

# Remarkable Grace

*An Exposition of the Book of Jonah*

Sermon One: How Could You Do This? (Jonah 1)

January 10, 2021

**Opening ILL: Have you ever been scandalized by grace?** What do I mean? Sibling rivalry. Sometimes, those of us who have siblings, really want to see our siblings get in trouble. “Oooo, you are going to get it now!” Have you ever had this attitude? Can you imagine (or, do you remember) what it feels like when instead of getting in trouble, your parents just forgave your brother or sister? Remember that sense of indignation you had. “That’s not fair!” You felt like the forgiveness extended to your sibling was...well...unjust and scandalous.

## I. Introduction to the theme of Jonah

A. What this book is not about.

1. It is not about a reluctant prophet who sees the errors of his ways and changes his heart for the good.
  - a) He doesn’t...the end of story shows us Jonah being mad at God for being gracious.

B. What this book is all about.

1. The Remarkable [Scandalous] grace of God.

**Point:** Why not use the word “Scandalous”? Well, we have to be careful not to communicate that God does anything improper, which the word “scandalous” may connote.

- a) His grace on the Ninevites
- b) His grace on the sailors
- c) His grace on Jonah himself.
2. The Resentment of the grace of God.
  - a) I don’t want to give away the ending, again, but...

## II. A Great City (vv. 1-3)

A. Notice where Jonah was supposed to go—Nineveh (a city of the Assyrians)

1. It was a huge city Jonah 3:3
2. It was an ignorant city Jonah 3:3
3. It was a wicked city Jonah 1:2

B. What was Jonah supposed to do?

1. Cry against the city!
  - a) Because this is a prophet’s job.
  - b) Because this is a prophet’s delight!
    - (1) Prophets love to cry out against the wickedness of Israel’s enemies.
    - (2) What prophets dread is crying out against Israel’s wickedness!

C. Why was Jonah sent there?

1. Their wickedness has come up before me.
  - a) This means that the Lord was aware of it.
  - b) This means that the Lord is acting in accordance with the prayers of the victims.
    - (1) After all, who would cry out if not those who were adversely affected by the Ninevites?

D. How does Jonah respond?

1. He gets up to flee to Tarshish.
2. He goes to Tarshish “from the presence of the Lord.”
  - a) How silly this is! We can never escape the presence of the Lord.
    - (1) Psalm 139:7-10
  - b) What could Jonah possibly hope to achieve?
    - (1) Maybe he didn’t even know...he just refused to do what God said.
    - (2) Don’t stop there! WHY did Jonah do this?

- (a) Because he knew that God would be gracious to the Ninevites.
- (b) Because he knew that the Ninevites deserved to be destroyed.

### III. A Great Storm (vv. 4-16)

- A. How is it that you are sleeping? (vv. 4-6)
  - 1. What happened? (v. 4)
  - 2. How did the sailors respond? (vv. 5-6)
    - a) They were afraid.
    - b) They cried out to their false gods.
    - c) They emptied the ship of its cargo (panic mode).
  - 3. How did Jonah respond?
    - a) He went to sleep?
  - 4. How did the captain respond?
    - a) What, are you crazy!
    - b) Get up and call on your God!

**Point:** We see in this passage that idolatrous, pagan sailors were more sincere in their religion than Jonah was. And he was a prophet. Just let that sink in!

- B. How could you do this? (vv. 7-10)
  - 1. The sailors investigate.
  - 2. Jonah gets exposed.
    - a) He is a Hebrew.
    - b) He “fears” the Lord God of heaven.
      - (1) These words had to get stuck in his throat! Really?! You are a servant of God?
      - (2) Notice, though, that even in disobedience, Jonah was confident that he was, indeed, a servant of God. How could this be?
        - (a) Because Jonah understood that God is a God of Remarkable Grace!
- C. What should we do about this? (v.11)
  - 1. Answer: kill me. Throw me overboard. (v. 12)
  - 2. Notice that they didn’t do what Jonah said...until they felt that they had to.
  - 3. Quote: Heathen sailors had more concern for one man than Jonah had for tens of thousands in Nineveh. MacArthur Study Bible
- D. The Lord is worshipped by sailors instead of by His prophet!
  - 1. The sailors prayed v. 14
  - 2. The sailors obeyed v. 15
  - 3. The sailors feared v. 16
  - 4. The sailors sacrificed v. 16
  - 5. The sailors made vows v. 16

### IV. A Great Fish (v. 17)

- A. God appointed a big fish to swallow Jonah...why?
  - 1. For Jonah’s punishment? No!
  - 2. For his (Jonah’s) protection.
    - a) This is very important! The big fish was not a judgement on Jonah. It was a picture of grace to Jonah.
    - b) We will see this even more clearly next week.

### V. What do we learn from this passage?

- A. God’s grace extends to a disobedient prophet.
- B. God’s grace extends to a group of ignorant pagans.
- C. God’s grace extends to His stubborn people.