

Harris Creek Baptist Church
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The Entitled Christian

Jonah 4

How many of you desire that on your vacations you end really well rested? If that is you, I don't want to go on vacation with you because that's just boring for me! Because on vacations, I want to end exhausted. I want to end having done everything that we wanted to do. In fact, on vacations I wake up earlier than I normally do, which drives my wife crazy. She calls me a golden retriever on vacations because I am like, "Hey, we got a life to live. We have got activities to do. We have got things to go and see." This last week, my wife and I, we got to go to New York City on vacation and I had a day-by-day itinerary plan for us - like hour by hour. This is what we are going to do and then we are going to go on this subway and do this and then go to this game and go and see this. We just had a lot to see in just a few days.

We were going to land in New York City, and we were going to take an Uber to our hotel. Then we were going to walk to Central Park and then we are going to walk to Times Square. We were so excited about it! We had not experienced that before, and this is what our first activity looked like. (Picture shows on screen of a person in a rain jacket and it is pouring.)

I mean it was just a downpour and even worse, we could not get into our hotel. So, I am like holding our bags, they would not even take it from us. So, I am holding the bags and my wife is sitting in a coffee shop and I am just looking at my phone and the weather just says rain all day. It says rain all the next day. I was just so bummed out. We are just sitting in a coffee shop doing something we could be doing in Waco, and I am just so disappointed. And in that moment, I mean, I do not know, maybe this might sound ridiculous... I am just like, God, I'm a pastor working hard for you, and this is what you give me? Like, I feel like I deserve better than this! This is our one vacation that we are going on! I feel like we deserve a break and yet you have given us rain. It was just frustrating.

I do not know if you have ever been there before. In that moment I am really thinking I'm like, "God, you can snap your fingers and the rain can stop." You can do that right now, but you are choosing not to - I feel like I deserve a little bit better than this. To make matters worse, we are sitting in a coffee shop. I have got nothing else to do. I realized that I am preaching this week, so I'm like, well, I might as well work on vacation. So, I open up my Bible to Jonah 4 and God just called me out. He did!

That is what we're going to see today, because in the moment after I read it and I just realized that God had given me so much, even in that moment. He had allowed me to take time off from work to go on a vacation. He provided a way for us to go on a plane to get to New York City. He had provided a way for us to have a hotel room. This is crazy, at least to me, he provided a family at Harris Creek who watched our daughter for 4 1/2 days. (Crowd laughs.) I know, that is

a lot! Some of you must not like my daughter. You are like holy smokes. Meanwhile, I am sitting in a coffee shop drinking coffee that I did not struggle to pay for because God had provided for us. And I am sitting next to my wife, who dearly loves me, who He provided for me. And I am sad because I was a little wet. I mean, in that moment, I just reeked of entitlement. But I do not think it's just me. I think entitlement is just kind of the air we breathe here. So many of us struggle with it. And if you struggle to believe that you struggle with entitlement, I am here to help you.

So, let's play a little game called "*You Might Be Entitled If...*" You might be entitled if your property taxes went up this year and you are so angry. Meanwhile, it is going to be easy for you to pay. You will not even notice that money is gone. You might be entitled if you came to church this morning and you were so frustrated that the parking lot was full and then you walked into the auditorium and you realized that someone else is sitting on your seat, that does not have your name on it. You might be entitled if this weekend, once it hit 90 degrees in Waco you started complaining about it while you are sitting in air conditioning. You might be entitled if you are a Baylor student, and you believe your professors need to cater to you. (Crowd response...) There we go! Come on! I will take that. You believe they need to change the assignment date for you. You believe they should shift around your finals for you, so you can go home a little bit earlier. You might be entitled if you believe that everyone in your life group should pursue you before you pursue them. You might be entitled if you believe your job should be a little more flexible and you should get paid a little bit more.

See the truth is all of us struggle with it. Here is the deal, all of us think we deserve more than what we have. Meanwhile, we have more than we deserve. JP says all the time entitlement is the highest platform from which we fall. That is what we are going to see happen with Jonah here in this passage. He is going to fall off this platform of entitlement and he's not going to look very good.

