



NEWSLETTER
June 5, 2022
PART 2

FLASHBACK!
MAY 29, 2022

Talk

**Talk 5: *When God's Goodness
Doesn't Feel Good***

BO SANCHEZ: Hi, Everybody,
God bless you.

I'm not in the Philippines. I'm in the United Kingdom. We're meeting the Feasters here, preaching at The Feast.

Also talking to some Feast leaders from different countries in Europe. It's been really an exciting time and I know that God is there with you. God will speak to you. God will change you. You're going to have an amazing, amazing Feast.

And this is the last talk of our *Jonah* series.

Today, I want to preach the message—this is going to be a jarring message for all of us. Here it is:

Nooooo!



GOD IS GOOD TO PEOPLE YOU DON'T LIKE

Three Messages from God



May I tell you a story?

Once upon a time, many, many moons ago, I was still wet behind the ears when it came to money, a friend of mine invited me to invest P200,000 in his business, and he promised 2% interest every month. Very attractive, you know, to me. I had P200,000 pesos—okay, a little bit more than that.

But I told him, “You know what, I’m saving it because I want to start my own business.”

When he noticed I was hesitant, you know what he did? On the spot, right there and then, he raised the interest to 3% a month. Now, that should have triggered alarm bells in my brain—with 300 red flags waving at me, right? But no. I just saw the 3% interest a month—whoa, I’m going to earn more! So, I gave him all my money—P200,000. My dear friends, I never, never saw that money again.

There were times when I would bump into this friend of mine, you know, and then he would talk about this convoluted story that his business hit some snags, hit some roadblocks, but the solution is coming, and he’s going to pay me after that.

And then in the next breath, he would say, “By the way, do you want to invest some more?”

And I told him, “I gave you all my money. I have no more money to give you.”

Later on, I learned the harsh, bitter, reality, that he was actually drowning in debt. When I met him and he got my P200,000, he was already drowning in debt. It was all a Ponzi scheme.

He was just scamming people left and right—running, escaping, and it was horrible-- oh my gosh! I remember going home that day angry and afraid. Because that money was my source of security for my future. I was going to start my business...

But thanks be to God, I have a relationship with Him...Spontaneously, I went into His Presence, poured out all my anger, poured out all my fear. And as I was doing that, I heard God give me three messages.

No, it was not an audible voice, you know: “Bo, this is God...”

Nothing like that. They were just thoughts than entered my mind, but they were so special, that I knew that God was speaking to me. And those three messages changed my life. I’m going to share them with you right now.

First Message

The first God told me was:
I was stunned. It's like,
I thought the Lord was going to take my side.

But I had enough sense to know that God was right.
I became greedy. I became lazy. You put those together
and you're going to give your money left and right.
You know, I did not do any research. I did not do any due diligence.

"Bo, you're at fault too."



Second Message

My mess had a message. My loss had a lesson. I realized unless I take personal responsibility that we were both to blame for what happened to me, nothing will happen. I'm telling you: if you keep on blaming your situation on someone else—I blame that person, I blame those people, I blame, I blame, I blame. Guess what? You are removing the power to change your life and passing it on to that person. But when God told me, "You're at fault, too"-- and I accepted it, I just knew something was happening in me. That I needed to learn this lesson to move forward.

Here's No. 2. The second message I received from God was much, much more difficult than the first.

The second message I received from God was:
I said, "Lord, he is a horrible human being. He pretended to be my friend but he was already lying through his teeth. Lord God, how?"

And I heard through the grapevine that he was so miserable. Why? His family— whole family—did not want to talk to him because he already borrowed from his mom, and his brother, and his sister, and his brother-in-law, and his auntie, and his uncle, and his cousins. And he was chased by loan sharks, and he was changing his phone, he was transferring houses. What a miserable life!

Now, I want you to know, to be honest, inside me, I was saying to myself, "Buti nga—Serves him right. Good for him. He deserves that."

But then in prayer, I would hear God telling me, "Bless him. Pray for him." Against the rage in my heart, I said, "Okay."

And I would pray for him—that God would bless him. And as I kept doing that, here's what I noticed-- I noticed my anger leaking out. Not fully. But drop by drop. And firsthand, I experienced the power of prayer—that prayer does not only bless the person you're praying for. It blesses the person praying.

"Bless him."



Third Message

The third message God told me:

"Trust Me."

"Bo, keep on doing what is right.
Keep learning. Keep growing.
Keep moving forward. Trust—that you will
get your money back in another way.
And much more."

I want you to know that that's what happened. It took a number of years-- but it happened. And through businesses and investments, and learning financial literacy, I began to be blessed even more.



Jonah's Disturbing Message

Why did I tell you that story?

Here's why: Because this is the center of *Jonah's* disturbing message:

That God is good to the people you don't like, especially people who hurt you and wronged you.

