

Jeremiah 1:5

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Preacher: Jacob Nantomah

[0 : 00] For our sermon this morning, I would like us to consider together the call of the prophet Jeremiah.

The call of the prophet Jeremiah. We shall read again some of the verses in Jeremiah chapter 1. Jeremiah chapter 1, reading from verse 4.

Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 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.

Then said I, A. Lord God, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child. 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. Be not afraid of their faces, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith the Lord.

[1 : 13] The call of Jeremiah. You know, the call of every prophet is usually the beginning of the ministry of that prophet.

In the Bible, we see records of how some of the prophets were called to begin their ministries. We see the record of the prophets.

We see the record of the prophet Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and many others. They have written as to how the Lord called them, and they became prophets of the Lord, preaching the word of God to the people of Israel.

In Galatians chapter 1 verse 15, we see St. Paul tells us something similar. St. Paul also tells us that he was set apart before he was even born, and called by the grace of God to be a preacher of the gospel.

But among these calls, it is only the call of Jeremiah, which is strikingly very similar to the call of the prophet Moses.

[2 : 34] In Exodus chapter 4 verse 10, when Moses was called, he complained about his own weakness. He said he couldn't preach, he couldn't speak.

Lord, I'm a slow speaker. How can I speak in public? I do not know what to say. He complained bitterly, but God insisted on calling him.

And eventually, Moses has become one of the greatest names in the Bible. So it is with Jeremiah 2, as we are about to see.

When he was called, he was not sure of himself. The Lord said, Jeremiah, just as we have just read, Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.

And before you were born, I consecrated you. I appointed you a prophet to the nations. The preaching of Jeremiah marked a very troublesome time in the life of the country Israel.

[3 : 42] It was a time, it is said that Jeremiah was born at a time just when the bad king, Manasseh, had just died. Jeremiah makes it very clear that it was a troublesome time in chapter 2, verse 1.

It was a time that the people did not know God again. And God says in chapter 2, verse 1 to Jerusalem, he said, I remember the devotion of your youth, how your love as a bride, how you followed me in the wilderness, in the land not sown.

And then in verse 5, God asks, What wrong did your fathers find in me, that they went far away from me, and went after worthlessness, and became worthless?

Then the warning comes in verse 19. Your wickedness shall chasten you, and your apostasy will reprove you.

That's the fear of God, the fear of the very God of Israel, had gone completely out of the land. And as it is recorded in the book of Micah, when the fear of God is completely gone out of the land, we have a situation of godlessness.

[5 : 14] And when there is no God in the minds of the people, when people no longer believe in God, when people no longer trust in the power of God to question their actions, when people no longer trust in the God who can save and redeem them, when people no longer believe in the God who made and created them, then we have all sorts of situations.

When there is no true knowledge of God, there is no private morality, and there is no social morality other. Elementary human rights are ignored, the poor are oppressed, and that is what is recorded in the book of Micah, chapter 3, verse 9, following.

This was the situation at the time of the death of King Manasseh, the time that Jeremiah was born. The rulers hate justice, the judges receive bribes, shopkeepers adjusted their skills, they used wrong skills in order to make more money for fewer goods.

The prophets prophesied for money, money, money, money became the order of the day. No one seems to care about God or about his neighbor.

The important thing is to think about how wealthy we can become. And such prophecies are found also in Amos. When there is no true trust in God, cruelty, robbery, and enmity and aggression become the order of the day.

[7 : 02] Are these not true? Are these not true descriptions of our world today? Who can deny that today, in the world today, God is being pushed further and further away out of sight?

God is being pushed into the corner. To some people today, it sounds a bit abnormal to say you are a Christian. Because parents deny God, because parents have not seen any need for God, children have even gone further not to know that there is a God at all because they have not been taught. Religion looks like something that is old-fashioned. Our church may be an exception in that we find a lot of young people, but if you go into other churches, you'll find that the majority of worshippers are elderly people because the young people have not been taught to know who God is and to see the importance God plays in a young person's life.

As such, children do not see the importance of God. A friend of mine, teaching in Danfries now, went into his, he is teaching religious studies, and when he went into class to introduce himself as the new teacher of religion, one of the kids got up and asked him, but what do you want here? From their point of view, religion is not important, and therefore, what does such a teacher want in their midst? This is not very different from the time of Jeremiah because in the time of Jeremiah, the Israelites worship other gods, and today, we also worship other gods, forgetting the real God, the creator of the world, the real God who has made you and me, we forget him, and we hang about doing other things, trusting other things more than God.

