

# The Compassion of God

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[ 0 : 00 ] Hello, everybody. Thank you, Sean, for the wonderful introduction.

If you don't know me, my name's Charlie, and as Sean said, I'm married to my wonderful wife, Stephanie, and we have a daughter who's almost two, and her name's Eleonora, and she is just the cutest I am.

As Sean said, a software engineer by day and a seminarian by night. And I wanted to thank Sean for giving me this opportunity and entrusting his precious flock to me this morning.

So with that, let's begin by praying for the reading and preaching of God's word. Our Heavenly Father, may I, by your Holy Spirit, communicate your truth faithfully and effectively this day.

May the words that come out of my mouth follow your truth, and may that truth sanctify us here. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. So today's text will be from Jonah 4.

[ 1 : 03 ] And while you go flip to it in your Bibles or go to it on your phones, let me give a quick introduction. Now, Jonah almost needs no introduction because most of you are familiar with it. If you grew up in the church or even are familiar with anything about the Bible, you've heard of Jonah and the whale.

And whether you're familiar or not, I think it's important to give some context to the passage. Jonah was one of the minor prophets, minor just because he wrote less that's recorded in the scriptures. And he worked around the time of 770 BC. And we know this because there's a reference to him in 2 Kings 14:25. The book of Jonah starts with the word of the Lord coming to Jonah, the son of Amittai, and telling him to go to Nineveh, a great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up against, or come up before me, the Lord.

So Jonah is told to go to the Ninevites. And who are the Ninevites? Well, they were, Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. And Assyria was one of the neighboring nations of Israel, but also one of their fiercest and cruelest enemies.

The Assyrians were brutal and wicked people known for bloody conquest and would later even capture, enslave, and exile the entire northern kingdom of Israel. So Jonah's not interested.

[ 2 : 21 ] Instead of listening to God, he goes in the opposite direction. And Nineveh was, you know, far to the east of Israel, and Tarshish was in Spain, far to the west.

So basically he went to the other side of the known world. He books a ship, but he finds out that running away from God is quite hard to do. The Lord sends a great storm upon him.

And, you know, the sailors, they try to save their ship by tossing out the cargo. And when they finally realize Jonah's the one at fault, they don't want to toss him over.

But Jonah says, like, it's the only way to survive. So Jonah ends up in the waves. He expects to drown, but God saves him. He appoints a great fish, probably not a whale according to the word, but a great fish that swallows him up, keeps him alive in its belly for three days and three nights. Within the belly of the whale, we read about Jonah's, or Jonah prays to the Lord. And we have this recorded to us in Jonah 2. He calls out to the Lord. He thanks him for saving him. And he dedicates himself to the Lord, saying, I will pay what I have vowed.

[ 3 : 28 ] So God commands the fish to spit Jonah back up onto the dry land. And you see at the beginning of verse, or chapter three, that the word of the Lord comes again to Jonah the second time and going to tell him to go to Nineveh, the great city.

So he goes to the city. He walks through it. He preaches a very short message. Yet in 40 days, the city will be overthrown. And sure enough, the city repents. The news reaches the king. There is a citywide fast and man to beast, all refrain from food and water.

Mankind turns from his or her evil ways. And sure enough, God relents. So that brings us here to Jonah 4. So if you're willing and able, please stand for the reading of God's word.

Just for a little context, I want to start one verse back in chapter three, verse 10. Jonah 3.10. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster he said he would do to them.

And he did not do it. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly. And he was angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, Oh Lord, is this not what I said when I was yet in my country?

[ 4 : 36 ] This 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. Therefore now, oh 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 went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth for himself there.

He sat under it in the shade till he should see what would become of the city. 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.

So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. But when dawn came up the next day, God appointed a worm that attacked the plant so that it withered. 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.

And he asked that he might die and said, it is better for me to die than to live. But God said to Jonah, do you do well to be angry for the plant? And he said, yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.

[ 5 : 40 ] 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?

This is God's holy and authoritative word. Please be seated. So if you grew up around the church and you're an English speaker, you would know that there are at least three J names you do not name your children.