I want you to welcome our next preacher. Keep on opening your heart. God is going to speak to you today.

God's True Character

DIDOY LUBATON: Great week!

We are in our last talk of the *Book of Jonah*. And ah, beautiful past weeks.

Let's review what we've covered so far.

So, we knew that God told Jonah to go to Nineveh to preach to Israel's archnemesis. He wasn't happy. Jonah wasn't happy and he wasn't fully subscribed to it. And we know that he actually went the other way. He went on a boat far away from where he's supposed to be. He went to Tarshish. But God sent a storm to rock the boat. And then he was thrown off the boat. And a sea monster got him. And three days later, that sea monster vomited him to Nineveh.

Jonah was then forced -- or maybe there was little obedience left in him—to go to Nineveh and he preached a five-word sermon that Nineveh would be destroyed in three days. And voila it worked. The Ninevites repented.

And if you want to end the story there, sometimes, you'll think you need to obey God, or else... there will be storms in your life. Or else you will have monstrous things happening in your life. But we are thankful because—I want to pose a question:

Does this reflect God's true character?

No. Not really.

So, instead of actually thinking, "Is it going to be obeying God? Is this story about just obeying God?" I want you to think about it...



What Jonah's Story Is All About

This story is not about just to obey God. It's about *obey* God, and also *know* God.

Because if you know the goodness of God, if you know the mercy of God, you cannot help responding in full obedience and in love to Him.

And again, we expected Jonah to be happy because it worked—God's mercy was shown. People were saved.

We're thankful that it did not end there. There's still a whole chapter – and this is where we are-- we're in the last chapter, and we're going to take a peek inside Jonah's heart-- Jonah's conversation with the Lord. And you know, this actually gives the huge meaning—the story is not over yet.

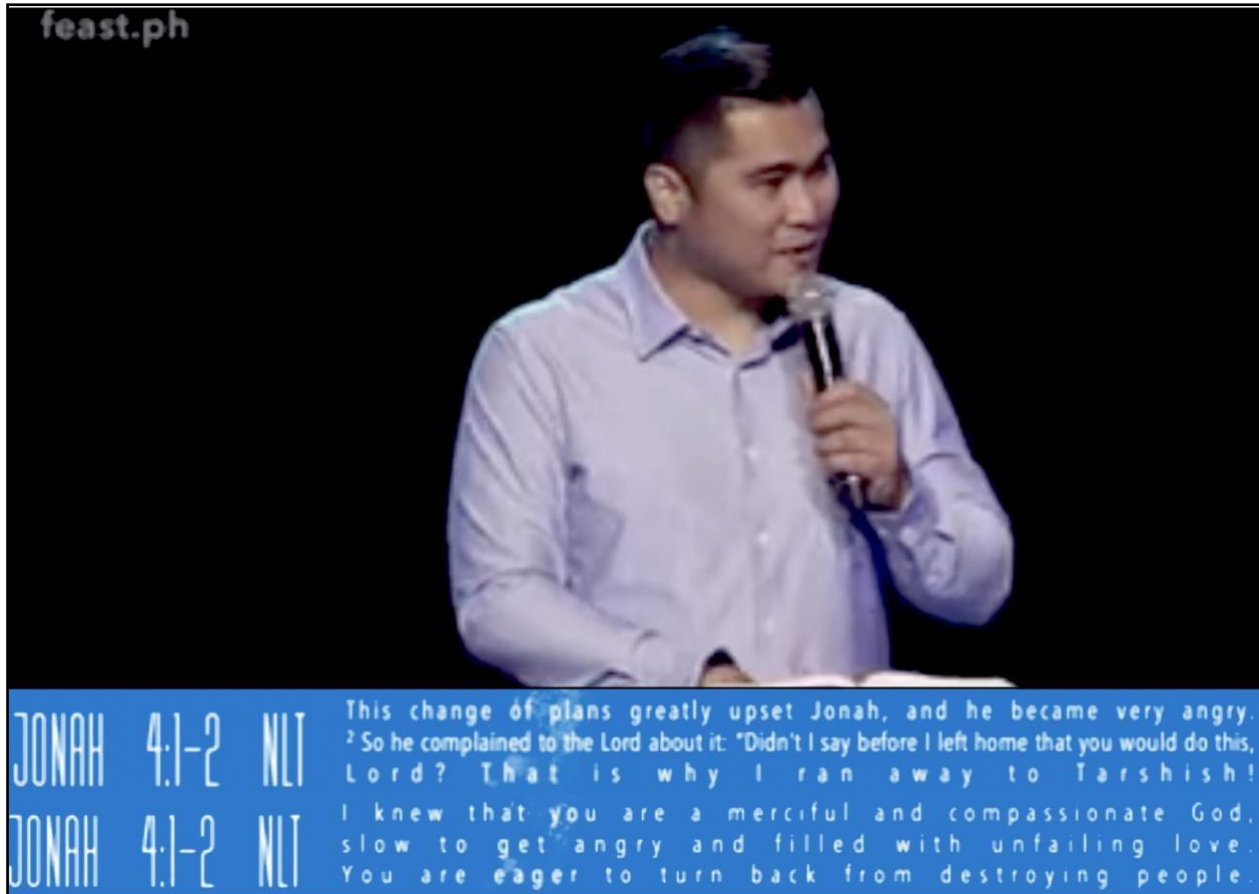
And, again, after all, a whole nation was saved—a great city was supposed to be destroyed, but it was saved. But Jonah was not happy about it.