[9 : 16] And because there is no trust in God, there is bound to be immorality in society. One of the byproducts of believing God is a concern for truth and decency, but where there is no God, these are thrown overboard also.

That is the kind of society to which Jeremiah was called to preach. It is the kind of society in which you and me find ourselves.

In verses 4 and 5, as I have just read, God makes it clear to Jeremiah that he was not being called out of the blue. It was not as if God looked at Israel and complained about Israel and then said, what can I do?

Well, whom can I send? And then Jeremiah volunteers, no, the situation is different. It is that the case was rather that even before Jeremiah was born, at the time he, God was forming Jeremiah in the womb of his mother, he knew that the child he, God was forming that day was going to be a prophet to his people Israel.

So Jeremiah was in fact consecrated and set apart that very day before even his mother knew that she had taken seed.

[10 : 50] The call of Jeremiah in this respect, going back to his very creation day, has two implications for us. The first thing is that God places great importance on each of us as individuals.

The most significant, the most insignificant person you see along the street, somebody you may have called worthless, somebody you may have felt is useless, walking along the street has great importance before God because God himself created that person and he didn't create that person out of a mistake.

He brought him into the world for a purpose. Although that person may be denying God, he is still very important for God. Secondly, it means that God is very actively involved in our day-to-day life.

God is actively involved in his creation. Martin Luther was fond of saying that, I know God created the world and me.

I know God created the world and me. His emphasis was that he knows God has created the world, but that is just not the end. God did not stop at creating the world, but he continues his work and that God created he, Martin Luther, as an individual.

[12:22] To say God created the world and stop there may imply that you realize that God has created the world, God created only Adam and Eve, and by the reproductive system we have all come to be, which means God no longer plays part in it.

But the Bible here says no. God formed you in your mother's womb. We are each a creation of God. Each individual sitting in here right now was consciously created, was consciously brought into existence by the God whom we know and worship, even though we may deny him.

God took the step of bringing us individually into existence, and by that he places a lot of importance in us. He creates us that we may know him and that we may worship him.

But where we fail to know him and to bring ourselves to worship him in spirit and in truth, then our lives become a life of waywardness, a life that does not know God, a life that does not know the truth.

God took this step to see, to create Jeremiah, creating the importance in us and in Jeremiah himself. He was not, when God called Jeremiah, Jeremiah was not sure.

[13:59] He was not sure of himself and he says, Lord, I do not know how to speak. I am only a child. I do not know how to speak.

I am only a child. It was not as if Jeremiah thought of his own personal leisure or his personal pleasure or he thought of the difficulties of being a prophet and therefore he didn't want to be. None of this was the case. The case was rather he thought of himself and he felt whole unfit for that purpose. His concern was his own unfitness for such a great office.

He thought of himself and he felt he was not equal at all for such a great office. He knew what it meant to be a prophet. He was probably a person who would normally be timid, very quiet, sit in the corner, rather than take a major position in life.

He would be the sort of person who would be eager to tell people what they want to hear rather than warn them against the word of God. And to such a person, very much aware of his own weakness, God comes to him and tells him, I called you even before I created you.

[15:34] I knew you were going to be a prophet. Jeremiah, in this case, was only being prudent. In all human undertakings, one should first weigh well his own strength and then take measure of his capacity.

You do not start a job before you consider whether you can do, whether you are capable of doing it or not. It is always prudent to consider your capabilities before applying yourself to a task.

And this is exactly what Jeremiah was doing. But that is not wise when the command of God is concerned. When God calls, when God gives a command, we ought to obey.

No matter how deficient we consider ourselves to be, no matter how young we consider ourselves to be, when God calls, we ought to obey.

Because God calls us to use us to establish his ends. He is not, it is not as if he is calling us to do a certain job, but he is calling us to use us to do the job.

[16:52] He is the one going to work in us. And therefore what we need is to be ready and willing for God to use us. We should go into the job conscious of our own weakness and know that he is using us all the same.

Hence he says, do not say I am only a child. You must do what I tell you, for I am with you. What more strength do we need than the fact that God is with us.

God is with us to do the job to which he has called us. That is in himself, in his weaknesses, and by the very fact of his knowledge of his weakness, he was made strong.

When we are aware of a job before us, and we are also aware of our own weaknesses before God, it is then that we learn to rely more and more on God, and by that we see how in fact we can be strong with God on our side.

This reminds us with the story of Saint Paul himself. Saint Paul had a weakness in him, he prayed about it, and he asked God to take this particular weakness away.

