

*“Simon Ponsonby’s latest masterful volume on the justice of God combines a profound knowledge of Scripture, brilliant theology, and deep insight into the human condition. Simon issues a challenge to the church: to be praying for, preaching, petitioning for, promoting and practising God’s justice. However, wonderfully, the justice of God that Simon unfolds before us is far from the justice of a cold-hearted judge. Instead he paints a picture of a God who, in Jesus, demonstrates compassion, grace, longing, truthfulness, and most importantly, tenderness, to a broken-hearted and hurting world. God’s justice is a judgment over the world that restores and heals.*

*“In this impassioned call to the church to reflect this deep and wonderful truth about God’s character, the readers will find inspiration, motivation, and strength to reach out to the marginalized, the oppressed, and the poor. Churches will be moved both to pray and to act as, in these pages, they encounter a God whose gracious heart unceasingly reaches out to a broken world.”*

— Dr Lucy Peppiatt, Dean of Studies, Westminster Theological College

*“A great book. Simon Ponsonby is challenging and inspiring. Many people have addressed this subject, few have done it with such biblical eloquence and elegance.”*

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*“Have you ever wondered why Christians should be concerned with the poor, the violently oppressed and the ‘unworthy’? Simon Ponsonby has written a challenging book which demonstrates the biblical call from God for Christians to serve in this mission, and exhorts us to follow the example of Christ and be ambassadors of justice and mercy in the world.”*

— Terry Tennens, Executive Director, International Justice Mission UK

*“Ponsonby has done it again! Mercy is not a fashion. It is not vague. It is not for the fainthearted. It relies on the sort of courage and perseverance only community and truth creates. You miss this book at your peril. Read it. Do it.”*

— Patrick McDonald, Executive Director, Viva

*“As always with Simon’s teaching, this book combines biblical exposition, practical application, and amusing and reflective anecdotes. It helpfully unpacks God’s passion for justice, a passion shared by Tearfund in our relief and development work with the world’s poorest people. Simon is honest about his own struggles with feelings of guilt and condemnation in the face of the scale of global poverty and injustice, but he inspires his readers to respond with compassion, practical action, and service. I highly recommend it.”*

— Joanna Watson, Tearfund’s Advocacy Advisor

*“These short yet significant meditations refreshed my passion and commitment to see God’s loving heart shared through the actions and reactions I take with those around me. If you want to be inspired, challenged and motivated to live out the love of God as a follower of Jesus, then this is the book for you too.”*

— Joseph Steinberg, CMS Director

*“Simon’s compelling exploration of justice and mercy is rich fare indeed. It is a feast of truth, served up in tenderness; it challenges and chastens, it prods and provokes. You will be nourished and satisfied by it, but it will recall forgotten passions and purpose – read it prepared to live differently.”*

— Anita Cleverly, Ask Prayer Network, Senior Leadership Team,  
St Aldates Oxford

*“In Simon Ponsonby the church has found an eloquent, theological and biblical writer, persuasive in his conviction that a life seeking holiness and more of the Spirit will also always be a life passionately concerned with justice and mercy.”*

— Dr Stephen Backhouse, Tutor in Social and Political Theology,  
St Mellitus College

# Loving Mercy

How to serve a tender-hearted Saviour

Simon Ponsonby

MONARCH  
BOOKS

Oxford, UK & Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA

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*For Tiffany*  
*remplie de tendresse*

**Also by Simon Ponsonby:**

*More*

*God Inside Out*

*The Pursuit of the Holy*

*The Lamb Wins*

*Now to Him*

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# Foreword

One day a homeless lady approached a vicar who was visibly flustered and stressed. She needed help, but he was simply too busy, so he promised to pray for her and then carried on his way. That lady wrote the following poem and gave it to a local Shelter officer:

*I was hungry,  
And you formed a humanities group to discuss my hunger.  
I was imprisoned,  
And you crept off quietly to your chapel and prayed for  
my release.  
I was naked,  
And in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.  
I was sick,  
And you knelt and thanked God for your health.  
I was homeless,  
And you preached a sermon on the spiritual shelter of the  
love of God.  
I was lonely,  
And you left me alone to pray for me.  
You seem so holy, so close to God  
But I am still very hungry – and lonely – and cold.*

I find the above story very challenging, and even guilt-inducing. I empathize fully with the beleaguered vicar, having been in similar situations myself on countless occasions, albeit in my very different context of working for a decade in the world's fourth poorest nation, Burundi. And I think we all feel helpless and

overwhelmed sometimes at the countless needs that bombard us either directly or on the news.

