

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

Dave Owen

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Jonah: Arise & Go

PART

4

TITLE

Who Knows? God May...

SCRIPTURE

Jonah 3



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I mean, if you have your words with you this morning, I hope you do. Let's take them and go Jonah chapter 3. Jonah chapter 3. If you're new to Christianity and the Bible and studying, there should be one underneath the chair, and we're going to be on page 775 and be able to walk through that, and for those in the other venues and online, I say good morning to you as well. And so it's a joy to be able to walk through this book, and I hope that it would walk through us in a sense.

And so Jonah. In light of our plant series we laid out a few weeks back, we laid out just the idea of planting our lives in the church, planting the gospel in our city, and planting churches in the world. In light of that, God's led us to study Jonah this summer, to see a city that was ... it's wickedness had rose up to the Lord and he sent a prophet to speak a word, and yet we see so much in this book already in the first two chapters, right? We saw in chapter 1, Jonah, when that word came to him, he ran instead of going to the city where God had instructed him, he ran away from God and was reluctant was basically trying to get as far away as possible, but he was a racist. He was prideful, and we saw that in chapter 1, and at the end of chapter 1 we saw how the sea really swallowed him with a great fish and we saw God's kindness and patience even in that, preserving his life.

And then, in chapter 2, even last week, we just saw how Jonah cried out to God in prayer from the belly of this fish, and today we're in chapter 3. In chapter 3, we're going to see a city repenting and God relenting of his wrath. Incredible book. Context, right? 930 BC you've got a kingdom that was established called Israel, and Israel divided and they divided in 930 and the Southern Kingdom took on the name Judah. That's where Jerusalem would have been, and the Northern part of the kingdom was called Israel. It kind of kept that name, and then you had kings and prophets and priests that would serve both of these, right? This is a lot of your Chronicles and Kings in the Old Testament where some forty-some different kings would come and reign and do certain things, and Jonah was a prophet that he and two other prophets were serving around 793, around 793, where they served during the reign of Jeroboam II, and they would come and bring God's word, a prophet would bring God's word to the people.

And a lot of our prophets and prophetic writings in the scripture, right, you've got some that are called major prophets and minor prophets. Well, for clarity, right, this is a minor prophet not because of it's content. It's no less important, right. It's minor in it's length. It's a shorter book. It's four chapters, right? You've got a lot of these, twelve of these that are called the minor prophets that are shorter condensed books, but packed with some serious stuff. And then you've got the major prophets like Isaiah, 66 chapters. That's a lot, and so we would call those the major prophets, and so a lot of these prophets, right, the book would be about their word to the people or the people and how they responded, right? But Jonah's unique, unique in the sense it's not about the prophet of God, rather it's about the God of the prophet.

It's a God centered book that's just going to highlight these great things about God, and so I want to read chapter 3 for us and then we'll look at just a few things this morning together. So, chapter 3, verse 1. This is the word of God.

Then the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying "Arise. Go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you". So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh according to the word of the Lord. Now, Nineveh, was an exceedingly great city, three days journey in breadth. Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's journey, and he called out "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown," and the people of Nineveh believed God. They called for a fast and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them to the least of them.

The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh "By the decree of the king and his nobles, let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock taste anything. Let them not feed or drink water, but let man and beast be covered with sackcloth and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows, God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger so that we may not perish." When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said that he would do to them, and he did not do it.

This is the word of the Lord. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this good word. As we open it, read it, may it read us. As we get under it and sit in it, may it conform us and shape us and mold us this morning more to the image of your son Christ, and we pray it in his name. Amen.

Well, many of you know some of my story from growing up in a small town Virginia, going off to college. Growing up in that small town, my dad was a pastor and I love my dad and just how he invested in my life and so I was grateful to God. He went into the ministry when he was 36 years old. He was pinned between two trucks, almost killed, crushed one leg, broke the other. He said God got his attention. He spent a lot of time on his back, so he had to look up, and so during that time, he sold the house, sold the business, went to seminary and began to pastor a small country church in southern Virginia.

