

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Brian Frost

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Jonah: Arise & Go

PART

5

TITLE

God's Big Heart For People

SCRIPTURE

Jonah 4



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You know, this week actually marks just a little milestone in the history of Providence, in that we're now one month in. We've done this one month, where you've walked down here, or you're in the fellowship hall or in the amphitheater, and you are watching on a screen. And the fact is, it's a little different, isn't it? In some ways, it's good, and for some people, they've found it challenging. In particular, how do you participate when there's a screen? You see, when you're at home, and you watch a worship service, let's just say, and so you see the various elements, you see a sermon, and you see praying, and you see singing, and you see these sorts of things, it's natural for us to watch it a little different than how we watch it here, or how we fully engage here.

In fact, the last time that I watched a worship service on TV, I had a bowl of cereal on my belly, my feet up on ... You know, and so they start praying, and I'm watching. I'm watching how they ... I'm just watching, you know? And they're singing, and I'm watching them sing, and then someone preaches, and I'm watching them preach. And they had various elements, like, "Hey, let's have somebody come up, lets" ... And so the church that's there, that's live, they seem to be more engaged than what I was. And why I want to bring this up is because when we gather together as a church family in different places during construction, we still come on Sunday morning to worship Christ, and worship is our sacrificial response to the worth and work of Jesus Christ.

Now, what that means is this, is that even though it's a little different, I want to urge you, wherever you're at, whether you're in the amphitheater, whether you're in the fellowship hall, whether you're here, is to lean in. Embrace some of the awkwardness. Sometimes it is awkward, okay? Like for us, we saw George and Nancy walk up on stage, and we clapped, and we stood. It's a little different if you're in the fellowship hall, because you guys know, well, we can't hear you, and George and Nancy can't see that taking place. And yet, it's an expression of faith, and our gratitude to the Lord, and so I want to encourage you that when we pray, you pray, and when we sing, you sing, and when we preach, you engage with your heart, with your mind. He is so worthy of everything that we have, and so let's give to Him a sacrifice of praise, okay?

If you would, let's bow, and let's pray together. Father, we do love you, and as we turn to Jonah chapter 4, I pray that your word would have full effect in our heart, that you would lead us to see your big heart for people, that you would lead us to want to repent, that you would lead us to want to believe in you, and lead us to want to go. And I pray, Father, that you would just show each person here how we can be engaged in what you're doing in the world. Our situations, our circumstances, our resources, they're all different, and yet you can use each and every one of us towards this end, and so I pray for help, pray that you would give grace to help speak through weakness, and that you would give us belief in your Word. Open up our hearts, I pray. In Jesus' name, amen.

So, the fourth chapter of Jonah, if you brought a Bible. If you didn't, there should be one near you in a chair, and if you don't have one at home, please take that home as a gift. We would love for you to have a copy of the Bible. For those of you who are new, I want to get us sort of caught up with what's happening when we get to Jonah chapter 4. There's a lot of you who know the story, but I want to get a good running start, okay? So the whole book, it begins with God. Not with Nineveh, not with a fish, and not with a prophet. It begins with God, and it says that God's word came to Jonah, and He says, "Arise, go to Nineveh and call out their sin against them."

And, you know, sometimes God calls us to do things that we just don't want to do, and Jonah did not want to go. He hated the people of Nineveh. He hated them, and so he went the other way, he went to Spain, 2,500 miles away from God's revealed will, and while he's running from God, God was running to him. And this is one of the most amazing gifts, I hope you see this in Jonah, and it's this, is that even when you run away, He doesn't want to crush you, He runs after you in order to rescue you. He loves you. He loves you. Even when you're sinning, He loves you. God demonstrated His own love in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He runs to us, not from us.

Well, how He chose to run to Jonah was he was on a boat, and so God sent a storm, a really bad storm, so bad that the pagan sailors who he's sailing with, they run out of options of how to sail in this thing, and so they drop to their knees and start praying to their gods. They don't know the one true God, and so they're just praying, to no avail. The captain goes downstairs, and he sees Jonah asleep, and he's like, "What are you doing sleeping? You gotta get up. You need to pray to your god, and maybe your god'll be able to help us." Well, soon thereafter, we're told that they all learn that Jonah was at fault, that all this was happening because of Jonah, and so at his advice, they throw him overboard into the sea.