The first is Jesus. You know, don't call your Jesus, your child God. Second is Judas. Also not a good name. Third, Jezebel. So boys, girls, very bad names. And there's a few more you can add. And I would like to add Jonah. You know, no offense if you know a Jonah or want to name your kid Jonah, but I don't think it's a good name. Just reading chapter four, you see that he's one of the most irritable and irrational figures in the entire scriptures.

He is disobedient, callous, fickle, vengeful, and he's full of self-pity. And not to mention, he's just downright angry. I personally will not be naming any of my children Jonah.

[ 6 : 54 ] Yet he's here. We have this colorful character, this unhappy camper in scripture that God wants us to learn from. So this morning, I want us to learn from Jonah four.

And the truth that I want us to bring away from today's text is that we should turn away from our self-centered desires and take on God's compassionate and merciful heart, a heart shown to us in Christ Jesus.

So the first point is to put off Jonah's self-centered heart. We'll see that in the first nine verses. And the second is to put on God's compassionate heart in the last two verses. So let's start by looking at Jonah's self-centered heart.

So if you look into your Bibles and maybe you have an ESV, at the bottom, there is a little footnote that will tell you that the word displeased Jonah exceedingly, says it was actually exceedingly evil to Jonah.

And that word evil there is a, can be generically just used just to describe great calamity or disaster. And this is actually the same word in chapter three, verse 10, which is why I read it, you know, God relented of the disaster.

[ 7 : 59 ] So I want us to look at Jonah, like how amazing it is that Jonah thinks that God relenting of a disaster is a disaster to him. You know, Jonah, just by the numbers, is probably one of the most successful evangelists of the entire Bible.

According to the 2023 census, Cambridge has a population of around 118,000 people, which is pretty close to 120K, which is what we see in Nineveh. So imagine you preach the gospel to all of Cambridge, all of Cambridge repents, and it makes you angry.

It's a disaster. What is going on? Jonah tells us what's going on in verse two. He says, Oh Lord, is this not what I said when I was in my country, yet in my country? This is why I may haste to flee to

Tarshish, for I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, relenting from disaster.

See, Jonah knows his Bibles. He knows his Pentateuch, his first five Bibles, and he knows the story of Moses. Moses is having a hard time and he asks God, show me your glory. And God says, I will show you my glory and I will proclaim to you my name.

And he basically quotes his name. Exodus 34, 34, 6 says, The Lord passed before him, Moses, and proclaims, The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

[ 9 : 20 ] It's in God's name to be gracious and forgiving. And Jonah doesn't want to have any of that. He personally cannot stand to see these Assyrians, these wicked Assyrians who had already done damage probably already done damage to the cities of Israel and would one day destroy them.

He couldn't stand to see those wicked people forgiven. Jonah was perhaps hoping that Nineveh would be overthrown in the same style of Sodom and Gomorrah. That word for Nineveh being overthrown in chapter three, verse four, is the same word used to describe the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, where God rained sulfur and fire out of heaven and burned the city down, killing everyone.

These evil Assyrians were no better in Jonah's eyes and they too deserved to be overthrown. But God relented. And this made Jonah angry, so angry that he wanted to die, that he told God, it is better for me to die than to live.

You know, there's a lot of angry things we can say to each other and there's a lot of angry things we can say to God. And I think this is one of the greatest and most deepest expressions of bitterness and anger, that telling God that not having it the way you want it means you might as well just die. This expression calls back to an episode with another prophet. In 1 Kings 18, we read about the prophet Elijah. And that's also another story about fire from heaven. Elijah is a prophet of God and he challenges the prophets of Baal to show who is the real God.

[ 10 : 57 ] Baal is an idol and the prophets of Baal cannot call fire down from heaven and Elijah is able to. And he shows that the God of Israel is the true God and he thinks he's done it.

But his efforts don't stick. Just a few verses later, Jezebel, the queen of Israel and a Baal worshiper, someone you shouldn't name your child after, is completely unfazed and she vows to kill Elijah. So Elijah flees a day into the wilderness, sits down under a broom tree and says, it is enough now, O Lord. Take away my life. I'm no better than my fathers.

