

Jonah 2 & 3 - The Joy of Repentance

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[0:00] Good morning. Today reading is on the book of Jonah and is on page 928. We are reading Jonah 2 and 3.

! Now the Lord provide a huge fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. From inside the fish, Jonah prayed to the Lord, his God, and he said, In my distress, I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the rail of the dead, I called for help, and he listened to my cry.

You heard me into the very heart of the sea, and currents swore about me. All your waves and breakers swept over me.

I said, I've been banished from your sight, yet I will look again toward your holy temple. The engulfing water threatened me. The deep surrounded me. Seaweed was wrapped around my head. To the root of the mountain, I sunk down. The earth beneath buried me in the forever. But you, Lord, my God, brought my life up from the pit. When my life was ebbing away, I remember you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple.

[1:29] Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them. But I, with shout of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you.

What I have vowed, I will make good. I will say, salvation come from the Lord. And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah unto dry lands.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time. Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I gave you. Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city. It took three days to go through it. Jonah began by going a day journey into the city, proclaiming, Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.

The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth.

[2:35] When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off Israel's robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat down in the dust.

This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh. By the decree of the king and his noble. Do not let people or animal, herd or flock, taste anything.

Do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animal be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence.

Who knows? God may yet relent and wish compassion turned from his fierce anger so that we will not perish.

When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had treated.

[3:39] Amen. Great. Thank you. Alexandra, let's pray as we come to God's word. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, we are so very conscious of your greatness and your glory.

You are the God who dwells in unapproachable light who no one has ever seen or can see. And yet we come now to listen to your word. To think on you.

To ponder what our response to you should be. So we pray that with a right sense of humility, you would give us ears to hear what you're saying to us from your word by your spirit.

Help me to preach clearly and faithfully. Help us all, we pray, to listen and to respond in obedience and faith. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Let's begin looking at Jonah 2 and 3 by having a quick scan through the story.

You might be very familiar with the story of Jonah. But if you were here last week, you will know that Jonah was sent to the Assyrian city of Nineveh. Andrew told you last week that it was a terrible, terrible place.

[4:59] And so Jonah's response was to go in the opposite direction. In the Hebrew, it's emphasized, Jonah chapter 1 verse 2, God asks Jonah to go up to Nineveh.

And instead, he goes down to Joppa to find a boat to Tarshish. He runs from God in disobedience rather than walking with God in obedience.

Now, as you might expect, and as you found last week, running from God did not work out for Jonah, as it doesn't for anybody who tries it. And God sends a storm, a great wind on the sea, as it's put in chapter 1 verse 4, so bad that the sailors who Jonah is with end up throwing Jonah overboard to save themselves.

And they're not effectively sacrificing Jonah for their own salvation, his life for their life. They throw Jonah into the chaos of the sea.

I was listening to catching up with the sermons as I was driving back from the Lake District yesterday. And I think it was Yannick who pointed out to you that sea is chaos in the Bible.

[6:09] And Jonah is thrown into the midst of the chaos. But that is not the end of the story. Because when all appears lost, God rescues Jonah by sending a giant fish to swallow him whole.

And that's where we find Jonah at the beginning of chapter 2, in the belly of the fish that God sent to save him. And chapter 2 verse 1 tells you that there in the belly of the fish, from inside the fish, Jonah prays, prays.

Now, I don't know when Alexandra read it, whether you noticed, but much of what Jonah prays would sound familiar to you if you've read much of the Psalms.

Jonah here basically picks up his book of Psalms. We don't really, because he probably didn't have it on him in the belly of the fish. And for sure, the fish had not swallowed the book of Psalms. But anyway, he is remembering the book of Psalms.

And he is praying prayers lifted directly from the Psalms. So Jonah is sort of imagining himself hurled down to the depths like the Psalmist. But the way it's laid out, Jonah really sounds a little rich praying like this.

[7:17] Notice he quotes Psalm 42 about being in the deep, and the waves and the breakers sweeping over him. But when you actually read Psalm 42, that the Psalmist in Psalm 42 is looking for and longing for God.