So, we are going to be in Jonah 4 if you have your Bibles open it up there - Jonah 4. Just some recap if you have not been with us these last three weeks, or if you just need a reminder, here's where we've been. Jonah 1 starts off with Jonah, a prophet of God, being called by God to go and preach to the city of Nineveh. Now the city of Nineveh was filled with some of the most evil people who have ever existed. They killed people in just gruesome ways, these are evil people. So, Jonah hears this message from God, and he runs from God. But as Jonah is running away from God, God runs after Jonah. He sends a storm and a big fish to redirect him back to Nineveh. As we heard last week, Jonah got his redo. He got to go to Nineveh and preach to the people there, and they repented - which is like a preacher's dream. This is what you hope for! You preach a message from God, and everybody responds - nobody's complaining on the way home. They are like, that was an amazing message. Everybody repented! He got to see so much life. This is so exciting, which is why Jonah says this at the beginning of chapter 4. It says, **But it displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was angry.**

This is like a record scratch moment, like what is going on? I mean, remember what comes right before this. This is how chapter 3 ends. Verse 10, **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, and he did not do it. Then chapter 4, **But it displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was angry.** Jonah was so angry. Nineveh repented, so God relented, and it does not seem fair. As I said before, these are horrible people. These Ninevites likely killed people that Jonah knew and God's letting them off easy. Let's continue on in verse 2, **And he prayed to the Lord and said, "Oh Lord, is not this 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 were 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."** What is interesting here is that Jonah doesn't say, 'I ran from the Ninevites because I thought they were going to kill me.' He says, 'I ran from the Ninevites because I thought you wouldn't kill them. I knew you would be good to them, God, because you've been good to me. I knew you would be kind to them God because you've been kind to me. The difference is I deserved it and they do not.' Because for Jonah, he's looking at the situation and it's clear to him - the Ninevites have been evil people and therefore they deserve to be punished. And this is the first thing we can learn from this passage.

1. Jonah did not like God's mercy.

Jonah did not like God's mercy. You know, I cannot help but think that a key part of his frustration is he's thinking, 'God, you're better to the Ninevites than you are to me.' These people have done every evil under the sun. You are just going to let them get away with it. Meanwhile, I have chosen to follow you. All of my life I have tried to follow your commandments and what do I get out of the deal? You tell me to leave my family and friends to go to this evil city, meanwhile, I get swallowed by a fish on the way. It just does not feel like I'm really getting a good end of the deal.

I think Jonah is thinking, 'God, I've done more for you than they have and yet you've given them more than what I have.' You know, I have felt this before in my life. Maybe you have to? Some of you might remember this because I mentioned this in a sermon, but a couple of months ago my wife and I had a miscarriage. This is just what I felt in that scene. I did in my heart I was like, 'God, I do not feel like we deserve this. My wife and I, we love you. We try to follow you, and this is what you give us? Yeah, I appreciate it... Thank you, God.' Then I would look around and other people who did not seem to be following Jesus as well as we were, and then they would get pregnant. And it just did not seem to make sense. I just felt like, God, I am doing more for you than they are and you're not giving me what I feel like I deserve.

Maybe this is just a theme in my life, because I can get a funk and get into a funk in my marriage whenever I start to compare what I'm doing versus what my wife is doing. And sometimes I think, maybe you guys do not do this, but sometimes I think I'm doing more than she's doing. Typically, this happens for me at the Mayborn Museum. I will take my daughter on Saturdays, sometimes in the morning. We will be in the bubble room for like the 100th millionth time and I'll just sit there going I deserve a break more than she does! I worked ALL week. I mowed the lawn all afternoon yesterday. I am setting up a new electricity program for us. I have changed our phone bill. Like I am doing all this stuff, I deserve a break more than she does! I have done more than she's doing! It just drives me crazy. Here is what you need to know. One that is so stupid. Inaccurate and ungodly. Secondly, whenever you choose to keep score, you choose to lose.

