

## Our Mission:

To share Christ with the world  
and grow disciples for Jesus



## Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

### Background:

Jeremiah appears to be quite young when he receives God's call. It is a tumultuous time as the nation of Judah finds itself living in the shadow and under the threat of much greater nations such as Babylon. It appears that the people sought God's help, but rather than engaging in just and compassionate actions or showing hospitality toward foreigners, they would rather show up at the temple, make an offering and call it good. Six hundred years later Jesus will make a similar critique of Temple practices as he makes his way toward his passion.

### Theology Connection:

The prophets did not exist to predict the future. Their job was to point out what was wrong in the moment and point to the likely outcome if the people continued on that path they were following. Jeremiah encounters great scorn from the ruling elite, and he will be punished for suggesting they are blind to God's desires. Ultimately, however, he will be shown to be speaking the truth.

### Application:

We have allowed ourselves to get stuck in echo chambers where others simply reinforce what we already believe to be true. This is not new, as we see in this text. Whatever the situation, might we ask ourselves, based upon this text if our perception is accurate? Are we truly listening to God? Might we attempt to look for the truth through a different lens than that which we have become accustomed to? Is this a call to broaden our theological as well as our theoretical horizons?

### **The Text: Jeremiah 1:1-10, 7:1-11**

<sup>1</sup>The words of Jeremiah, son of Hilkiah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. <sup>2</sup>The word of the Lord came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, son of Amon king of Judah, <sup>3</sup>and through the reign of Jehoiakim son of Josiah, king of Judah, down to the fifth month of the eleventh year of Zedekiah son of Josiah, king of Judah, when the people of Jerusalem went into exile.

<sup>4</sup>The word of the Lord came to me, saying,

<sup>5</sup>"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."

<sup>6</sup>Alas, Sovereign Lord," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am too young."

<sup>7</sup>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.

<sup>8</sup>Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord.

<sup>9</sup>Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth. <sup>10</sup>See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

7 <sup>1</sup>This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord:

<sup>2</sup>"Stand at the gate of the Lord's house and there proclaim this message:

"Hear the word of the Lord, all you people of Judah who come through these gates to worship the Lord. <sup>3</sup>This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Reform your ways and your actions, and I will let you live in this place. <sup>4</sup>Do not trust in deceptive words and say, "This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord!" <sup>5</sup>If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, <sup>6</sup>if you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widow and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, <sup>7</sup>then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors for ever and ever. <sup>8</sup>But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless.

<sup>9</sup>"Will you steal and murder, commit adultery and perjury, burn incense to Baal and follow other gods you have not known,

<sup>10</sup>and then come and stand before me in this house, which bears my Name, and say, "We are safe"—safe to do all these detestable things? <sup>11</sup>Has this house, which bears my Name, become a den of robbers to you? But I have been watching! declares the Lord.

## ADULT

We live in a world where people are constantly searching for the right answers. Might we instead, spend more time looking for the right questions? Does having an answer make us better, or honestly does it make us right? Are we comfortable living within the tension of uncertainties and the unpredictability's unleashed by the prophetic voices in our society?

## YOUTH

Please read Jeremiah 1:1-10, 7:1-11

Jeremiah had been set apart for the Lord from his conception. But he felt unprepared for his role God has set for him. Jeremiah argued that his young age and his lack of skills disqualified him from this task. Jeremiah said I cannot speak because I am youth. However, God reassured Jeremiah he was equipped with everything he needed. Can you relate to this story? I sure can. When I was approached to be the youth director at Peace, I felt unprepared, and unqualified. But with lots of praying and discernment I realized God had already equipped me for this task.

Let us pray:

Dear God, please remind us that we are all equipped for whatever task is ahead of us. Thank you for your guidance and strength. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## CHILDREN'S

People in Bible times often reserved tombs where they could be buried. Someone wanted to offer his tomb for the body of Jesus. Jesus was wrapped in special linens and a huge rock was placed in front of the tomb. It was Friday when Jesus was killed, and the next day was the Jewish Sabbath. Sabbath means day of rest. There were some women who loved Jesus very much. They wanted to anoint His body with special oils. They went on Sunday to do so and found an interesting and intriguing surprise! When the women arrived at the tomb, they found it empty! They saw two men standing by them in bright white clothing, they were angels. The women bowed their faces to the ground, and the angels told them that Jesus had risen from the dead! The women were so excited that they ran to tell the other, but they didn't believe the story. Peter jumped up and ran to the tomb! He looked in, but he only saw the cloth that Jesus' body had been wrapped in.

1. What did you learn from this story?
2. What is your favorite part of the story?
3. What do you think you would have thought and felt if you had been one of the women to discover the empty tomb?

Remember:

Jesus died to take away our sins, His resurrection completed what God had intended from the very beginning!

Pray:

Dear God, Thank You for saving us, and thank You for Your love. Help us to share the hope of Easter with others. Thank You for Your son Jesus. In His name we pray, Amen.