In any case, what you have before you is a fantastic resource that steers clear of the guilt trips while retaining a challenging thrust to embrace a costly engagement with God's heart for his world.

In *Loving Mercy* we are presented with rigorous biblical backing and analytical thinking coupled with accessible anecdotes and quotes that draw us closer to our "tender-hearted Saviour". Simon is not an ivory tower theologian writing in a theoretical vacuum; rather he is a deeply rooted passionate practitioner who, as both theologian and pastor, wants to share what he has gleaned from the depths for the benefit of the body of Christ.

Edmund Burke once declared: "All that it takes for evil to prosper is for righteous people to do nothing." As followers of Christ, we have both the enormous privilege and the awesome responsibility to *do* something, to be both hearers and doers, which is what Simon is longing for us to embrace through his latest book. (As we are reminded in Luke 12:48 "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required.") The church in some quarters (by no means everywhere) is a slumbering giant with extraordinary potential to change the world, if we work together in unity and purpose to enact our God-given mandate as ministers of mercy.

So you want something challenging, biblically rooted, relevant, and practical? This book could, by God's grace, provide just the shaking and stirring you need to ramp things up in your own life and community. And ultimately, you will be left asking the painfully searching question: will I love the truth enough to live it?

Simon Guillebaud, Founder of Great Lakes Outreach

# Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?

My first book *More* was about how we can be filled with the Holy Spirit. Later I wrote a less popular book (in terms of sales figures) called *The Pursuit of the Holy* that was about how I could be more Christ-like. This current book on justice and mercy flows out of the years of study and reflection and pursuit of how to be filled with the Spirit and how to be more like Jesus.

What does the Spirit-filled life look like? Living justly and mercifully. What does the sanctified life look like? Living justly and mercifully. The Spirit-filled and sanctified life look like a life lived, not inwardly but outwardly, not wanting more for me but wanting more for others, not desiring mere personal transformation but social transformation. The Spirit-filled, Christ-like church will have her affections stirred for God and all that stirs God's affections: the kingdom on earth as it is in heaven, a rule of righteousness, a kind kingdom. Jesus once said of Mary who anointed him with nard before his death, "She has done what she could" (Mark 14:8). That's all he asks of us – to do what we can – for him and for the world he so loves.

A good friend of mine was invited to speak at a conference. He very quickly felt awkward as every message was on prosperity doctrine and how God wanted all believers to be rich, explaining the steps of faith and declaration that would bring in the big bucks. My pal, known for his ministry to the poor in India, was surprised to be in such company, but assumed God had orchestrated it and that the hosts knew him and the burden of his message. So when it came time for him to speak,

he duly delivered a talk on his favourite theme, from James 2, namely God's heart for the poor and the church's need to have God's heart. He didn't find delivering the sermon easy, sensing resistance in the room to his theme. Justice and mercy were not the dish of the day.

When he finished and sat down to stunned silence, it seemed as if tumbleweed was rolling in front of him. The host, a Canadian with a Texan accent, stood and spoke. He began by saying he had found the sermon difficult and had not understood what it was about. My friend thought, "Well, at least that's honest and humble." But what the host went on to say made my friend sit up. He continued: "I struggled with what our brother was saying today until God gave me revelation." My friend was all ears, thinking that perhaps God had brought him here just for this, bringing a revelation of his heart to these men.

It was not to be. The compère, standing with microphone to mouth, legs set apart in dominant posture, arm rotating in wide circles like a windmill, and index finger pointing at the people on each completed iteration, slowly screamed out these words at fever pitch:

*You –*

*can –*

*all –*

*be –*

*millionaires!*

Instantly the crowd leapt from their seats, began shouting and cheering and running to the front, throwing their credit cards and

their money on the stage – believing they were sowing, and so naturally they would reap! In an instant the atmosphere changed from soporific indifference to my friend’s message on mercy, to the pulsing electricity of a golden-calf party. My friend bowed his head, fought back the tears, rose from his seat and walked out. Giddy with the thought that soon they might all be millionaires, no one noticed him leave. But I am quite sure that God looked at my friend and smiled, even while those with dollar signs in their hearts were making him wince.