So Elijah, he's no better than his fathers, probably also prophets. They couldn't accomplish their mission. Might as well die. You know, it kind of, it's kind of like a high school senior who doesn't get their, into their dream college and becomes bitter and sullen or, you know, a guy who becomes salty because he gets shot down by a girl.

You know, you had dreams, now they're gone. Might as well lay in bed and do nothing. This is the same for Jonah. This is our first look into his self-centered, self-focused heart.

[ 12 : 09 ] Jonah is, is very concerned about his own expression of justice. What he thinks should happen to the Ninevites. It's so central to who he is that he can't stand it not happening.

It's all about Jonah, Jonah, Jonah, and not about God. So, into his anger, God speaks.

He asks them a very simple question. Do you do well to be angry? And I think this question already begins to reveal some of God's heart. There is great patience and wisdom in this question.

You know, when my child is angry, I just tell her to stop. You know, it doesn't work, but, you know, God could easily have told Jonah, do not be angry.

This is not befitting a prophet of the Lord. But I think there is great wisdom in this question. One, because it asks him to respond and two, because the question itself is so well worded.

[ 13 : 09 ] The idea of doing well, I think, cuts to the core of what anger is. So, anger, when you really think about it, is that strong emotional response that flares up when your standard of right and wrong, what's good, worse, well, or good or bad, or well or worse, is violated.

That's what makes you angry. You know, I tell my daughter that, it actually happened this morning, I wrote it down and it happened this morning, to come over to the door and put on her shoes because we have to go to church and she runs off to play and I can feel the anger boiling up because I am her father.

She needs to honor me and what I say goes and she needs to obey now. And that's what a good kid would do. You think about road rage, you know, what would a good driver do?

They would obey, they would do well by the rules of the road and so when they don't, you honk at them. You know, sometimes, you know, we can also be angry at God.

We think, we want something to happen that's good, you know, I want my family to have peace. I want, you know, this relationship that, you know, God, you've said it's good and you haven't given it to me and that makes you angry at God.

[14:22] Something similar here is going on with Jonah. It makes him snap. God does not do well in his eyes by his standard. So God is using this question and he's, he's phrasing it in a way that wrenches Jonah's finger from pointing at God back to himself.

So how does Jonah answer God? Well, he doesn't. I mean, some of us here would be head over heels to have the Lord God himself speak in such a direct manner to us.

But Jonah, Jonah, Jonah just brushes him off and continues on his own way. In verse five, we read that he goes out of the city and he sets up a booth for himself to get some shade. Maybe he thinks that the people will backslide.

Maybe he thinks that God will change his mind. It's unclear. He's clearly not a rational guy. But he set up a booth for himself outside the city. That word booth we have in the Hebrew is the same used to describe the tents that the Jews were to make during the festival of booths.

Nehemiah 8.15 specifically tells us that these booths were made of branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees. These are basically anything that could provide you shelter from the sun.

[15:36] And we don't know what time of the year Jonah takes place. We can kind of guess from storms and things, but it's hard to say. But we do know that the area of Nineveh can be unbelievably hot. The ancient city of Nineveh down to its very walls and gates has actually been discovered.

It's within the bounds of the modern day city of Mosul in Iraq. And I took a peek at the average high temperature in Mosul in July of 2023. And the average was about 108 degrees Fahrenheit.

And there was one day where it reached 120. So I need this to say if you were going to stick around, then you would need some shade. And God actually sends a little shade.

Verse 6 tells us that the Lord God appointed a plant to come over Jonah to be shade over his head to save him from his discomfort. And he was exceedingly glad. There's another footnote that you probably have in your ESV that says that the Hebrew is the kikayon or probably the castor oil plant. And there's the same word for plant we see later in Jonah. Some people who are more familiar with the KJV might know this word as a gourd. A gourd. Both of these plants are large leafy plants.

[16:46] The castor oil itself can grow up to 10 feet tall or more and it had leaves like these nine star maple leaves that could easily grow 18 inches in diameter. So it was very, very good shade.

And there must have been something wrong about Jonah's booth or he must have been lazy in putting it together because when this plant sprung up it made him very happy. But unfortunately for Jonah his joy is short-lived.

When dawn comes up the next day God appoints a worm that attacks the plant and it withers. And then the sun rises and a scorching east wind comes. These east winds would likely have picked up a great amount of heat just from traveling over hot deserts.

