

Come Follow Me  
Elo Viz Production  
Week 42  
Jeremiah 1-20

I find the record of the Prophet Jeremiah fascinating. It is believed that Jeremiah was about 20 years old when he was called to the ministry, but it actually started long before that. Chapter 1 verse 5 says:

“5 Before I **formed** thee in the belly I **knew** thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I **sanctified** thee, *and* I **ordained** thee a prophet unto the **nations**.”

What magnificent doctrine is contained in this single verse. It goes to show how perfect God's plan is for each of us. He knew us before we were even born. Perhaps it would be wise for us to seek for His wisdom for the course of our life.

Jeremiah must have had great parents to teach him the gospel and how to listen to the voice of God, because from a young age his life was devoted to missionary work. And he isn't one who we would think should be called as a great missionary. Verse 6 says:

“6 Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot **speak**: for I *am* a **child**.”

Perhaps he was humble, or maybe he was frightened by the wickedness of the people. At this point in history the children of Israel were very wicked. Immorality was rampant, they were murdering children, sacrificing them to false Gods. They were on the verge of destruction. They didn't get the message when Isaiah was there, so God sent them another prophet. Jeremiah was the one who witnessed their demise, which we will get to next week. But God kept giving them a change time and time again he sent great prophets that carried His word in their mouth. Listen to these incredible words verse 7-9:

“7 ¶ But the Lord said unto me, Say not, I *am* a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall **send** thee, and whatsoever I **command** thee thou shalt **speak**.

8 Be not **afraid** of their faces: for I *am* with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

9 Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my **mouth**. And the Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put my **words** in thy **mouth**.”

This doctrine contained in these verses is absolutely true. I have witnessed it personally. Years ago when I was called to teach early morning seminary I was working full time, had a young family that needed lots of attention, and had very little time. I remember after class each morning I would get to work and it was really the only quiet time I had during the day to prepare for the next day's lesson. I would sit down at my desk, open the scriptures and pray that God would help me know what it was I was to teach his children, as I began to read the words would clearly reveal what it was I was to teach. It was an absolute miracle. With a 15 minute

preparation time I was able to know exactly what I needed to teach a 1 hour lesson on. And this happened day after day for years. I testify that God is absolutely engaged in the work of teaching and saving His children. It is no different today than it was for Jeremiah 2600 years ago.

That doesn't mean it is going to be easy. Jeremiah faced some things that I hope you and I will never have to see with our mortal eyes. At one point he cries out:

“19 ¶ My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war.

20 Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment.

21 How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet?

22 For my people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.

23 I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.”

From what we know Jeremiah's mission was pretty fruitless. I'm not sure if you are aware, but it is believed that the book of Jeremiah was written by a guy by the name of Baruch. He must have been some sort of scribe or assistant to Jeremiah. There were some pretty cool things that happened during his ministry like: a false prophet comes among them and Jeremiah calls him out and he dies, and tons of prophecies. We don't have time to go into all of them but I would like to look at one event that seems to be the turning point in Jeremiah's mission.

In chapter 20 We read of Jeremiah's confrontation with Pashur, who was the chief governor. Verse 2:

“2 Then Pashur smote Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the Lord.

3 And it came to pass on the morrow, that Pashur brought forth Jeremiah out of the stocks. Then said Jeremiah unto him, The Lord hath not called thy name Pashur, but Magor-missabib.

This means a “terror all around”. This confrontation seems to have a very negative impact on Jeremiah. I'm sure there was more that happened than what was recorded. Perhaps when “Pashur smote Jeremiah” it could have been more of a beating. In any case it was enough to cause Jeremiah to quit. He was done with his mission. Verse 9

“9 Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name.”

Remember this was not some old prophet that was near the end of his ministry, this was a young kid in his 20s. Who has labored without any success. He has gone years without any baptisms. Day after day, struggle after struggle, persecution after persecution, and it was too much for him. How many missionaries have that time when they just don't have it in them to keep going. I know I felt it on my mission, in calling, in life. And I'm sure missionaries in the field still have those feelings today. This work is hard, it's meant to be. It does have its rewards, but it most of the time has many challenges. This was the case for Jeremiah. "I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name" he cried.

But "Something had been happening with every testimony he had borne, every scripture he had read, every truth he had taught. Something had been happening that he hadn't counted on. Even as he vowed to close his mouth and walk away from the Lord's work, he found that he could not. Why? Because "his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay.

That is what happens in the gospel to both the teacher and the taught. It is what happened to Nephi and Lehi when, the book of Helaman says, "the Holy Spirit of God did come down from heaven, and did enter into their hearts, and they were filled as if with fire, and they could speak forth marvelous words."<sup>24</sup> Surely it must have been that kind of heavenly joy Mary Magdalene experienced when near the Garden Tomb she unexpectedly beheld her beloved resurrected Lord and said to Him simply, "Rabboni,"<sup>25</sup> which is to say, literally, "Teacher."

<https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/1998/04/a-teacher-come-from-god?lang=eng>

We come to a time in our lives when the cares of the world, the mocking of strangers, the unwanted eyes mean very little if not nothing to us. There is only one thing that grows greater and greater in our hearts, and that is the love for and a desire to serve the true and living God no matter what the cost. This is what Jeremiah experienced, and I'm sure many servants of our father have had the same experience. I am a witness that when this feeling comes, the feeling of "His word in your heart, like a burning fire shut up in my bones". You will find that you will not be able to keep it in. That His words will burst forth from you in a spirit of love for your fellow men and women. That your desire for them to come to know what you have will flow from you like a river of living water.

In the name of Him who is the source of all life and love, even Jesus Christ, Amen.