And once Jonah hits the water, the storm stops and the sea calms, and the sailors, they start worshiping the one true God, because He's done what their gods could not do. So there's a little revival that bust out right on the boat, but Jonah is in the water, and he begins to sink. He needs a life raft, and there's not one available, but there are fish in the sea, and so God appoints a fish. He's sovereign over everything, and He says, "This guy needs a rescue, and so you, go over there, swallow him."

And what's amazing is this. It says that he was in the belly of a fish three days and three nights, and then it uses the word "then." In other words, Jonah sat in rebellion and anger in the belly of the fish for three days before saying, "Okay, I give. God, I need help." Right? He's waiting, he just cannot bring himself, but he finally brings himself, and once he says, "God, I need you," you get to chapter 3, and what it says is that God spoke to the fish and said, "I need you to throw him up on dry land." So he throws him up on dry land, and then He says to him again, "Now, Jonah, we've already done this once, a few chapters ago, but we're gonna do this again. I want you to rise. Now, you got seaweed wrapped around your head right now, but arise, I want you to go to Nineveh, and I want you to call out their sin against them."

He goes, he preaches, he says, “You need to repent,” and they do. There’s, like, this amazing revival that takes place, and it says from the king all the way down to the lowest person in the city, everybody, they begin to repent and pray and ask God to forgive them. And at the end of chapter 3, it says, “And God relented of the judgment and disaster that He had planned to bring to them because of their sin.” And you would think, right, that there would be a party in the heart of everyone who cared about God, and then you get to chapter 4, and this is what it says.

“But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed to the Lord and said, ‘O Lord, is this not 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’re a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and relenting from disaster. 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 went out of the city and sat to the east of the city and made a booth,” or a tent, “for himself there. And 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.’ 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 I not 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?’”

I just love how the book ends. “Don’t forget the cows! Don’t forget the cows, they’re important too!” So we’ll get to the cows in a minute. There’s two things that I want you to see here this morning, just two points that are true about God, His big heart for you and for me, and for the people of the world. And if we really understand these things, then it’s going to cause us to move, then it’s going to cause us literally to move with our lives, to do something. The first is this, I just love this, is God cares deeply about the spiritual health of His people. Now, when I say the word “His people,” I recognize that everybody is His in the sense that He created them, but here, what I’m really talking about is His people who have believed in Him. In this case, it would be the Church, it would be believers in Christ, His people.

This is an amazing thing, that God is this patient. So after this amazing display of grace, relenting disaster, it says that Jonah responded with “exceeding displeasure.” He was angry, and just like we, in our times when we’re really angry — in particular, angry with God — he busts through all of the hurdles, and all of the speed traps, and everything else that God gives us in verses like Ecclesiastes chapter 5, verse 2, that says, “Be not rash with your mouth, for God is in heaven and you are on earth.” You know, it’s true that God is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. Isn’t that so encouraging, that He is a friend? And we’re His children, and so God welcomes us to come.

You’ve been taught, “Hey, God knows our heart anyway, so whatever’s on your heart, go ahead and tell Him.” Ecclesiastes says, “Well, that is true, but you need to remember who you’re talking to.” He is a friend, and He’s a Father, and He loves you, but He is also the Holy God of the universe, and there are times because, just like Jonah, we’re so flippant with our words to Him in prayer, that we need to go back to Him and say, “God, the fact is, is I just accused you of wrong.”

He busts through all of those gates, because he was angry, and he says, “Come on, God, is this not exactly what I told you? When we were all the way back, when you first called me, I knew that you were gracious and merciful, and slow to anger, and abounding love, and I knew that if they repented after I told them about you, that you would relent from giving them disaster. You went and did what you always do. You went and forgave ‘em. And I just can’t take it anymore, so just kill me now.” That’s what he says. “Just take my life. I’m sick of this, I’m, I’m, I’m, I’m, I’m tired of you being kind to people I hate. So just kill me now.” That’s exactly what he says.

Now, I want you to look at the words ... Two words: “I knew.” “I knew you were gracious.” He has knowledge. Knowledge is important. Part of our whole discipleship process here at Providence is to connect people to God and to the church, and then to grow them in what? In truth and in love. This is an amazing thing. To grow in truth, it means knowledge. We want to teach you that God is merciful and gracious. We want you to be able to say, “You know what I know? I know that God is gracious. I know that He’s merciful, I know that He’s patient.” Listen, Jonah knew that, and it didn’t keep him from nastiness in chapter 4.

