

God, that was too much Mercy?!?!

Hello Tru Church. As Kayla said, I am Dilan Oglesby. [Go to slide 2](#) I am the Office Administrator at Peace Lutheran Church. My wife Crystal and our 7month old(crazy) try to split our time between there and here. I haven't preached since before my daughter Haven was born. Speaking of that, I am tired, so tired, but also so enthralled and smitten with that girl! She has become such a Haven for Crystal and me after the last few years of heartache and struggle. Man, life is a roller coaster, isn't it. Anyway, Pastor Dave and his family are gone to Colorado, and he has asked me to fill in up here. Sorry you are kind of stuck with my ADHD brain this morning. I also did not choose the easiest week to preach as we have been in Jonah and my part is where Jonah is just crazy angry at God for him showing mercy! So, yea, no big deal, I'll just make that work.

[Go to Slide 3](#) Let's recap where we have been quickly and then we can jump into the text. The first couple weeks Dave walked us through how Jonah was a very popular prophet in the northern Kingdom of Israel. Dave said he was like a celebrity pastor to the people. We see he is asked by God to go to Assyria, specifically Ninevah. He taught how these people were vicious. Jonah was told to bring a message of repentance to this brutal nation. I mean these people deserved destruction. At least I think they did. We then see Jonah say, "nah fam, I'm out" and he flees, across the sea, on a boat. [Go to slide 4](#) (Talk About Dave and me on the boat and out experiences.) First, we get stuck in a storm and barely miss the storm having to rush to my house and stuff all the Geldarts in my bathroom with our animals, we have a small bathroom, oh and Dave actually breaks it toe in the midst of it all. Next, we went out together with another guy and the wind picks up beyond anything I have ever seen out there, and the waves were huge blowing water all over us each time we hit one. The other guy was terrified, it was awful. The next attempt was the perfect day, no wind, not hot, clear skies. I back the boat into the water get it unhooked and ask Dave to back me in a little more so I can get off the trailer. Nothing happens and eventually I hop out and run up to the window where Dave is holding what looks like rod in his hands. He ripped my gearshift out. You heard me, ripped it clear out, in his hands. Most recently, we had life group (join us each week at 6:30pm) out at the lake and Dave and I drove the boat from the marina to the beach that everyone was meeting us at. We soared over there with no issues; he jumps out and the boat no longer goes over 5 miles per hour. Boats and Dave do not go well together. Or boat with Dave and I together do not work, is God trying to tell us something?! [Go to slide 5](#) Now Back to the story, Jonah gets on the boat to run away, we also don't know why he ran yet, that's important to note, we will come back to that. We see God's servant flee. Then there's the storm right, where we see another almost backward act from the pagan sailors, they prayed to Yahweh, the God of Isreal, they tried to save Jonah. That doesn't work, so they toss him over and he is eaten by a fish. A dang fish. This is crazy, it sounds unreal. Then he kinda repents, kinda, in my opinion. He gets spit out and goes into Ninevah to preach

this message. So, the prophet, whose heart isn't really in it, but kinda like forced to, still he chooses to go. Nathan talked last week about like kind of half doing something. Not being all in. That is Jonah. And here we go again with that backwards thing happening, he preaches like a few words, doesn't even say much, pretty much just "repent". And this nation, who is known for slaying anyone who looks at them wrong, repents. From the King on down! Everyone! Wow. What?

So, we are caught up. What comes next? I feel like this is where we usually stop, right? Because what comes next is a little confusing and its actually is easy to just say, I don't really connect with Jonah here. Let's read it and see if you agree with that statement. So right after everyone repented:

Go to slide 6

Jonah balks at God's mercy

4 But Jonah thought this was utterly wrong, and he became angry. ²He prayed to the Lord, "Come on, Lord! Wasn't this precisely my point when I was back in my own land? This is why I fled to Tarshish earlier! I know that you are a merciful and compassionate God, very patient, full of faithful love, and willing not to destroy. ³At this point, Lord, you may as well take my life from me, because it would be better for me to die than to live.

