

Jeremiah 1 "Living in the Grip of God's Call" **

Main Idea: In Jeremiah 1 the Lord called Jeremiah into His service and the prophet began to live in the grip of that call. In this important passage we learn that the Lord's call involves three important, divinely initiated elements.

I. The Lord appoints His servant (1-10).

A. The Lord revealed His purposes for Jeremiah (4-5).

1. I knew you before you existed.
2. I formed you.
3. I set you apart before you were born.
4. I selected you to be a prophet.

B. The Lord addressed Jeremiah's objection (6-8).

1. God doesn't choose His servants based on their adequacy.
2. God chooses His servants based on His sufficiency.

C. The Lord gave Jeremiah what he needed to fulfill his calling (9-10).

1. In Christ, we too have been called.
2. We were called to salvation.
3. We were called to holy living and service.
4. We were called to suffer.
5. We were called to experience the power of God in our weakness.

II. The Lord assures His servant (11-16).

A. He gave Jeremiah an object lesson of an almond tree branch (11-12).

1. The illustration would be a lifetime reminder of His watchful eye.
2. The illustration would be a lifetime reminder of His powerful Word.

B. He gave Jeremiah an object lesson of a boiling pot (13-16).

1. He revealed what was coming (14-15).
2. He revealed why it was coming (16).

III. The Lord assigns His servant (17-19).

A. He told him what to do (17).

B. He told him what to be (18).

C. He told him what to expect (19).

The Bottom Line: Are you living in light of God's call?

I met Duvai in 2001 and he told me a story that still amazes me. We were standing in a mission house on the edge of the jungle in Papua New Guinea when this middle-aged man told me about his birth. Duvai is an Angor who comes from a small clan, in fact, so small that when his father had his first son, the elders insisted the child be killed, due to lack of land, and their decision was implemented. Later a second son was conceived, but again the elders insisted, "We do not have enough land. This child too must die." And so the baby was strangled to death, as Duvai explained, by being choked to death with a special vine.

Then Duvai's mother became pregnant again, this time with him. The same decision was reached by the elders. "The baby must not live." And so, when Duvai's mother gave birth to him, the vine was wrapped around his neck, as with his brothers.

But at that moment, the unexpected occurred. Duvai's father was a bigamist, and his second wife had mercy on the dying baby and snatched him into her arms and ran off into the jungle. Due to her kindness Duvai didn't die, but lived. In fact, as he shared with me, he lived with a sense of purpose, believing the Creator had spared his life so he could use that life for the good of his people. As I recall, Duvai was the first Angor to graduate from high school. He then became an educator so that other children might experience the wonderful privileges he had lived to enjoy.

We all have a purpose for living. Sadly many don't know what that purpose is, but nonetheless we have a purpose. That purpose isn't something we devise. It's been given to us by our Maker and joy comes when we learn to live in light of that God-given purpose.

Do you know what your purpose is in life, and more importantly, are you living in light of it? Jeremiah did. Jeremiah was a man who knew his purpose, and devoted himself to fulfilling that purpose even though the consequences were painful and heart-breaking.

I want to know what made Jeremiah tick, and I want you to know, too. Jeremiah was an amazing man. Not only did he preach a message of judgment to his own nation, for which message he paid a great price, but he also composed lamentations to help his people grieve and return to the Lord once the judgment hit.

How did he do that? How did he turn around and help the very people who hated him and treated him like a criminal and even tried to kill him? That's not natural. What's natural, in the least, is to give the cold shoulder, or worse, to retaliate with pain for pain. When somebody wrongs me, even if it's something trivial like cutting me off in traffic, I'm not thinking, "Okay, that was wrong, but what can I do to help that person now?"

So how did he do it? What made Jeremiah tick? We need to know if we're going to live the kind of purpose-driven lives that pleases our Lord.

That's why we're doing this mini-series, *Living By Faith When Times Are Tough*. We're investigating some key scenes from the life of Jeremiah. This morning we're going to go back to the beginning of the book that bears his name, for it's there we discover something that happened to Jeremiah that shaped him for life.