Jesus defined his ministry by saying the Spirit was upon him to preach good news to the poor, to bind up the broken hearted, give sight to the blind and release for the captives, and proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour. In this book I want to think about exactly who are the poor, the broken, the blind and the captives, and to consider how Christ through us is bringing them favour. Can we find God’s heart for the lost, the last, and the least?

The well-known Canadian author and teacher Guy Chevreau tells how he stopped at a traffic light in Toronto to talk to a homeless guy. The man had a grubby cardboard sign, and on it was written: “Homeless and Hungry, Broke and Broken – please help. God Bless.” Guy couldn’t get this man’s sign out of his head – or his heart. You see, life *with* the Holy Spirit is to care for those in that hurting place who live life *without* the Holy Spirit: the homeless and hungry, the broke and broken. And we the church are called, not to prosperity but to mercy; to grace the poor; not to get full but to feed the hungry; not to buy a holiday home but to see the homeless homed; not to go to health spas to get our toenails tidied but to heal the broken.

The Hollywood blockbuster *Slumdog Millionaire* follows the journey of an Indian boy who survives in the slums of Mumbai and eventually escapes the depravity and poverty by winning a fortune as a contestant on a TV quiz show. It’s a story of hope in despair. But very few really get lucky and get out. Most don’t

stand a chance. We may all have watched the movie – but were we moved by it? And how were we moved? To do what? What does the incarnation tell us? What does the Spirit provoke in us?

Some who are reading this book have the creative, productive business skills to make a million. Do it. Missions work costs millions. But live by Methodist founder John Wesley's motto: "Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can." Others reading this are called to be downwardly mobile, not lovers of money but lovers of the needy, seeking out where slumdogs sleep, and sharing the gospel, sharing our daily bread, sharing ourselves, sharing God.

## Chapter 1

# Second Conversion

*I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.*<sup>1</sup>

**Martin Luther King**

The prejudice seen by Martin Luther King as he campaigned for justice with the US Civil Rights movement is sadly far from unique, yet it poses one of the greatest obstacles to living out justice and mercy. We hear of institutional prejudice like that encountered by King, and of individual moments of prejudice, such as that experienced by Mahatma Gandhi when he was turned away by an usher from a church in London as a student – despite having been drawn to the lack of prejudice in the Jesus he had read about in the Gospels. Gandhi, as history records, returned to India, and despite his best efforts for peace, oversaw the partitioning into India and Pakistan amid a tidal wave of bloodshed. How different might that continent look, how different might history be, had that dear man been shown the way to Jesus rather than shown the door.

In the face of deep racial prejudice, Nelson Mandela powerfully observed in *Long Walk to Freedom* that “No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if

1 <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkhaveadream.htm>

they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.”

## Proud and prejudiced

The apostle Peter had learned to hate the non-Jew. Even when already committed to following Christ and preaching the gospel, Peter had not yet let Jesus teach him to love the Gentiles. Yet where did he learn to hate?

Perhaps the oppressive brutal Roman occupation of his nation with its countless injustices against his own people had done this, following on as it did from a history of invasions and oppression under the Persians and the Greeks. Perhaps as a young boy he witnessed the 2,000 Jews crucified in Galilee, lining her streets with the blood and the death of his kith and kin.<sup>2</sup> Fear, even stretching to paranoia, regarding the Gentiles was by no means limited to Peter. There was no love lost between Israel and the other people groups, no trust – what nation had ever done right by them?! That’s why Jesus was pressed hard when he said “love thy neighbour” (Mark 12:31 κτν) as to exactly who “my neighbour” was. Hearing it was a half-breed, a half-Jewish and half-Gentile Samaritan, would have been a traumatic thought to a Jew.

Perhaps Peter’s prejudice also stemmed from the exclusive nature of his Judaism, inculcated since he was a toddler. He had grown up knowing that he was part of the people God had chosen from Abraham for his own possession, whose unique role was to be the priests of God to the world. They were “a peculiar people” whose rules and regulations enforced a strict distinction between them and all others. They were to be separate. This distinction was enforced on a daily – even momentary – basis through strict

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<sup>2</sup> Josephus records in *Jewish Antiquities* 7:295 that in 4 BC, 2,000 Jews were crucified in Galilee on the orders of Varus, Roman Legate of Syria, after a minor revolt.



rules of purity and separation. Merely entering the home of a Gentile was enough to make a Jew unclean (Acts 10:28), and one of the worst sins was marriage between Jew and Gentile.