⁴The Lord responded, "Is your anger a good thing?" - Jonah 4:1-4

Go to slide 7

Jonah, the prophet of God is angry. This one isn't quite as backwards as some of the other instances though. We know these people are evil, to him it would be better if they had died. So he is mad that the people he hates are just allowed to keep living. So, you know anybody that you wish would just be dead? Yea, maybe a few of us, but most of us don't have that level of hate in our hearts, right? But see, this is actually the biggest flip of the story, it is Jonah's response to mercy. UOHHH Mercy. That is a word we are not used to hearing much. What is mercy? What is mercy in a world that is all about an eye for an eye. When showing compassion is known as being weak. When loving someone who doesn't deserve it is laughable. The text is holding up a portrait of you, of you and of me. It's a portrait I don't want to see.

To illustrate my point, I brought my high school graduation portrait, which I despise by the way. I am so hypercritical of this portrait of me. It shows a young guy that didn't know who he was, a guy that was flailing to find identity in everything around him. From friends, drinking, sex, and relationships. It shows a guy who was overly judgmental of people who had wronged him. I also choked down my anger, and let me tell you, you better not have pushed me too far, I would snap. And I would intend to hurt you back. I do not like this guy, he had some good qualities, but I have worked very hard to weed out the bad. Annnddd yet, when I look at myself now, maybe I still have those same qualities, just way deep down, I have a problem with people who abuse authority. I don't just get angry, I get fighting angry when a leader, boss, teacher, person of authority creates an unhealthy environment or mistreats someone. Now,..... I have gained an unnatural patience with people, at least when I am speaking with them, maybe not so much when I talk to Crystal about them. Anyway, that patience stems from a passion of loving people, which combats that anger. And from my own failures showing me that I am not qualified to judge because of my own sin. My heart has slowly been moved towards love for people by the grace and mercy that has been shown to me since this portrait has been taken. That grace and mercy pushes me dig in, learn people, know what has hurt them, know what they need to be loved, and try to help Jesus love them while they heal. I don't say that except to bring back my anger point, if my sense of Justice spikes too high, usually with someone in a place of authority that is abusing that authority, I will snap. And I don't mean just tell them I am upset; I am likely to want to destroy them. Like use the things I have learned about them by loving them to literally destroy them. I can't stand injustice. Fury reigns down from my seat of no mercy. It's like in Karate kid with the Cobra Kai motto: Strike First, Strike hard, No Mercy!!! (This is how I get angry at others)

That's not the only anger I have dealt with in the last few years. Let me recap what the last few years have looked like for my family. Five years ago, I came home, and Crystal does this whole cool reveal that she is pregnant. Now I'm beyond the moon happy, I had been wanting kids since we got married but we were waiting so it could just be us two for a bit. So, I begin to dream what it would be like for me to be a father. How it would change me and Crystal, how we would grow, how we would get to raise a little one to know that God loves them so so much. Oh man, I was excited..... As many of you have probably experienced, life can be ripped from you. Miscarriage. Crystal likes to say that she doesn't remember what the dr said except that we lost the baby as she was in shock. I, on the was on high alert, ready to protect both of our mental states through this, I remember every word she said. And me being the crazy, literally crazy optimist I was back then, I latched onto her saying, don't let this discourage you, this can be normal, and don't let this stop you from trying again when you are ready. I latch hard onto that and avoid the grief. I started to feel discomfort, a small feeling inside of frustration. I wasn't sure what it was directed at, but it almost felt like it was toward God. Nope, not going down that road. Can't be frustrated at God. I moved on to, everything would be ok. Then Crystal had a physical and was told something felt weird and they needed to test a spot on her neck. Cancer.....now that was a hit, scary, very scary word, but Crystal needed someone strong to lean on. She needs