You won't understand Jeremiah if you don't understand Jeremiah chapter one. More importantly, you won't respond like Jeremiah if you don't learn to see your life the way Jeremiah began to see it in chapter one. In Jeremiah chapter one Jeremiah began to *live in the grip of God's call*.

The truth is, short and simple, Jeremiah didn't volunteer for his lot in life. God called him to it. And the fact that he knew that God called him to be something and to do something made all the difference

when the critics started harping and the arrows started flying. He lived his life in the grip of God's call.

You can endure a lot if you know, first of all, that you're called to it, and second of all, that the One who called you has promised to supply you with every necessary resource to fulfill that calling. That's precisely what Jeremiah knew, and he's worthy of our attention.

In Jeremiah 1 the Lord called Jeremiah into His service and his call involved three elements. The Lord gave him an appointment, then gave him assurance, and then gave him a specific assignment. I'd like to personalize the outline, for I believe that the Lord's call in our lives also involves these three divinely initiated elements.

I. The Lord appoints His servant (1-10).

Notice how the book begins in verses 1-3, "The words of Jeremiah son of Hilkiyah, one of the priests at Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. The word of the LORD came to him in the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah son of Amon king of Judah, 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."

Jeremiah's call to ministry came in 627 B.C. King Josiah was reigning in Judah at the time. In fact, Josiah reigned for another sixteen years after Jeremiah's call. It's worth noting that just five years after Jeremiah's call, Josiah instituted much needed reform and authorized a spiritual house-cleaning in the temple and throughout the land (see 2 Kings 22-23). But the revival under Josiah was short-lived, and moral conditions quickly plummeted following his premature death.

And that was as good as it got for Jeremiah, ministerally speaking. While Jeremiah saw a glimmer of hope for his country at the beginning of his ministry, he then saw that glimmer snuffed out and spent the rest of his life preaching to a stony-hearted nation. I don't think we can fully appreciate what he endured, forty-plus years of preaching with nothing to show for it but rejection. No wonder R. K. Harrison said, "Jeremiah is the most notable of the Hebrew prophets because of the almost impossible mission which God assigned to him."^[1]

Let's walk through Jeremiah's appointment step by step. First...

A. The Lord revealed His purposes for Jeremiah (4-5). "The word of the LORD came to me, saying, '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.'"

The call of God works top-down. Jeremiah certainly didn't initiate this conversation. The Lord did. The word of the Lord came to him. In fact, seven times in chapter one we're told that the Lord's word came to Jeremiah (verses 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14). In verses 4-5 the Lord revealed four astounding facts to this unsuspecting man.

1. *I knew you before you existed.* "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you." When does personhood begin? The so-called pro-choice advocates justify the termination of an unborn "fetus" because it's not yet a person, but just a glob of tissue. But listen to the Maker's assessment. *Before I formed you I knew you.* The Lord knew Jeremiah even before he entered his mother's womb.

The Hebrew word "knew" (*yada'*) is very personal. It's actually used to refer to the intimate relationship between Adam and Eve in Genesis 4:1 ("Adam *knew* his wife," NIV "Adam lay with his wife"). Jeremiah, before you were even conceived, I *knew* you, says the Lord.

2. *I formed you.* The Lord is quite specific. He says, "I formed you in the womb." No one describes this beautiful truth any more vividly than David did in Psalm 139:13-16, "For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. My frame was not hidden from you

when I was made in the secret place. When I was woven together in the depths of the earth, your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be."

You're not here by chance, my friend. The Living God fashioned and formed you in your mother's womb, as He did with Jeremiah.

3. *I set you apart before you were born.* The verb that the Lord uses here means "to set something apart for a particular purpose or use." For instance, God says in His Word that He set apart the Sabbath day so that it would be treated differently than the other six days (Ex. 20:8). In other words, He gave the seventh day a holy purpose.

That's what He did for Jeremiah, too. Before you ever took your first breath, I *set you apart*. For what? What was that purpose? Here it is...