Let me pause there. Did you ever hear good news happening around you—but you were not happy about it? Can you relate to that? Yung kapitbahay mo, yung kasama mo sa office na mas senior ka, pero siya naunang ma-promote.—Your neighbor, your officemate, you are more senior than him, but he was the one promoted. Hmmm. Yung kaklase mo nung high school, mas maganda ka sa kanya, bakit siya ang may boyfriend.—Your high school classmate, you're prettier than her, but she's the one with a boyfriend...



What Jonah Wants

Let's read Jonah 4:1-2:



So, finally,

**Jonah was not just disobedient—
he was angry.**

A prophet, knowing the Scriptures. A prophet of the Lord was very angry about God being good. All along, he wanted Nineveh to be destroyed—because they were enemies. And the Assyrians, in Nineveh, they were ruthless. They tortured their enemies. They massacred the Jews. So, for Jonah, he didn't want that. He wanted them to suffer.

He wanted the enemies of his nation to suffer because they deserved it.

Jonah's Tantrum

And so, Jonah says, in Verse 3:

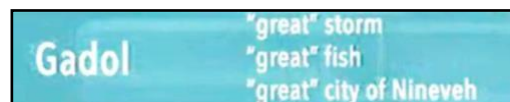


Wwoooow. It was like, “It’s me, or them, Lord. It’s either you pick me or you pick them. It’s either you kill them, or you kill me.”

He was throwing a tantrum-- to the Lord. Over something good that happened. Can you relate?

I want you to appreciate the Bible. The Bible says *angry*. Do you know how much anger was that? All throughout the Book, the

brilliant author of the *Book of Jonah* used the Hebrew word *gadol*. He used the word to describe the great storm, the great fish, the great city of Nineveh. And it wasn’t accidental. When the author described, there was a pattern—for a purpose. And the author described his anger also as *gadol*.



That means that’s how big the anger was—like the sea, like the huge sea monster, like the huge great city of Nineveh, like the huge storm. And it was destructive. It was killing him. It was too much.

Jonah's Complaint

We must read again—so you can appreciate—Jonah's complaint.

Verse 2 says:



Look: *Merciful. Compassionate. Slow to Get Angry. Unfailing Love.* These are good or bad qualities? And yet the prophet was complaining.

Sometimes, I can really relate. Sometimes, I'm Jonah. I'm complaining about good things.

The Bible is a hyperlink book. It's a collection of stories—one story connected to the other. So, *Jonah* is actually a lot connected to *Genesis*. Jonah was almost quoting verbatim the great message of Exodus 34:5-7. If you read that, you will see that it was almost verbatim-- *Merciful. Compassionate. Slow to Get Angry...*

And you know what, in the Hebrew tradition—in that culture—this is very important. It is one of the most foundational verses of the Old Testament. It's so special, it's quoted 27 times in the Old Testament. And it's one of the most quoted verses from the Bible.

Jonah's Problem

So, what is Jonah's problem? It's this: We want God's mercy to be exclusive. We want that the goodness of God is only for us—not for our enemies. And let me say this to you: Sometimes, we think, “How dare God bless our enemies.”

We are following God. *They* are not following Him. They do not deserve His mercy.

Do you trust me? Because I would like to lead you to a very simple mental exercise that you wouldn't like. Just being honest. May we try...

Close your eyes. Trust me here. I want you to think of someone who hurt you. Someone who insulted you. Someone who bullied you. Who destroyed your reputation-- who put out fake news about you. Ruined your life. Wrecked your life.

Or think of someone who stole from you. Someone who got money from you and did not give it back to you. A very substantial amount. Hey, it doesn't have to be that big.

I want you to think of a friend who campaigned and voted for a candidate you hated in the last elections.

Open your eyes. Can you feel the anger?

I tried to do this at home. I could not. And I'm guilty that sometimes, I want the goodness of God to be for good people alone. But how dare I say it?

I want you to imagine God loving that person. Lord, bakit siya? Lord, why *he*? Blessing that person, embracing that person. There is something inside you that says, Waaah. Grrrr.

That is how Jonah felt-- in some way.



God Replies to Our Anger

Verse 4 says:



I believe God is asking us today: Is it right for you to be angry when I show my goodness towards your enemies? Is it right for you to be angry when I bless people? Am I not blessing you enough? Why do you hurt when I heal your enemies?