her positive, optimist husband to tell her its all going to be ok. So, I did, I told her just that, over and over, for almost 5 years. Through each set back, surgery, radiation pills, cancer free, just kidding, not cancer free, 2nd surgery, her being radiation resistant, doctor trying to rush in to a 3rd surgery, having to go out of state to get her the best care at MD Anderson, waiting for 3rd surgery, the 3rd surgery, waiting months to know if it was successful or not. On top of that, I was a student at Manhattan Christian College when all this started, I was never good in school because of my adhd. So, the fact that I had survived 2 years at MCC was huge. Things got crazy with all the surgeries and trips that I had to step away from classes for a while. Which left me stuck in a space of not being able to pursue the career I wanted even longer, cause a degree in this world is “”everything””..... Somewhere along the way, that frustration turned to anger, and then the anger teetered dangerously towards hate towards God. Yoda in Star Wars says it accurately, “Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering. Cause I was optimist, especially towards how Good God is. But the things happening to us, they were not good. How could God allow this all to happen, how could he let out child die, how could he allow the threat of losing Crystal loom over our heads, how could he leave us in this mess. It felt like he had no mercy. God in my mind was not good. I realized something was wrong one Sunday while I was running slides during a worship service and the words about the Goodness of God felt like daggers and I was furious. Are you kidding me? Goodness of God? Have you ever felt like that? Have you ever been so lost or hurt or broken that you can’t possibly see God is good. In fact, that is one of the most common things I hear from people who don’t follow Jesus. They either can’t reconcile that others seem to do whatever they won’t and reap good rewards or that God allows really bad things to happen and not do anything about it.

Go to Slide 8

Isn’t that why Jonah is angry after all? God relented of his destruction of this truly wicked nation, and Jonah had a really terrible time of it getting to that point. Some of that may have been his own fault but still, the man got legit eaten whole!!! See Jonah is angry because he can’t reconcile God’s mercy with his own perception of what justice looks like. He is failing to see that God is not reacting to how good or bad someone or something is but instead that God is seeing the inherent worth in humanity. That God loves people enough to not just give up on them.

Now we are lucky because we can see just how true that is, we have Jesus. We know that God felt so passionately about the evil in the world and about us, that he gave himself up for it. Jesus became the very thing he loved so much. He saw firsthand how depraved and sinful we were, he saw the hardships that were happening to us, and he still chose to pour himself out on our behalf. To die so all of those evil people, us included, didn’t have to face the same destruction that Ninevah could have faced, so we can draw near to God forever. Then He

defeated death and was raised in new life to show that God has not forgotten about where we are, has not forgotten about the hardships we are enduring. He set in stone what is to come, victory, total renewal of the whole earth and of us. A promise to not leave us where we are.

You may ask, what are you saying, Dilan??? Just like everything in Jonah's story is backwards, we need to look back to ourselves. How do YOU reconcile the bad in the world, the bad things people have done to us, and the terrible things that have happened in our lives? Do you believe that God is merciful? What does that mean for you?? It all leads to identity. That's what this sermon is about, identity. Who was Jonah? Who Are You?

I'll tell you I was an angry guy. I didn't like people during those five years of hell. I saw others with good things happening. I saw bad people doing bad things and nothing happening to them. I saw things just working out for people. I judged other and I was angry at God. And here is the big but, God melted the anger away when I pleaded with him, when I told Him how angry I was, when I told trusted friends, when I went to a counselor. God walked into the mess and held me, let me yell, let me tell him this sucked, and letting him touch the hurt. That paired with the gentle reminder of how I used to be the bad person. I personally abused the authority that was given to me, I sinned, I was a moral failure, I was evil. And yet in the middle of the storm my sin created, God, showed up so fiercely through other's loves, through other's forgiveness, through his guidance of where I am now. And no, everything is not perfect, somethings are still very hard. But look right there, my beautiful wife is cancer free, our Haven is one of the happiest babies I have ever seen. I have people who care about me. And I know I am not just a sinner saved by grace, but have full sonship in the father, fully a child to Him, nothing held back from me. I am known and still loved.