Whenever you choose to keep score in your relationships, you choose to lose. But this is what Jonah is doing here in this moment.

He is looking at the religious scoreboard and who's got the most points, and he sees that Jonah has got like 1000 points on the board and then Nineveh just put one point on the board. He is looking at it and he sees the situation clearly. He is going, I've done more for God, so I deserve more from God. But the question for us, and for Jonah, is not have you done more for God than they have done for God? The question is, have you done more for God or has He done more for you?

Because while we think we deserve more, friend, you do not want what you deserve. You do not want what's fair. Let me tell you what Scripture says you deserve, Ephesians 2, **As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.**

You see, Jonah believed the Ninevites were wicked and therefore they should be punished, which is true. The only issue was Jonah was wicked and should be punished. You are wicked and should be punished. I am wicked and should be punished. You see, we deserve that because we have chosen death. Because of our sin we deserve a life separated from God. We deserve a life of punishment. We deserve a life of abandonment. We deserve a life of pain. **BUT because of His great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace that you have been saved.** You see, Nineveh did not deserve salvation. Jonah did not deserve salvation. We do not deserve salvation. Friend, you do not want what you deserve, but praise God in Christ Jesus, you don't get what you deserve! You do not get what's fair. While you chose death, He's given you life.

While we were in New York City, the second day we were there, we were supposed to go to a New York Mets game. If you do not know this, the Mets play baseball. If you do not know this, baseball is played outside, and it was raining that day. I was like, maybe we can catch a few innings, but we are at lunch right before. The game is like at 1:30. We're at lunch and I get an e-mail from the Mets saying that the game has been cancelled. Again, I am like, all my plans are just completely ruined. I do not know what we're going to do inside at New York City. There is nothing to do here in New York City inside. And I am just throwing myself another pity party. I pulled out my phone and I look and see that the New York Knicks basketball team is playing in the playoffs that day. And I check for tickets on StubHub, and they are like thousands of dollars. I am like well I am not paying for those tickets.

So, while we are at lunch, I am just ignoring my wife, I am on my phone, and I text a buddy who I thought might have connections to the New York Knicks. I was like, "Hey, I know we are an hour before the game – is there any chance you could like hook me up with tickets?" He shoots me a text back. He is like, 'Absolutely. No problem. I got them. Sending it to your phone right now - for free.' I look at them. They are on the first level. I go check online; they were thousands of dollars. Like thousands of dollars! We get to go to the game and have an absolute blast.

I told one of my friends that day, I am texting another buddy. He goes, “Man, you really need to do something nice to make it up to him.” Which is true. I want to do something nice. The only problem is I cannot make it up to him. The nicest thing I can think of is I could take my buddy out to Diamondbacks and pay for the nicest steak on the menu, and that wouldn't even hold a candle towards those tickets cost.

See, this is our situation with God times a million billion. He paid an eternal price for you. He sent His one and only son to die a death that you deserve. He paid your price! I think a lot of us think, you know, I better do something nice to make it up. You know what, I'm going to do something next for God. I am going to serve him in the kids' ministry. I am going to do something nice for God, I'm going to be really generous with my money. I might even give 10%. I am going to do something nice for God, and like Jonah, I'm going to share the gospel with my neighbors. I am going to do something really nice for Him and we think that we kind of level the playing field between Him and us. And sometimes we even feel like He owes us. Friend, He does not owe you anything.

If God gave you what you were owed, you would get what Nineveh was owed. Disaster in this moment. Destruction in this moment. But thank God, He does not give us what we deserve! Even though God had been merciful to Jonah, point number one, the first thing we can learn is Jonah does not like God's mercy.