It is very soul-penetrating. Get this message: That is the message of Jesus. Centuries later, in Matthew 5: 43-44, in Jesus' sermon on the mount, He says:

It's so hard to be a Christian. Yes, it is. But it's worth it. God called us.

MATTHEW 5:43-44 NLT "You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy.
44 But I say, love your enemies!
Pray for those who persecute you!



God: Old and New

I want you—before I end—to understand a very important, a very rampant misunderstanding that we have about the Bible. Sometimes, we have this question:

Why is the Old Testament God harsh and judgmental, but the New Testament God is loving and merciful?

Have you asked that question? Have you wondered?

I also thought like that in my early years of reading the Bible-- and I'm not done yet. I'm still learning, and so much more.

By the way, when we're preaching, we're preaching to ourselves. We're also learning, and I'm grateful for this calling. So be it, Lord.



The New Testament and the Old Testament God are one.

He did not change.

God is both merciful and loving, slow to anger, and compassionate—from the Old Testament to the New Testament.

Invitation Today

So, the invitation today is not to fear God just because God will throw us to the sea and we will get swallowed by the sea monster and force us to obey Him. No. The invitation today is not to obey Him only. The invitation is to know Him. To trust His heart. And if you cannot trust His ways in your life, trust His heart. If you cannot trust the pain that God allowed in your life, you trust his purpose. If you cannot trust that God allowed hurting into your life, trust that God is healing you from within. And there's so much more.



The *Book of Jonah* was already talking of God's radical mercy—from the early start, from the Old Testament.

And so, today, as I close, I invite you, aminin mo na—admit it. Say to yourself, “Yes, sometimes, I’m like Jonah. I hurt when God does something good to other people I don’t like.”

It’s our human nature. But I thank God that we do not just rely on ourselves. We can have God.

Today, I encourage you: May you experience God’s mercy like never before. Because that mercy-- that love, that compassion, being slow to anger—is not just for you. It also for the people around you.

And who are we to dare question it? Because sometimes, we are the sinful people. We are the difficult persons. We are like the Ninevites too,

So, pick your character in the story. If you feel like Jonah, there is hope for us. And there’s a lesson about God’s mercy. And if you feel like you’re a Ninevite, with a very simple five-word sermon that Jonah preached, may we be listening enough and responding early on to God’s invitation of mercy, and love, and compassion. Amen.

Director's Cut



AUDEE VILLARAZA: So much wisdom in the story of Jonah.

We're not done yet. Because I believe we're going towards the end. This is the culmination of what has been one of the most amazing stories that we've read.

I mean, we've seen Jonah. How Jonah disobeyed God and how he ran away from God's calling, and how he ended up in a boat and how he ended up in the belly of a great big fish. And then we saw how God forgave Jonah and gave Jonah a second chance-- because God is merciful. And then we saw how God forgave the Ninevites when they repented because Jonah preached this five-word sermon.

And you would think, this is the ending—that's how I'd always thought that *Jonah* would be: with a perfect ending—when God would forgive the people. You couldn't think of a better ending than that, right?

Except that's not the ending yet. This is the brilliance of the author of *Jonah*. Just when you thought that you already knew the ending, he flips the script and then he gives it a Director's Cut-- a different ending.

You know who else loved doing that?

Jesus.

Every time Jesus would tell these stories called parables, just when you thought how it would end, Jesus would flip the script and then give it an unexpected ending.

Let me explain...

Jonah's Secret Wish

So, we are at this part, in Verse 5—and Didoy just preached this.

Now, Jonah is observing at this point, when he already preached, and he saw how the Ninevites repented and God forgave them.

And it says here:



If
by

this point, you're still wondering what the true nature of Jonah's heart is—whether Jonah was being selfless or selfish, this verse confirms it all. What was Jonah doing? He was secretly hoping that God would change His mind about the Ninevites—that instead of saving Nineveh, God would destroy it.

And I wonder how many of you are like that—you say you've forgiven the person, but in your heart, you're secretly wishing, "Lord can you please punish them too?"

Secretly, you're like that, right?

True Nature of Jonah's Heart

This is the true nature of Jonah. He was a prophet. He was a follower of the Lord, and yet we're seeing how selfish Jonah was. He was watching what God was going to do.

But instead of destroying the city, what did God do? God did something completely unexpected.

Let's read in Verse 6:



JONAH 4:5-6 NLT ⁶ And the Lord God arranged for a leafy plant to grow there, and soon it spread its broad leaves over Jonah's head, shading him from the sun. This eased his discomfort, and Jonah was very grateful for the plant.

You know, we've seen Jonah experience a lot of emotions. He was bitter, he was angry, he was resentful, he was disobedient.

For the first time, ever in the story, we're seeing Jonah is grateful.

