

JEREMIAH

THE WEEPING PROPHET



““Before I formed you in the
womb I knew you,
before you were born I set you
apart”

- Jeremiah 1:5 -

Jeremiah – The Weeping Prophet

“Jeremiah was a bullfrog!” goes the classic 1970s pop song. But before Three Dog Night sang their song, God chose the son of a priest from the obscure town of Anathoth to be his messenger. This Jeremiah wasn’t a bullfrog, but he was a friend of God. From a reluctant start, Jeremiah was given a fiery message of judgement and despair, which is why Jeremiah is often called ‘the weeping prophet’.

Jeremiah wept over the immorality of his people. He wept over their lust for idols. He wept over the political and economic alliances that drew the people further and further away from God. Jeremiah knew hard times and hopeless situations, but he never lost faith in God. Instead, he grew through the hard times and like a bullfrog croaking across a creek, Jeremiah shared his grating messages from God with the people who didn’t want to hear them.

This short study of the book of Jeremiah is designed to help you engage with the main message of Jeremiah: even when things are bad, God is good. Jeremiah learned this directly from God through his prophecies but also through his experiences. In his walk with God, Jeremiah is cast out of the temple, thrown down a well, sees Jerusalem destroyed and finally goes into exile but through it all he sees that God has a plan for his people, for which it’s worth enduring all the pain.

Our hope is that this study would bolster your confidence in God’s Word, strengthen your faith, and deepen your relationship with Jesus. May the Holy Spirit guide you as you work through these studies and learn to rejoice with Jeremiah – the weeping prophet.

Rev’d David Browne
Dalby Anglican

WEEK 1

THE RELUCTANT PROPHET

Warming up: Have you ever felt too young or too old to accomplish a task and yet you proved your doubts wrong? What did you do and what changed your mind?

Read: Jeremiah 1:4-10

1. Jeremiah was the son of a priest living in the southern kingdom of Judah. He lived in a priestly city called Anathoth. What happens to the young Jeremiah in this passage?
2. How does Jeremiah respond to God in this passage? Why do you think he reacts this way?
3. What do vv.4-5 tell us about ourselves and what do they tell us about God?
4. This passage is often quoted in debates about abortion. Do you think this is helpful? Why/why not?
5. Why do think Jeremiah is frightened of the mission God wants to give him?
6. What sort of mission might God be calling us towards today?
7. What excuses might you be tempted to make if God called you to speak on his behalf?
8. What does God promise Jeremiah in vv.9-10? Do you think God makes similar promises for his people today?
9. What does v.10 tell us about God's mission for Jeremiah? What might it be telling us about God's mission for us today?
10. Who can help you overcome your excuses as you seek to be obedient to God day by day?

Rubber hits the road:

Make a list of excuses you've made for not serving God and following his call. Write down parts of this passage that apply to your excuses and pray about them. God is calling you to speak and live for him; thank him for this honour daily.

NOTES / PRAYER POINTS / ETC.

Prayer

Loving Lord God, before I was formed in my mother's womb, you knew me. You know my name, you know my faults, you know my gifts and my potential. Help me to live out your plans for my life and to overcome my excuses. Amen.

WEEK 2

THE COURAGEOUS PROPHET

Warming up: What does a courageous person look like to you? What qualities does a courageous person have?

Read: Jeremiah 2:4-13

1. What stands out to you in this passage?
2. Why is Jeremiah speaking like this to Israel; what have they done? (See Jer. 1:16)
3. How do you think Jeremiah is courageous in this passage?
4. Was Jeremiah a naturally courageous person? Or did he doubt himself? (See Jer. 1:6)
5. How then is Jeremiah able to be so courageous and speak this way to Israel? (See Jer. 1:7-9; 17-19)
6. There are two main crimes in this passage that Israel is accused of committing against God. What are they?
7. In this passage, Jeremiah is warning his fellow Israelites against the danger of forsaking God and being spiritually dried up. Is Jeremiah's message still relevant to us today? Why?
8. How can we today prevent ourselves from being spiritually dried up? (See John 7:37-38)

Rubber hits the road:

Pray each day this week in the morning to be courageous and open to the opportunities to be living water and to share your faith with someone new.

NOTES / PRAYER POINTS / ETC.

Prayer

Eternal Trinity, you are a deep sea, into which the more I enter the more I find, and the more I find the more I seek. The soul ever hungers in your abyss, Eternal Trinity, longing to see you with the light of your light, and as the deer yearns for the springs of water, so my soul yearns to see you in truth. Amen.

(St Catherine of Siena 1347-1380)

WEEK 3

THE TRANSFORMING PROPHET

Warming up: Do you enjoy being creative? What do you enjoy about it?