Psalm 42 starts with, As the deer pants for the water, so my soul longs after you. And then the Psalmist is sent trouble instead. And so Psalm 42 is the prayer of an earnest God seeker who has found themselves in the midst of dryness and struggle, which really is the opposite of Jonah's story, isn't it?

Jonah has not been panting after God like a deer panting for water. Instead, he is running from God and basically throws himself into the sea. Now, that perhaps explains why in verse 5, he has to use his own words to say that he's tangled in seaweed and ready to drown.

None of the Psalmists ran from God quite like Jonah did. But despite his awkward use of Psalm 42, God mercifully doesn't leave Jonah in the belly of the fish. Instead, after three days and three nights, according to chapter 1, verse 17, the fish vomits Jonah up.

So that when in chapter 3, verse 1, he's told again, Go to Nineveh. This time he goes. So you can contrast, can't you, the beginning of chapter 1, which begins with Jonah's disobedience, with chapter 3, verse 3, which begins with Jonah's obedience.

[8:45] Jonah obeyed the word of the Lord, chapter 3, verse 3. Now, preaching to this city of Nineveh is no mean task. It's a big city. It takes three days to walk through it.

And so Jonah does just that. He does it with a very brief sermon. It's only five words in the original Hebrew. It's there at the end of verse 4. 40 more days and Nineveh will be overthrown.

Now, I don't know if you've ever been to preaching class, but that isn't a brilliant sermon. It's not really very persuasive. He has no illustrations. There are no parables. There are no examples of what they're doing wrong.

It doesn't really seem as if Jonah's trying very hard to persuade anybody. He's like the guy with the sandwich board on that says, you know, repent or perish. He's probably looking more for a fight than he is looking for fruit.

Yet remarkably, Jonah's five-word sermon is incredibly effective. And from the king on his throne to the peasant in the field, the Ninevites repent. They proclaim a fast.

[9:49] They put on sackcloth. They turn from their evil ways and their violence. And at the end of verse 8, are pleading with God to relent and turn from his judgment. It's an incredible turnaround.

And it's met with the mercy of God who verse 10 says this, when God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

Now, that's not quite the end of the story. Nathan is going to finish it off in a sermon at the end of August. But what are we to think about the story so far? What do you think the story is about? What is the big idea? Well, if you jump forward in your Bibles, we're given a massive hint by Jesus himself because Jesus picks up this story, these chapters, in Matthew chapter 12.

So if you've got a Bible, you might want to turn with me to Matthew chapter 12 and verse 39. It's on page 978. 978.

[10 : 50] Matthew chapter 12, verse 39. Let me read to you these verses. Let's pick it up in verse 39. Jesus, speaking to the scribes and the Pharisees, he answered, a wicked and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but none will be given it except the sign of the prophet Jonah.

For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the son of man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah and now something greater than Jonah is here.

Notice what Jesus is saying here. He reads Jonah two and three and speaks of it to the scribes and the Pharisees and he says, doesn't he effectively, listen, I'm like Jonah, just better than Jonah.

And there is a judgment coming, just like there was a judgment coming on the Ninevites. And you too also need to repent, just like the Ninevites did.

[12 : 06] So let's just pick up those three points and use them to walk back through this story. Let's firstly think about Jesus being better than Jonah. Jesus is better than Jonah. Now, we don't have loads of time to get into all the detail of it, but really, as I said earlier, you could summarize the book of Jonah by being remarkable fruit from a terrible preacher.

So not only is Jonah reluctant at the start, running the way and ending up in the belly of a fish, but also chapter four will show you that despite eventually going to Nineveh, he hasn't really changed at all.

Three days in the fish and praying like a psalmist all seems to be very skin deep for Jonah, who ends up in as big a mess as he starts with. And then even in chapter three, the writer wants you to notice that his preaching is rubbish.

This five-word sermon is obviously a summary of what he said. I'm sure he said more than that. But the way it's written is just underlining this lack of conviction or compassion from Jonah.

He doesn't care. He doesn't care. In fact, I think he's quite keen on the idea of them being destroyed. And yet there's something about the message spoken by a guy who probably looked quite rough.

[13 : 14] I think if you've been in the acidic belly of a fish for three days, you probably look a bit rough as you come out. There's something remarkable about this rough-looking guy preaching for three days that did a work on the hearts of the Ninevites.

