

Title: The Prophet Who Looked Beyond Himself

Scripture: Jeremiah 1:4-10, 18:1-6, 20:9

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Jeremiah 1:4-10 *"Then the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 5 Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations. 6 Then said I, Ah, Lord GOD! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child. 7 But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak. 8 Be not afraid of their faces: for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the LORD. 9 Then the LORD put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth. 10 See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant."*

Jeremiah 18:1-6 *"The word which came to Jeremiah from the LORD, saying, 2 Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. 3 Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. 4 And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. 5 Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 6 O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel."*

Jeremiah 20:9 *"Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay."*

The prophet himself:

1. His name: His name means "the one Jehovah appoints." God called Jeremiah when he was younger – maybe in his teens or 20s.
2. The time of his ministry: His ministry spanned 40 years through the leadership of five different kings. He was living in a time when the nation of Judah was in sin. Although this was going on, he remained faithful to preach the word of God. His message didn't change.
3. He is called the "weeping" prophet: He wept and cried often over the state of the nation of Judah.
4. His message: His message was not an easy message. He had to sound out judgment. We have to look at who he rebuked in his message: the people of Judah, the priests, and the princes and God used Jeremiah to rebuke them over one serious sin – idolatry. This is what led Judah into their trouble. He did it because he loved them. Preachers preach to rebuke us so that we know what is causing the trouble in our lives. God has done so much for us and we need to do our best to live up to his standards. Jeremiah told them that they would spend 70 years in captivity at the hands of their enemies. The people wouldn't have anything to do with his message. They threw Jeremiah in a pit and viewed him as a trader. These people didn't want to hear the truth. In chapter 31 of Jeremiah, he not only rebuked them for their sins but he gave them hope. He told them about the new covenant that God was establishing. All they had to do was repent.

The message he brought regarding the potter's house:

1. If you look deeply, we see that this is a message of grace. In chapter 18, it's a chapter of grace. Following that, 19 is a chapter of judgment. We see two main things in this message: the potter and the clay. The potter's wheel is Jesus. He's the center of it. If we don't have him, we don't have anything else.
 - a. God is the potter: Our lives are not in the hands of some invisible force. We are not directed by blind fate, luck, or coincidence. Everything we have is from God. Our lives are in the hands of God. Isaiah 64:8 says *"But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand."* In Romans 9:21, Paul asks *"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?"* If our lives were left up to us to shape and mold, what would our lives look like?

- b. God is the power: Clay cannot mold itself. Only God has the power and ability to direct our lives and mold us so that we are more in his image more today than we were yesterday. In Galatians 4:19 Paul says *“My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,”* It is not God’s fault if we choose to go a way other than his. He wants the best for us. He uses his power to try and form us. It’s not his fault if we decide to go in a different direction.
- c. God has a plan: Our potter has a plan for the clay. God sees the finished product – we don’t. He knows exactly where he wants us to be in our lives. As we yield as the clay to the potter, he will form us and lead us. We need to be careful that we don’t resist him as he’s working in us. Ephesians 2:10 *“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.”* Philippians 1:6 *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”*
- d. God is patient: The potter is patient with the clay. How many times has God had to remold us during our lives? God really does love us. Even though we are marred and we mess up in life, he is patient with us and works with us. Sometimes he uses other people to fashion us into who we are.

All of this work that God does takes time. It’s not an instant result. We won’t be perfect, but we should strive for it. Can you sense the potter working in your life?