Let's keep reading, verse 4, this what it says: **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 what would become of the city. Now the Lord God appointed a plant and made it come over Jonah, that it might be 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.”** OK, this is a weird part of the story, but I want to show you something that the author would want you to see. The author in Jonah continually uses a similar word, frequently with different words, he repeats words so that we might take notice of them. He does that in this chapter in verse one. It said, **But it displeased Jonah exceedingly and he was angry.** Then in verse six it says, **So Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant.** I just want to make sure everyone realizes this, that typically that phrase Jonah was exceedingly glad because of the plant. That's only true of people who were born in the 70s... (Nate is waiting for audience to respond to the joke.) Maybe you'll get in later.

Anyway, Jonah is on this roller coaster of emotions. He's exceedingly frustrated because he doesn't get what he wants, and he's exceedingly happy because he gets what he wants. He's exceedingly angry because they don't die, and he's exceedingly glad because he has this plant for him.

2. Jonah's emotions are tied to getting what he wants.

The second thing we can learn from this chapter is that Jonah's emotions are tied to getting what he wants. So why does God do this really weird thing where He grows a plant only to kill the plant? Well, He wants to show Jonah what he does and doesn't care about. He wants to show Jonah the state of his heart. At the beginning of this chapter, Jonah is upset that someone - the Ninevites - didn't die. And at the end of the chapter, he's upset because something - the vine - did die. In doing this, God just says, 'Hey Jonah, look at your emotions. What do your emotions communicate to you?' Your emotions communicate that you really, really care about getting what you want. He's angry they don't get what he thinks they should get, and then he's angry because he doesn't get what he thinks he should get. His emotions are tied to getting what he wants. When he gets his way, he is thrilled. When he does not, he's angry.

In that moment God says, "Do you do well to be angry?" What he is saying is, "Hey is this going well for you? Are these emotions going well for you?" When my wife and I got to New York City on the plane one of my biggest pet peeves on earth happened. I do not know if this is just a New Yorker thing, but we landed and the pilot says, 'OK, you can get up now.' We are at the gate and six people who were in rows behind us grab their bags and walked in front of us. Have you ever seen that happen? It drove me nuts! It was not just like one family who was late for their flight. There were different groups of people and they're just cutting in front of us to get off the plane earlier. And I am looking at them like, who do you think you are? You were sitting in 23 B. I am 20A. I need to get off the plane before you get off the plane! Do not cut in front of me.

I had already read Jonah 4 and I just felt the Holy Spirit saying, "Nate, do you do well to be angry? Does it matter if they get off the plane ten seconds before you do?" No! It is not a big deal. Get over yourself. You do not always have to get what you want. As Christians, we do not have to look this way. As Christians, we can step off this emotional roller coaster that Jonah was on. We do not have to look that way because our emotions are not tied to what happens to us. Instead, they are tied to what happened to us.

So, what, you did not get the promotion, but your peace isn't tied to your job title. You do not feel seen by your spouse today. Good news! Your worth does not come from how your spouse feels about you. Your job today was a beatdown. Good news! Your joy does not come from your job. Your peace, worth, and joy are not tied to what happens to you, but what happened to you two thousand years ago when Jesus walked out of that empty grave. And the good news is our emotions do not just have to be tied to what happens to us, but what happened to us and what will happen to us. Because friend, you are going home to be with Jesus one day. Either you are going to die and be with Him or He's going to come back and take you there. And it does not matter if you've been laid off today. It does not matter if you get cut off today. It does not matter if the vine giving you shade dies today. You can have joy in each and every season because the world cannot take away your joy because the world didn't give it to you in the first place.

But this is not what Jonah looks like. Jonah's emotions, Jonah's joy was stolen from him by the world because he cared so much about the world. This does not have to be what we look like. We can look like the apostle Paul who tells a very, very different story. While Jonah was so flustered because a plant died, Paul says this in Philippians 4. **I am not saying this because I am in need,**

for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength. And I just need you to know this truth. That verse is not saying you can dunk from the free throw line. That verse is not saying you can ace that test even though you didn't study for it. That verse is not saying you can get that promotion even though you are not doing very good at your job. What Paul is saying here is he is saying, I can endure all circumstances. I can have joy in all circumstances because getting what I want does not define my joy, knowing Jesus does. I do not need to wonder if I'm getting more than I deserve, because I know that I've already gotten more than I deserve. That is point 2, let's keep reading.