Now contrast that to Jesus. You know that the darkness and half-heartedness of Jonah makes the brightness and whole-heartedness of Jesus shine even more brightly.

Think about it. Jesus, the preacher, did not run when he was sent. He came willingly. And he wasn't just leaving the relative safety of the nation of Israel for the wickedness of Nineveh.

He was leaving the perfection of heaven for the brokenness of this world. And he wasn't just visiting for a three-day preaching tour. He was putting on weak human flesh, becoming one of us, taking 30 years to live, walk, talk, eat.

And Jesus didn't die as a sacrifice for his own sins to calm the storm that resulted, but really he came and sacrificed himself for the sin of others.

[14 : 32] He was not three days dead in a fish. But as Matthew 12 points out, he was three days dead in the earth. And Jesus rises, and Jesus rises, not bleached by stomach acid, but with wounds on his hands and his feet, marks from the sacrifice that he's made for our sin.

And he preaches not a five-word sermon of condemnation, hoping that we don't listen, but a whole Bible full of compassion and love and grace and persuasive mercy, pleading with us to listen and not refuse him, saying to us that if we refuse to listen to him, we'll be worse off than the Ninevites. Now, of course, the point of all this is that we should listen to Jesus. If Nineveh listened to Jonah, then the priests and the scribes, so the Pharisees and the scribes, and you and I this morning, we

should listen to Jesus even more than the Ninevites listened to Jonah.

Let's just be really clear about this so that we know what's going on. You know, don't you, that when you read your Bible or when you listen to the Bible taught faithfully and preached faithfully, it is Jesus' voice that you're hearing.

These words, my words this morning, are his words, not because I'm special or better than anybody, but because these words are from his book. It's a book that's not just about Jesus, but it is from Jesus.

[16:06] It's an extraordinary claim, isn't it? And I can't prove it to you in a way that would fully convince you, I'm sure, if you don't yet believe it. But really, all the evidence points this way. The Bible itself is written over thousands of years by multiple different authors from a diverse range of backgrounds on the most controversial and contested subject in all of life.

And yet they agree with one another. Why? Well, because God is the author of the scriptures. Jesus is speaking through the Bible.

One voice, one story, one promise of salvation in Jesus Christ. So the story of his death and resurrection is modeled 800 years before he comes in the life of Jonah.

And so we get to listen to Jesus as his word is opened and as it's taught. Jesus walks off the pages of the Bible. He calls out to us, listen to me, he says.

I have an urgent message for all of you to hear. That's the first point. Jesus is like Jonah, only much, much better. And we get to hear him.

[17:19] Secondly, then notice the similarity in their message. Both Jesus and Jonah say judgment is coming. If you're still in Matthew 12, look down at verse 41.

The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it. For they repented at the preaching of Jonah and now something greater than Jonah is here.

Notice Jesus' point. The judgment that Nineveh avoided is not, he says, the only judgment. There is another judgment to come. And in this coming judgment, these 8th century BC Ninevites will stand alongside these 1st century scribes and they will condemn them because they repented and the Pharisees and the scribes didn't.

Condemnation will be received, won't it, for all those who do not listen to the warning of God's messenger. The Ninevites listened to Jonah.

The Pharisees did not listen to Jesus. The Ninevites believed in judgment for themselves. The Pharisees did not. And this is really the heart of all this. Okay, so the book of Jonah is really a book about repentance.

[18:34] Repentance. It's about turning from our sin and turning to God. Turning is all over these chapters. You'll notice that we see it in Jonah.

He turns from running from God to now going back to Nineveh where he was supposed to. But we learn that his repentance is skin deep. And then we see true repentance in the Ninevites.

Turning back to God. And what's really clear is that genuine turning, genuine repentance happens when we listen to the warning of future judgment.

Perhaps you could put it this way. Real repentance is always thoroughly persuaded of future judgment. Put it negatively. If you are not persuaded of future judgment, you will not repent properly now.

If you do not hear the warning, if you do not believe the warning, you will not repent. Not truly. You see, there might be all sorts of reasons this morning why you might be sat there thinking, do you know what I could really do with turning my life around a bit?