So, to wrap up, because of that I am gifted with the ability to trust God, even in the bad, I am given the ability to see people, not as evil but as human being who are loved by God. I'm reminded of the older brother in the prodigal son parable that Jesus shares: The younger brother had squandered his father's wealth and returned broken, yet the father met him with mercy and love and threw him a big celebration for his return. The older brother refused to go in because he felt he had been wronged, that he had been forgotten, that his good had not been met with the same good. But then, the father comes out, he comes to the older son and says that I have always loved you and always will. He pursued him and drew near to him. The father made the assumption that his older son would be secure in his identity. [Go To Slide 9](#) Celebration of good around you and mercy to others is the result of finding your Identity in Christ. (Say it twice)

So, who should we love? Who should we show mercy to? Who are people that God would deem worth mercy that maybe we would overlook or even go as far to say they don't deserve it? After all, we love the idea of grace until it widens to include those that differ from us. Look in the portrait and look at your own story, how have you needed God's mercy? When were you like the "them?"

Go to Slide 10

Maybe the people you think are not so deserving of mercy are:

- ☐ **LGBTQ+ individuals or activists or church that promote that or the flip, those who aren't for that.**
- ☐ **Progressive Christians or "deconstructing" believers or the flip, conservative or Christians who refuse to progress, Christian Nationalists maybe?**
- ☐ **Atheists or outspoken critics of Christianity**
- ☐ **Politicians from the opposite political party (e.g., liberal Democrats, hard right republicans)**
- ☐ **Illegal immigrants or refugees**
- ☐ **Muslims or people of other non-Christian religions**
- ☐ **Abortion providers or advocates or pro-life advocates**
- ☐ **People who burned American flags or protested patriotism, or white supremacists**
- ☐ **Criminals, especially those with violent or sexual crimes**
- **A leader who hurt you or others?**

These people are far better than the people of Nineveh but yet, I bet some of us twinged when you heard the list above, I know I did I wrote it. It made me uncomfortable. See I come from the south, Republican headquarters. Then I moved here, still considered republican, but with K-State, there are many democrats. That means after a decade here of adding Facebook friends from both sides, my Facebook feed is interesting. What I found most interesting is the flips that happen. Each election, each shift of power, the response is the same from the losing side, fear and anger and lashing out to the other side. Then the winners, joy, pride, and insulting the losing side and kind of “perceived justice” that things have been set right in the world. It has gone as far to say the sides hate each other.

Another one is differing denominations within the church. Each denomination assuming their way is the only way or the “right” way. Ever been a part of a church who had an argument about how something should be done or about how a certain belief is wrong? How'd that go? Lol It rips churches apart often. I work at Peace Lutheran, but I also attend Tru. Two very different churches and two very different approaches to ministry and very different beliefs. What have I

found working at Peace but also attending Tru? Peace is the most welcoming and loving church we have ever been involved in. Do we agree with all of their doctrine or ministry styles? No Does that scare me? Not at all. Tru on the other hand, is doing something that most churches avoid, creating meaning relationship with one another and with Jesus through discipleship. Lives are being changed. Do I think this place is superior, not at all! I have found that they are both full of broken people doing good work for Christ. That they are worthy of God's love and support because of what Christ has done on the cross. And that more than anything, both are a part of larger church. The Church as a whole. The church is doing good, even if it is flawed sometime, good work in the world.

Go To Slide 11

Look in the portrait or look at your own story, how have you needed God's mercy?

Are you ok with a God that loves those that are different than you?

How are we disconnecting? Maybe we are quick in our culture to just disconnect or walk away or not plug in, but maybe God is calling us to step into it.

Knowing the depth of your own brokenness before knowing Christ, how can we begin to see them differently?