Why? Because for the first time, God was actually doing something for him. Throughout the story, God was doing something for somebody else. He was doing something for the Ninevites. He was doing something for the sailors. And then, for the first time, God was doing something for Jonah. And now, Jonah is happy.



Our True Picture

And you know what, this is a picture of you and me. We don't mind when God is blessing us. We're happy. You know, life is good when God is blessing you. You tell your friends all about it -- when God is blessing you. You write it on your journal. You tell your small group when God is blessing you.

Some of you even post it on social media—"Eating in my favorite restaurant. Hanging out with my best buds. Hash-tag: Blessed!"

#BLESSED!

You spread it all over. It's because you know you're proud when God blesses you.

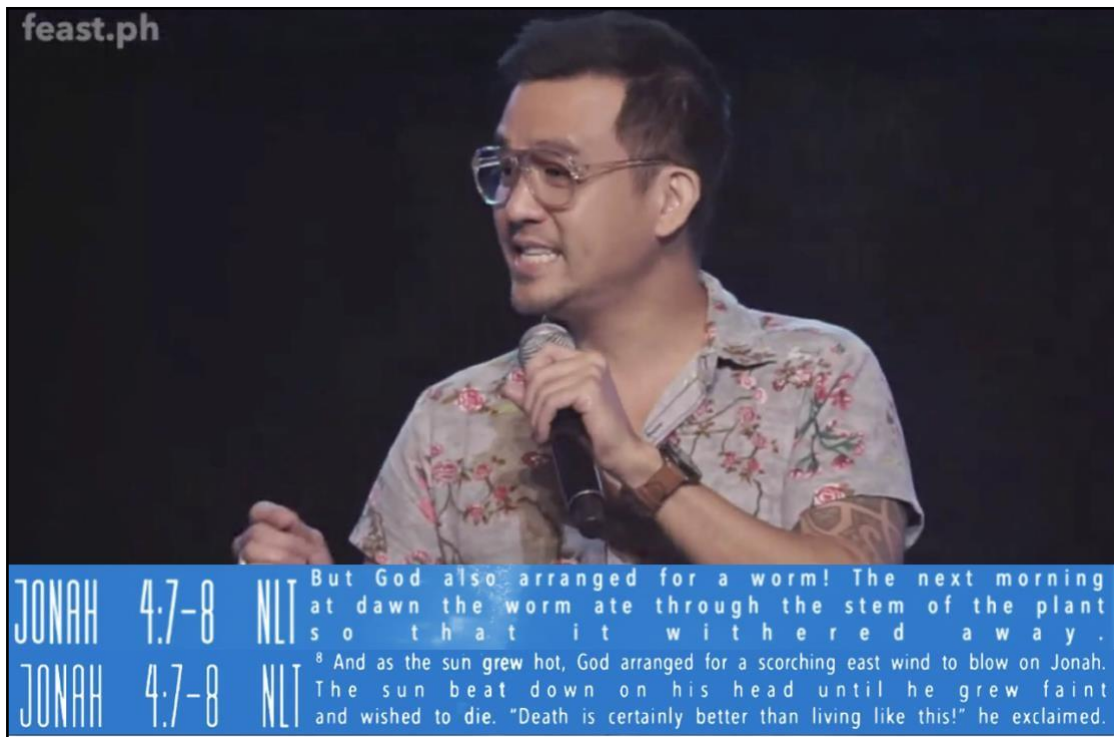
But the moment God starts blessing other people—especially with blessings you prayed for and God didn't give it to you. What happens? You start to resent it. You start to become bitter about it. You start to become angry.

That's what exactly what is happening with Jonah.

And you know what? There's a danger whenever you behave like that.

How To Lose the Power of a Blessing

Take a look at Verse 7-8



You see, all my life, I've come to learn this truth the hard way: That one of the easiest ways to lose the power of blessing is when you become ungrateful about that blessing.

Sometimes, yes, you're grateful about it. Just like Jonah—he was grateful for the plant. But in his heart, there was still a lot of selfishness. You lose the power of a blessing the moment you don't look at it the right way-- as a real blessing. And if you don't start sharing it with other people. You keep it to yourself-- then you lose it. The greatest way for that blessing to be taken away is if you take it for granted.

So, let's not be like Jonah. Because you've got a choice. When the blessing leaves you, here are two choices: You can be bitter that you lost it, or you can be grateful that you enjoyed it. Which do you choose: Bitterness? Gratefulness?

Because all blessings are temporary. Not all of the blessings are permanent. So, while you have that blessing, appreciate it.

Angry = Too Hot

So, here's what happens next. After God removes the plant, God does something to Jonah. The author says that the sun beat down on Jonah's head until he grew faint and he wished to die.

The ancient Hebrew word for the word *angry*—Get this: it actually means *hot—too hot*. That's why sometimes when you're angry, you feel like Hell.