[18:15] And God's answer came back saying that his strength, his grace is sufficient for Saint Paul and that his strength is made perfect in our weakness.

The more we see our weakness, the more we see the strength of God. Whatever Saint Paul's weakness was, we cannot say, but what is important is that God taught him to be able to see his weakness in the light of the strength of God.

That is exactly what the prophet Jeremiah is called upon to do now. Learning from the answer of God, do not say I'm only a child.

I'm sending you to do what I command you to do, and all you have to do is to obey commands.

Now, what does the call of Jeremiah mean to you and to me?

What does the call of Jeremiah mean to you and to me? Is it just a text in the Bible that we can read, or it has some meaning as we read it that can apply to us personally?

[19 : 39] As we have seen earlier on, Jeremiah was born at a time when the knowledge of God was far from the land. The people left God for Israel and worshipped, the people left the God of Israel and worshipped other gods.

Because they lacked the true knowledge of God, their lives left much to be desired. Both private and social moralities were gone.

People did just what they felt would help them, without any reference to God. Judges collected bribes, the poor were oppressed, shopkeepers used wrong measures in order to make more money for few goods.

We have seen how that is very much like our own world today. In our world today, bribery and corruption can be found in every country, in most countries, traders and businessmen, businessmen, use every means to adopt, use corrupt means to make as much money as possible. The knowledge of God is gone. Many people no longer see the need for believing God. In communist lands, for instance, the problem is that the people do not have the freedom to gather and worship God in the way that they would like to.

[21 : 09] they do not have the freedom to present God and acknowledge God in the way that they would have liked to. But here, we have all the freedom to do that.

We have all the freedom to acknowledge God, to accept God, and to worship God as our personal savior. But look around us, how many are doing it.

Go into the churches and you find that again, it is few who meet to acknowledge God. It is to such a world that Jeremiah was called.

And it is to such a world that God may be calling you as an individual. God may be calling you right now, just as he called Jeremiah.

God is calling you right now. Does the call of Jeremiah means that today more than ever before, there is a need for you sitting there and me here to dedicate ourselves to the service of God.

[22 : 18] There is a need for more people to commit themselves to God because the knowledge of God is lacking and the warnings of God are upon us, just as the warnings of God were upon Israel.

God is speaking to you right now. He has been calling you for long. You have seen it in various ways in your life.

You yourself have had indications that God is calling you. God wants you to dedicate your life to him and to serve him as your God and your personal savior.

But you've been given excuses. just as Jeremiah wanted to give. Maybe you feel you are too young. You've been saying I am only a child.

I'm not yet old enough. I will wait until I'm old enough, until I'm old like my big sister or my big brother or like my daddy before I can become a Christian.

[23 : 29] Christian. I shall wait until I'm old enough before I can commit myself to God and consider myself a Christian, a born again Christian.

But today God is saying that age does not matter. He calls you the very day he created you. He called you and appointed you to be his follower the right time before you were even born, before your mother even knew she had taken seed, God had appointed you to follow him.

And therefore you do not have to resist God any further. Just as Jeremiah was told, look, Jeremiah, age does not matter in this case, so also in your case, age does not matter.

If you have not yet answered to the call of God, always giving your age as and his choose, then you are being told by Christ and by God today that you should give yourself to God because your age is not a problem.

The call of Jeremiah also has meaning for the not so young. Maybe God has been calling you to a job, God has been calling you to a task, to dedicate yourself to him for some purpose, God has

been giving you several indications of his call, of how he wants you to relate himself to you, how he wants you to relate yourself to him.

[25 : 12] God has made several of these indications in your life, but you've been putting it aside. God has been asking you to make a definite stand for him, but like Jeremiah, you've been finding a way out, saying, well, I'm not good enough, I'm not good enough a Christian, I have not yet committed myself to God, you've been giving one excuse after the other, looking at yourself not fit, not good enough, not worthy enough, and you've been hoping that others may do what God wants you to do.

Today, God is telling you, do not be so introspective, do not look inside you, look outside of you to me, and to see me God, to see what I can use you to do.

Do not be so introspective, do not look at your own weaknesses, do not look at the fact that you've not yet committed yourself to God, and say you cannot do anything.

Today is the time to take a definite step, to take a definite step towards God, because he is calling you through the prophet Jeremiah, and he is telling you that just as he called Jeremiah, so is he appealing to you, because he appointed you even the day that he created you, the day that he put you into the womb of your mother, that very day, he appointed you to be dedicated to him, and your continuing refusal of him is a danger to yourself.