There's a similar wind it's called the Sirocco it's kind of famous it goes over the Mediterranean sorry the Sahara into the Mediterranean and it's known to pick up enough heat and sand and speed that it actually strips paint from cars.

Like that's how awful this wind is. So you know I know it's like 20 degrees now but try to imagine the feeling of being like on a hot beach and when you take off your flip-flops and you step in the burning sand well that's how Jonah's face felt.

[17:54] verse 8 reads that he was so so faint that he asked the Lord again that he might die and he said it's better for me to die than to live. And again God responds in a very similar fashion in verse 9 he says do you do well to be angry for the plant?

God asks essentially the same exact question but this time just about the plant. Now as a general Bible study and interpretation tip when you see something repeated especially almost verbatim and especially in a narrative that's a sign from the author to pay attention to what's happening here.

It's kind of like when you have like a part of a theme song or a motif of a song that plays at various parts of a movie to tie things together it's something that sticks out that's meant to catch our attention and here what sticks out is that God finally catches Jonah's attention.

First Jonah doesn't actually answer God but this time he does and what does he say? Yes. He admits it. I do well to be angry. Angry enough to die. So there is something sad about seeing plants die if you walk along Cambridge Street you know the city of Cambridge puts out these flower pots that in the spring that they have to take down every winter because they brown and withered and become really depressing and there might be a little bit of that happening here with Jonah but I think it's clear from the context that the plant was important to him because it gave him shade. You know his fickle heart had just easily just attached itself to that well-being of the plant because it gave him so much well-being. You know you can imagine if you went to Chipotle and got an extra you know got an extra burrito bowl and you know you dropped by your friends and you gave it to them and they get angry at you and you're like what's going on?

[ 19 : 40 ] They're like you didn't give me the free tortilla and you're like come on man like it was free like why does this matter to you all of a sudden? Like this isn't something to get worked up over. I imagine that's how Jonah is feeling for this plant and the plant withers and so does Jonah and finally he's willing to speak to God.

I want to take a little time here and just talk about the sovereignty of God and how he does work to get not just Jonah's attention but also our attention.

Over and over again in this book God demonstrates his sovereignty on full display. Storms, seas and big fish all listen to him and now plants, worms, winds and the sun itself all move to make Jonah angry.

And I do want to say that God is not tempted with evil. He is not does not do any evil and nor can he be tempted by evil nor does he tempt us but he can allow us to be tempted.

And so here with regard to the temptation to anger we see him working with Jonah. Now have you ever considered in your own life that maybe God is trying to get you your attention through something that's making you angry?

[ 21 : 08 ] are there scorching winds and searing suns in your life? One common source of anger I think are people who refuse to follow our schedules and our times.

Nothing is more responsive than an unresponsive nothing is more frustrating than an unresponsive boss or an advisor an unresponsive child. God could be letting those people into your life to expose your idol of control of wanting to have everything your way when everything should go God's way. See before this this was a one way conversation between Jonah and God. He spoke didn't care if God had anything to say and so God might be sending things in your life to get you to pay attention to what he's saying.

You might be sitting here and you might think I don't really struggle with anger not as angry as Jonah not angry enough to die but anger wears many masks and each of these different types of anger actually points to a different heart issue or very similar heart issues.

For example annoyance. We are annoyed when people who are just beneath us not worth our time take up our time. I think that points to pride in our hearts because we think our time is so valuable and everything else is below our pay grade.

[ 22 : 41 ] Bitterness points to a slow simmering anger that often represents discontentment. I use the word frustration before. Frustration is often just a politically correct and conversationally friendly way to say you're angry.

Kosher. And it's also important to point out that one of the realities of anger is that when we are angry with fellow man or with our situations we're actually being angry with God.

You think about jealousy. Are you jealous over someone's position over someone's relationship of how things are going in their lives? Well that's actually anger directed at God for saying they have something God why can't you give me that same thing?

Here we see Jonah's anger as a sign that his heart was not aligned with God's. But God wants your heart to be like his to love what is good like he does.