You feel like you're perspiring, you're sweaty all over. Because the literal sense it's to be hot. And so, Jonah says this in Verse 7: *Death is certainly better than living like this*.

And then God says to Jonah:

JONAH 4:9 NLT Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry because the plant died?" "Yes," Jonah retorted, "even angry enough to die!"

Have you noticed it yet? Jonah keeps mentioning death, about wanting to die. And if there's anything that we're getting from this message, it is this: When you continue to be angry, or you stay angry with your enemies, you know what's happening to you?

**When you stay angry towards your enemies,
you are dying a slow death.**

You are being killed little, by little.



Anger Changes You

When you're angry, the first that gets killed is your *peace of mind*. You don't want to see that person because you are angry at that person, but not knowing that you are thinking about that person 24/7. That's the person in your head. Whenever you're going to bed, you think about that person, then you get mad.

And then, after your peace of mind is killed, what happens is that your *joy* is killed. You start losing all the happiness you used to have.

And then after your joy is killed, your *identity* is killed. You used to be this happy, peaceful, loving person. Now, you've turned into a bitter, resentful, unforgiving person.

Anger changes you. And I know this because I'd experienced it. You know, sometimes, whenever we're angry, our anger will sometimes be senseless. How do I know that?

Have you ever been in an argument with somebody? And the argument had turned for the worst. And you just wanted to win that argument. So, instead of going for *logic*, you just go for *longevity*.

You're like, "How long can I keep this argument-- even if it's already so stupid—until the other person snaps?"

You're just waiting for that other person to snap. That's it. It's just longevity. Not even just logical anymore. Because you think that *ang napikon, talo*—the one who loses his cool is the one who loses the argument.

But here's the truth:

Victory at the expense of love
is not real victory.

Victory at the expense of love and truth is not really victory. It's fake victory. You cannot win the right fight if you embellish the truth. If you lie about it. Or if you start hating other people. So, that's not real victory. And that's what we're seeing right now. People are so victorious but then they're backstabbing other people. They're coming up with bad things about those other people. It's not really victory if you're not loving the person. And so, that's what anger is doing to all of us.



My Story

You know, the story of Jonah is about God's mercy. Because we are all angry people—deep inside. And I know this: Just like Bro. Bo shared earlier, I have my own story...

In 2013—I remember this because it was the year I got married—October 24, 2013. Six months before I got married, I was scammed. Big time. It wasn't so much about what was taken from me. But it was the timing. I mean, I was getting married. And the last thing you want is, you know, your savings to be put on hold. Or for somebody to take your hard-earned money.

And so, it was a client of mine. You see, I operated a retail outlet—I used to sell grocery gadgets. It was an online store. And one of my clients, a regular loyal client, would often buy from me—and he would pay in cash—

One day, he comes up to me and says, “May I buy the newest iPhone model that just arrived?

And I am like, “Yeah, sure.”

He ordered four. And that's not unusual because he would order that much, and it would amount to a six-digit figure.

And he says to me, “I'm going to come late—at 7 o'clock. Is it okay if I issue you a post-dated check?”

And I'm like, “Yeah, that's fine.”

Because I get to deposit the check the next day. And so, he comes and then I see him driving this brand-new BMW X5. My goodness.

You would think, “This guy has money!”

He was using this phone brand—it's like the Rolex of watches for smartphones. It's called the Vertus phone—it's very expensive.

I'm like, “My goodness, this guy's check would definitely be good.”

And so, I gave him his order. Then he left, and then the next day, I deposited the check—and that was fine. But it takes three days to clear, right?



Scam!

So, the next day, he texts me again.

He says, “A couple of my colleagues also want to buy phones. May I go to your office?”

I’m like, “Sure.”

So, he comes again in the evening, and he grabs five or six more phones amounting to a six-digit figure. And I’m like, “That’s good.”

And we parted ways. That was Monday, then Tuesday, and Wednesday came. And one thing as a business person that you would not like to get early in the morning is a bank calling you, and then telling you, “Sir, tumalbog po yung tseke nyo. --Your check bounced.”

And one thing that I realized when I got that call was that I had no idea where this guy lives. I knew who his friends might be. He is actually a public figure. He works for one of the government officials and I knew that because he’s been a client for many years—five or six years.

So, the check bounced. In my heart, I was trying to stay calm. I was thinking, “No, no, no. I just got to call him and inform him. Maybe he wasn’t able to fund it.”

So, I texted him.

And he responded and he was like, “Sorry, Boss, nasa Bicol po ako. Deposit nyo na lang bukas. – Sorry, I am in Bicol. Just deposit the check tomorrow.”

Then, the next day, the second check that he issued again bounced. By this time, I was already panicking. So, I started calling him. Unreachable. I didn’t know what to do. I kept on trying to look in my contacts who would probably know him. I found one guy—he’s from our faith community. I asked for his help.



Entrapment...Or Peace?