4. *I selected you to be a prophet.* And more specifically, "a prophet to the nations." Wow! That must have got Jeremiah's attention. To the nations? I don't even have a passport, Lord! Remember, he's from the village of Anathoth in Benjamin, just a few miles north of Jerusalem, hardly a metropolitan man.

Not surprisingly Jeremiah responded just like most of us would have responded. Verse 6—"Ah, Sovereign LORD," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child." You may recall that Solomon offered a similar objection (1 Kings 3:7).

You say, "Yea, and it sounds legit. Why would the Lord pick a little boy for this assignment?" For starters, Jeremiah's not a little boy. The Hebrew word for child (*na'ar*) has a broader range than our English word. Elsewhere it refers to infants (Ex. 2:6; 1 Sam. 4:21) and to young men (Gen. 14:24). Most commentators feel that Jeremiah was in his late teens or early twenties.^[2]

But his point is still valid, from a human perspective. "Lord, I'm no public speaker, and I for sure don't have the experience. I've never been a prophet before, nor did I grow up with one (he was a priest). Why in the world would people listen to a young, whipper-snapper like me?"

That's often the response people give when they first learn of the Lord's call. I sure did. When my pastor told me at the age of eighteen that he thought that God was calling me to be a pastor, I told him, "I think you've missed it this time, pastor. The aptitude tests all say I'm supposed to be a doctor. I can't see myself as a pastor..."

Watch what the Lord did next...

B. The Lord addressed Jeremiah's objection (6-8). Verses 7-8—"But the LORD said to me, 'Do not say, 'I am only a child.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,' declares the LORD."

Did you ever notice how often we hear the command "Do not be afraid" in the Bible? Abraham heard it (Gen. 15:1), as did Moses (Num. 21:34; Dt. 3:2), and Daniel (Dan. 10:12, 19), and Mary (Luke 1:30), and Simon (Luke 5:10), and Paul (Acts 27:24). Harrison is right when he shares, "Fear is one of the most paralyzing human emotions, and can only be dispelled fully by the love of Christ."^[3] That's what 1 John 4:18 verifies, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love."

How did the Lord help Jeremiah overcome his fear? I'm intrigued by what the Lord *didn't* say to doubting Jeremiah. He didn't give him the pep talk the self-esteem advocates promote, "Oh, Jeremiah, you can do it, but you need to believe in yourself. You're not that young. I know you've got the potential, so say it with me, 'I can do it. I can do it. I can do it.'"

Quite frankly, Jeremiah didn't have what it would take to fulfill this calling, not within himself. But that wasn't the point, as the Lord's response made quite clear. "I am with you," declared the Lord to Jeremiah. There's an important lesson here for us, beloved. Don't miss it.

1. *God doesn't choose His servants based on their adequacy. Rather...*

2. *God chooses His servants based on His sufficiency.*

Let that sink in, for there are two very common and equally dangerous responses to the Lord's calling for ministry. The first is to say, "Okay, Lord. You want me to do that ministry. Good choice. I'm up for the challenge. I feel adequate. I can do it." That's obviously unacceptable. But to the other extreme of *self-belief* is *unbelief*, and it too is unacceptable. "I can't do it Lord. I know You've chosen me for this ministry, but You've made a mistake. I'm inadequate. You can't use me. Find someone else."

When it comes to responding to God's call, both self-belief and unbelief most go. They're unacceptable. What God's interested in hearing is this. "Lord, in myself I feel so inadequate for this assignment, but if You want me to do it I'll do it because You are my sufficiency. If You are with me, I can do everything that You want me to do. I can be a good pastor, a good husband, a good dad, a good son, a good friend, and I can do it because my competency comes, not from my resume, but from You."

I love how Paul put it in 2 Corinthians 3:5, "Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God."

Perhaps you're on the sidelines right now, as far as God's calling goes. You know the Lord has given you a ministry, but it's not happening. I have some good news for you. Just look at the cross. Jesus Christ didn't die for sufficient people. He died for sinners. He took upon Himself our blunders and He paid the penalty for them. And on the cross God transferred the merit of His Son's accomplishments to our account, if we believe in Him. In Christ God makes us sufficient for all that God calls us to do in life. Has He called you to be a parent? Then in Christ you can be the parent God wants you to be. Has He appointed you to represent Him at your job? Then represent Him, for in Christ you are up to the task. Whatever it is, let's get off the sidelines and in the game!