And as he did that, I began to go to church and came to know God in a shallow way. I didn't grow that much, but as a young boy I ended up going to church for seven years without missing a Sunday, and what happened with that is I began to build a foundation on attendance rather than the acceptance of God's love, right, which doesn't sustain when you walk onto a college campus. And so when I walked onto a college campus as a freshman, I remember that first Sunday when the alarm clock went off to go to church, I hit it about 17 times, the snooze button, right? And if you do your math, that carries on into about 12:30 or one o'clock on a Sunday afternoon with that type of snooze button.

And it began a five to six year journey of running away from God and rebelling from God, and as I moved to Raleigh and life was still somewhat chaotic, having played basketball in college, I ended up calling a lot of churches in the city. I reached out. There's a generation of us, I know one generation Googles things. There was a generation that used a thick yellow book, right? Called a Yellow pages, right? And so we would flip through that. I would flip through that and call churches to see who had a men's basketball team, and Providence had one, and they ended up putting me on the team. I met a pastor named Leon Tucker who had lunch with me the next day as we met on the court that night, and we began a friendship where he began to just disciple and walk with me through, but I'll never forget this particular day.

After doing life with Leon for a season, he called and when he called he said "Hey, man, listen. Some of the ministry responsibilities I have, I need an intern. I need someone to help me set up tables, set up chairs, take the trash out," and I'll never forget that day because that day, the spirit of God just pierced my heart because I began to weep over that phone call. I went home that night and just bawled like a baby. I called my parents. The reason I was weeping because I had lived such a rebellious life that I'd never thought God could use me.

Never once did I think ... I was like this would be the last thing God would want me to do is to take out trash and set up a table at his church, right? And God in his kindness, right, gave an amazing second chance for Dave, and so I was so grateful and now, as we, my kids and I, sometimes we'll do family fun Friday nights, and we'll watch a movie and so when we watch the Veggie Tales version of Jonah, right? It's one of my top five. I'll just go ahead and confess that, right? Veggie Tales, it's an amazing movie, right, telling the story of Jonah, but there's a song that's in that and I'll start crying when I heard the song, and the kids are like "Man, what you doing, Dad? What's wrong with you?" Right?

But they don't know in my mind, I'm reflecting back on the five years of rebellion where I didn't honor God and walk with him and then the fact that he would allow me ... even the privilege to set a chair up at a church is an honor for me, much less to be able to stand and preach, that overwhelmed at that privilege. But the song, right, the song goes like this, and some of you starting to sing it in your head "Jonah was a prophet," right? This is the way the song goes.

Listen to these words, right? "You're feeling pretty blue. You didn't do what God requested. Yeah, I'd be moping, too if I was gonna be digested. This ain't a pretty picture. I said it ain't a pretty sight. You ran from God this morning and you're fish chow tonight. But hold on, hang on, not so fast. Your life ain't over yet. See, we're here to tell you about the forgiveness that you can get. You see, God's got a mercy. God's got a love, and right now he's gonna lend a helping hand from above. Praise the Lord, he's the God of second chances. You'll be floored how his love your life enhances. You can be restored from your darkest circumstances. Our God is a God of second chances."

And as we watch that movie and as I think on those lyrics, I am so grateful to his kindness, and so this morning I want to show you three truths about our glorious God from Jonah chapter 3, who gives second chances. So three truths. Here's the first one. Here we go. God is a good father, restoring those who run. God's a good father, restoring those who run. Notice in verse 1. The word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time. The fact that it had come once is a miracle, but it came a second time. Jonah has run from God and yet God has used a fish and a storm to ... actually his grace not wrath, to get his attention, to move him back to a place of service. He restores those who run, right?

You don't take an officer who's just been court martialed and immediately give him the command to go into battle, but yet this is what God has done with Jonah. It's like me, when I was cut from my middle school basketball team, and it's like me starting fro Kevin Durant in the NBA finals. This is amazing that God would do this. See, God works through weakness. John chapter 12, verse 24 says "Unless a kernel falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed, but if it dies, it produces many seeds."

It's failure, right? It's suffering that makes you useful. God works like that. Peter would deny Christ three times and run out with great shame and guilt and yet, he's the one that God raises up in Acts II to preach the gospel where 3,000 came to face. See, suffering, listen. Suffering makes you a servant. The great advocates for cancer research and those impacted by cancer are those that have it. The Jimmy V Foundation, right? Founded in 1993 and raised 1710 million dollars was founded by Jim Valvano two months before he died of cancer. God's restoring the reluctant prophet here, right? And some of you are thinking, how could he ever use me and my suffering? Maybe I don't have cancer, but maybe I have run, maybe I've rebelled, maybe my past is haunting.