Go To Slide 12

Dave has asked, how is Jesus the greater Jonah? In this part of the story, Jonah ran away and sat cursing the city and the people. Jesus sat on the hill of Gethsemane and prayed for the city and the people. Can we do the same for all peoples?

Go To Slide 13

The Band can come up.

Pray: Lord, we come to you knowing that sometimes life is not fair. That sometimes we face challenges that push out beliefs about your goodness. We face tragedy, heartache, and loss. These things can make us question ourselves, others, and you. Lord, I pray during these times we can be honest with you about how we are feeling, that we can express our doubts and frustrations and that in that you would step into our mess. That you would comfort us, hold us, heal us. That we would find you to be a God that is trustworthy. A God that does rescue, and a God that sustains us. And let that propel us to love others. In Jesus name, amen.

Go To Slide 14

Communion:

We are going to transition into a time for Communion. Today we gather around this table to remember the sacrifice of our Lord, whose love and mercy extend to all who believe. Communion is not reserved for a select few but is a sacred invitation to every heart that trusts in Christ.”

“As you come forward to receive the bread and the cup, know that you are embraced in the unity of faith. Let us share in this holy meal as a community, celebrating our differences, our journeys, and our common hope in Jesus Christ.”

“Receive the bread as a symbol of Christ’s body, given for you, and the cup as a reminder of His blood, shed for the forgiveness of all sin. In this act, we proclaim our dependence on Him and our commitment to follow His ways.”

“Gracious God, we thank You for inviting us all to Your table. May this communion strengthen our bonds, renew our spirits, and empower us to live out Your love in every walk of life. Amen.”

JONAH

MISSION. MESS. MERCY.





JONAH

MISSION. MESS. MERCY.

Recap



JONAH

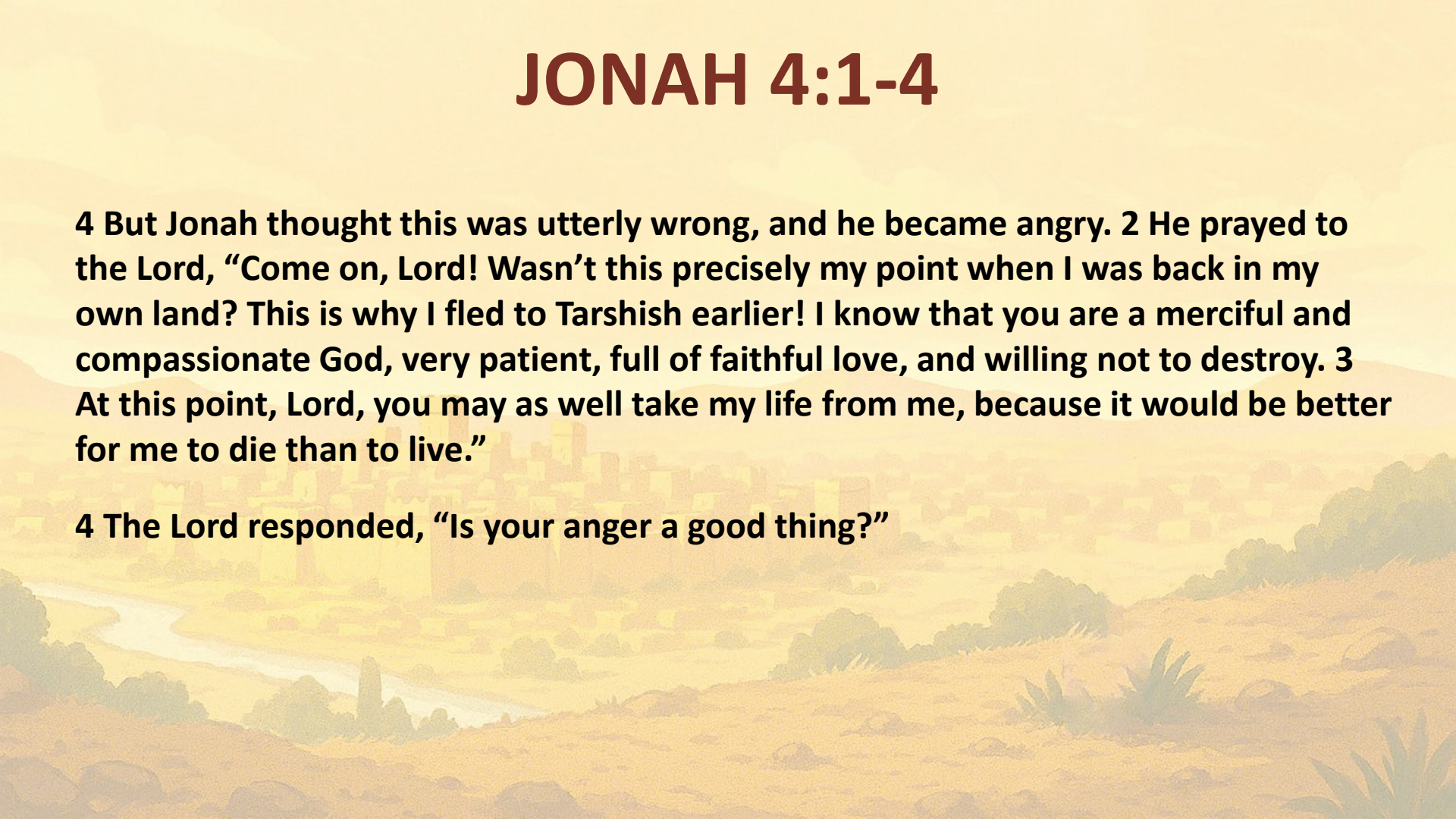
MISSION. MESS. MERCY.

