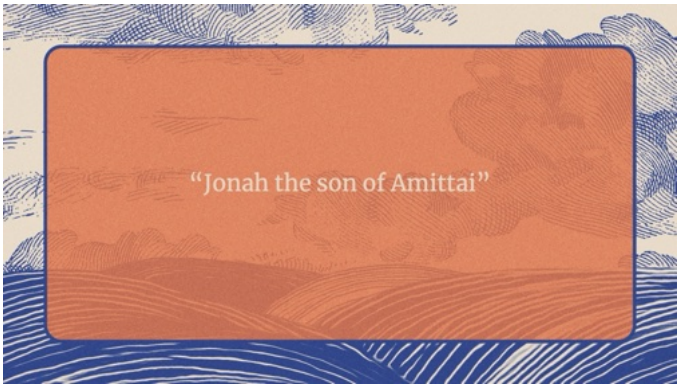
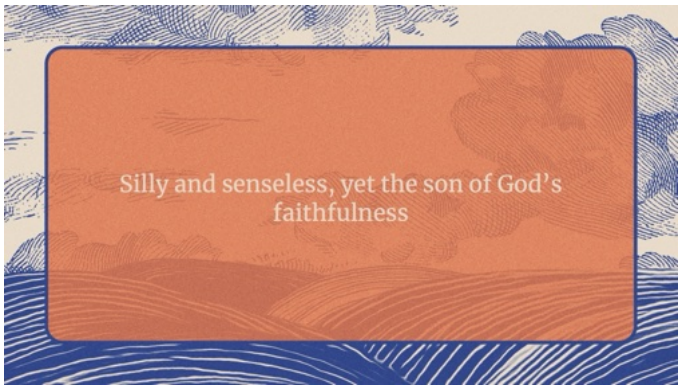
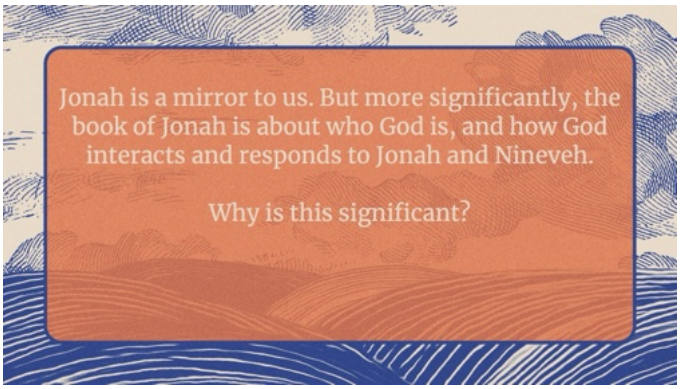
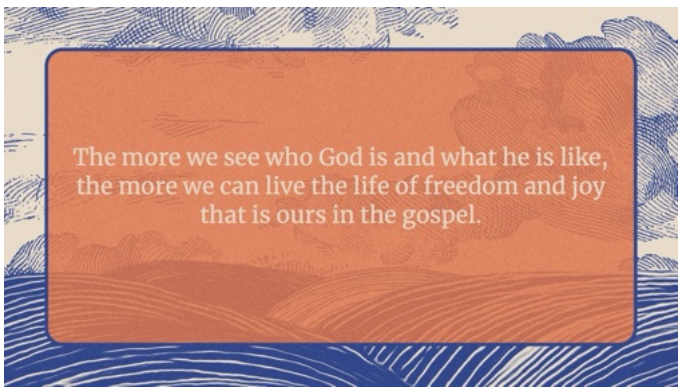
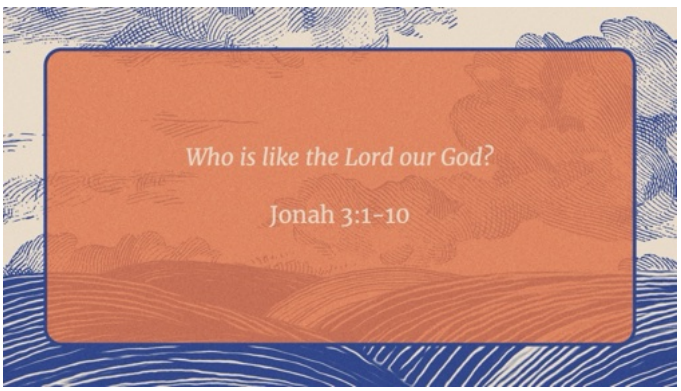

JONAH
God's Pursuing Grace


"Jonah the son of Amittai"


Silly and senseless, yet the son of God's faithfulness


Jonah is a mirror to us. But more significantly, the book of Jonah is about who God is, and how God interacts and responds to Jonah and Nineveh.
Why is this significant?


The more we see who God is and what he is like, the more we can live the life of freedom and joy that is ours in the gospel.


Who is like the Lord our God?
Jonah 3:1-10

Jonah 3:1-10:
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. ...

The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. ...

Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish." When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

- Jonah 3:1-10

Who is like the Lord our God?

Three things we learn about God and what his pursuing grace looks like...

Who is like the Lord our God?

1. God gives us another opportunity even when we fail him. (1-2)

Verses 1–2: 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."

The God of second chances:

1) In the gospel, your sins and failures will never disqualify you from God's mercy and forgiveness.

Our sins are no match for God's grace!

The God of second chances:

2) In the gospel, your sins and failures will never make God give up on you.