Listen, if he can Jonah, he can use you. Right? If he can use Jonah, he can use any of us. Now remember his goodness, his goodness was in the storm, right? That wasn't punishment. That storm, that sea raging was God's kindness, hid goodness and moving Jonah from a place of rebellion to a place of usefulness. And so sometimes that place, it just takes a little bit of path, a journey that maybe you and I wouldn't necessarily choose, but one that he uses. Think about this for just a second, right? I'm going to go PG-13 on you all, so you all just stay with me for just a moment, okay? Think about the goodness of God in the chosen path of Jonah's suffering, right? There's two ways that he could have exited the fish.

Let that land on you for just a moment, all right? See, there's goodness even in the small things, isn't it? If Jonah was here, he would say "Amen" to that point, right? Listen, he's good. Now he's not just in the small things, he's good to send his word. Notice throughout this text. Verse 1 of chapter 1, the word of the Lord. In chapter 3, the word of the Lord, the word reached the king in verse 6, right? This is about God's word more than it is God's prophet. This is about God and what God is doing. He's good in sending his word. He's good in preserving his word. He's good in raising up men like William Tyndall who translated the bible to English in 1536. He was in prison near Brussels. He was strangled to death and then he was burned at the stake for doing these things.

Oh, he's good in allowing us to have a copy of his word. The word has come to us. He's good in preserving and pressing and moving people like a man named Epaphras. Epaphras was in Colossians chapter 1. Epaphras was this man, this incredible story where he goes a few hours away from Colossae which would be ... is modern day Izmir in Turkey which is where Ephesus was. Ephesus was a thriving port city, and Paul has made his way to Ephesus. He always loved going to the city, so he goes into the influential city. He shares the gospel. Epaphras receives faith in Jesus and then he goes back to his hometown of Colossae which is near Hieropolis and Laodicea and these areas and he goes back and he plants a church.

He starts a church in a house. It's called a house church in Philemon's house. It's a house church. Well, they're meeting and fellowshiping and talking about things about the gospel and some thoughts about the gospel, some thoughts are creeping into the church where for Paul, he never had gone to Colossae, only Epaphras who was converted by the preaching of Paul, so Epaphras cares for the fidelity of the gospel so much that he doesn't take Delta Airlines because they're not in existence yet, but he walks 1,296 miles to get to Rome to find Paul, to ask Paul about how do I address these issues about the gospel in the home plant church, church planted in the home of Philemon.

Well then Epaphras ends up hanging with Paul and takes another guy named Tychicus and he gives him this rolled up scroll that he had penned which you and I would call that the book of Colossians, that's what you have in your hand this morning, and he would take that roll and put it in his pocket and Paul said "I wrote another letter called Ephesians to the people, to the church at Ephesus. Could you drop that off at Ephesus as you make your way back?" And so as he makes his way back, 1,300 miles to read these letters in the church, that's what's been canonized in the 3rd century and you hold in your lap this morning.

He's good, preserving his word and sending it to us. Oh, he's good, isn't he? He's good. His word in Psalm 119:105 says "God's word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." What does that mean? It means that God will help you understand where you are today, and he'll lead you where you need to go tomorrow. Oh, yes, he's good in sending his word. Notice what happens. Notice what happens in the sending and the sowing of the word. In verse 4, in your English translation, the sermon, the message is eight words, but in the Hebrew which is the original language Jonah was written in, it's only five words. So this reluctant prophet preaches this five word sermon and a revival comes to the city. Some of you are saying "I wish our pastors would preach with five words," right?

And so listen. Listen. In five words, God uses his word in a massive way. Notice the word "overthrown". The way the sermon ends, right, it's a word that literally means to throw over like Sodom and Gomorrah was, but it also can mean that word transform. This is what God desires, right? He wants to transform cities. He wants to transform them at the preaching of his word, at the hope of the gospel. He'll do this, right, one person at a time. One heart at a time. He's good, he's good in sending his word. He's good in sowing his word, but he's also good in showing his love on major cities. Notice this language. This language in verse 2, that great city. That, in verse 3, exceedingly great city. What is all this city language?