You say, "But it's going to take more than a pep talk to make it happen." You're right. You need more than words, and the Lord knows it.

Which is why He did what He did next with Jeremiah in verses 9-10, "Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, 'Now, 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.'" Do you see what happened?

C. The Lord gave Jeremiah what he needed to fulfill his calling (9-10). "The Lord touched my mouth," says Jeremiah. How appropriate! Jeremiah was concerned that he couldn't talk very well and that he wouldn't know what to say. So the Lord took that problem away by touching his mouth and putting His own words in that mouth. He gave Jeremiah exactly what he needed to do exactly what He was calling him to do.

That's the way God works. When He calls, He enables. When He appoints, He equips. That's not just true for Jeremiah. That's true for us, too. Let me point out five parallels.

1. *In Christ, we too have been called.* It's our identity according to Ephesians 4:4, "There is one body and one Spirit— just as you were *called* to one hope when you were *called*." If we are in God's family, it's because He called us. Paul reminded the Corinthian believers of that fact in 1 Corinthians 1:26, "Brothers, think of what you were when you were *called*. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth."

In fact, the concept of calling defines what a Christian is according to Romans 8:28, "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, *who have been called* according to his purpose." If we are in Christ, it's because we have received a divine calling.

Which raises the question, to what were we called? The New Testament writers identify several things. For starters...

2. *We were called to salvation.* That's Peter's point in 1 Peter 2:9, "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him *who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*" Paul explains in Romans 8:30, "And those he predestined, he also *called*; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified." Our calling begins with salvation, but it doesn't end there. The Bible makes it clear that like Jeremiah...

3. *We were called to holy living and service.* Listen to how Paul began his letter in 1 Corinthians 1:2, "To the church of God in Corinth, to those sanctified in Christ Jesus and *called to be holy.*" Or to put it another way, we are "called to be saints," says Romans 1:7. And we are "called to a holy life," according to 2 Timothy 1:9.

If that's our calling, and it is, are there implications? Absolutely, says Paul in Ephesians 4:1, "I urge you to *live a life worthy of the calling* you have received." In other words, if we are called to be holy, then we need to live holy lives, that is, lives that are set apart to God for His purposes.

For Jeremiah, that meant being a prophet. That was his calling. God set him apart to serve Him as a preacher to the nations. The Lord has called you and me to serve Him, too. Our lives are not our own, but His, to be lived for His purposes.

Is that happening? Be honest. Is that even how we think about our lives, or our kids' lives? Do we see ourselves as *His* servants who exist to fulfill *His* agenda? Far too often I don't think that way.

Right now our oldest daughter, Julie, is facing the decision about what's next after college. I'll be honest. As a dad I find myself thinking about income levels and job security and a location close to home, but are those the kind of issues that matter most if I'm really serious about Julie living in light of her calling? They're not. What matters most, and what should matter most to me and to you when we think about our lives and our kids' lives is, *how does the Lord want me to serve Him?*

If Jeremiah had been your child, how would you have responded when he told you, "Dad and mom, the Lord has called me to serve Him as a preacher, and He's made it clear that life is going to be hard for me..."? Would you have encouraged your son to follow God's calling, or would you have tried to talk him out of it? A better question is, are you encouraging the sons and daughters you do have to follow God's calling, or is having those grandkids close to home a higher agenda?

Let's be clear about something. Like Jeremiah...

4. *We were called to suffer.* "Everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted," says 2 Timothy 3:12. Suffering isn't optional. We're appointed to it.

In Jeremiah's case, the Lord didn't pull any punches but told him right up front what to expect. The Lord told him in verse 10 that his ministry was going to have a twofold effect. It would be both destructive and constructive, with the clear emphasis on *destructive*. Look at the text. The Lord used four verbs to emphasize the first element ("I appoint you to *uproot* and *tear down*, to *destroy* and *overthrow*"), while only two verbs pointing to the second element ("to *build* and to *plant*").^[4]

Would you have accepted that call? You say, "I'm too weak." So am I. But remember. We're not called on the basis of our strength. Right?

