CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JULY 06 2024

Scripture Story: Jeremiah 1.
Commentary: *Prophets and Kings* (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 34.

who, me?



Photo by Colleen Cahill

flashlight

"For forty years Jeremiah was to stand before the nation as a witness for truth and righteousness. . . . Despised, hated, rejected of men, he was finally to witness the literal fulfillment of his own prophecies . . . , and share in the sorrow and woe that should follow the destruction of the fated city.

"Yet amid the general ruin . . . , Jeremiah was often permitted to look beyond the distressing scenes of the present to the glorious prospects of the future, when God's people should be ransomed from the land of the enemy and planted again in Zion" (*Prophets and Kings*, p. 408).

keytext

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

(Jeremiah 1:5, NIV)

what do you think?

Jeremiah was given an unpopular job to do as God's prophet in tough times. Has being a Christian ever made you unpopular? Check any of the situations below that have applied to you:

____ People have made fun of me for religious beliefs or practices.

____ I've had to miss out on activities because they conflicted with Sabbath or church activities.

____ I've had to say no when friends were doing things I believed were wrong—drinking, trying drugs, etc.

____ I speak out when people are hurting or bullying others, even though I might get attacked myself.

did you know?

Jeremiah was called by God to be a prophet to the people of Judah about the year 628 B.C. About a hundred years earlier, the northern kingdom of Israel—made up of 10 of the 12 tribes—had been overthrown by the king of Assyria. The Israelites of the northern kingdom were sent into exile, never again to return to their homeland. For centuries God's prophets had been warning the people of Israel and Judah that if they didn't remain faithful to God, destruction would come. For the kingdom of Israel, that day had finally come. Now, a hundred years later, Jeremiah was sent to warn the people of Judah that the same fate was about to happen to them.

INTO THE STORY

"The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. . . .

"The word of the LORD came to me, saying,
'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.'

" 'Alas, Sovereign LORD,' I said, 'I do not know how to speak; I am too young.'

"But the LORD said to me, 'Do not say, "I am too young." You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,' declares the LORD.

"Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, 'I have put my words in your mouth. See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.'

"The word of the LORD came to me: 'What do you see, Jeremiah?'

" 'I see the branch of an almond tree,' I replied.

"The LORD said to me, 'You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled.'

"The word of the LORD came to me again: 'What do you see?'

" 'I see a pot that is boiling,' I answered. 'It is tilting toward us from the north.'

"The LORD said to me, 'From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land. I am about to summon all the peoples of the northern kingdoms,' declares the LORD.
'Their kings will come and set up their thrones
in the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem;
they will come against all her surrounding walls
and against all the towns of Judah.
I will pronounce my judgments on my people
because of their wickedness in forsaking me,
in burning incense to other gods and in worshiping what their hands have made.

" 'Get yourself ready! Stand up and say to them whatever I command you. Do not be terrified by them, or I will terrify you before them. Today I have made you a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall to stand against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, its officials,

its priests and the people of the land. They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you,' declares the LORD."

(Jeremiah 1, NIV)

OUT OF THE STORY

What was Jeremiah's first reaction when God called him to become a prophet? Why do you think he reacted this way?

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How far back does God's plan for Jeremiah go? What does this tell you about God's plan for your life?

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If God chose Jeremiah as a prophet before he was even born, was Jeremiah really free to say no?

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What was God's special task for Jeremiah? How do you think he might have felt about being called to this kind of ministry?

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What warnings does God give Jeremiah? How do God's promises match up with His warnings?

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punch lines

"My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be" **(Psalm 139:15, 16, NIV).**

"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" **(Romans 8:29-31, NIV).**

"Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity" **(1 Timothy 4:12, NIV).**

"Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you" **(Matthew 5:11, 12, NIV).**

further insight

"God's purpose for you is wider, deeper, higher than your limited vision has ever imagined! God often picks reliable persons from unlikely places to witness for Him in the world's highest places. Many a young person of today . . . studying God's Word and His works, and learning lessons of responsibility, will yet stand in legislative assemblies, in courtrooms, and before royalty, as a witness for the King of kings."—Ellen G. White, *A Call to Stand Apart*, p. 100

Sabbath

Read Jeremiah 1:5, 6.