I met my friend for dinner and I asked him, “Can you help me out, Bro.? Because this guy that we both know, he ran away with the goods, and he didn’t pay me—his checks bounced. And I don’t know how to look for him.”

So, he tried to help me out. He pointed me to various contact persons, and I went to them. But they couldn’t help me, either.

Because they were already saying, “You know, that guy also owes me money.”

So, apparently, this guy had been into gambling recently, and he had been owing people money left and right. You know, those two weeks were the worst for me. And remember, I was getting married.

But then a week later, the same guy who helped me out, he called me and he said, “Brother, the person we were talking about? He texted me—selling me iPhones. And he said, cheaper, below market price.”

He added, “If you like, let’s set up an entrapment. Let’s entrap him.”

And I was like, “What is entrapment? I’d never done it.”

He said, “I’ll invite him for coffee in Rockwell. And then you’ll come, and you bring police. Invite NBI. You get him beyond bars.”

I was like, “How can I do that?”



I was playing it in my head...I was really hating this guy by this time because he stole from me... I was getting married...

And so, I spoke to my spiritual mentor, Bro. Bo Sanchez. I didn’t know that he went through the same thing.

You know what Bro. Bo told me? He said, “Pray about it.”

And then he told me, “Imagine this: If you’re able to do what your friend is suggesting, to do that little entrapment where he meets up with that guy, and then you come from behind, and then you do the stuff—you get him behind bars...”

Then Bro. Bo asked me this question: “Will that give you peace?”



What Anger Does

Truth is, I just wanted to move on from this because I knew that he owed a lot of people-- and I wasn't going to be able to get back my products.

And here's my greatest fear: I was going to get married... I knew that he was involved in a syndicate, and I didn't want that syndicate, you know, affecting my marriage, my future wife—and my peace. I didn't want that.

So, I walked away from it with a bitter heart. I swallowed it like a bitter pill. And it was hard. That money was going to be used for our marriage. You know, the start of our life together...

And I wonder... Have you ever been scammed before?

It seems that there's a lot of you here. Let me just say this, my dear friends:

You know what it's like to be fooled with your hard-earned money. It's hard, right? And you start hating that person. I mean, it's just natural for us to start hating. But here's where our anger becomes so senseless: When we start hating not just that person but everything about that person.

All of a sudden, I started praying, "Lord, saktan mo siya. Lord, saktan mo yung kapatid niya. Lord, kunin mo yung negosyo niya. – Lord, hurt him. Hurt his sibling. Get his business."

I wonder if some of you ever thought like that. Because in your hatred, you feel like, "My gosh, Lord, I want them to feel the exact same pain that I felt."

That's how it feels like when you're angry.

Now, how does my story end?

Open-ended Ending

If you're looking for closure, a happy, good ending of the story, you're not going to find it here... It says in Verse 10:

JONAH 4:10-11 NLT Then the Lord said, "You feel sorry about the plant, though you did nothing to put it there. It came quickly and died quickly."

Here's how I know that Jonah's sense of morality has already been warped.

Why? Because he was more concerned about the plant than all the people in Nineveh:

JONAH 4:10-11 NLT ¹¹ But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, not to mention all the animals. Shouldn't I feel sorry for such a great city?"

That is the ending: No feel-good ending. No fairy-tale ending. That's it. It doesn't end, you know, on a dot. It ends with a question mark. Now, why?

Two Reasons

No.1: It's open ended because the ending of Jonah's story is the beginning of your story. You're the continuation of Jonah's story. And the question that author is asking you and me right now: Will you choose to be like Jonah? In his anger, in his selfishness, in his pride...he demanded justice – in his own terms.

Are you going to be like Jonah who will demand your sense of justice? Or will you be like Jesus who surrendered to God's boundless mercy. Which one will you be: Jonah or Jesus?

No. 2. The second reason the story is open-ended – and this is so simple... but I pray that will minister to you today in a powerful way:

The author ends it on the topic of mercy-- God says
"Shouldn't I feel sorry for such a great city?"

The story is open-ended because that's how God's mercy is. God's mercy is open-ended. It has no limit. You can keep coming back to God-- again and again-- and God will have more than enough supply of mercy for you. That's why the story ends with a question about God's mercy.



Here's How My Own Story Ends

I just had to file a notice for this guy at the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) And a year later, after that whole situation of walking away with a bitter heart, I got a call from the NBI.

They said, “Sir, the guy you accused of stealing your products, we caught him. And he’s here being detained in our office in Manila. Would you like to come in? And gusto nyo bang kasuhan? – Do you want to file a case against him?”

I went to the NBI, and on my way, I was thinking of all the things that I would say and do to this guy. This guy stole my hard-earned money. He caused me so many sleepless nights and I was thinking, “What am I going to do to this guy? Am I going to punch him? Would that be enough? Am I going to scissor-kick him? Is that more than enough? Am I going to Karate-chop him? Is that more than enough? What am I going to do? Am I going to lambast him?”