You see, there is a bridge between growing in truth and growing in love, and if you don’t cross this bridge, you will not become a loving person with all of your knowledge, you’ll become an arrogant person with all of your knowledge. You say, “Well, what’s the bridge?” We’re going to talk about it in a minute, but it’s repentance. It’s repentance. See, God opposes the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. So here, Jonah, he’s absolutely sick of everything, and yet he knows truth. He grew up in Life Group. He probably earned the pin. He had memorized Psalm 86:15 that says, “You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.” I know these things true about you. I know things. He knew things, but knowing things about God is never enough for spiritual health.

We see this in the public forum, when we find leaders, and all of a sudden, after a period of time, they do things, and you think, “Wait a minute, you’re violating everything that you’ve said previously up until this point.” But isn’t it true that we do the same thing? See, everyone who looks in the mirror has the same problem. Let me just ask you this question. Have you said, thought, or done anything this week that you knew was wrong? Has there been a thought — anger, selfishness, pride, lust, deceit — that’s crossed your heart, knowing that that’s not the way that God calls us to live, and yet we did it anyway?

You see, what’s amazing is this, is instead of a rod, God addresses Jonah’s heart, and this is what He does with us. I just love ... He asks him a question. He puts a mirror in front of him. He doesn’t just say, “You know what, I’m ... Let me tell you something, Jonah, I’m also a God that answers prayer. You wanna die? You’re dead.” He could have done that, right? I mean, Jonah said, “Just kill me now.” He could have said, “You know what? I’m kind of done with you anyway, so yeah, let me kill you.” He doesn’t, nor does He lecture him. He doesn’t sit there and say, “Now, let me tell you something. I’m tired of this immaturity, and I’m tired of this attitude, and I’m tired of this sourness.” No, instead, He goes, “Jonah, let me ask you a question. Ask yourself, is this really the kind of man that you want to be? Do you do well to be angry?”

And isn’t this how God does this in our life? See, it’s through kindness that He leads us to repentance. He doesn’t just come slap us across the head, He puts things in front of us. He puts truth in front of us, He puts people in front of us, and then He says, “You know, this attitude you got going on, is this ... Is this really ... Is this really the legacy that you want to leave?” Oh, no. But Jonah didn’t get it yet, did he? He says, “Yeah, yeah, yeah, I should be angry.” You see, when God says the words, “Do you do well to be angry?” He was saying, “Jonah, really? Like, you’re really gonna do this, right in the middle of the grocery store aisle? Like, seriously, we’re gonna do this right here, right now?”

And then it gets worse. Check out what happens. Jonah goes, “Yeah, I should be angry. I’m leaving this city.” He leaves Nineveh, he goes up on a hill so he can oversee Nineveh. He builds a tent because it’s real hot, he needs some shade, and he waits for God to rain down fire upon Nineveh. “I know you’re gonna change your mind. All right, I’m just gonna sit here until you destroy them all.” I mean, nobody wants to hang with a guy like Jonah chapter 4, right? I mean, if this is around you today, you’re probably going to say, “You know what, I’ll talk to you tomorrow.” And yet God is right there with him, He’s engaging with him, He cares for him.

Now, watch God go to work. The first thing He does is He says, “You know, you made this nice little tent, offer you some shade, but not really good, it’s kind of a shoddy job, so let me give you better shade.” And it says He appoints a vine to grow so rapidly that it provides shade. Now, this is amazing, this is such grace to me. Think about this. God looks at him, and all of this putrefied disease of spiritual ... Just nastiness, and God adds shade to keep him from getting sunburn. Think about your life. Think about the times that even when you were just not walking with Him, He was still kind to you. It’s because it’s through kindness that He leads us through repentance.

Well, then He appoints a worm, because He wants to teach him a lesson, and it attacks it, eats that vine, all of a sudden it's gone, and then God says, "All right, now let's ... Now let's bring in the heat," right? And all of a sudden, it says He appoints ... Appoints. This is a word of sovereignty, okay? Tonight, we're going to appoint elders and deacons. We're going to say, "You are going to do this task." And God says, "Uh, wind, I need you, get really hot really fast, and I want you to go hit right there. Hit his forehead." He appoints a wind, a scorching east wind, and the sun beat down on his head. And then, hearing Jonah request to die a second time, God asks again, "Do you do well to be angry?" And this time, Jonah's sick of it, he says, "Yes! Yes, I deserve to be angry."