Let me break this down for you really fast if I can. Now, let me state before I do this, I grew up in the country, right? I love the simplicity of country living. I would never want a do-over on the way my parents raised me. It was an incredible, simple life. I mean, look, when you can take a lunch break and drive your truck down to the pond and fish for about 20 minutes, catch three bass, eat a sandwich, get in the back of the truck, take a 10 minute nap and then go back to work, that's a good day, right? That's a really good day. All right? And so I love my folks up there. I love the people up there.

As I've been growing in the reading of the scripture and trying to develop my theology of cities, I've been influenced by a writer and pastor out of New York City named Tim Keller, and Tim Keller has done extensive research and writing on this, and I just want to build real quick a theology of cities for you, honoring the country folks. I'm one of them. Honoring them, but helping us to see the city maybe in a new light. Listen to what Tim Keller says.

“The city is the place where everything starts and moves out into society, ideas in the arts in the academy, the theater, the media, the journals. They start in the city. They move out into society. This is the heart. If you want medicine in the whole body quickly you inject into the heart. You don't inject it into one of the veins. By AD 300, half of the urban populations of the Roman Empire were Christian. The rest of the country, the rest of the empire was all pagan. In fact, the word pagan comes from the word which means a countryman. The country dwellers were the pagan, literally, and the urban dwellers were the Christians, and because of that, Christianity won the Roman Empire.”

He goes on. “Because God loves cities and because God sees they're the most strategic place to go, he tends to say to Paul and to all missionaries, ‘Go to the city first.’” He says this. “Gardens are places where there are more plants than people. And cities are places where there are more people than plants. And since God loves people far more than plants, he has a unique love for cities. Don't get me wrong,” right? “He uses the plants to feed the people in the city. We are so grateful for the farmers, but the plants aren't made in the image of God. People are.”

See, listen. “The bible started in a garden but it ends in a new city,” right? Think about this. So this is why we desire to plant the gospel in our city, churches in major cities of influence in the world. Culture making, right? It flows downstream, not upstream. Raleigh will impact Rocky Mount more than Rocky Mount will impact Raleigh. And so let's praise God for his word, but let's pray for our cities. Let's pray for our cities. Let's praise him for his word. Notice the second truth about the glory of God who gives second chances, right? He's not only a good father who restores. He's a great father reaching all who repent.

He's a great father reaching all who repent. Notice verses 5 through 8. Notice in verse 5. The people of Nineveh believed God. They believed. They trusted. They put their faith in God's word and what he said about himself and so they're trusting God, and immediately, immediately they call for a fast and put on sackcloth. What's going here? This is a revival. This is an awakening. This is, see true belief always affects the trajectory of one's behavior. I mean, God's invading their hearts, right? The greatness of God is seen, not only in the majesty of Mt. Everest but in the mercy of God melting a human heart.

They call for a fast. This is a sign of repentance, of brokenness, of humility, right? The ashes will remind them that from dust they came, to dust we will go. Ecclesiastes 3, verse 20 says that true repentance always shows up in genuine change. Second Corinthians 7:10 says Godly sorrow repentance that leads to salvation, but worldly sorrow brings death. There's a way to be sorry and not really repent of it. And notice the text when it says in verse 5 "From the greatest of them to the least of them." No one ... What do we learn from that? No one is outside the need for the mercy and the grace of God. No one, right? No matter how well you look, how thick your bank account is, how thin it is, what status you have on social media, listen. From the least to the greatest, we're all in need of mercy.

This is why he will transition in verse 6 to tell us how far this word actually reached, right? Now notice verse 6. Notice what's interesting about 6. It does not say that Jonah went to the king. It says the word. "The word reached the king of Nineveh." Now, let's play this out. Did he, Jonah, make it to the king and share the word? Did someone that maybe was serving in the king's quarters come to faith, believed, right, part of that sackcloth for a few minutes and said "I got to get to the king," and does he go in the back of quarters of the king's house and do a bible study quickly? We don't know.