When I got to the NBI office, it took some time for me to see him because the officers first talked to me. They started telling me stuff about the guy – that he wasn’t caught because of the crime that he committed against me. You know what he was caught for? Making forged United States visas. And apparently, that wasn’t just it. Two: he was also called for carnapping. Because the car that he was driving that night was stolen.

So, this guy was on a vicious cycle of violating laws. But in that moment, when I found out all that he had done-- because of that gambling-- the hardness of my heart started melting away.





Forgiveness

I had hatred in my heart, I mean, to be honest, I really hated him. But that moment I found out about what he went through, and then here he comes... The moment that I was wishing for and hoping for—it comes. And he wasn't even looking at me.

He was wearing the orange shirt that they would make those ah bilibid—jail-- prisoners wear. And he was wearing simple slippers and shorts. I could not wait for him to speak because they sat him right in front of me.

And so, the first three words just came out of my mouth: “I forgive you.”

Then, I added, “I don't know what you've been through, but I know that it's more than what I'd been through. You've done some things, yes, I know. And it hurt me. It hurt a lot of other people. You've done some things and there is a punishment for those things, but right now, I want to be the first person to say, “I forgive you.”

And you know what I did? I prayed for him right there. He was crying. I prayed for him and I felt complete peace in my heart.

I am speaking this to somebody here right now. Because I don't know the kinds of anger that you feel against somebody in your life. Just like what Didoy preached earlier, I ask:

How we can be so angry towards people who voted for different candidates we did not support? Or how we can be so angry at family members who hurt us-- who back-stabbed us, who betrayed us? How can we be so angry with a partner because he stole some money from us?

Mercy

I want you to think about this. The New International Version (NIV) version of the story is so powerful. In this version, God speaks of “more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left.” (Jonah 4:11).

Note: Bible scholars interpret the expression to mean young children who can’t tell which is their right hand and which is their left hand, or adults who have no clear idea what is right and what is wrong.

So, here’s my thinking: There are many people we don’t like. What if we see them from the posture that maybe, they just don’t know who God is? They don’t know right from wrong. Because of their upbringing—maybe they’ve been corrupted by their parents, or because of the system right now, maybe they’ve been corrupted where they work.

What if we open our eyes to see the mercy of God-- not just working in our life but also in their life? Because I truly believe this: That God is not about destruction. God is about transformation. He wants to change you. He wants to change you and me.

And I know how you see people. Whenever you look at people, you’re like “I’m good. I don’t steal. I don’t lie. I don’t cheat. *They* are evil.”

So, you point your finger at people who are evil. That person is bad. That person is disgusting.

But you know, what I realized, we’re all sinners, my friend. We-- all of us here-- we’re all sinners. We need the mercy of God. None of us here are perfect. We have all fallen short of the grace of God. And when you think about that, it somehow sets you free.

Because remember the Prodigal Son story? That parable? The sinful son came back. And the father threw a feast—killed the fattened calf. Meanwhile, the older brother, the one who had been a good son, an obedient son, he was with the father, but he said, “Why are we doing this, Dad? My brother ran away and yet you are killing the good calf for him?”



Love

We may not be the sinful one, but we may be the bitter one, the angry one. When you realize this, when you think about it: two sons—one who needed mercy because he sinned against his father; but another one who also needed mercy because he was filled with bitterness. We are all in the same boat, my friends. We are all prodigal children. We all need the love of God.

How do you do it? Go to the Cross. On your own, you're not going to be able to do it. On your own, you're going to complain. You're going to get tired of loving people. You will be impatient. But when you go to the Cross, God will supply you. God will equip you. God will arm you to forgive people. God will arm you with the mercy you deserve. That you will use to love those who are broken right now. So, go to the Cross. Because the Cross is the source of all mercy, the source of all love, and it's a source of grace. Are you ready to go to the Cross right now?

You are a prodigal child—whether you believe it or not. You're prodigal like me. We're all prodigal now and so we're going to declare the goodness of God over our life.

I am praying at this moment that God is going to make a shift in your life. That He is going to melt the anger, and the hatred, and the indifference and the complacency that have been rooted in your heart. And I want God to reveal to you right now, to open your eyes, how much you need His mercy and His grace.

Say this: *Jesus, I need You. I need You. I need You. I need Your mercy. I need Your grace. Thank You for loving me, for forgiving me, for changing me. Thank You for Your love. You are good. Thank You, Jesus.*





Thank You!

The Feast Family, now organized as the **Feast Mercy Ministries**, is a spin-off ministry of the Light of Jesus Family founded by Bro. Bo Sanchez, earlier named as Kerygma Family, a unique online, non-physical, borderless, international community of friends who support each other's personal growth.

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Go and make disciples of all men

— Matthew 28:19