And so he reveals his heart to us in these last two verses. So in verses 9 and 10 we see God's call to put on his own compassionate heart. The Lord responds to Jonah now we have a conversation and the Lord said you pity the plant for which you did not labor nor did you make it grow which came into being into a night and perished in a night.

[ 24 : 03 ] And should not I pity Nineveh that great city in which there are more than 120 thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left and also much cattle. In these verses God gets to the crux of the issue the heart of the matter the heart of the book of Jonah you know some people you can imagine Jonah easily ending at the end of chapter three and it would have been a nice little story but this is what it's actually about it's about the hearts you know God says to Jonah you didn't work for the plant you didn't do the toil and labor that it takes to make a plant some of them have been with us for like eight years they've been through ups and downs and we've watered them like every two weeks for eight years and they have sentimental value to me but Jonah Jonah's been with this plant for like a day plants also come and go like a breath we saw in I think the call to worship Psalm 103 and also

Jesus mentions in the Sermon on the mount plants being alive today thrown into the fire the next they just come and go they're gone so Jonah if you're going to have so much pity for this plant which isn't worth much anyways and it's not worth much to you then shouldn't I have pity for Nineveh also you see this mention in verse 11 of 120,000 persons who do not know the right from the left some commentators take this to say that it's and some other commentators also believe that this is a reference to people who are morally lost in general who do not know God and that two word pair of knowing between occurs in 2 Samuel 19:35 where an 80 year old man says can I not discern between what is pleasant and not and he's actually being rhetorical because he's too old to enjoy music and food and also Ecclesiastes 10 when you see in the Bible a contrast between the right hand and the left hand not just talking about both hands but a contrast then usually the right hand is the good hand and the left hand is the negative hand so I think this is just a reference to all the people there in the city who do not know God and you know though they may be lost and they may be wicked every single one of those people was still according to Psalm 103 fearfully and wonderfully made by God knit together in their mother's womb on top of that God has put his image into man every single one of those 120 thousand people is a slice of God's infinite glory and worth he cares for them he even cares for the cattle the wildlife you know they aren't as important as humans like we eat beef God tells us we can eat the animals in Noah 6 or sorry Genesis after the flood but he still created them on the sixth day he made the animals and he saw that they were good he tells

Adam to name them and then he tells Adam to steward them to make them multiply so even the cattle the cows have a place in God's heart and I think it's obvious to all of us here that human life is more valuable than plants no one thinks twice about eating a salad or feeding your cow hay but on the other hand we have Jonah Jonah Jonah in spite of the fact there are so many people in this city even cattle Jonah only cares about himself look at the phrase that uses in verse 6 exceedingly glad you might have noticed that repetition I told you to look out for that exceedingly glad is actually the Hebrew construct is the same as in verse 1 where we see it displeased Jonah exceedingly and I think what the author wants to see is the irony of the situation Jonah was exceedingly angry when God would not destroy the city full of people precious people made in the image of God but he was exceedingly glad or yes when God saved him just from a little heat he was angry angry enough to die because God removed a little shade from him and angry angry enough to die because God would not rain fire on the Ninevites what a guy but it's easy for our hearts to also make this miscalculation as a parent it's easy to be mad at children for example you know we can pity our sleep our time our comfort these are all things that children have no pity for and we can be exceedingly angry when children take those things from us instead of being exceedingly glad that we have children they're precious in the sight of God another thing that magnifies the irony of this situation is that God had given Jonah a second chance I mean even the sailors they didn't want to throw him off but God gives him a second chance after he is disobedient he saves him from the storm and recommissions him but

[ 29 : 18 ] Jonah will not extend that grace to others he simply does not do well to be angry so what does he do verse 12 tells us that Jonah repented blessed Nineveh and returned to Israel actually verse 12 says Jonah cursed God in his heart and died there of heat stroke I'm kidding I'm not adding to the scriptures I'm not cursed we're left with this cliffhanger for a reason and the reason is the reason we don't know what happens to Jonah is because the author is not concerned with that what we do need to know is that Jonah is given a choice so I want you to think back in the scriptures to someone else who God confronts over their anger very early in the Bible it's actually the story of Cain so if you turn to

