

Honduras Devotions

Jeremiah 1 – The Call of Jeremiah

DAY ONE

In our Bibles, Jeremiah Chapter One is titled "The Call of Jeremiah." It goes into great detail about how God came to Jeremiah and appointed him as a prophet (see verse 5).

How does this look in our own personal calling, because we are all called by God in one way or another. It probably looks different for each one of us. God may be calling you to public ministry like Jeremiah. Or maybe He's calling you to speak to your friend or co-worker, or to help your neighbor in some way. And maybe you've recently felt a tugging in your heart, and you're wondering, "Is this from God?"

Hopefully, taking a look at Jeremiah's call is going to be great in helping us process through that. We need to know how to navigate what a calling looks like, because God is going to call every single one of us. Ephesians 2:10 says that we were "*Created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*"

So just as Jeremiah 1:5 says that Jeremiah was formed in the womb for his calling, we also were created strategically. We were born in this place at this time by design. So, whatever your gifts, your quirks, even what you might think of as weaknesses — God has a plan for it all! And that plan will be good if we choose to follow Him in it. Hopefully, God will use the message of Jeremiah's call to bring some clarity to our own calling today, and this week.

There are four lessons that we can learn from Jeremiah when it comes to God's calling on our life:

There is no age requirement to your God calling.

We know that Jeremiah was called at a young age, and we see this in Jeremiah 1:6 when God calls him to be a prophet, and Jeremiah says, "Ah, Lord *God!* Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." And then verse 7 says "But the *LORD* said to me, 'Do not say, 'I am only a youth;' for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.'" God did not have an age requirement for following Him. He just needed someone willing to go.

Jeremiah was called to be a prophet during the 13th year of the reign of King Josiah. Josiah was made king at the age of 8. He was running a nation at 8 years of age! So, if we do the math, Jeremiah, who was probably late teens, was appointed prophet when Josiah was 21 years old. That means the God-appointed leader and prophet of the Nation of Judah were both in their late teens and 20s.

There's a verse in 1 Timothy 4:12 that says: "Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." Just knowing this about Josiah and Jeremiah should get us excited about our youth today and the potential of their calling. God raises up young people to do mighty kingdom work. God calls teenagers, young people to share His love and make a difference. When we look throughout Scripture we also see that you are also never too old to be called by God, either. God's call has no age restrictions.

Questions:

- Have you ever felt a call from God on your life?
 - What age were you when you perceived this call?
- Did you sense that God was "calling" you to go on this trip to Honduras?
 - Can you share with the Group what that looked like or felt like?
- Did you ever feel too young (or too old) to be used by God?

DAY TWO

Know who your calling is from

Jeremiah 1:9 says, "Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, 'Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.'" Let's take a look at why this is so important. In Jeremiah 4:10, it says this: "Then I said, 'Ah, Lord GOD, surely you have utterly deceived this people and Jerusalem, saying, 'It shall be well with you.'" Why did Jeremiah accuse God of lying to the people? There were many false prophets who all claimed to be speaking words from God. And they told the nation of Israel, "Don't worry, everything is fine. Peace, prosperity. Just keep doing what you're doing." And people loved the message of the false prophets! Meanwhile, poor Jeremiah is prophesying destruction and judgment. He was super unpopular. But here's the lesson: Jeremiah never departed from the truth, no matter how unpopular or hard that truth was. Because he knew that the words coming out of his mouth were God's words.

So, it is always good for us to ask: "Is this tug or this feeling I'm having, is this from God? Or is this coming from the world? And once we know that this calling is from God, we must stay true to what He has asked us to do.

Jeremiah knew what his calling was, and he persevered. He didn't see fruit initially, but he continued to do what God called him to do, and we're challenged to do the same.

Questions:

- Have you ever felt a nudge to do something, and wondered if it was from God?
- How do we discern God's voice when we feel we're being "called" to do something?

DAY THREE

Be ready for opposition

The third lesson where Jeremiah's calling relates to our own is this: We need to be ready for opposition. Chapter 1 verse 17 says, "But you, dress yourself for work." What a translation: "Dress yourself for work." The NIV says "Get yourself ready." Why? Well look down at verse 19. God tells Jeremiah, "*They will fight against you.*" Is that ever an understatement! What lies ahead for Jeremiah is this: He is going to be beaten and have his life threatened. They are going to burn his scrolls. He will be accused of treason and imprisoned. And, he is going to be forced to flee to Egypt against his will. But here's the amazing thing about Jeremiah: He knew without a doubt that God was faithful.

God tells him in Chapter 1 verse 19, He says, "*I am with you.*" And Jeremiah found that to be absolutely true in his life! So, in our own calling, we should probably expect opposition when doing God's work. If we are following God's plan for our life, the Enemy will certainly try to stop us. Sometimes we mistakenly think that if something doesn't work out the first time or if we hit some opposition, maybe God didn't really want us to do that thing. It's almost like we expect God just to make it easy. God will call us to do hard things. But, He is faithful, and He will never leave us. So, we need to get ready for opposition by trusting in the character of our faithful God.

