

STORYTELLERS
The Weeping Prophet
Jeremiah

God has an amazing PLAN for your life. You are NOT an accident. You have a rich and beautiful purpose on this earth, and God longs to show that to you. You do not have to be DEFINED by your family, your failures, or your flaws! **But God wants your life to be a POWERFUL WITNESS of HIS GLORY in your life. Will you cooperate with him and discover what he wants to do IN, THROUGH, and FOR you?** We will see!

The bible character that we want to look at today is one of my favorite people in scripture. But, you would probably NOT have liked him! He was born during the most dreadful days of Israel's history [Just like being born a Jew a few years before WW II.], and he was viewed as a national TRAITOR! The Jews in his time were rebellious and openly wicked, and he preached that the Babylonians were God's instruments of judgment on the nation. He encouraged the Jews to surrender to them! He served 5 kings, and only the first one was a follower of God. It was a DOWNHILL SLIDE for the nation after the days of King Josiah.

His life was a portrait of FAITHFULNESS.

His calling was his CONFIDENCE! Jeremiah 1:4-9 NLT

4 The LORD gave me this message: 5 "I knew you before I formed you in your mother's womb. Before you were born I set you apart and appointed you as my prophet to the nations." 6 "O Sovereign LORD," I said, "I can't speak for you! I'm too young!" 7 The LORD replied, "Don't say, 'I'm too young,' for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you. 8 And don't be afraid of the people, for I will be with you and will protect you. I, the LORD, have spoken!" 9 Then the LORD reached out and touched my mouth and said, "Look, I have put my words in your mouth!

- His calling was determined before his birth! **[Psalm 139]**
- His gifts were NOT the basis for his qualification
- His purpose was God-given, not self-determined
- *Bertha Smith's word to me: It's none of your business!

His obedience was CONSISTENT!

- He was focused on the WORD of God. **Jeremiah 15:16 NLT**

16 When I discovered your words, I devoured them. They are my joy and my heart's delight, for I bear your name, O LORD God of Heaven's Armies.

- *He listened for God's voice
- *He delighted in God's word

-He was willing to share the hard message. **Jeremiah 1:10 NKJV**

10 See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant."

-He accepted limitations that God put on his life without bitterness! **[Ch. 16]**

*He was instructed not to marry or have children!

*He was forbidden to mourn or attend funerals of friends/family.

*He was forbidden to attend parties.

Your ministry will be a BURDEN that deeply changes your own life.

*Some messages are extruded through my life. That HURTS!

His ministry was an expression of GOD'S HEART.

What is YOUR MINISTRY? **[Family, Church, Friends, Work Associates]**

*If you are a child of God – YOU HAVE A MINISTRY! [Plumbers, Moms, etc.]

*If you are married, MARRIAGE is your MINISTRY!

*God has called you to serve some people in your life. They affect you!

***Love for God's people: Jeremiah 8:21- 9:1 NLT**

21 I hurt with the hurt of my people. I mourn and am overcome with grief. 22 Is there no medicine in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why is there no healing for the wounds of my people? 1 If only my head were a pool of water and my eyes a fountain of tears, I would weep day and night for all my people who have been slaughtered.

How do you express God's love for those people around you?

Are you praying for the deliverance and healing of anyone?

Do you hurt with them in their sorrows?

***Anger over their sin: Jeremiah 9:2-3 NLT**

2 Oh, that I could go away and forget my people and live in a travelers' shack in the desert. For they are all adulterers--a pack of treacherous liars. 3 "My people bend their tongues like bows to shoot out lies. They refuse to stand up for the truth. They only go from bad to worse. They do not know me," says the LORD.

How does the rebellion of your loved ones frustrate you?

How clearly do you SEE the sins of your loved ones?

Do you REMAIN with them even when they FAIL to change!

***Wisdom for their current situation: Jeremiah 29:11-14 NLT**

11 For I know the plans I have for you," says the LORD. "They are plans for good and not for disaster, to give you a future and a hope. 12 In those days when you

pray, I will listen. 13 If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. 14 I will be found by you," says the LORD. "I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land."

God used his words to help protect the exiles from further destruction.
 God used his words to help the exiles bless their captors! **[Jeremiah 29:4-7]**
 -Remember how God used these words to instruct Daniel!

***Passion for their ultimate restoration: Jeremiah 31:16-20 NLT**

16 But now this is what the LORD says: "Do not weep any longer, for I will reward you," says the LORD. "Your children will come back to you from the distant land of the enemy. 17 There is hope for your future," says the LORD. "Your children will come again to their own land. 18 I have heard Israel saying, 'You disciplined me severely, like a calf that needs training for the yoke. Turn me again to you and restore me, for you alone are the LORD my God. 19 I turned away from God, but then I was sorry. I kicked myself for my stupidity! I was thoroughly ashamed of all I did in my younger days.' 20 "Is not Israel still my son, my darling child?" says the LORD. "I often have to punish him, but I still love him. That's why I long for him and surely will have mercy on him.

-Especially seen at the most difficult period of his life! **[Ch. 37]**
 *He is thrown in prison
 *He is left to starve in the bottom of a muddy well

His ENDURANCE is a model for God's people.

He continued serving God even when he was CONFUSED! Jeremiah 12:1-2

1 LORD, you always give me justice when I bring a case before you. So let me bring you this complaint: Why are the wicked so prosperous? Why are evil people so happy? 2 You have planted them, and they have taken root and prospered. Your name is on their lips, but you are far from their hearts.

-He was confounded when King Josiah was taken away! Why?
 -He was open and honest with God when he was hurting.
 *His PRAYERS were an honest conversation with God!
 *He listened when God responded with an unwanted answer.

Jeremiah 12:5 NLT

5 "If racing against mere men makes you tired, how will you race against horses? If you stumble and fall on open ground, what will you do in the thickets near the Jordan?"

-E.V. HILL: Remember what you agreed to in the first place!

Persecution could not diminish his passion. Jeremiah 20:7-9 NLT

7 O LORD, you misled me, and I allowed myself to be misled. You are stronger than I am, and you overpowered me. Now I am mocked every day; everyone laughs at me. 8 When I speak, the words burst out. "Violence and destruction!" I shout. So these messages from the LORD have made me a household joke. 9 But if I say I'll never mention the LORD or speak in his name, his word burns in my heart like a fire. **It's like a fire in my bones!** I am worn out trying to hold it in! I can't do it!

He stayed tenderhearted even when he was betrayed.

[Quote: [The Inner Voice of Love - Henri Nouwen, P. 59](#)]

He did not take the easy way out. Jeremiah 40:1-6 NLT

- In what way are YOU tempted to escape from an uncomfortable situation?
- Has God given you LEAVE to do so? Are you violating a covenant?

He faithfully fulfilled his calling before God's people for 40 YEARS.

- We see him last preaching to the rebellious remnant in Egypt.
- Some traditions say that Jews in Egypt murdered him for prophesying.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BE FOUND DOING IN YOUR FINAL DAYS?

- *It will happen one day at a time!
- *Where are you tempted to fall . . . TODAY?