Recap

JONAH 4:1-4

4 But Jonah thought this was utterly wrong, and he became angry. 2 He prayed to the Lord, “Come on, Lord! Wasn’t this precisely my point when I was back in my own land? This is why I fled to Tarshish earlier! I know that you are a merciful and compassionate God, very patient, full of faithful love, and willing not to destroy. 3 At this point, Lord, you may as well take my life from me, because it would be better for me to die than to live.”

4 The Lord responded, “Is your anger a good thing?”





JONAH

MISSION. MESS. MERCY.

Jonah 4:1-4

God, That Was Too Much Mercy?!?!

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**Celebration of good around you and mercy to others is
the result of finding your Identity in Christ.**



Who Should Receive God's Mercy?

- LGBTQ+ individuals or activists or churches that promote that
- Progressive Christians or "deconstructing" believers or the flip, conservative or Christians who refuse to progress, Christian Nationalists maybe?
- Atheists or outspoken critics of Christianity
- Politicians from the opposite political party (e.g., liberal Democrats, hard right republicans)
- Illegal immigrants or refugees
- Muslims or people of other non-Christian religions
- Abortion providers or advocates or pro-life advocates
- People who burned American flags or protested patriotism, or white supremacists
- Criminals, especially those with violent or sexual crimes
- A leader who hurt you or others?

Application

1. Look in the portrait or look at your own story, how have you needed God's mercy?
2. Are you ok with a God that loves those that are different than you?
3. How are we disconnecting? Maybe we are quick in our culture to just disconnect or walk away or not plug in, but maybe God is calling us to step into it.
4. Knowing the depth of your own brokenness before knowing Christ, how can we begin to see "them" differently?

Application

Dave has asked, How is Jesus the greater Jonah? In this part of the story, Jonah ran away and sat cursing the city and the people. Jesus sat on the hill of Gethsemane and prayed for the city and the people. Can we do the same for all peoples?





JONAH

MISSION. MESS. MERCY.

Jonah 4:1-4

God, That Was Too Much Mercy?!?!