Peter had a hard heart to Gentiles – especially Roman soldiers, their uniform ever the symbol of those who slew his Master. Many of us have learned to hate. Justice and mercy begin when we see people as we see ourselves – when they become us. Justice and mercy begin when the scales that blind our eyes to others fall away, when bigotry and prejudice are exorcized by the Spirit of God who so loved the world that he gave to us. It is a painful exchange for many of us – to embrace those we would much more readily exclude. But until the affections of Christ are our affections, God’s work is incomplete in us. We are like the blind man whom Jesus enables to see, but who initially can see only men as trees walking (Mark 8:22–25). Many of us have yet to see our fellow men walking: we cannot see the people for the trees.

## A revelation and a revolution

What does it take to overcome such entrenched prejudice and to experience the “second conversion” that Peter needed in order fully to take up his place in God’s plans for the world?

We see in Acts 10 that God brought to Peter three visions, three voices and three visitors to shake him out of his prejudice.<sup>3</sup> The use of three is significant here – in Jewish idiom, to say something three times was a way of expressing it definitively, permanently, and unequivocally. When God revealed himself to Isaiah and to John in the Apocalypse, the angels cried “Holy, holy, holy” (Isaiah 6:3; Revelation 4:8). The threefold repeat signifies perfection. So a threefold vision, voice, and visitors is as clear-cut as it gets: God is speaking.

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3 This conversion is also discussed by my close colleague Charlie Cleverly in his recent book *Epiphanies of the Ordinary*, Hodder, 2012.

God arrests Peter three times with a shocking vision (Acts 10:11–16) of many kinds of animals on a sheet with four corners. The four corners represent the four corners of the world (Revelation 7:1), and the animals were both those set apart as clean and those considered unclean under Jewish law and so excluded from Peter's diet. To Peter's astonishment, God accompanies this vision each time with the command "Kill and eat". Peter's response to the command is the same each time – he refuses to eat, saying "I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean." Yet God responds three times with the same answer: "What God has made clean, do not call common."

The attitude and instruction of Jesus on the law of Moses has occupied theologians for two millennia. On the one hand he declared that not a jot or tittle would disappear from it, and on the other hand he declared he had come to fulfil it. Jesus universalized and intensified the moral law of the Old Testament, as "murder" was made to include anger and "adultery" now included lust. The law which gave permission for divorce was upgraded and the grounds for divorce reduced. Jesus' use of the phrase, "You have heard that it was said... But I say to you..." (Matthew 5:21) not only intensified the demands of the law but applied it to all disciples, not just the Jews.

And yet it is also clear that Christ reapplied the ceremonial law, especially where it related to cleanliness, diet, and special religious days. It was this easing of religious observation that aroused the anger of the Pharisees. He shocked them by personally associating with religiously unclean people – including lepers, women, tax collectors, and prostitutes – and this made Jesus ritually unclean in their eyes. He avoided a direct obedience to the letter of the law by not stoning a woman caught in adultery. And he "worked" on the Sabbath in ways that the Scribes and Pharisees deemed to be law-breaking.

## *Second Conversion*

Peter had learned much from his Master, but the visions, voice and later the visitors would inaugurate a paradigm shift. Peter was already on a journey of transformation. He was staying (presumably out of necessity) at the house of a tanner. Now the tanner's was a profession, which, because of its association with dead animals, was regarded as ritually unclean. By staying at this house Peter was already unclean by association. Incrementally God was stretching his worldview and theology, and rewriting his mission. However, Peter would need to let go of his commitment to ceremonial law if he was to fulfil the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. You cannot love your neighbour as yourself if your ceremonial laws of cleanliness and diet keep you at a distance. Peter had received the Great Commission to "go and make disciples of all nations", and at Pentecost he had received the power to be a witness to Jesus in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the ends of the earth. But for that to be fulfilled, to go to the "Gentile" uttermost ends, there needed to be a great transformation of Peter's heart. He needed a new affection. We see in Acts 8 that Peter was already willing to evangelize at home in Judea – indeed even in Samaria, where Jews and Gentiles had intermarried – but up to this point, his prejudices had not allowed him to witness "to the ends of the earth". Peter's prejudice made it impossible for him to obey the Great Commission, and it would take an extraordinary revelation to get him to go.