Genesis 4 you can see this this is the story of Cain and Abel another famous Bible story Cain is the older brother and he either procrastinates or doesn't give his best to God but Abel the younger brother gives the best of his flock as a sacrifice to the Lord the Lord is pleased with his sacrifice but Genesis 4 5 says that the Lord for Cain and his offering had no regard this is Genesis 4 5 and Cain was very angry and his face fell and the Lord said to Cain listen to this why are you angry and why has your face fallen if you do well will you not be accepted if you do not do well sin is and you can just read the rest of the story in your own time but Cain doesn't do well he lets his anger take over him and he kills his brother and is cursed and sent out and he goes away from the presence of the Lord and settles in the land of Nod east of Eden there's a lot of little little narrative bits that kind of tie Jonah to the story of Cain so for example in Jonah 1 we see Jonah try to escape from the presence of the Lord and you see he sits east of the city and God essentially asks him the exact same question why are you angry so God gave Cain a question gave him a choice God asked Jonah a question he too has a choice and we as readers also have that choice and God asks us the same question if you think about the first recipients of scripture they were ancient Israel and they had to figure out how they would respond to their neighbors they were surrounded by wicked and idolatrous neighbors violent and would do them great harm how would they act towards others and what would that say about their

God you know today traditional Jews so not all Jews actually read the entire book of Jonah during the afternoon prayer on Yom Kippur which is the day of atonement and it kind of has the same message to them today you know what are they going to do given their history of antisemitism and pain but we as Christians on this side of the cross have an even deeper meaning to the story of Jonah because God has not only pity on Jonah and Ninevites but pity on us on the beloved and a deep pity shown to us through the compassion of Jesus Christ so we can turn to look at God's compassion of us so we do not do well to be angry but there is one who is right who is in the right to be angry and that is God God is the perfectly just God he knows the ins and out of every situation he knows every broken rule every broken heart he is the one who is slighted when we sin against his perfect holiness and in his perfect goodness he cannot stand evil he cannot stand our anger even and as the one who created us

God has the right to enact judgment on us to destroy his body and soul in hell but what does he do to his enemies what does God do to those who are against him you know we see a taste of this in Jesus Jesus goes to Israel that idolatrous nation and he says to the crowd and he sees the crowds in Matthew 9 36 he says he had compassion for them because they were harassed and helpless like sheep without a shepherd that word pity just means to look upon something with compassion so Jesus pitied the crowd because they were like dumb sheep just wandering around not knowing where to go Christ describes his own heart he says he is gentle and lowly of heart in Matthew 12 20 he declares that not even a bruised reed he will break or a smoldering wick he will not quench and in I guess today's words he would say he's kind even to worthless twigs and used up matches just the refuse of the world this is

[ 34 : 47 ] God's heart in Christ came he showed love to Israel the nation of Jonah that had turned away from over and over again and would later crucify and reject him they were his enemies and we sinners were enemies of God but God showed his love for us by sending his son as an atonement for our sins so if you like the people have turned from your own evil ways and turned to Christ then you will have received his ultimate compassion because God instead of pouring out great calamity and disaster upon your head which my head which we all rightly deserve he poured it out on Christ Christ died on the cross and just as Jonah was in the belly of the whale three days and three nights and was spit out onto the dry land Jesus was in the tomb for three days and three nights and was spit up by death back to life he now stands alive and ascended at the right hand of

God as your shade in the shadow of Christ's wings you will find refuge and you will find a refuge to protect you from God's burning wrath which you would not be able to otherwise withstand and now that you are saved the word of the Lord has come to you the gospel commission sends you out into the nations these wicked nations full of the sinners and the lost this nation an evil generation so how will we go about glorifying God's name and showing other people the compassion of God you know we are called Christians which literally means little Christ how can we bear his name well then John 13 34 tells us Jesus says to his disciples a new commandment I give to you that you love one another just as I have loved you you are also to love one another by this all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another so when we love each other we show each

other that grace that

God has shown us then we show the world that we are his this is the love that counts others interests as more important than our own that puts away anger and puts on patience patience is just synonymous with long suffering so when your spouse or your coworker your brother in Christ or even an enemy sins against you not just once but for the umpteenth time will you be forgetful like Jonah or will you lay down your ego your self righteousness and your wounded pride and instead choose to love and serve as Christ has loved and served you when you show that love the world will know who you are now I want to just take a little time to talk about the idea of righteous anger now there is a place for righteous anger it's a biblical category that you know you should be angry at sin but