And I think, intentionally the author is wanting us to see something here is that what's more important than the person who brings the word is the word itself, right? And so the word reached the king. The word reached the king. See, it's all about God. It's not about who brings it. First Corinthians chapter 3, verse 6 says this "Some planted the gospel seed, some watered it, but God gave the increase. Neither he who plants nor he who sows is anything, but only God." This is what's happening. God's word is reaching the king, the greatest in the city, and he arose. Notice the text. "He arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes." So this king, he rises only to go back down, right?

If someone of great status walked into this room, the propensity, the tendency would be to stand and applaud, right? In a celebrity type of way, but when God's word comes and God's presence comes, you may stand for just a minute only to fall and to humble yourself before the holy one, right? Notice what happens. Notice the effects on the king. We see the city, the people of Nineveh believed when they call for this fast and they put on sackcloth, but then notice the king's response in verse 6, right? He issues a proclamation, so he begins in one sense preaching. He published it, so now he's writing a book already about how great God is, and then he says listen. Nobody's going to eat. Let's humble ourselves, even the animals.

Animals humble yourselves. He says let everyone turn from his evil way, and that maybe you should call out mightily to God. He's praying. He's leading the entire Ninevites in prayer to this God.

This is a genuine revival, right? He's telling them in verse 8 to turn from their evil ways. This is repentance. Jesus preached this in Matthew 4, to repent the kingdom of God is near, right? And some of you this morning maybe need to repent for the first time. Maybe you're an unbeliever here. Maybe you're watching one of the venues online and you've never repented, you've never turned from your sin. Maybe you know about these terms, but you personally in your heart, and repented, it's a military term that means turn around, so you're walking this way and you turn and you trust in Jesus. You place your faith in Jesus and the scriptures teach theologically you're justified at that moment, you are justified. You're made right with the holy God. An un-holy person made right with a holy God, right? And so that's justification.

That's when you repent. Now, how do you walk with God, right? The theological term in the scriptures is called sanctification. Well, how is sanctification played out? Well, sanctification's played out by continuing to repent, not to be justified if you've done that one and once and for all, but to walk with God, right, you repent of your sins. You still continue to battle sins. This is why Martin Luther when he discovered this great truth in the gospel reading the book of Romans would nail on the door in 1500s on October 31st, the 95 theses that he wrote against some of the things that they were doing that was not biblical at all and so of these theses that he wrote, the first one that's on the door, now they're inscribed in Latin at a church in Germany, Wittenberg, Germany. The first one says that the Christian life is a life of repentance.

This is why First John 1:9 says God's faithful and just to forgive us when we come and ask. This is why my marriage of 20 years is continuing to grow sweeter and sweeter because we chose on that first year to keep short sin accounts against each other and that we would repent and forgive each other quickly, right? And so watch what happens, I'm married, right? But if I go a couple of weeks with some bitterness harbored against my wife and I'm not asking for forgiveness or extending forgiveness, ever how it's needed, right? Well, what's going to happen? I'm still married, right, but the relationship, the sweetness of the fellowship suffers.

And so it is with God, right? You may have been justified, right, at a point in time where you came to faith in him, but now as you're walking with him, if you're habitually in some sin or you're turning and running away from him in a season of rebellion, yes, you've been justified but look, the sweetness of the friendship with God, the sweetness of a father and a son, that relationship is hindered. And that's why he says listen, to repent. There's a holy fear, there's a reverence for God in these words. Listen, A.W. Tozer. He's a pastor, theologian, passed away, a 19th century influence, he says this. He says "The greatness of God rouses fear within us, but his goodness encourages us to not be afraid. To fear and not be afraid. That's the paradox of faith."

Listen, God is great in reaching a king who thinks he's the greatest but realizes there's another king. God is great, isn't he not? In Psalm 50 ... Psalm 50, if you haven't read that, I'd encourage you to read Psalm 50. Psalm 50 starts where God says that he summons the sun to rise and set, and then goes on in verse 12. This is what he says in verse 12. You can almost sense God, right, leaning in to all of humanity, 7.4 billion people and saying, he says then he goes if I were hungry, right? And that's a joke in and of itself, right? The all-sustaining God. He goes if I were hungry I wouldn't even ask you for something to eat, humanity. For all, for all that's in the heavens and earth is mine. Even if I were hungry.