[19:46] You know, you might be persuaded that your life would be a bit happier, a bit more pleasurable if you made a bit more moral effort, if you spent a bit more time with the kids, or if you kind of dialed down your social media use, if you try to spend more time in the real world.

Let me tell you, like two weeks in the countryside where mobile reception is dodgy, it's brilliant for you, right? You come back a new person. What are we doing? And maybe you're persuaded of that. You might be persuaded, do you know what, I just think actually my life would be better if I made a regular effort to go to church.

I really think I'd be better if I was free from this addiction or that addiction, if I could break from my troubled past. And all that is great as far as it goes, but none of them on their own will lead to biblical repentance.

Biblical repentance, the kind of repentance you see modeled by the Ninevites, the kind of repentance that the Lord Jesus is calling us to here is thoroughly persuaded that without God's mercy, it's not that it's going to be a little bit worse, but that all will be lost.

Biblical repentance starts with the conviction, doesn't it? That each one of us in this room will find ourselves one day standing before God as judge and he will not care and will not ask you, have you been true to yourself?

[21 : 11] Did you try your best? Did you go to church? He won't, he can't tolerate, can he, even the smallest and slightest immorality and still be a good, pure, holy God, the kind of God that we all need.

And so every unrighteous thought, every immoral action, every selfish desire, every wicked deed will be condemned along with the guilty party. And you and I, we might not be the worst people that we know, but we're not the perfect people that we need to be.

And so Jonah's message, Jesus' message, stands as a warning, doesn't it? 40 more days, maybe 40 more years, maybe 40 more minutes, who knows? Whatever it is, the time is coming when judgment will be here and sin will be overthrown forever.

And you might think, well, goodness, really, is that really what Jesus says? Is that really his message? No, I can see that, I see that Jonah preached this kind of turn or burn kind of message, but was that really what Jesus said?

Didn't Jesus say, do to others as you would have them do to you? Well, he did say that, yes, but he warned of judgment more than anybody else. Let me just read to you a snapshot of Jesus' warnings from Matthew's gospel.

[22 : 28] You don't have to turn to them, I'll just read them out to you so you can get a sense of Jesus' preaching. Matthew chapter 5, verse 22. I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment.

Again, anyone who says to his brother or sister, Raka, is answerable to the court, and anyone who says, you fool, will be in danger of the fire of hell. Matthew 13, verse 39.

This is how it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. Have you understood all these things, Jesus asked.

Matthew 18, verse 8. If your hand causes, or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life maimed or crippled than to have two hands and two feet and be thrown into eternal fire.

If your eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell. Matthew 24, verse 50.

[23 : 39] The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him, an hour when he's not aware of, he will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Matthew 25, verse 41. He will say to those on his left, depart from me, you who are cursed into the eternal fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat. I was thirsty, you gave me nothing to drink. I was a stranger and you did not invite me in. I needed clothes and you did not clothe me. I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.

Before we went away on holiday, I got to spend about three days by myself. I've done it before just like that but I went away just me, a Bible, a couple of books, a dog and I read through these passages and passages like them and it struck me with probably a greater clarity than it has for a long, long time that so much of my repentance is so weak and half-hearted because my belief and consciousness of future judgment is so weak and half-hearted.

That I don't spend the time turning to God and saying that I'm genuinely sorry, owning my sin and my mess is because somewhere in my heart I've persuaded myself that judgment is not coming.

[25 : 10] but Jesus is really clear and notice he's not only clear is he that hell is a reality. That's a part of it, right?

But what we need to see is not just that hell is a reality. What we need to see is that hell is what I deserve. That should be my destiny.

I deserve to be lost in the sea of chaos as Jonah pictures it. You see this in the Ninevites, don't you? They understood not that judgment was coming in some sort of general sense but they understood it's coming for me.

It's coming for us. A specific our city is going to be judged. Rich and poor. The king on the throne and the servant washing the boots in the yard.

So perhaps I can ask you if you've seen this. Maybe you wouldn't call yourself a Christian this morning. Perhaps you're just trying to work out what it's all about. Can I ask you do you see this? [26 : 11] Has God granted you the eyes of faith to see this judgment and to believe in its coming? You know, God opens our eyes as we listen to his word.

