

“Stop your finger pointing.” Sadly, I see it in my family all the time. Something happens when my kids are playing and I have both kids pointing their fingers at each other, **blaming** each other for what has happened. My wife and I get into an argument, and both of us are pointing our fingers—at least in our heads—thinking that the other one is **wrong**. It has been this way in humanity from the very beginning. After Adam and Eve wandered away from the Creator, the Creator came to them looking to make things right. When the Creator asked Adam what had gone wrong, Adam blamed and pointed his finger at his wife Eve. Adam even went so far as to blame and point his finger at the Creator saying, **“It was this woman that you put here with me.”** When the Creator then asked Eve what had gone wrong, Eve blamed and pointed her finger at the serpent. And in the process Eve pointed her finger at the Creator, for the Creator had made the serpent. Adam and Eve **both** pointed their fingers at each other and even at the Creator. They shifted the blame away from themselves, refusing to take any personal responsibility.

But finger pointing gets us nowhere helpful. It is **easy** to see the fault in others and **push** the blame onto them. Even the smallest children can do it very well. But our finger pointing only adds to the pain, chaos, and storms all around us. When the prophet Jonah was running away from the Creator, not wanting to preach repentance to his **enemies**, to the hated Assyrian Empire, he found himself caught in a storm at sea. Jonah tried to hide from it for a while, he tried to point his fingers elsewhere and not take responsibility. But eventually the prophet Jonah manned up and took the blame. Jonah **stopped** pointing fingers. He told the sailors on the boat that he was to blame, it was **him**, not them, who was at fault. It was **him**, not Assyria. It was **him**, not the Creator. When Jonah took the blame and stopped pointing fingers, the sailors threw him overboard and he stopped running from the Creator. Instantly the storm **stopped**. Jonah sank into the abyss, down into the depths of the sea. There he was swallowed by a giant fish. Functionally **dead** for three days, he was then **reborn** as he was spit back onto the earth. The storm, the chaos, the madness only came to an end when Jonah **stopped** pointing fingers and took the blame himself.

We often wonder why the Creator seems to ignore us in life. We ask, **“Why have we humbled ourselves and you haven’t noticed?”** We know the Creator asks us for humility, so we **try** to live humbly. Yet, nothing changes for us and we wonder why. The reason is because our humility is a lie, it is fake, it is false. The Creator says, **“In your so-called humility you do whatever you please and exploit all those around you. Your humility ends in arguments, fighting, and in hurting each other.”** We try to play the part of humbling ourselves, but all the fighting and violence that erupts among us and in our lives reveals the truth about us. We are not **actually** humble, we only **pretend** to be humble. As Isaiah says, **“The way of peace they do not know, there is no justice in their ways.”** Our claims of humility are shown to be false because we are unable to live at **peace** with each other. The fighting among us proves that we are **liars**, that we are not actually humble. The way we compete with each other and tear each other down, preying upon the weak shows that we are hypocrites. As the prophet says, **“Truth is nowhere to be found and whoever rejects evil is preyed upon by others.”**

Therefore, the Creator calls us out for our **deceitful** and **fake** humility, saying, **“You cannot do this and expect your voice to be heard.”** It is not that the Creator **cannot** hear us or that he doesn’t **want** to hear us. We are not heard because we have separated ourselves from the Creator with our **choices**, with our way of life. As Isaiah says, **“Surely the Lord’s ear is not too dull to hear. But your selfishness has separated you from your Creator so that he will not hear. Your hands are stained with blood. Your lips have spoken lies and your tongue has wounded others.”** We have severed ourselves from any meaningful relationship with the Creator because of all our infighting. We are utterly lost and blind in our hypocrisy. As Isaiah says, **“We look for light, but all is darkness. We grope along the wall like blind men.”**

Thankfully, the Creator does not leave us alone in our blindness. We cannot fix all the injustices of this world—only the Creator can do that. But we can repent and fix our own personal lives, we can mend our relationship with the Creator, we can hear his voice again. The prophet declares, **“The Redeemer will come to those who repent of their selfishness.”** The Creator tells us where this must all start, **“Stop your finger pointing and hurtful words.”** We point fingers because we are protecting and defending ourselves and our egos. We need to let go of that. The Creator urges us, **“Stop going your own way, stop doing as you please, stop speaking empty words.”** Instead he urges us to lay down our lives for others, **“Spend yourselves on behalf of the needy.”** He comes to us through his Word and tells us what true humility looks like, **“This is the kind of humility I have chosen. Loose the chains of injustice and set the oppressed free. Share your food with the hungry and provide shelter for the homeless. Clothe the naked and do not turn away from your fellow creatures.”**

The Creator promises that if we actually humble ourselves, stop pointing fingers, and take care of each other, **“then your healing will come. Then you will call and the Lord will answer.”** If we listen to the Creator and let him guide us into truly humble lives, no longer pointing fingers at each other, but instead laying down our lives in love for each other, then the prophet promises, **“The Lord will guide you always and will take care of all your needs. Then you will find joy in the Lord.”**

“Stop your finger pointing.” We think the world is broken and is full of problems because of **everyone else**, because of our **enemies**, because of those **other people**. But the problem is not everyone else, it is not our enemies, it is not those other people. The problem is **me**. The problem is my **“finger pointing.”** The problem is **my** judging, **my** hurtful words, **my** blaming, **my** lack of love and compassion. The fighting and arguing in my life is my fault. The broken relationships in my life are my fault. It is **me** that is to blame. I need to stop worrying about who is **“right”** and who is **“wrong.”** I need to stop all my **defensiveness**, all my **competing**, all my **blaming**, all my **“finger pointing.”** I need to stop being like Adam and Eve, pointing fingers at everyone but myself.

Instead, I need to be like the prophet Jonah. It is **my** fault, I am to blame, I should be the one thrown overboard. In place of all my blaming, the Lord has given me a task. I need to, **“Loose the chains of injustice and set the oppressed free.”** I need to **“share my food with the hungry and provide shelter for the homeless.”** I need to **“clothe the naked and not turn away from my fellow creatures.”** It is only when I stop my **“finger pointing”** and instead help and love those around me that I will begin to learn real humility. And it is then that my voice will be **heard** again by the Creator. It is then that I will find **peace**, it is then that I will find **joy**.

Leo Tolstoy said, **“Everyone thinks of changing the world, but no one thinks of changing himself.”** The problem with the world isn’t out there. The problem with the world is in **here**, in me. It is time for me to stop thinking about changing the world. It is time for me to **“stop pointing fingers”** and work on changing myself. **Amen.**