We probably all carry prejudices, and many of us are not even aware of them. Perhaps deep down we may think we are superior; such a belief may be unarticulated but strongly held. That other people group over there, "them", we truly regard as inferior, be that through:

*Loving Mercy*

race	education
creed	sexuality
colour	shape or size
age	hair length or colour
class	fashion.
gender	

We categorize and condemn them as less than us because they are not like us.

There are many in the church today giddy for a revelation of God. They have the plain commands in Scripture and the Spirit's leading within, but they want extraordinary visions, voices, visitations. Maybe God will grant them their wish – and take them to the people they previously despised! Peter's extraordinary revelation in Acts 10 came about because his prejudice had caused a reluctance in him to obey the Great Commission and go to the Gentiles. Oswald Chambers rightly noted, "The best measure of a spiritual life is not its ecstasies but its obedience."

Who are you better than, in your own mind? We need to ask God to search our souls and expose the subtle but deeply held resentments, superior spirits, judgmentalism, and prejudices. We are prejudiced when we single out any particular group and categorize them as "all the same". This applies to any people group we look at and look down on generically! Homeless or homeowners? So-called Whites or non-whites? Poor or prosperous? The old or the young? Males or females? Working class or upper class? BMW or Volvo drivers? Blondes or peroxide blondes? Fat people or skinny people? People who live in suburbia or in caravans or in mansions. Poles or the Welsh or the English... prejudice knows no boundaries and infects us all.

A Welsh friend told me that she grew up in a culture that

taught that every time she crossed the Severn Bridge from Wales into England she should spit, in a kind of ancient curse on the English who for centuries had oppressed their neighbour. I grew up with an inchoate hatred for Germans, no doubt fuelled by two world wars in living memory and an avid interest in twentieth-century military history. Say “German” and I thought “Nazi”. Use a German accent and all I could imagine was orders barked at prisoners in concentration camps. Not until I became a Christian leader did God begin to put his finger on this and expose it as prejudice, racism, hatred, and sin. I found a friend, a dear German lady who met regularly with me and listened, and prayed, and shared about her family’s experience of the war and their response to Hitler. This dear woman by proxy accepted my repentance for hating her people. She helped me to walk in the opposite spirit. I bought German cars, sought out Germans as friends, and even hoisted a German flag in my study so that whenever I looked at it I could pray and bless Germans. And slowly, over time, God so changed my heart that now I even get excited when I hear a German accent and greet a German person.

The apostle Paul wrote: “God shows no partiality” (Romans 2:11) and “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28). In Christ our barriers come down, our barricades are dismantled. In this way we are called to reflect the openness of Jesus, imitating his engagement with all parts of his society – from young to old, rich to poor, “good” to scandalous. He was a man for all peoples.

By contrast there is a strongly promoted missionary model known as the “homogenous principle” which describes effective mission as when you target your own people group and give your church a single monoculture! Middle-class white church, working-class church, youth church, Chinese congregation, Nigerian church... yes, it’s all very pragmatic and effective,

because it appeals to latent prejudices and people prefer to be with “their own type”. But as pragmatic mission underpinned by prejudice it’s fundamentally unbiblical and unchristian.

I recognize that in many churches there may be several different congregations and no one belongs to them all. In my own church we have a “family-orientated” congregation, a “twenties–forties” congregation and a “teens and twenties” student congregation. Each has its own flavour and style. However, it is important that each recognize they are part of a larger, wider, varying family, and that – through shared notices, shared leadership team, shared publicity, shared mission teams, integrated pastorates and joint events – we work hard to create a sense of belonging.

## **Prejudice is the great barrier to global mission**

It is impossible to witness effectively to someone you are dismissive of, or who you think is inferior to you in some way. Such prejudice is a barrier to mission because it does not allow the love of God to be shown through us, and nor does it allow God’s Spirit to use us.