And now watch God's huge heart for people. He says, "Jonah, you pity the plant, but you didn't pick the plant out, you didn't plant it, you didn't dig, you didn't water it, you didn't make it grow. How do you think the gardener feels? Now, Jonah, let me give you the point. You didn't do anything with Nineveh. You don't even know who they are. You don't know what their kids' names are, you don't know their dreams or aspirations or anything about them, and yet I ordained them to live. I created them in my image. I planted them, I have watered them, I have created them. They are mine, and they are far from me. Now, you pity your shade, and I pity those people."

And all of a sudden, it ends. Now, the difference between a people like us, you see ... Like, if you've been to Providence, you know this. We're a Bible study kind of people. There's a lot of us that have been in Bible study 20 years, and we've yet to share the gospel with anyone. We will learn that God is gracious and merciful and patient and loving, but what is the difference, what's the gap between learning these truths and becoming a people who love? You've got to cross the bridge of repentance. This is the application, for those of us who are believers, is "Let's lay our heart before God and repent."

You see, Jonah had a problem within his heart. It was a spiritual disease, and it was a disease that's really prevalent within spiritual life today. It's always going to be involved, it's always going to be prevalent in people who are learning about God. And that is his flesh forgot something about God, and that is he became blind to grace. He became blind to grace in his own life. You see, Jonah can say, "I know that you're gracious," but he was blind to the day back in his past to the grace that had come to him. You see, the years of faithfulness, and the years of prophesying, the years of carrying God's Word to hard places, had led Jonah to assume a place of merit before God. "I'm better than them. I'm different from them, my sin is different than them." Yeah, they're adulterers, but Jonah, you are in outright rebellion to God.

You see, it's so easy for us to get blind. We forget the chase. I'm going to use that term several times over the next few weeks. Do you remember the circumstances, the events when you were walking far from God, and God rescued you? Those days when He opened your eyes, when He gave you grace, when He forgave you, when He gave you peace for the very first time? Can you remember that? You need to remember that. He was blind to grace in his own life. You see, Jonah's pouting was simply a portrait that you look and look at to see what takes place among religious people who are far from God. They say things like "You know, I'm not gonna defy God, because I know the Bible. I know the Bible better than you. But I'm not gonna be happy about what God's doing, either. So I'm gonna fold my arms in worship, and I'm gonna complain about everything, I'm gonna scoff at people who look happy."

This was Jonah. Think about it. Has it ever been you? For a day, for a moment, when the gospel is so far from you, from your attention, that you behave in such sour, irritable ways? I know it has in my life. What's interesting is, just like physical disease, spiritual disease, it doesn't just stay in a corner and say, "You know what, I'm a disease, but I'm gonna stay in this part of the body, and I'm not gonna move, I'm just gonna be really content here." No, that's not what disease does, does it? Sickness begets sickness.

And so there's some things that blindness to God's grace in our own life, it spawns in our life. It creates more disease in our life, and I'm going to show you three of them you see here in Jonah. The first is stinginess. Stinginess. We look at people, they have need, we have means to help them, and we say, instead of "I need to give to you," we say, "You know what, they should just work harder." What if God said that to us? What if He said, "You know, Jesus, hold on, let's see if they can just work harder." The whole gospel is we can't work hard enough, and so God worked for us. He accomplished it for us. We become stingy. We start thinking, "You know what, one day, I'll be really, really generous. When I make so much money that I can give a lot of money without it hurting, that's when I'll be generous." Are you generous today?

The second thing it spawns into is unforgiveness. We just naturally forget, like we're blind to grace, we forget all the things that God has forgiven us, and all the sourness in our own life, and we're just absolutely amazed that He would forgive anyone else, and so we don't forgive those other people. Is there any relationships that you have right now that are broken, and that are still broken because you won't forgive? Think about the gospel. You cannot think of God as withholding forgiveness because of hurt, and think of the gospel at the same time.