5. *We were called to experience the power of God in our weakness.* Isn't that what the Lord told Paul? After pleading with the Lord regarding his thorn in the flesh, Paul heard these words in 2 Corinthians 12:9, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

So here's where the Lord's call begins. The Lord appoints His servant. I love what He did next with Jeremiah, and am grateful He does it with us, too.

II. The Lord assures His servant (11-16).

I can imagine that Jeremiah's head must have been spinning at this point. "Today I appoint you over the nations," yes, that's what he heard. Graciously the Lord gave him more than words, for in the next scene He gave him two object lessons to fill his heart with assurance, first, the branch of an almond tree, and second, a tilting boiling pot.

When I first began to ponder those object lessons I found myself thinking, "That sure seems like a strange way to give assurance to a struggling prophet." But in reality, those illustrations were indeed quite meaningful to Jeremiah.

Think of it this way. If the Lord called you to be a prophet in 2010 and then sent you a vision in which you saw a bald eagle and a bell with a crack in it, you'd likely conclude, "The Lord must have a message concerning my country, the United States of America." You'd draw that conclusion since the bald eagle and the liberty bell are meaningful emblems in our day.

So it was with almond branches and boiling pots in Jeremiah's day. They meant something to Jeremiah. Meant what? Let's consider them one at a time.

A. He gave Jeremiah an object lesson of an almond tree branch (11-12). Verse 11—"The word of the LORD came to me: 'What do you see, Jeremiah?' 'I see the branch of an almond tree,' I replied."

I discovered that the almond tree was a special tree in Judah. It was known as the "awake tree" because it was the first tree to bud and bear fruit each year. In late January, while the other trees were still dormant, the almond tree would burst into bloom. As one commentary points out, "Jeremiah's vision of the 'awake tree' reminded him that God was awake and watching over His word to make sure it came to pass."^[5]

And that's the very point the Lord emphasized in verse 12, "The LORD said to me, 'You have seen correctly, for I am watching to see that my word is fulfilled.'" In fact, there's a play on words here. The Hebrew word for "watching" sounds like the Hebrew for "almond tree." Do you see what the Lord is doing for Jeremiah? He knows that tough times are coming for Jeremiah, so He's branding a motivational picture into the prophet's brain, a picture that would serve Jeremiah well in two ways.

1. *The illustration would be a lifetime reminder of His watchful eye.* "You'll never be alone, Jeremiah. You may feel alone at times, especially when the people reject you, but you can be sure that I'll be watching."

2. *The illustration would be a lifetime reminder of His powerful Word.* "I won't just be watching, but watching to see that my word is fulfilled."

It reminds me of what the Lord told the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 55:10-11, the same truth but a different metaphor, "As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."

The point? Just give them My word, Jeremiah, and leave the results up to Me. You can be sure the results will surely come. What kind of results? That's the next illustration...

B. He gave Jeremiah an object lesson of a boiling pot (13-16). "The word of the LORD came to me again: "What do you see?" "I see a boiling pot, tilting away from the north," I answered."

It's not hard to figure this one out. If someone tips a boiling pot into your lap, what happens? You get burned. It's coming, Jeremiah. My people are about to get burned. Judgment is coming.

From where? The pot is tilting away from the north, indicating it's going to spill its blistering contents towards the south. And lest there be any misunderstanding about this object lesson, the Lord Himself gives the interpretation in the following verses.

1. *He revealed what was coming (14-15).* "The LORD said to me, 'From the north disaster will be poured out on all who live in the land. 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.'"

In Jeremiah's day, Judah was situated right in the middle of enemy super-powers who were jockeying for position. There was Egypt to the south, Assyria to the north, and Babylon to the east. In fact, King Ashurbanipal, the last great ruler of Assyria, died about the year of Jeremiah's call, and in the next two decades the Babylonians defeated the Assyrians and the Egyptians to take control of the Middle East.