We are going to read again, verse 9 and finish out the book of Jonah. This is how it ends. **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?"** This is how the book ends, it is a weird ending. So, God mentions the cattle at the end because he is likely saying, "Jonah, if you can at least be glad that the people weren't destroyed, can you at least care that the animals weren't destroyed?" If you are going to hate them so much, can't you at least care for their animals?

This week I heard it said that this is the only revival in history where the preacher needed more follow up than the converts did. This is what Jonah looks like here. And what God is saying here, to closeout this chapter, He's saying 'Jonah, you pity the plant. I pity the fool.' He says, 'You are so affected by this plant, meanwhile, I am so affected by the Ninevites. I care for them because their rebellion hurts me. Conversely, their repentance brings me great joy because I care about them because they're helpless. Their evil pursuits have so confused their brain that they do not even know their left hand from their right. In their confusion, I care for them.' While Jonah's heart was for retribution, God's heart was for restoration. This is the third thing we can learn from this passage.

3. Jonah's heart does not look like God's heart.

Jonah's heart was for retribution, God's heart was for restoration. If this is who God is, this is who we must be also. The problem is, many of us look a whole lot more like Jonah than we do Jesus. Because, I think, we really enjoy when our enemies get what is coming to them. We enjoy watching our enemies struggle.

I was talking to a fellow staff member this week, I will not tell you this was, but they said they enjoy getting on social media and looking and see that the people who bullied them in high school now look old and overweight. That is what he said. I think that is true in all of us. You know that ex that broke your heart, you hope their heart gets broken 10 times over. Or that boss right now who's not very kind to you, you love hearing that their marriage is not going well. Or that political candidate that you do not like, you jump for joy when you realize that they had a

moral failure. We love to hear when people we do not like get what's coming to them, and yet we claim to follow Jesus. Because in our walk with Jesus, we just like to say, God, thank you so much for not punishing me - now go and punish them.

We have got to learn this lesson from this story. Ultimately, while we do look like Jonah in this story, I would argue that that we do not most look like Jonah in this story. In this story, who we most look like are the Ninevites. We most look like the people who chose to love the world more than God. We chose to pursue sin more than we chose to pursue holiness. We chose everything that was against God and God saw all of that and He said, 'I'm going to choose to love the Nineveh in you.' And if he chose to love the Nineveh in us, we must choose to love the Nineveh in others. We cannot be forgiven and then refuse to hand out forgiveness.

But this is what happens here with Jonah. We just so clearly see at the end of this chapter that Jonah's heart does not look like God's heart. I think really one of the purposes of the book of Jonah is to do this for us. I think part of the reason why the book of Jonah is in scripture, in the vast narrative of Scripture, is to show us just how different Jonah's heart is from Jesus's heart.

In fact, here are all the ways that I could come up with how they differentiate.

- Jonah hated sinners; Jesus loved them.
- Jonah ran from his assignment; Jesus ran towards it.
- Jonah came only because he had to; Jesus came because He wanted to.
- Jonah delivered the message to the Ninevites to save his own life; Jesus delivered His message even though it cost Him His life.
- Jonah was taken down into the depths of darkness for three days because of his disobedience; Jesus was taken into the darkness of death for three days because of our disobedience.
- Jonah only came with the message of condemnation; Jesus came and said, 'I did not come to condemn the world, but to save the world.'
- Jonah sat outside the city and hoped to watch the people die; Jesus went inside the city to die so that the people might live.
- Jonah was distraught when his comfort was taken from him; Jesus gladly endured the pain of the cross.
- Jonah was agonized when rebels repented; Jesus went through agony so rebels could repent.