An important clarification:

God's forgiveness and mercy will always be available, but that doesn't mean that the consequences of sin disappear.

A "second chance opportunity" never takes sin lightly, nor does it mean that things may be the same as before.

Before moving on to the next point, an application for all of us...

When we sin and fail, there are *two postures* to watch out for:

1) Performance: *"God can only use me when I'm doing well."*

When we sin and fail, there are *two postures* to watch out for:

1) Performance: *"God can only use me when I'm doing well."*

2) Defeated: *"God cannot use me because I've messed up so badly."*

A Question to Reflect on:

In light of your sin and failure, what would it look like to respond to God's renewed call with humility and dependence rather than grit? With gratitude rather than shame?

Who is like the Lord our God?

1. God gives us another opportunity even when we fail him (1-2)

2. God accomplishes his purposes even through our imperfect obedience (3-5)

Verses 3-5: 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.

Observe:

1. Jonah's sermon: 5 Hebrew words!

"Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

Observe:

1. Jonah's sermon: 5 Hebrew words!

2. Even with the "worst" sermon, what happens?

Verse 5: "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."

What we learn from our text:

God accomplishes his purposes even through our imperfect obedience. God can make straight lines out of crooked sticks.

3 Implications from this:

1) This is humbling because God's word ultimately doesn't depend on us.

We can become so preoccupied with our inadequacies that we lose sight of God's sufficiency.

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3 Implications from this:

1) This is humbling because God's word ultimately doesn't depend on us.

2) This is encouraging because no one is outside of God's reach.

3) This is convicting, because Biblical faithfulness should involve both outward obedience and inward transformation.

God works in spite of us. But his grace must also work deeply within us.

Who is like the Lord our God?

1. God gives us another opportunity even when we fail him (1-2)

2. God accomplishes his purposes even through our imperfect obedience (3-5)

3. God is holy in judgment yet rich in mercy (6-10)

Verses 6-10: The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God." ...

"Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish." When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

Observe:

1. God is holy in judgment

Verse 4: "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

Observe:

1. God is holy in judgment

2. Recognizing the seriousness of their condition and sin, look at Nineveh's response to God's judgment:

a. There is a posture of *humility.*

The king steps off the throne: "The word reached the king of Nineveh, *and he arose from his throne*, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes."

What would it look like for you to step off your throne?

b. There is a *calling out to God.*

"By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, *and let them call out mightily to God.*"

c. There is a *turning away from evil and sin.*

"Let everyone *turn from his evil way and from the violence* that is in his hands."

d. There is a *surrender* and *yielding* to God.

"*Who knows? God may turn* and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish."

One more thought: Understanding the repentance that takes place in Nineveh

Is this a repentance that is turning from evil or does it include a turning to God for salvation (covenant relationship)?

- Elohim/Yahweh

- Luke 11:32 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.

Either way:

1) God's heart for the welfare of the city and concern for injustice are clear.

2) If this is not repentance unto salvation, the rest of Scripture makes clear that our ultimate hope and forgiveness is found in Christ.

3) The central focus is about God's deep heart for mercy over judgment.

Verse 10: When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, and he did not do it.

The God who relents:

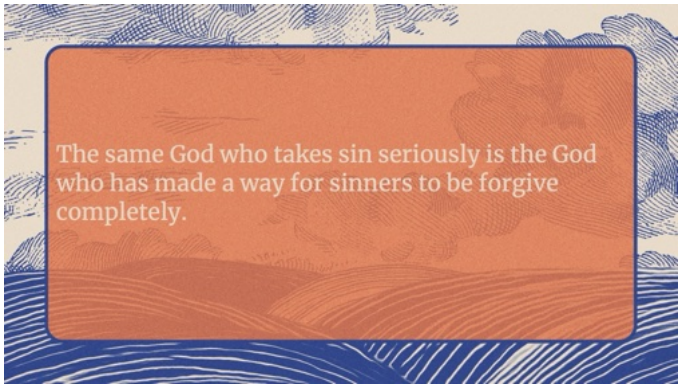
God is never reluctant to show mercy. He is so responsive and moves toward those who cry out to him! God is so quick to pull the trigger on mercy and forgiveness.

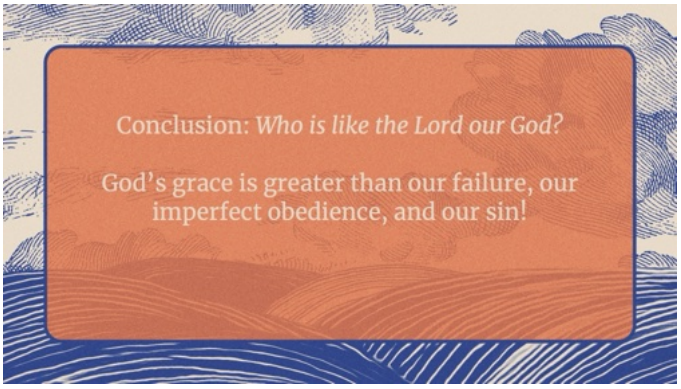
"Wow. This is remarkable about the nature of God's great mercy. But does this downplay sin and evil?"

Mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13)

Mercy triumphs over judgment because mercy triumphs *through* judgment.

Do you believe you need this mercy today?


The same God who takes sin seriously is the God who has made a way for sinners to be forgive completely.


Conclusion: *Who is like the Lord our God?*
God's grace is greater than our failure, our imperfect obedience, and our sin!