I think the weight of the councils is to be highly suspicious of any time you are angry and you want to do something about it James 1:19 says let every person be quick to hear slow to speak slow to anger for the anger of man does not produce the righteousness of God so you know even if you think your righteousness is justified I want you to search yourself because you're going to find 99 times out of 100 that it really isn't but one of the things that is very dangerous about anger is that it's incredibly deceptive it's about justification so we can easily justify our sin and being angry it's kind of like those cartoons where the screen turns red and you can't really see and you get tunnel vision you lose sight of your own sin and can only think about other people's you know I used to get angry when people show up late to things I would plan and I was like come on this is like my time this is so important why would you show up late but then I was also late to other people's stuff there's a story this past month of a

McDonald's customer in Atlanta who got into an argument because her order was missing food and she pulled out a gun and shot in a McDonald's employee to death I can assure you in that moment when she pulled that trigger she thought what she was doing was perfectly justified she pitied her missing fries but not pity that woman so I think if you look back in times in your life when you were angry and you did something about it you will remember that in that moment you thought it was right it was good but do not be deceived who knows what you will do in your anger so I want to end with some practical tips for fighting anger in our own lives what should we do when temptation does come our way I think the first thing to do is remember what Christ has done for you he has shown you great compassion let us show that compassion to others a second tip is to remember that vengeance is if you look throughout the

[ 40 : 27 ] Old Testament and sometimes in the New Testament you see that God does reveal his wrath he does burn down the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and various other peoples who sin against him but that's his domain that's his right that's his prerogative because he is God rather he tells us that when we are sin against we ought to not repay evil for evil to live peaceably with all if your enemy is hungry feed him if he is thirsty give him something to drink by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head do not overcome by evil but overcome evil with good the idea of heaping burning coals on the head I think it's related to repentance you want to get them to repent and that's what we do when we let God take vengeance a third tip is to be careful of an inflammatory diet and I'm speaking figuratively of course it is an open secret that the tech industry which is a linchpin of our economy and our culture runs on anger everyone knows that the easiest way to make click to get clicks to get followers engagement is to feed people their own self-righteous anger if you have ever read the news ever followed any political like you know content creator anywhere you would know that this is the trend so be careful what you consume is your time on your phone inflaming your soul or would you rather be spending time in the word spend time with Christ and drink from the refreshing the peaceful living waters of Christ and you'll find your anger will subside and lastly

I want to repeat this to remember the plant of Jonah you know maybe God has sent a worm to wither your vine and the sun to scorch your head to get your attention that there is something going on inside the thing that is wrong is not with God or with the people around you but but in here so those are the four tips about dealing with anger now there will be a day when God's patience is filled up his perfect patience will come to an end and he will reveal his perfect wrath on the entire earth we've been reading about it in Revelation it will be something that you cannot hide from no one can hide from because if you go back to Exodus 34 which which Jonah quoted actually in 4.1 the beginning of chapter 4 the description of God's name goes on he is the God who shows steadfast love and graciousness but he is also the God who will by no means clear the guilty if you have not repented and turned to God then your guilt is still on your own head so

today you can repent and God will relent and if you are in Christ you can have hope because there will be a day when God will free us he will give us new hearts that are free from the self-centeredness the pride and the contempt that are at the root of our anger and our struggles in this world however until that day we live clothed still in the dead flesh and hearts that are so easily tempted and so when anger comes our way when anger comes knocking on our door we have to answer the same question of Jonah Jonah had a choice to deal with anger and so do you God is asking you when anger comes knocking will you love as I have loved will you show compassion as I have shown compassion will you bear the name of Cain or of Christ of Jonah or Jesus beloved let us do well and not be angry let's pray heavenly father we thank you for your patience your perfect patience it is a marvelous mystery that you have forgiven us your enemies Lord I pray that as ambassadors a priest of your name to be a light of the nations we too would show that same compassion pray this all in your son Jesus' name amen