So can I ask you to listen and to think about this? Might you consider that the guilt that you carry that you feel in your kind of belly when you've done something wrong is an echo of the righteousness of God who made you and that just as your thoughts and your actions condemn you in your own heart so they will be for a holy God.

And if you're a Christian this morning don't lose sight of this. Of course the joy of the Christian life and we'll come and think about this in a moment is that we are free from fear of condemnation.

Jesus is thrown into the sea of the chaos of hell for us to save us from our sin.

He frees us by his sacrifice. He pays for our judgment. It's not that we're let off sin is it? Rather that sin is already judged in Christ for us.

It's already been paid. It can't be paid again and say that I'm free. And yet still the reality of our Christian lives must be that we are conscious that it is only the mercy of God that's done it for us.

[27 : 30] There is nothing in me that deserves this. I will stand before the Lord and on that day it will be Jesus' righteousness alone that will be any hope for me.

So Jesus is better than Jonah. Judgment is real and coming and then the final point repentance is miraculous. Repentance is miraculous. I think the way the story is told is meant to just point this out to us over and over again.

The Ninevites' response to the preaching of Jonah is nothing short of miraculous. You see that don't you? Because you cannot explain the Ninevites' response by the quality of Jonah's preaching.

Yeah? We've seen that. Nor can you explain their response by their heritage or their moral leanings. I listened to Andrew's sermon from last week and he pointed this out really helpfully didn't he?

That actually the Assyrian city of Nineveh was a city of blood. But it was a terrible place. It was not that he went to a city that had sort of kind of moral inclinations that were going to you know oh yeah that's a city that would definitely turn to God.

[28 : 38] Not at all. Their heritage was wickedness and ruthlessness. No notion of a belief in God. Rather it seems as if this massive turnaround of heart was brought about by God.

That God sends the warning of judgment for the purpose of turning the hearts of the Ninevites back to him. Performing that miracle in their hearts to bring repentance.

And you see the miraculous nature of it in their thoroughness don't you? The writer underlines this over and over showing how they extended their repentance even to the animals. The herds and the flocks.

It's as if everyone and everything needed to change. I have no idea. You want to ask me later. I don't know. I have no idea how you enforce a fast on a cow. Right?

Or why you would do that. But I think the writer records that because he's just saying to you look how thorough their repentance is. Look how deep this goes.

[29 : 37] It goes right down to the cattle in the field. This is how serious they are about it. But the other miraculous thing about it as well is that it's not just thorough but it also doesn't pull them from God does it?

It draws them in towards God himself. It's remarkable isn't it? In normal circumstances we deal with the potential of judgment by running and hiding.

Don't we? So you run from the police. Yeah? Not to them. We hide from the teacher the fact that we've not done the homework that we were meant to do.

we don't walk up to them and tell them do we? We cover over our sins. The things that we've done wrong. The things that we've broken at home from our flatmates or from our parents.

Because we don't want them to discover it. You know we lie about what we really did when we are put under pressure because we don't want people to notice what we really did. But this miraculous repentance does the very opposite of that.

[30 : 48] Despite it being God's judgment that is coming for them still the Ninevites don't run from God but they turn to him for mercy. Wholeheartedly with fasting and sackcloth saying listen this is

what we want more than we even want food.

We want mercy from God himself. We're not going to cover up. We're going to lay ourselves bare before God and say God God will you show us mercy.

And that's remarkable. I think the other way that the writer of Jonah underlines this miraculous repentance is by contrasting it with the fakeness of Jonah's repentance.

So notice Jonah has this amazing experience of the fish. He's not just warned of future judgment. He if you like has gotten to taste future judgment in the sea water and then in the fish.

fish. And God speaks to him directly. Jonah knows his Bible. He clearly knows it well enough to be quoting it back even under the pressure of being inside a fish.

[31 : 56] And yet still despite all of that he is reluctantly obedient at the beginning of chapter three. He is not really repentant and he ends the story in a worse mess than he was at the beginning where really he hates the idea that God is merciful to people.