I recall hearing an unforgettable story told by that saintly old American Pentecostal Bible teacher, Judson Cornwall. In the 1960s he received an invitation to speak at a renewal conference in Germany. Having lived through the war, and having seen friends and family suffer as a consequence, Cornwall had a deep-seated grudge against the Germans. Not that he was aware of it; but when he read the invitation he scrunched it up and threw it in the bin without even replying.

Remarkably, his wife emptied the bin, found the invitation, pressed it out and put it back on his desk! It haunted him for days

as he shuffled it around. Finally, the Spirit won over his reluctant flesh, and he reluctantly agreed to go. Arriving in Germany, he was not relieved in his dis-ease as the conference centre turned out to be the former headquarters of the SS, Hitler's élite guard, which aroused all sorts of images and old hatreds in him! He spent the two days before the conference praying and fasting and preparing – and avoiding Germans.

On the first night of the conference he went down to speak, and instantly took umbrage at his translator, a somewhat stereotypical Aryan *Überfrau* – giant, buxom, blonde hair in bun. He disliked her, and he disliked even more hearing his voice translated into German. He spat out his sermon, so it was no surprise that it was badly delivered, badly received, and died a death. He returned to his room and decided to go back to America the very next day. Full of humiliation and emotion, he wept himself to sleep.

In the night he awoke to demons screaming in his mind: *"You don't belong here! You have no authority here! Go home!"* Experienced in spiritual warfare and deliverance, Cornwall recognized this attack, figured it was something to do with the demonic history of the SS in the building, and immediately rebuked the demons in Jesus' name before going back to sleep. Three times the demonic voices woke him; three times he rebuked them and they left. After the third time, he got up and asked God what was happening and why his prayers weren't sufficient and the demons kept returning. The Lord spoke immediately: *"The demons are tormenting you because you really do not have any authority here. You have no authority because you do not love these people. Your authority to minister is related to your love for those you minister to. Now, you can go on hating these people, pack up and go home tomorrow; or you can let me love them through you."*

Cornwall acknowledged his deep racism and prejudice. Too

embarrassed to go home, he confessed his sin and asked God to love through him the Germans he loathed. He knew he needed a miracle of grace. Immediately he was overwhelmed by the Spirit of God and filled with Christ's love for the Germans. Having spent two days avoiding Germans and refusing to eat with them, he could not wait for breakfast. He rushed downstairs to the queue for breakfast and greeted and hugged everyone in the food line. When he got to his translator from the night before, he gave her a big kiss and embraced her. Immediately she pulled back and barked: "You hate us!"

"No, no," he replied, "that was yesterday – today I love you."

Judson Cornwall preached that morning and the power of God was upon his words. At the end of the sermon, there was a huge line of people wanting to speak personally to him, something that he usually avoided; but he sensed God wanted him to be attentive to the people individually. One by one, people came and thanked him for helping them to forgive the Americans – whether because they had lost loved ones in combat against them or in the bombing raids. Cornwall saw that pain and resentment and prejudice cuts both ways... but that obedience to the Spirit of Christ heals historic hurts and unites us in the love of God.

## **Burying prejudice**

Peter's vision took place at Simon the Tanner's house in Joppa, now Jaffa, the Mediterranean seaside port halfway along Israel's coast. Joppa is only mentioned a couple of times in the Bible, most infamously as the port from where Jonah set sail, fleeing from God, refusing to take the gospel to Nineveh. It is at Joppa that we see Jonah's prejudice against the Ninevites which leads to his disobedience, with all its unpleasant consequences of



storms and stomachs.

Joppa thus represents to us a place of decision: whether or not we will obey God's call to overcome social and racial prejudices and take the gospel to former enemies. Jonah at Joppa disobeys God. But Peter at Joppa finally accepts a command to bury his prejudice concerning Gentiles, and he ministers to the Roman Cornelius. At Joppa Jonah broke ranks with God – prejudice got the better of him. At Joppa Peter broke through – God got the better of his prejudice! A knock at the door brings the three visitors from Cornelius, against Jewish custom but after Jesus' heart, and Peter welcomes the Gentile strangers into his room. He accompanies them to Cornelius's home where he shares the gospel of Christ with them. The Spirit falls, the whole family is saved, and so begins the great missionary expansion to the Gentile world.

Who is knocking at your door?