And the third thing that you see that naturally spawns from blindness to grace is apathy. Apathy to lostness. We look at people around the world, 2.2 billion people who have never heard of Christ, and we yawn. "Yeah, well, that's on them. They should've been born somewhere else." You see, these things are like smoke pointing to fire. If you woke up today, and there was ... Looked like this, there was smoke, and you say, "Well, I don't see flames, so I'm just gonna go back to bed," you wouldn't do that, would you? You know that smoke comes, that you can trace it and you can find flames.



Now, here's the point. If we're not giving and forgiving and touched by lostness, something is burning deep within. So we should ask, "Am I generous today? Am I forgiving today? Am I passionate about lost people today?" And if not, the antidote is laying our life before God and His gospel, and repenting whenever needed. Where we open up the Scriptures, and we study them, and whatever we see in there that we don't see in ourself, we say, "God, I'm wrong. Would you forgive me, would you cleanse me, would you help me to change course?"

You see, the most amazing things about the Lord is He says, "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, and times of refreshing may come from the Lord." Is that even when we are as sour as Jonah was in Jonah chapter 4, God says, "If you'll repent, I'll restore." You see, if repentance is not daily part of our life as a believer, stinginess and unforgiveness and apathy will be. So, Providence, let's be amazed that Jesus came and died for us. He did it for us.

The second thing that we see is that God cares deeply about the spiritual health of lost people. He not only cares about those who are in the family, He cares about those who are outside of the family. And He says in verse 11, "Should I not pity Nineveh, in which there are more than 120,000 persons and much cattle?" In other words, He's saying, "Jonah, listen, your eye pities more shade, but my eye pities people. Should you not share my concern?" And the little line about the cows is more than just amusing, because Romans chapter 8 says that all of creation is groaning under the collective weight of human sinfulness, the brokenness. That the rivers, and the mountains, and all the animals, they're all longing for the day when God is going to restore all things, and so when God places, "And there's a bunch of cattle there," what He's saying is, "The day is gonna come, Jonah. Don't you understand this, that not only do I care about those people, but I really care about restoring all things?"

The next time you're out at a farm, and you hear a bunch of cows mooing, it should be a reminder of two things. One is they are mooing because they cannot wait to get out of the burden that we have afflicted them. And second, it's a moo of hope. They know it is coming. Now, they may not know it's coming, but God knows it's coming. He's literally going to restore things, He says, so that a lion and lamb can play together in the same yard. This is what's coming, Providence, and this is why it's there.

Now, I want you to notice what happens after this, after He says, "And don't forget the cows." You look down there, and you go, "Wait a minute, there's nothing after that." And that's what we're supposed to ask. "Well, what happened? Did He ... Did God break through? Did Jonah repent? What actually took place at the end of this story?" You see, most people believe Jonah wrote this book, and why that's important is because it means that he likely repented, and then he wrote all this in order to pose a question to his readers. You say, "Well, how do you think that he repented?" Well, the reason I think that he repented is because if you were Jonah, would you write this about yourself, make it public, if you didn't say, "Now, don't do this"? This is one of the apologetics of the whole credibility. This is why it's so reliable. No one would write this about themselves and go, "Now look, look at me."

No one wants to be Jonah. I mean, if you do, we need to talk afterward. This is not who you want to be.

And so this is what's happening, okay? Jonah is a representative of a country that was called to be a missionary country to the world. God said, "Jonah, you go, you're my missionary to this people," and he was a representative not just of the calling, but of the attitude. He was just like Israel. So after the fact, I think he repents, and then he writes this in order to pose a question, first to Israel, but then to all of his readers. You see, Israel was created to be a missionary nation to the world, and they were chosen not as the end, but as a means to the end, but they failed.

And so in fullness, and in fulfillment of God's promise, God sent His Son Jesus Christ, who came from heaven to earth, He lived a righteous life when He was here, and then He died on a cross for my sin and for your sin, the sins of the whole world. He was buried in a grave and He rose from the dead, and when He rose from the dead, He says, "If you'll believe in me, if you'll not look at your own righteousness and count on that, but if you'll count on my righteousness, my accomplishments, I will forgive you of all of your sin, and I will justify you. I will give you my Son's righteousness, and I will make you part of my covenant people called the Church." The Church is a missionary people, just like Jonah was, just like Israel was. We're not the end, we're the means to the end.