And so this is the sting isn't it of Jesus mini sermon on Jonah two and three. That it is be it is possible for us to be so dressed up in Christian language that we fail to repent properly.

the very first point of the Christian life to turn to God and own our sin and say we're sorry.

So perhaps you pray the Psalms. Maybe you know your Bible really well. Maybe you sing the songs. But if you do not confess your sin and own it before the Lord.

miraculously repenting. You have not repented. You know perhaps you preach the gospel to others.

[33 : 07] Maybe you're known as a Christian but you don't believe it for yourself. Well don't be like a Jonah. Be like an Ninevite. Let me ask you.

Have you repented like that? Now because we've seen that repentance is miraculous. We need to ask. It's not so much have you generated inside yourself enough sorrow and guilt at your sin that you feel like this.

It's not that is it? It's have you received repentance from God? Have you said to God please give me a heart like this for my sake? Please Lord help me to see who you are and what you're like.

Have we responded to the warnings of judgment with an earnest turning to God. Living in this ongoing dependence on God's mercy. You know perhaps you come to church each week and you think well we have that weird prayer of confession don't we in the beginning of our service.

Why would we do that? Why not mix it up a bit? I once had a church leader who worked with me in another church not in this one. He would say why don't we mix it up a bit Steve? Why don't we put the sermon people come late to church don't they all the time?

[34 : 18] If we put the sermon at the beginning there'll be so miffed that they missed the sermon. They might come on early next time. Why don't we do that? Well we don't do that because our very instinct as Christians as we walk into the worship of God and are called by him to worship him is to go Lord we're not worthy.

We fall at your knees in repentance and trust in your mercy again. Please forgive us. Please show us mercy. That's what Christians do. The Christian life is really the ongoing recognition that in every conceivable way there is nothing that I could do or have done or will do that could earn what I really need from the Lord which is his mercy and his grace.

And so it is the instinct of every believer to throw themselves not on their efforts or their goodness but on the mercy of God. Mercy found at the cross of Jesus Christ. One of the books I read while I was away was a book on repentance by a guy called Chris Brawns.

It's a brilliant book. I'd recommend it to all of you if you want to know what the book is you can come and ask me afterwards. And one thing that he points out over and over again is that repentance is not simply sorrow at your sin.

Everyone is sad aren't they at the things that they've done wrong. But genuine repentance is sorry for sin but it also rejoices in God's mercy.

[35 : 40] Right? You see this at the end of Jonah. I'm going to steal a bit from Nathan's sermon but Nathan's on camp this week. He doesn't know. He won't know. And I'll ask for his forgiveness.

Jonah is miserable at the end of the story and wants to die.

Right? That's how Jonah ends up. Why is Jonah miserable and wanting to die? Because he does not repent. The Ninevites end up rejoicing. Why?

Because they repented and they enjoyed the mercy of God. And so for us repentance is what's needed because mercy is what is on offer.

And by definition you cannot earn mercy. You have to receive it. And so we repent and we're not only sorrowful for our sin but we are rejoicing in the mercy of God.

Because if you turn to him you find that he is this merciful God. He is this gracious loving God who sent his son to this world to preach this gospel of mercy, grace and forgiveness.

[36:41] He was dead. He's now alive. He's paid for our judgment that we might receive mercy and grace. And for you to know that, for you to be full of that kind of joy, you must repent with a miraculous repentance that sees future judgment, sees that Jesus is better than Jonah and puts its trust in him.

Let me pray and then we'll come and sing in response. Perhaps we'll just take a moment, just a moment of quiet in our own hearts as we respond to God's word.

Thank you.

Father, we turn to you in repentance. We know that we deserve your judgment. We know that there is nothing in us that deserves your mercy or your grace.

We know, Lord, that there's no point hiding from you or running from you because you know us, you see us, you know all about us.

[38:37] And so we turn to you in repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, knowing that he took our sin upon himself and died on the cross.

That as we turn to you in repentance, we don't turn just in a vague hope that you might be merciful, but in confidence that you love to show mercy in the Lord Jesus to repentant sinners.

So we pray that this miracle of repentance would go on and on in our hearts, that we would find ourselves turning to you and trusting in you day by day. And pray, please, Lord, that you might continue to do that work for your glory and for our good. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen.