



jonah

SURRENDERING TO THE SUPREMACY OF GOD IN THE STRUGGLES OF OUR DAY

There are those who want to make the story of Jonah nothing more and nothing less than a big fish tale. They use explanations and excuses rather than acknowledging the miraculous and supernatural. However, if you take the miraculous out of the Bible, you remove God. Make no mistake, the book of Jonah is far from being a fish tale. It is a great testimony of who God is, how God, works, and what we need to know and understand about God.

As we study the book of Jonah, I want to focus our attention on two things: (1) the sovereignty of God and (2) the mercy of God.

Regarding the sovereignty of God, when we pray, "Your kingdom come, Your will be done," we recognize prayer brings us to a place where we bow before the Father and submit to His sovereignty and rule over all things.

Prayer is both recognition and resolve to embrace the supremacy and sufficiency of God in all the circumstances and outcomes of our lives.

We also need the mercy of God individually and daily. The mercy of God alone can change and penetrate the hardest of human hearts.

We desperately need the understanding that God rules and is moving and working in our lives.

I know of no single book that has more to say about surrendering to the sovereignty of God and experiencing the mercy of God than the book of Jonah.

Whether or not you are a Bible scholar, you probably know the story of Jonah. You may describe it as being about a man and a "whale". It is a whale of a tale for sure, but it is not a tale about a whale. We don't know if the fish was a whale or not.

Let's start our study by identifying some features about the book.

First, Jonah is a **controversial book**. There has been tremendous dispute over whether or not this is a literal story about a literal man and a literal fish, or whether it is an allegorical story—something written simply to inspire. There are those who want to make Jonah's story nothing more and nothing less than a big fish tale.

Many of us know fishermen and their fish tales. Right? I am not what you would call a fisherman, but one of the greatest memories I have with my son occurred while fishing for Permit.

Permit are fairly large, thick fish found in the Florida Keys. While some fish are hooked and pulled directly into the boat, Permit go sideways and fight their way through the water. We were exhausted after about 35 minutes of tugging and pulling. We caught a variety of other fish too, and I even have a fish tale about the “fish that got away.” However, the thing about fish tales is they get bigger and bigger the more times they are told.

To some people, the book of Jonah is seen as nothing more than an oversized fish tale. They use explanations and excuses rather than acknowledging the miraculous and supernatural. But let me make a very simple point: If you take the miraculous out of the Bible, you remove God.

Why do some people go to church—any church—hold the Bible in their hands, and yet, don’t believe the Bible? They speak of an Almighty God, yet they make excuses for His supremacy. Are they simply moralistic atheists? If so, why bother going to church?

There *is* a God who rules and is Supreme. He is the Creator of all things. God can do anything He wants and is able to do anything

He needs. When God is in the equation, it changes everything.

Second, Jonah is a **historical book**. In fact, Jonah was in the news a couple of years ago when ISIS targeted a place not far from modern day Mosul. They blew up the site of ancient Nineveh and the tomb of Jonah. Nineveh is a real place. Jonah was a real person, a prophet who lived in what know today as Iraq.

It is interesting what Jesus said about Jonah in Matthew 12. A group of scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “We wish to see a sign from You” (Matthew 12:38b ESV).

Jesus replied, “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” (Matthew 12:38-40 ESV).

What do you think Jesus was talking about? His death and resurrection. If He thought Jonah was a myth, would Jesus use it to parallel His resurrection—the foundation and focus of everything we believe?

Is the resurrection a myth we read about in the Bible? No! Is Jesus nothing more than a religious man or moral teacher? No!

Jesus Christ came as the only Son of God, lived a sinless life, died a sacrificial death and rose victoriously through His resurrection on that first Easter Sunday morning.

“Jesus referred to the experience of Jonah as a historical illustration of His literal resurrection, thus reinforcing the truthfulness of this narrative.”

—James Montgomery Boice

Third, Jonah is a **personal book**. We can quickly relate to the message found in Jonah’s story. It has been said that Jonah is the only Minor Prophet where the emphasis is less on the message and more on the person.

Fourth, Jonah is a **sensational book**. It is interesting to note that J.R.R. Tolkien, known for *The Lord of the Rings* and *The Hobbit*, was fascinated with the book of Jonah. He loved the beauty and the quality of the storyline.

“While the storyline is so simple that children follow it readily, the story is marked by as high a degree of literary sophistication as any book in the Hebrew Bible.” —Mark Futato

Jonah is an amazing book, and all these things are a part of its backdrop and background. However, this book is *not* about

many of the things we try make it about.

Some people say the book is about Jonah himself, or about the mission that God gave him, or about the message, or about a monstrous fish. Jonah is only mentioned 18 times in the book. The city of Nineveh—to which Jonah was told to go and preach—is mentioned nine times. The fish is mentioned four times.

So what is mention most in the book of Jonah? God. 38 times this book focuses on God—who God is, what God does, what God is like. Make no mistake. The book of Jonah is far from being a fish tale; it is a great testimony of who God is, how God works, and what we need to know and understand about God.

“The book of Jonah is about the will of God and how we respond to it. It is also about the love of God and how to share it with others.” —Warren Wiersbe

There are essentially four chapters and four scenes in the book of Jonah, so let’s walk through these scenes as we ...

Hear the Story of Jonah

Scene 1: Jonah Running From God

“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” (Jonah 1:1-3 ESV).

Here is how the story begins. God gave Jonah an assignment, and instead of accepting the assignment, the prophet fled from God.

Joppa was a place on the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh (up

toward Iraq today). But Jonah got in a ship to go to a place believed to be as far away as Spain today. We don’t know the exact location of Tarshish. Other potential places could have been toward Greece or Italy. But we do know Jonah went in the opposite direction of where God told him to go.

Jonah was a man on the run. He was essentially saying (*paraphrased*), “Okay. God has given me an assignment I don’t want to do, so I’m going to give Him my resignation and go another way.”

Jonah might have thought if he was far enough away from God, God would choose someone else to do the job—possibly someone else closer to Nineveh. We really don’t know the reason as to *why* or *what*, except maybe a little hint in the fourth chapter. We will get there later, but for now, Jonah left for Tarshish.



What *do* we know about Jonah? From a historical standpoint, he was prophesying during the rule of Jeroboam II, the ruler of the Northern Kingdom.

Israel was once a great United Kingdom under the leadership of David and Solomon. Then a dispute occurred between the sons of Solomon and the kingdom divided. Ten of the tribes were in the north—Israel. Two of the tribes were in the south—Judah. It was during this time that Jonah was called to preach and minister.

Assyria was also a rising power in the northern region. They were the worst enemies of the people of Israel. Since Jonah believed the people of Assyria deserved judgment, he refused to be an instrument God could or would use in Nineveh.

So the Bible tells us:

“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” (Jonah 1:4-5a ESV).

Jonah was in the boat in order to run from God, but God put resistance in his path. Suddenly there was a massive storm at sea, and the mariners panicked. They didn’t know what to do. While they were in the process of trying to

figure it out, the Bible tells us, “But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep” (John 1:5b ESV).

I love the fact the Bible says, “So he [Jonah] paid the fare and went **down** into it” (Jonah 1:3b ESV), and then minutes later, “Jonah had gone **down** into the inner part of the ship” (Jonah 1:5b ESV). *Bold added for emphasis.*

When you run from God, don’t you find there are a series of steps downward in your life? Jonah stepped down and stepped away, trying to get away from God.

In their panic, the Bible tells us the men called out to their various pagan gods. They found Jonah and said, “What are you doing down here? Get up and call out to your God” (Jonah 1:6, *paraphrased*).

Jonah told them, “I am a Hebrew. I believe in the God who is the Creator of all things, the God of heaven who made the sea and the dry land” (John 1:9, *paraphrased*).

And the men basically told Jonah, “Pray to that God if you know Him.”

Jonah further disclosed to them what he had done—how God had given him a command and how he had chosen to run from God. Jonah finally looked at them and said, “Why don’t you just pick me up and toss me in the sea?” (Jonah 1:12, *paraphrased*).

Interestingly, the Bible tells us something about these men with whom Jonah was making his escape: “Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not” (Jonah 1:13a ESV).

Even though the men knew the worst about Jonah, they tried to save him, to help him. Eventually, the resistance was so great, the only thing the men could do was treat Jonah like a piece of cargo. As the men threw cargo overboard, they also threw Jonah overboard.

“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” (Jonah 1:15-16- ESV).

Although the men got right with God when they saw the sea calm before them, one of the most wasteful things we can do with our lives is to try and run from God.

The end of chapter one opens with and connects with chapter two:

“And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights” (Jonah 1:17 ESV).

As I mentioned before, the Bible does not tell us what kind of great fish it was. It simply states that God appointed a great fish. God had

a peculiar need for a specific fish, and God sent that fish after Jonah to swallow him up.

Scene 2: Jonah Running Into God

What did Jonah do?

“Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish” (Jonah 2:1 ESV).

After Jonah was swallowed by the monstrous fish—his own foam blubber mattress!—he cried out to God, praying like he had never prayed before. It is really an incredible prayer, too.

“I called out to the LORD, out of my distress, and He answered me; out of the belly of Sheol [death] I cried, and You heard my voice. For You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all Your waves and Your billows passed over me... When my life was fainting away, I remembered the LORD, and my prayer came to You, into Your holy temple. Those who pay regard to vain idols forsake their hope of steadfast love. But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to You; what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the LORD!” (Jonah 2:2-3, 7-9 ESV).

Jonah no more than said, “Amen,” when “The LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah out upon dry land” (Jonah 2:10 ESV).

This was projectile vomiting! The fish literally projected Jonah out

of his belly onto the shore. Jonah's prayer was answered.

Look at Psalm 139:

"Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven, You are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, You are there! If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there Your hand shall lead me, and Your right hand shall hold me. If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light about me be night,' even the darkness is not dark to You; the night is bright as the day, for darkness is as light with You" (Psalm 139:7-12 ESV).

Anywhere... any time... any place... God sees, God knows, God hears.

Scene 3: Jonah Running With God

"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 3:1-3 ESV).

Nineveh was such a massive city, it took three days to cross from one side of the city to the other. In the ancient world, Nineveh was the symbol of the mind and power of the Assyrian kingdom.

The Bible says that Jonah went into the city a day's journey and cried out, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" (Jonah 3:4b ESV).

Jonah put Nineveh on the clock and began the countdown. He said the judgment of God was coming in 40 days.

"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 3:5 ESV).

What an amazing picture! After Jonah disobeyed God, God recommissioned Jonah to go back accomplish His original will and plan.

I find God often does that in our lives when we disobey, wander and go off course. Do you know where God will bring us back to? The place where we faulted in the first place, as if to say, "Now let's try this again."

God is the God of second chances. This attribute is one of the most beautiful things we see in the book of Jonah. We also see the amazing patience of God—a patience that gave the people of Nineveh a second chance. They did not deserve it. Jonah did not deserve it. No one ever deserves it. Jonah was an Israelite—one of the people of promise—and Jonah was a prophet. Yet God gave this stubborn prophet and these sinful people a second chance.

Jonah preached and Nineveh repented. It is one of the greatest revivals and transformations in history. It speaks to us of the power of God, the goodness of God, and the grace of God to withhold judgment.

The Bible tells us the people of Nineveh “called for a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them (Jonah 3:5b ESV).

Then the Bible tells us:

“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’” (Jonah 3:6-9 ESV).

There was a cry of brokenness before God. It began in a spirit of brokenness and then a spirit of prayer. And it began with a practice called *fasting*.

Have you ever practiced the discipline of fasting? Fasting is giving up or going without

something that would normally be a part of your life—typically something in your diet. However, it could be any type of discipline where you essentially say, “I am going to remove attention and activity away from a particular routine in my life in order that I might focus my attention and activity in another direction.”

A fast could include omitting one meal a week or maybe doing without food one day a week. A fast could include omitting one thing that you like and indulge on daily basis—something that would consistently make you aware of its absence. The purpose of fasting is to refocus the attention of your life, allowing God to deepen the desire in the desperation of your prayer.

Fasting is important, and it is a part of “Lord, hear my cry.” What did the king of Nineveh say?

“Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish” (Jonah 3:9 ESV).

Listen carefully. If something doesn’t happen in the heart and the soul of our nation, we *will* perish. Something needs to happen that changes our heart and our posture in our city. We need to pray that God does something new and fresh in us or we are going to be without the power and strength of God in our lives.

“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 3:10 ESV).

What was Jonah's response?

"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry" (Jonah 4:1 ESV).

Have you ever been mad at God? Somebody has well said, "Your arms are too short to box with God."

You would think any prophet would want to see success in his preaching ministry. Right? Anybody would think it was the ultimate goal and joy for God to use them, call them to preach and then witness change in people's lives.

However, the Bible says that Jonah saw what God did and Jonah was mad at God.

Scene 4: Jonah Tries to Run God

"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'" (John 4:2 ESV).

Jonah tries to tell God who He needs to be and what He needs to do.

Jonah said (*paraphrased*), "I knew You would do this!" It is an amazing response. Jonah knew who God was and yet Jonah despised and disrespected the Lord. Jonah went even further by saying:

"Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live.' And the LORD said, 'Do you do well to be angry?'" (Jonah 4:1-4 ESV).

Look again at God's response. "Do you do well to be angry?"

So, "Jonah went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there" (Jonah 5:4 ESV).

I don't know what Jonah was thinking, but he just walked out, went up on the side of a hill and looked out over the city. The Bible says he made a booth for himself and "He sat under it in the shade, till he should see what would become of the city" (Jonah 4:5b ESV).

He may have secretly been thinking (*paraphrased*), "*This won't last. This isn't real repentance. These people are just having an emergency meeting and it won't be long until God is going to judge them. So I am just going to watch the show.*"

Jonah is trying to run God.

The Bible says, "Now the LORD God appointed a plant and made

it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to save him from his discomfort” (Jonah 4:6a ESV).

Why is God being so nice to Jonah? Even though Jonah is having a pouting tantrum, God is being gracious and allowing Jonah to have the shade tree and its covering. “But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant, so that it withered” (John 4:7 ESV).

Isn't it amazing the same God who could use a great fish could also use a small worm? In His power and creation, God is still working and dealing with this man, Jonah. The patience of God is incredible!

So the plant withered and “When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah so that he was faint” (Jonah 4:8 ESV).

We then hear Jonah repeat again, “It is better for me to die than to live” (John 4:8b ESV).

Let me die! Let me die! As I read this passage, I am thinking, “*God, just go ahead and kill him. He's a worthless piece of flesh, for sure.*” But God doesn't kill him.

God asked Jonah, “Do you do well to be angry for the plant?” and Jonah answered, “Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die” (Jonah 4:9b ESV).

“And the LORD said, ‘You pity the plant, for which you did not labor, nor did you make it grow, which came into being in a night and perished in a night. 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?’” (Jonah 4:10-11 ESV).

And with this question, the book of Jonah ends.

It is an abrupt ending—no Hollywood here, no resolution. We do not know what happened to Jonah, but later in history, we know Nineveh (Assyria) fell to the Babylonians. God used the Babylonians to accomplish something He wanted to do in the life of Israel who rebelled against Him. But that occurred in another extended period of time.

Ultimately, Jonah is a tough story because it doesn't resolve. It doesn't take us anywhere. We just see Jonah mad at God in the beginning and mad at God at the end. Yet, God was gracious to Jonah and God was gracious to the people. What an interesting and amazing passage of Scripture!

I can only conclude this: As the story ends, we can't do anything about Jonah's decisions, but we can do something about our own.

Having heard the story of Jonah, let's step back from the book and...

Heed the Testimony of Jonah

Ultimately, our lives change when we see God for who He is and understand how He works in our lives. Jonah is not a book that was given to intrigue us; it was given to instruct us—even to rebuke us in order that we might live according to the will of God. So, what are the lessons we learn from Jonah?

God is Sovereign

When we say that God is sovereign, it simply means God rules over everything. God is Creator. God is Sustainer. God is the One who has purpose and design, and He is the One who has moral rule over all things.

From the beginning to the end of this book, we see the sovereignty of God—who He is, what He is like, and what He ultimately accomplishes.

Tragically, in the first and last chapters, we see the stubbornness and the callousness of this prophet. Yet over and over again, we affirm the sovereignty of God.

No where and at no time is the rule of God not in effect on this planet. It is difficult to get our hands and minds around this fact. God is so much bigger than we are. We can't comprehend how His thoughts are different from ours, but they are. "Yes, but...!" We can't go there. Either God is sovereign or He isn't.

Mike O'Brien, a Pastor-Teacher I know in Virginia, once said, "Sovereignty is like pregnancy. Either you are or you're not."

God is sovereign. His sovereignty is total. It's comprehensive. And frankly, it's only in the hope of God's sovereignty that we can deal with all the ills, evils and losses in this world. Apart from that, there is nothing but chaos. God is sovereign and you cannot run from Him.

God is Faithful

God is faithful and you *can* trust Him. Although it was God's own doing in His providence and purpose to bring the fish to swallow Jonah, God allowed what was the worst of man to become the best of His grace.

In the same way, God uses some of the worst things that happen in our lives to show us His goodness and faithfulness. The faithfulness of God was extended to the life of Jonah and to the people of Nineveh, and God's goodness and grace are evident to us today.

The difficult truth is that many of us struggle with the worst things that happen in life. You may find yourself in a difficult place today. I may not know your circumstance, but I do know God's grace and faithfulness are available to you, whether it is a circumstance of your own doing or not.

Certainly some of the hurtful and hardest places we find ourselves in

are *not* a result of our own doing—but they can be (as was the case with Jonah). Either way, we can rely on the faithfulness of God.

In the third chapter, we learn that...

God is Merciful

What an amazing mercy! What a severe mercy! You cannot exhaust God's goodness.

"Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time" (Jonah 3:1 ESV).

A second time for Jonah. A second opportunity for Nineveh. *God is merciful!* And yet, at the conclusion of the story, we find Jonah pouting on the side of the hill, hoping for the destruction of the city.

God gave Jonah shade and God was patient. Isn't it overwhelming to experience the patience of God? Isn't it overwhelming to experience God's mercy?

In the fourth chapter, we learn that Jonah was angry with God because Jonah hated the people of Nineveh. While Jonah felt no pity for the people, we are reminded that...

God is Impartial

No one has an advantage when it comes to the grace of God—neither class, race, religion, color, creed, nor nationality. Likewise,

everyone is equally accountable to God. We are all made in the image of God. From a biblical perspective, all lives are valuable and all lives matter because God is both Creator and Author. That is why the sanctity of life is a fundamental truth upon which we must build society. We cannot pick and choose which lives matter more.

We live in a sinful, fallen world. We protect our own pride and elevate our own race, our own ethnicity. As a result, we create enemies in the world because of the hatred in our hearts.

"In a day when prejudice and hate inflame men's emotions and pervert this judgment, Jonah speaks with compelling force about limiting our love and sympathies only to some of our fellow human beings and excluding others from our pity."
—Frank Gaebelein

This is a powerful message to the church. As we look at the tensions of society—whether it is race and class or terrorism and conflict—and as followers of Jesus Christ, the greatest answer to these problems is not found in politics; it is found in prayer. It is God changing our hearts. It is God creating in us a love and care for others.

Sadly, underneath our skin, many of us have a Jonah mentality. We indulge our desire to run the

world, rather than God. But God calls us to look to Him, believe who He is, trust in His wisdom; and let Him examine our hearts, our attitudes, and our responses.

We need to remember race does not give us a reason to disrespect others—anytime, anyplace. And race does not give us a basis to disregard law. There has to be law and love in society. The Bible that tells us to love our neighbors and do good to our enemies is the same Bible that tells us to obey governing authorities and take responsibility for our lives.

Therefore the book of Jonah is an incredible statement to a world in conflict, division and chaos. Ultimately, we need to surrender to the God who alone can change hearts. We preach the gospel because our message is bigger than the mess in which we live.

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him graciously give us all things?” (Romans 8:31-32 ESV).

God’s amazing grace is extended to us at every point of need. In these days, like never before, we need to look to Jesus—who He is, what He has done and the work of God’s grace and salvation through Him.

Don’t be “little rulers” seeking to rule your world. Surrender afresh

and anew to the sovereignty of your great God and asked that His mercy be poured upon your heart and life.

Earlier today, I thought about the incredible words to this song:

*Who am I,
that the Lord of all the earth
Would care to know my name
Would care to feel my hurt?*

*Who am I, that the
Bright and Morning Star
Would choose to light the way
For my ever wandering heart?*

*Who am I,
that the eyes that see my sin
Would look on me with love
And watch me rise again?
Who am I, that the voice that
calmed the sea
Would call out through the rain
And calm the storm in me?*

*Not because of who I am
But because of what You’ve done
Not because of what I’ve done
But because of who You are.*

*I am a flower quickly fading
Here today and gone tomorrow
A wave tossed in the ocean
A vapor in the wind
Still You hear me when I’m calling
Lord, You catch me when I’m falling
And You’ve told me who I am
I am Yours.*

—Casting Crowns, *Who I Am*

If you confess you belong to Him, be sure you live in such a way that the will of God is confirmed in you and the love of God is poured out through you.



Father, thank You for the book of Jonah. There are so many parts and facets to it, and there is so much for us to hear and know.

God, how I pray that this would not be a book that we just study on a Sunday, but a book that we would step into, pour through and pray through. I ask You to work in our hearts during these days.

God, how I pray You would change anything in my life that is like Jonah, and that You would do the same in the lives of the people called Warren. Use us to be a

people who would honestly and openly declare Your truth—even the judgment of God to our city and to our nation—not with hearts of hate, but with hearts flowing in love and mercy, and a desire to see Your grace and power.

Thank You that You rule. Thank You that You are faithful. Thank You for Your mercy. Thank You that You are impartial and that no one, nothing is hidden from You.

So today, we come before You and ask for the outpouring of Your Spirit in our lives, that the world may see in us the reality of who You are. In Jesus' name, Amen.

This edited message from the series, *Prophets, Politics and Prayer*, was preached from the pulpit of Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, Georgia, on Sunday, October 2, 2016, by Dr. David H. McKinley.

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