Do you see it, Jeremiah? The boiling pot is tilting from the north, and the day is coming when it's going to scald Judah from top to bottom. That day came in Jeremiah's fortieth year of ministry, in 586 B.C., when the Babylonians burned Jerusalem to the ground.

And lest you're thinking, "But Babylon is situated east of Judah, not north, isn't it?" Yes, but there's a desert between Babylon and Judah, which means in order to attack Judah Babylon had to follow the fertile crescent and invade from the north. Which they did, just like the Lord told Jeremiah they would. But in addition to *what...*

2. *He revealed why it was coming (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."

There's why the pot is tilting your way, Jeremiah. My people have defamed Me. They've forsaken Me and chosen to worship other gods, gods of their own making. That's what I'm going to do, and why I'm going to do it. You can be sure of it.

The Lord is so gracious. First, He appoints, then He assures. He uses His Word to empower the servants He calls, and that includes you and me.

III. The Lord assigns His servant (17-19).

Jeremiah's name means "The Lord throws," and that pretty much sums up how the prophet must have felt that day in 626 B.C. The Lord threw quite an assignment his way, and lest there be any confusion, the Lord clarified the details of the assignment in the third element of his call.

A. He told him what to do (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."

Remember Jeremiah's objection? "Ah, Lord, I don't know how to speak." In reality, Jeremiah wouldn't need great oratorical skills for his ministry assignment, just a tender heart and a ton of perseverance.^[6] Here he learns that his God-given role wasn't to bring the people back to the Lord, although he would call them to do so again and again. No, his task was to announce that they'd passed the point of no return and that judgment was coming. Eloquence wasn't needed. Just faithfulness. "Get on your feet, Jeremiah, and tell the people whatever I tell you to tell them."

What an assignment! The Lord gave Jeremiah the task of being a preacher of judgment. Think of it in comparison with the other prophets. As Feinberg observes, "Isaiah speaks of the salvation of the Lord, Ezekiel of the glory of the Lord, and Daniel of the kingdom of the Lord, so Jeremiah incessantly proclaims the Lord's judgment."^[7]

The next time you find yourself thinking, "I don't like my ministry. I want another one," remember

Jeremiah! We don't choose our assignments. We're called to them. Jeremiah did what he did because the Lord told him what to do. What's more...

B. He told him what to be (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."

Don't miss that. The Lord made Jeremiah into something he wasn't before—a fortified city, a pillar, and bronze wall. And He did it so Jeremiah could do something he'd never done before—stand for God against kings and officials and even priests (his own peers and family). And that's exactly what He does with us.

He makes us into something that we weren't before, so we can do things we've never done before, all for His glory. That's what the cross is all about. When we put our faith in Christ and His cross, we become something new, so we can do something new, all for the glory of Him who called us.

C. He told him what to expect (19). "They will fight against you but will not overcome you, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD."

And that's exactly what happened. For the next four decades, Jeremiah preached to his wayward countrymen, and they fought against him, and God stood with him again and again and again. And then he died.

Some would say he wasted his life, for he forfeited the comforts and applause of this world to fulfill his calling. What do you think? Oh, by the way, he didn't just die. He died and then entered into the presence of the One who called him to the sound of, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." And in that moment there was absolutely no question that it was worth it all!

The Bottom Line: Are you living in light of God's call? For some, it's His call for salvation. For the rest, it's His call for holy living, and for service, and even for suffering? Are you living in the grip of God's call?

****Note:** This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

[1] R. K. Harrison, p. 47.

[2] Observation by Walvoord, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*.

[3] R. K. Harrison, p. 50.

[4] Feinberg, p. 384.

[5] Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-c1985). *The Bible knowledge commentary : An exposition of the scriptures* (1:1131).

[6] Or as Charles Feinberg assesses, "What God required for Jeremiah's ministry, which was to be so sad and denunciatory, was a tender heart able to sympathize with the condemned." p. 383.

[7] Charles Feinberg, p. 386.