That is who our Savior is. We need to realize that on our own, we will look more like Jonah than we will Jesus. I do not want my entitlement to keep me there. I do not want your entitlement to keep you there. The good news is we can look more like Jesus. The more we gaze at His accomplishments and not our own, the more we will look more like Jesus than we will Jonah.

So, to summarize, the three things we can learn from Jonah 4 are: Jonah did not like God's mercy; Jonah's emotions are tied to getting what he wants; and Jonah's heart doesn't look like God's heart.

And just to close out, I want to compare this story with another story that is in scripture. I did this with Jonah 1, and I think it is fitting again with Jonah 4. There is a story that that Jesus told in

scripture, it's a parable. There is a character in this story that looks just like Jonah in this chapter - it is the story of the prodigal son. Maybe you know the story of the prodigal son. There is a son who asks for his inheritance early from his father. He takes the money, spends the money, loses all of the money. He is in a pig pen, and he eventually goes back to his father, his father welcomes him back home. That is not what Jonah looked like though. Jonah looked not like the younger brother, but the older brother.

Jesus telling this story, it is like he had Jonah in mind. This is what it says in Luke 15, **“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So, he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ‘Your brother has come home,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So, his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, “Look! All these years I have been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!”**

God, I have done so much for you! When are you going to do something for me? I deserve the party. He does not. I deserve more than what you have given me God. That is the heart of the older brother, that's the heart of Jonah, and that is the heart of so many of us here today. But I think God's response is this, “My son, (my daughter)” the father said, “you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.”

Notice he does not say, ‘Everything you deserve is yours.’ He doesn't say, ‘Everything that you earned is yours.’ He says, ‘Everything that I've earned, everything that I deserve, everything that I have is yours.’

I just want you to know that I do not know your life story. I do not know where you're at right now. I do not know how painful your life is right now, but I do believe this. God is not holding out on you. In the relationship between you and Jesus, you are not getting the short end of the stick. No matter where you are at in your life today, I know this about Jesus, while you sinned, He saved. He lived the perfect life we could not live. He died a death that we deserve, and he rose again so that we might be able to live forever. And although all of us have fallen short of the glory of God, God is welcoming us into His glory anyway. So, if He never does another thing for you, what He did would be enough.

And so, as we closeout the book of Jonah, the thing that I am praying for myself is I'm just asking God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, would you make my heart look more like Jesus' than Jonah's? This week I just want to be resolved to love the Nineveh in others because He first loved the Nineveh in me. And this week I just want to be resolved to not be on the outside of the city. To not be on the outside of the party looking in. I want to be in the middle of it, celebrating every single time someone else gets more than they deserve - because I got more than I deserved. That is my story and that's your story. Let me pray that we would not be entitled to it.

Father, thank you so much that Jesus does not look like Jonah. That you were not reluctant in sending your son to save us. You weren't reluctant to telling us a message of reconciliation, but instead you went with joy to the cross. You did not hate sinners, instead you loved them. You did not run away from them, instead you pursued them. Thank you so much God that our Savior is like Jesus, and he is not like Jonah. God I just pray, through the power of the Holy Spirit, that our hearts in this room would look more like Jesus than Jonah. That we would not see the failures of others and think that they are permanently failed, or permanently flawed. Or that they deserve punishment, but instead that we would see the reality of our story. That God Chose to love us, not just that moment 15 years ago when we chose to accept you – when we were dirty and broken and you chose to make us new. But you love us, even this morning, when we are still dirty and broken. So, if you could love us as dirty and broken people, would we radically love the dirty and broken people around us as well. God more than anything else, we just want to be so grateful that you have not given us what we deserve. Although we deserve death, you have given us life. Although we deserve an eternity separated away from you. Every single one of us, if we have chosen to believe in you, are going to spend eternity looking at you face to face. God if that is true, if we believe that, may we not be so concerned and consumed by the things of this world. May our emotions not be so tied to getting what we want or what we do not want. Instead, may we be just so joy-filled and hopeful because we know what happened to us and what one day will happen to us - because we know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus is alive and with us and for us. It is in His name we pray. Amen.