God caught Jeremiah's attention and gave him a special task to do. In Jeremiah 1:6 the prophet said he couldn't _____ because he was only a _____.

Jeremiah was probably a teenager at the time. He didn't consider himself ready for the task God had for him, but God assured Jeremiah He'd been planning this for a long time—even before Jeremiah was born!

Do you believe that God has a purpose for your life? What do you think you might say to God if He spoke to you as He did to Jeremiah (in Jeremiah 1:5)?

Sunday

Read Jeremiah 1:19.

God's call for Jeremiah was not to do an easy job that would make everyone like him. In fact, his job was to tell the people of Judah that because they had rebelled against God, He was going to punish them.

People don't usually like hearing that they're doing things wrong. God warned Jeremiah up front that his message would be unpopular and people would reject him for it. Jeremiah didn't go out of his way to make people mad—he just did what God told him to do, and got in trouble for it.

What promise did God give Jeremiah? Summarize today's Bible verse in your own words.

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Monday

Read Psalm 139:15, 16.

Ask your parents what they remember about you from before you were born. Do they have ultrasound pictures, or pictures of your mom when she was pregnant? If you were adopted, ask your parents to tell about how you came to be part of your family. Think over what you've been told as you reread this week's *Key Text.*

Parents have hopes, dreams, and expectations for their children even before those children are born. In the same way, God has plans for us even before we're born. Does knowing that God knows all about you even before you're born make you feel: ___ loved? ___ special? ___ scared? ___ uncertain? ___ it depends!

Tuesday

Read Matthew 5:11, 12.

We all like to hear positive words. The Bible is full of hope, promises, and encouragement. But there's a time for negative words too—a time to point out sin, to warn people of the consequences of their actions.

"Prophets of doom" exist not just in the church but in the world too. Scientists warn us about the dangers of damaging the environment and predict that terrible things will happen if we don't clean up our act. Such predictions can be scary, but they can also motivate us to change our ways!

Read the *Flashlight* section. According to this passage, what did God offer to balance the negative side of Jeremiah's message?

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Wednesday

The Bible verses in the *Punch Lines* section remind us that Jeremiah's experience wasn't unique. God calls *all* believers to do a special work for Him. He knows us so well that He knows the work He has for us to do, even before we're born. And He warns us that doing His work won't always be easy. It may make us unpopular, or get us into trouble. Your mission is to learn what that job is and do it the best you can—staying true to Him even when times get tough!

Thursday

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

Many believers, like Jeremiah, see things going on in the world around them—maybe even in the church—that don't seem right. God calls us to speak out—not in condemnation but in love—against sin, injustice, and cruelty.

What things do you see going on around you that you think are wrong?

_____

_____

What would happen if you spoke out and said those things were wrong? What response might you get from people around you?

_____

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Friday

Read Ephesians 4:15.

Look back at your answers for yesterday's two questions. Speaking out against wrongdoing is a tricky business. It's easy to slip into being judgmental or self-righteous rather than "speaking the truth in love."

Think and pray about what you wrote yesterday. Do you think God is calling you to be a "Jeremiah" right now by drawing attention to something in your community or church that's not according to His will? If so, talk to Him and to an older Christian you trust about what would be the best way to approach the situation, so that you'll bring glory to God.

this week's reading*

Prophets and Kings (or *Royalty and Ruin*), chapter 34.

**Royalty and Ruin* is a special adaptation of *Prophets and Kings*, created for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press®. Get more information about it at http://www.cornerstoneconnections.net/article/191/about-us/conflict-of-the-ages-companionbooks#.URlhF1rBO9s. By following the weekly reading plan, you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages Series each year.