

GROWTH GROUPS
WEEK 2
WEEK OF JUNE 14



Growth Group Summer 2020

What Would I Say?

Week 2 – June 14, 2020 - Jeremiah 1:6-18

Growth groups are one of the best and easiest ways to find community at a church. In this time of Corona19 and “social distancing” please don’t meet in person, but do continue to check in with each other. If your growth group would like to meet online or if you are aware of needs that the church can help fill, please let us know at connect@ljpres.org. Thank you for loving and caring for each other.

Setting the Context

Previously God had told Jeremiah that he was known, set apart and appointed. This served as Jeremiah’s commissioning to take God’s message to the people of Judah. Jeremiah’s response is, “No thank you. I am not equipped, I don’t know what I would say or how I would say it.” God, however, does not allow Jeremiah to get out of the plans that God has for him.

Verse 9 tells us that God reached out his hand and touched Jeremiah’s mouth and said “I have put my words in your mouth.” See also Isaiah 6:7 for another time that something similar to this happened. This image is trying to get across the idea that God can now proclaim His will, with Jeremiah as his spokesperson. This was what Jeremiah was born for.

Jeremiah is asked twice by God, “What do you see?” The first image is an almond branch. It was a reminder of his home in Anathoth, which was one of the centers of almond production. The almond was also the first tree to start blooming and signaled the approach of spring. It was a symbol of hope and renewal. Life was emerging. The second image is in contrast to the first. There is danger approaching from the north. Things are boiling over. It is a reference to the impending invasion of Babylon.

Jeremiah is told to get ready. He will have to stand up to the people and rulers of Judah and announce judgment. Their sinfulness has ramifications. Their failure to trust in God will cause them to go into exile. One can imagine that Jeremiah was terrified. This was no easy calling that God had placed in front of him.

God realizes this and offers some more images to Jeremiah, in verse 18, that are meant to encourage him. He will be a fortified city, an iron pillar and a bronze wall. The idea is that nothing will be able to advance against him. There is a tendency for believers to overestimate evil and underestimate God. We see the evil around us and think that it has more power than God, but we fail to see what God is actually doing. These words, in verse 18, remind and encourage Jeremiah that he can withstand whatever comes his way, because God is with him.



Exploring the Text

Read Jeremiah 1:6-18

⁶ *“Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.”*

⁷ *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. ⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the Lord.*

⁹ *Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth.*

¹⁰ *See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”*

¹¹ *The word of the Lord came to me: “What do you see, Jeremiah?” “I see the branch of an almond tree,” I replied.*

¹² *The Lord said to me, “You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled.”*

¹³ *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.”*

¹⁴ *The Lord said to me, “From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land. ¹⁵ 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.*

¹⁶ *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.*

¹⁷ *“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. ¹⁸ 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.*

Questions

If you are answering these questions alone, we would urge you to try journaling. Rather than just pondering the answers, try writing them out along with a prayer to the Lord.

- 1) How do you feel about speaking in public settings?
- 2) Is there an area of your life where you often find yourself making excuses, about doing or not doing certain things?
- 3) What do you think of the mission given to Jeremiah, in verse 10? The verbs used can seem contradictory. Do you think images like that are still applicable to us today? Are there places or things that you need to be uprooting or planting? What would that look like in 2020?
- 4) Through the almond tree and boiling pot, God is teaching Jeremiah how to be attentive to God’s actions. How do you stay attentive to what God is revealing to you?
- 5) Much of the book of Jeremiah will deal with the wrath and justice of God. What is your initial reaction to a word of judgment like this? (v. 15-16)
- 6) One wicked act, mentioned, is the worship of idols. What are some of the idols of our modern culture? What are some idols that you have built for yourself?
- 7) What promises are given to Jeremiah? What promises are given to us?
- 8) Is there something this week that you need to do, that you have been making excuses about?