All the greatness of God. Psalm 77. Psalm 77 says what God is great like our God? And so unbeliever this morning, let's repent and come to know him for the first time. Christian, maybe caught up in sin, repent and do it in humility. See, this is the sackcloth and the ashes, right? It's a posture that you do it. There's a worldly sorrow that doesn't do it. There's a Godly sorrow that brings it, right? The presence, the kindness of God. And so let's repent of our sin. Let's repent of our sin in humility with hope. In humility with hope, right?

And so God, right? He's a good father, restoring those who run. He's a great father, reaching all who repent, and the last will land it, right, he's a gracious father. He's a gracious father, relenting ... it's a longer point so let's walk, stay with me now, stay with me, he's a gracious father, relenting of his wrath, relenting of his wrath by redirecting to Jesus. What in the world does this mean, right? He's a gracious, gracious God to make rebels family members, right. He requires repentance, but he responds to repentance, and here is the question of the hour. Now watch this. Look at your text, verse 9. Verse 9 says, the king's asking, right? "Who knows?" Who knows, it's a great question, now stay with me. "Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger so that we may not perish."

Who knows? Who knows? God may, God may turn. Well, this morning we know. We know the answer to this question because Matthew 12:40 says "The Son of Man ... " Jesus, speaking ... it says "The Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, now something greater than Jonah is here." Listen, God, what's he doing? What's he doing? Is he changing his mind here? No, no, no, no.

He's extending mercy. Is he removing and forgetting about his holy, fierce anger. No. He's not. At all. No, what is he doing? He's redirecting his anger to a cross with his son on it, right? He's going to crush his son instead of you and I. His fierce, righteous anger must be absorbed one of two ways, either in his son or in you and me. So, God's not changing his mind. He's extending mercy. Listen, one pastor, theologian, Brian Chessmore says it like this. "It's because Jesus came that God could relent of his destruction toward Nineveh, towards Jonah, towards you, towards me. The king of Nineveh had it right. God in his holiness and righteousness really did have a fierce anger. He really did have impending disaster and response to their evil and to our evil, but on that day, but on that day, God relented. He relented in light of a future day. God looked upon his precious son, fully God and fully man, and did not relent of his fierce anger. He did not withhold his justified wrath for our sin."

Now listen, listen [inaudible 00:35:34] this morning. “God relented the day Nineveh repented because there was another day coming. There was another day coming called the cross of Christ where the son of God took and absorbed the wrath of God in our place.” This is the best news you will ever hear in your life. Listen, this is why Isaiah 30 says “Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you.” This is why we sing songs like this “But as I ran my hell-bound race, indifferent to the cost, you looked upon my helpless state and led me to the cross. And I beheld God’s love displayed. You suffered in my place. You bore the wrath reserved for me. Now all I know is grace.”

Grace. Grace. This is the best news, Providence. When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil way, God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them. How did God relent of his fierce anger. He redirected it. He redirected it to a hill called Calvary. On a cross with his son Jesus the Christ was there, hung, strung out, arms stretched out, and he because of his grace and mercy received what you and I deserve. What a kind and gracious God, full of mercy, full of grace, full of grace. And I beheld God’s love displayed, you suffered in my place. You bore the wrath reserved for me. Now all I know is grace.

Listen, God used a reluctant, running prophet to reach city. What would he do with a people called Providence who have repented of their sin, who are overwhelmed by the grace of God. Could he not, could he not reach Raleigh and Boston and Portland and Philly and Chicago and New York and cities around the world, Dubai and Izmir and Istanbul and Paris and London and Mumbai and Beijing and Shanghai and Jakarta and Tokyo. Oh, listen, let’s run, Providence. Let’s run to great cities with God’s grace filled gospel. Let’s run. Let’s run to the great cities in our world with God’s grace filled gospel. It started with a garden. It started with a garden. It’s going to end with a new city.

Let’s pray. Father, thank you for your grace today. Thank you for your mercy. Thank you for your absolute gift of your son. Father, I pray that you would capture, capture, God, our affections and help us to realize that you are a good, good father. You are a great father. You restore, you redeem. You outrun us, and we’re so grateful for that. And God, you’re a gracious God. You’re gracious in what you have done, what you are doing, and what you will do, and as we take even our offering this morning, God, we know you use this act of worship in a sense to even help get this gospel to these cities, to support these missionaries that we’re sending. And so God would you even be honored in this moment as well. And we love you and we pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.



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