You are only endangering your own self by refusing, continuing to refuse God's call. You cannot remain lukewarm, you cannot remain lukewarm in a life that is meant to be led to God, because God does not take lukewarmness.

[27 : 25] He needs dedication to dedicate yourself to him fresh. If you have dedicated yourself to him already, he needs a renewal of it to rededicate yourself to him afresh and know that you belong to him.

you. But finally, you may feel that this is just for the young. Jeremiah's calling has meaning for the elderly too.

Maybe you too have been hearing him, he's been commanding you in one way or the other, and your attitude has always been to say, well, I'm too old, maybe my children will do it.

Maybe the younger people will do it. I am too old, I cannot take a step, I am too old, I am too old, is always the answer. You will get one indication after the other, but you keep insisting that you are too old.

And through the prophet Jeremiah, God is telling us that age is not the problem. There is a great job to be done still in the world today.

[28 : 43] There is a great job still to be done in Aberdeen today by belonging to Christ. And no matter your age, God can still use you. God can still use you to do the job that he wants to be done in the world.

And you have to answer to his call. Take a definite stand and commit yourself to God. Take a definite stand and say, yes, Lord, I'm sorry I have been resisting for years.

Now I am ready. And pray to him and listen to him and he will tell you exactly what he wants you to do. So the call of Jeremiah has meaning for all of us, no matter your age.

If you are too young, if you are still a child and you say, I'm just a child, I cannot be born again, I'm just a child, I cannot give myself to God, I'm just a child, I do not know what it means to be a true Christian, then the prophet Jeremiah is telling you today, God is telling you through Jeremiah today, that you are wrong.

You have to dedicate yourself to God, you have to commit yourself to God, despite your age, because God called you even before you were born, and if he called you before you were born, then who are you to say you are too young?

[30 : 13] And if you feel you are grown, but you are not good enough to do the job to which God is calling you, again he says, stop introspecting, look outside of yourself, and see the strength that comes in God.

if you feel you are too old, then God says, again, stop looking into yourself, stop putting hindrances in my way, and allow me to use you.

Amen. let us pray.

Amen. Lord our God, we want to thank you for the call of Jeremiah.

We want to thank you that despite his weakness, you insisted and he accepted his call and became such a great prophet to Israel, a prophet that went through so many trials, so many imprisonments,

and yet he kept preaching your word without any single bend.

[31 : 48] He kept you, and you gave him strength. Father, we want to pray that you will teach us to listen to you and to obey your call.

We know that this morning you've been calling us. We know that this morning you are calling us individually, but we've not succeeded in giving ourselves to you.

We are asking that your Holy Spirit himself will help us to do that. We are asking that you keep knocking.

We pray that you keep knocking at the hearts of each of us. Those who are resisting you, Father, we pray that you do not give them rest until they have committed themselves to you.

Those who are giving one reason or the other for not committing themselves to you, for not taking a definite step, to believe in you and to trust in you or to accept the job to which you are calling them.

[33 : 00] We pray, Father, that you do not give them rest. Keep working at them, Father, until they come down on their knees to accept you and to admit that they have for long been resisting you.

Those who have accepted you, Father, we pray that you give them courage to go on, to know the will that you have for them in their lives, to know your will for their lives, and that you may help them to do it.

You may help them to be faithful to you, to trust you, and to follow you, to show by their lives that there are people who believe in you and who trust you.

This is our prayer for Christ's sake. Amen. Now I have the announcement.

The evening service is at half past six and it will be taken by Dr. Emsley. A prayer meeting is held in the session room at six o'clock.

[34 : 19] The midweek meeting for prayer and Bible study is on Wednesday at half past seven.

The services next last day will be taken by Dr.

Emsley in the morning and by me in the evening. The August issue of the Evangelical Times has arrived and subscribers should collect their copies at the door.

There are spare copies for anyone who would like to have one. We shall conclude our service by singing Psalm 100.

Psalm 100, the first version, to the tune Old 100. Psalm 100, to the tune Old 100.

All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with a cheerful voice. Himself with mouth his praise foretell, come ye before him and rejoice.

[35 : 29] Psalm 100, to the tune Old 100. Psalm 100, to the tune Old 100. God 12, to the boat of the pig and who 59 clap in their■■■■ yêu his grace Holy Spirit, all Him has redeemed , all that the love is conceding ,■■■■ifififififififififif

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[39 : 03] Thank you.