Questions:

- Have you ever experienced opposition when carrying out God's will?
- Have you ever mistakenly thought that if something didn't work out the first time, or if you hit some opposition, maybe God didn't really want you to do that thing?
- How do you "dress yourself for work?" (Hint: Ephesians 6:10-17) Or other ways?

DAY FOUR

Always carry a heart for God's people

Jeremiah is often referred to as the "weeping prophet." We saw a glimpse of that in Chapter 4, verse 19, where he writes "My anguish, my anguish! I writhe in pain! Oh, the walls of my heart! My heart is beating wildly; I cannot keep silent." Jeremiah felt a deep burden for his nation. He truly loved them. And, we see throughout the book of Jeremiah, his sorrow and anguish and tears. He was prophesying destruction, but it broke his heart. This is part of what makes Jeremiah so compelling. It's his combination of warning them against sin mixed with his tears for their hearts. Our calling must come from a place of love and compassion for each other. That thing that you feel God may be calling you toward — is your heart tender there? Because those things that break our hearts are often put on our hearts for a reason.

Matthew 14:13-14 says:

When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. When Jesus landed and went ashore, and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Even though Jesus was exhausted, he felt love and compassion for the people before him. It is so hard to keep that tenderheartedness in the midst of exhaustion or opposition, because there really is an Enemy, and he seeks to come in and get us hardhearted against each other.

We have learned a lot from Jeremiah this week about what it looks like to be called by God.

- First, God has no age limits on His calling.
- Second, when we do feel a call, we need to make sure that it is from the Lord.
- Third, we need to be ready for opposition.
- And finally, we need to always carry a heart for people.

God has called every single one of us. Some He calls to be missionaries or Bible teachers. But just as important, he calls parents and spouses and bankers and teachers and nurses and students — He calls all of us — to show the world His truth and grace. May we be like Jeremiah and take up the call God puts on our hearts today. Always carry that tenderheartedness. Remember our calling — whether it's a difficult child or a hard boss or a difficult neighbor —we are called to love and show compassion.

Questions:

- Who do you feel a deep burden for? A family member? A neighbor? Our nation?
- When you see suffering (homelessness, prison inmates) do you feel compassion, or do you feel a sense of "they got themselves into this mess, it's not up to me to 'rescue' them."

DAY FIVE

How we can know the voice of God?

Do we know the voice of Jesus? In [Jeremiah 23](#), the Israelites clearly did not know (or refused to hear) the words of God. Because if they did, they would have been able to identify these false prophets. But they didn't. So, they go the way of the false prophets, and they go toward their utter destruction. And what Jesus is saying is, "My people will know Me by My voice. I know them because they know Me by My voice."

Do we know His voice?

A few just quick suggestions on how we can know the voice of God. The first is **being in God's Word**. God's Word is such a gracious gift to us. And we can often find ourselves reading more books about God than the book that God gave us Himself – The Bible. And, God has given us the gift of the Holy Spirit, so, we can trust the Holy Spirit to guide us. We need to be spending more time in God's Word directly versus relying on other people to tell us about God's Word. Because otherwise, how are we going to know if those people are actually saying what's actually in God's Word? Because then we're in danger of exactly what happened in the time of Jeremiah with the Israelites. We'll just listen to people, and potentially be led astray. That is why we really need to be a people who are in God's Word.

The second thing is to **be a people who are committed to prayer**. We have direct access to God because of the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit, so we can always pray. And if it's hard for us to pray, pray the Scriptures! Go through the Book of Psalms and just pray the Psalms. OR Pray through The Lord's Prayer.

The third thing is **being a part of a church body**. Be committed to your local church; be present, active, involved. Allow yourself to be known and know other people within the covenant community of God. That is what is described throughout the entire New Testament. In Acts, Chapter 2 it says that the people had everything in common. They loved each other, they worshipped together, they broke bread together, they had fellowship together, they dug into God's Word together — within the context of community. One of the ways that we can hold each other accountable, and that we can really know the voice of God is by surrounding ourselves with other people who love God and want to know His voice as well.

How often is God calling, but we're not listening? Or we're not tuned in to hear His voice? We need to make sure that we're positioning our hearts in a place to hear Him. He is never silent. But often, it's just that we're being distracted by other things that cause us not to hear Him when He is speaking.

Whether you're a mom or a dad, in the workplace, or in the carpool line waiting to pick up kids; all of those areas are holy moments. They're holy opportunities to be a witness for the goodness of who Jesus is. **Do we know who Jesus is? Do we hear His voice?** And, if we hear His voice and we know who He is, **how are we responding to Him?**

Discussion of above questions.