And so Jonah ends the way Jonah ends because he's writing us into the narrative of his story. He's asking his readers, "Do you get it?" Do you get it? Do you share God's pity for people, or do you simply pity more shade? Do you care about the 2.2 billion that are going to go to hell, and they've never heard? You see, God's a missionary God, and those who share His heart have missionary blood. We've been talking a lot about "plant," right? We want to plant our lives within the church, we want to plant the gospel in our city, we want to plant churches in the world. And when you get to that third one, "to plant churches in the world," what we're talking about is sending 300-500 people on a mission trip every year overseas. Our hope in sending 300-500 people is that every time we send people for short term, God puts upon some of their hearts to go for the long term.

We also want to plant churches, and support churches. But listen, when you look at the faces that are on the screen right now, you need to understand something. This is not a concept. These faces are not a discussion point for your Life Group. They are people like you, made in the image of God. They have kids, they have fears, they have dreams, they have aspirations, they have sin, they face death just like you and just like me. And yet, unlike you and me, they've never heard the gospel. They've never heard it.

And so, a few points of application, then we're going to be done. The first is this. I hope you see, for those of you, maybe, who have never trusted Christ, you see in verse 11 God's heart for you. I exhort you, let's trust Christ as our Savior. You can believe in Him, you trust in Him, and He will forgive you of all of your sin. It's such a miracle. But then, Providence, for those of us who have trusted Him, the second application is this.

If this is true, that He cares deeply about the spiritual health of people, then let's take the gospel to our neighborhoods and nations.

You see, we can either be part of God's mission as believers, or we can be disobedient. I want you to think about this for a second. The last thing Jesus said to believers on the earth was "Go and make disciples of all nations." If you're a believer and you have a Bible, you cannot claim that you have no part in the nations. And God's going to hold every one of us accountable for that. We can give to it, we can pray for it, we can go, but we have to be involved.

You see, Mark 8:34 says, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." Isn't it interesting how quick we are to accept parts of the Bible, but not all of it? We read verses like "Cast all your cares upon me," and we think, "Now, that's for me. I'm a dad, I'm stressed out, I'm a mom of three kids, I'm gonna highlight that verse, and I'm gonna stick it on the fridge." And we go to Acts 1:8, or Matthew 28, "Go and make disciples of all nations," and we think, "You know, I know a college kid without a job. That would be really good for him." It's for us, all of us. We have to be a part. We have to be an active part, for He's told us to engage.

And here this morning, we have the privilege to be able to commission a few people. Slovakia ... Yeah. Come on down, Phil and [Brandy Carmen 00:35:38], and then two trips going to Romania and Philadelphia. Now, some of the people are already on the field, so there's not that many people here today, but we want to pray for them, and actually commission them. You guys can come on up. I know it's lonely, there's normally lots and lots of people, but that's okay. For each of the teams going to Slovakia, going to Philadelphia, and going to ... The third one is ... Romania. I'm sorry, I forgot. It really is an amazing privilege, and what we're seeking to do, and what we're hoping to do, is as a result of them going and using a variety of means, lots of which is through children, through families, doing all kinds of ministry to people, the end goal is to glorify Jesus Christ by introducing people to Jesus Christ and growing them up to love and worship Him.

And it takes prayer. All of us are invested. I want to encourage you to think of yourself like this, okay? "I am a part of the Philadelphia, Romania, and Slovakia mission teams. I may not be going, but I can pray for them. I can pray for them every day. I can give to them." We can all be a part. So if you would, let's bow, let's pray together. Father in heaven, thank you for your grace. Thank you for your kindness. You've been so good to us, and we do pray, God, that you would use Jonah, Lord, to challenge us where we're at. But, God, I also pray for these teams. What a privilege it is to be able to see people responding to what you are doing in the world, and what you have said and instructed within your Word, who are inclined to want to go.

And so we pray for these, our brothers and sisters, part of our family, who we send out with outstretched arms to three different places, to talk to many, many people. We pray that you would protect them, we pray that you would go before them. We pray, Father, that you would open up people's eyes and hearts to hear the gospel, and God, I pray that as a result of the sacrifice of energy and time and resource for these teams to be able to go to these regions, Lord, that there would be people who would come to faith in Jesus Christ, and be so excited about being saved that they could not wait to go and tell some of their family members and some of their friends. So we lay them before you, we commission them, we love them, and ask that you go before them, and we pray this in Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Guys, we are so proud of you. You guys, head back down. Let's just give thanks to God for what He's doing, okay?



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