

Mercy Triumphs Over Judgment

Jonah 4

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / August 22, 2021

I. God doesn't delight in the death of the wicked, so neither should you.

Jonah 3:10-4:1 "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. ¹ But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry."

Even though Jonah's preaching went well (the Ninevites repented), Jonah would've preferred they not repent so they could be judged and condemned by God.

Throughout the Bible, we see the Lord as both just and merciful, but He seems to have a preference for mercy over justice.

A. God will judge the wicked, but He doesn't delight in doing so. In fact, He'd "rather" they repent.

Ezekiel 18:21-23 "But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all My statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die. ²² None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. ²³ Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord God, and not **rather that he should turn from his way and live?**"

B. When someone receives God's mercy, He is elated!

Zephaniah 3:17 "The Lord your God is in your midst, a Mighty One who will save; **He will rejoice over you with gladness**; He will quiet you by His love; He will exult over you with loud singing."

Luke 15:7 "Just so, I tell you, there will be **more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents** than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."

C. While God calls us to value both justice and mercy, there's a love and affection we're called to have for mercy that won't coexist with a love for justice.

Micah 6:8 "He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justly, To **love mercy**, And to walk humbly with your God?" (NKJV)

II. You need to closely guard your heart so your identity in Christ isn't replaced by anything else!

Proverbs 4:23 “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.”

Proverbs 23:7 “For as he thinks in his heart, so *is* he...” (NKJV)

Romans 12:2 “Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

Ephesians 6:12 “For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.”

If your identity is rooted in anything other than being saved sinners and children of God, you’ll be prone to disdain recipients of mercy and prefer their judgment and condemnation.

Jonah 4:2 “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.’”

III. You need to know that those who show mercy to others do so because they’ve been shown mercy by God!

Matthew 5:7 “Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy.”

Matthew 18:33 “And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?”

“If you come before the judgment seat of God and He sees that you have lived a life that is merciful to others, He will show mercy to you, because your mercy will testify to your saving faith. It will be true in your case that **mercy triumphs over judgment**. Contrarily, a person who has lived a life devoid of mercy to others will show himself to be without saving faith.”

MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (1998). [James](#) (p. 117). Chicago: Moody Press.

IV. Your best motivator for being merciful is a consistent reminder of the mercy you’ve received through the Gospel!

Romans 12:1 “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, **by the mercies of God**, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice...”

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 “Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, ²⁰ **for you were bought with a price.** So glorify God in your body.”

Ephesians 4:32 “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, **as God in Christ forgave you.**”

Ephesians 5:1-2 “Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. ²And walk in love, **as Christ loved us and gave Himself up for us**, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

Ephesians 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church **and gave Himself up for her...**”

Having received the mercy of God is the most effective, longest-lasting motivation for walking in obedience, by extending mercy towards others.

Questions for Personal Reflection and/or Community Group Discussion:

1. Are there some people (personal relationships/acquaintances, people groups, people you only know from afar, etc.), whom you'd rather receive judgment instead of mercy?
2. Pastor Peter said “If you take pleasure when someone receives the judgment they deserve, you're not like God.” What do you think of that statement?
3. What allegiances, convictions, etc., might contribute to desiring judgment rather than mercy for some people?
4. Pastor Peter said “By nature, we are more like Jonah. But by the Gospel, we can be more like Jesus.” In what ways are you like Jonah? In what ways are you like Jesus?
5. Jonah ends abruptly. In what way(s) do you hope your life story ends differently from Jonah's? What is one thing you can do this week that will demonstrate a love for mercy over judgment?