Read: Jeremiah 18:1-11

1. When you think of Jeremiah going down to the Potter's house, what does the image look like in your mind?
2. Try to imagine the potter forming the clay pot. What is the process like? How much time and care goes into this creative process?
3. What does it look like when you imagine Israel in God's hands like the potter's clay?
4. How big and powerful is God suggesting that he is?
5. In v.8, God talks about 'warning' nations. How might he do this?
6. In vv.8-10, God speaks about reconsidering how he might act, even to the point of relenting from destroying nations based on whether they turn from their evil ways. How do you see the role of 'free will' and God's sovereignty here?
7. In v.11 God directly warns the people of Judah (especially the people of Jerusalem). What does this warning tell us about God's desire for all people to live his way?
8. How do you feel about God working in you and transforming you into what is pleasing in his sight?

Rubber hits the road:

Take some time this week to imagine yourself as clay in God's hands and then ask God to transform and shape you according to his will.

NOTES / PRAYER POINTS / ETC.

Prayer

Sovereign God, I acknowledge that you know best. You knew me before I was born, and you have walked with me each day of my life. Please transform and shape me as you please – may I look more like you and glorify your holy name. Amen.

WEEK 4

THE SCOLDING PROPHET

Warming up: How do you feel about decluttering? Do you hold onto your possessions, or do you enjoy getting rid of old things?

Read: Jeremiah 4:11-28

1. How does this passage make you feel? What parts stand out for you?
2. In this passage Jeremiah gets a vision of the judgement from God coming upon the kingdom he is living in. The people have rejected God and an army is coming from the north to attack them. What has this army been sent to do (see vv.11-12)?
3. What does Jeremiah see in this vision? How do you think it would have made him feel?
4. What does v.22 tell us about the reason this is happening to the people?
5. Why would a good God allow destruction like this to happen to his people?
6. What does v.23 tell us about the destruction Jeremiah sees (see Genesis 1:1)?
7. How does the trial, judgement, death, and resurrection of Jesus speak into this passage?
8. What might Jeremiah's hope for his people have been after seeing this vision? What should we hope for in life when we face hardship and destruction?

Rubber hits the road:

Spend some time in prayer for countries and people experiencing destruction like that which Jeremiah sees. Spend time reflecting on how God works to bring us to repentance and help us realign our lives when we lose our senses.

NOTES / PRAYER POINTS / ETC.

Prayer

Loving Lord God, forgive me for my sins and deliver me from evil. Lord, I know sometimes I am like a senseless child, lost in sin, not even knowing how to do good. Holy Spirit please help me to realign my life with your good will and purpose. Help me to forgive as I have been forgiven, and to seek your Kingdom and righteousness above all things. Amen.

WEEK 5

THE MOURNING PROPHET

Warming up: Think of a time when you were mourning. What feeling, and emotions did you go through during that time?

Read: Jeremiah 8:18-9:1

1. What stands out to you in this passage?
2. How does this passage make you feel?
3. Who is really talking in this passage? Who is mourning? Is it Jeremiah? Is it God? Or is it both?
4. Why do you think Jeremiah is mourning in this passage? What has Israel done? Read 8:1-17 & 8:19.
5. If God was to ask us “why are my people crying?” today, what would we say?
6. What do we learn about God in this passage when people turn away from him?
7. In v.22 the region of Gilead is mentioned as a place of hope and healing. Are there places, people, communities, etc. that serve as beacons of hope and healing for you today?
8. How do Jesus’ words in the garden of Gethsemane encourage us to keep going? (See Matt 26:36-39, Mark 14:32-35)

Rubber hits the road:

How does this passage give hope when things are falling apart? And how can this passage shape our prayer life and repentance?

WEEK 6

THE PROPHET OF HOPE

Warming up: If your house was burning down and you only had two minutes to escape, what three things would you try to rescue before you left the house? Why do these items mean so much to you?

Read: Jeremiah 32:1-15

1. What was happening to Jerusalem and to Jeremiah at this time?
2. Why was Zedekiah king of Judah upset with Jeremiah?
3. Was Jeremiah's prophecy already proving to be true?
4. Israel is surrounded and Jeremiah is in prison. But God keeps on speaking and acting. As you think about this – what thoughts come to mind?
5. How did Jeremiah know that he was supposed to buy this field?
6. After Jeremiah buys the field, he tells Baruch to put the deeds into a clay pot so that they will last a long time. Why do you think this instruction is important?
7. As you think about Judah's situation, why is the promise that "Houses, fields and vineyards will again be bought in this land" so important?
8. God gives the people hope for a restored future even when the current circumstances are hard to fathom. What does this tell you about God's heart of hope?

Rubber hits the road:

Have you been waiting for a promise to be fulfilled for a long time? Take some time to chat with God about it this week. Ask God to renew and strengthen your hope in what he has promised.

NOTES / PRAYER POINTS / ETC.

Prayer

God of hope, you know and see the past, present and the future. There are so many prayers that fill my heart today. And as I look around and as I read the news, there are many reasons to feel hopeless. Today, Lord, I acknowledge that you keep your promises and I put my hope in you. Holy Spirit, please move in my life and continue your restoring work in the world. I give my heart to you – please fill it with your hope. Amen.

“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.””

- Jeremiah 1:9-10 -



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