

Objection Overruled!

Jeremiah 1:4-10 (NIV)

⁴ The word of the LORD came to me, saying, ⁵ “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.” 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.”

Preaching God’s Word can be hard, thankless, and even detriment to your safety and well-being. Jesus proclaimed the truth when saying of those words of Isaiah that “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” (Luke 4:21) The reaction of the people who had been eagerly anticipating hearing Jesus preach? They were furious! They drove him out of town, and tried to throw him off a cliff! I have had people unhappy with me - even hate me - because I proclaimed to them God’s Word, but I don’t think anyone has tried to kill me for it – that I know of.

I chose to pursue this profession of being a pastor, but at the same time God chose to call me into the public ministry. He very easily could have blocked my way to becoming a pastor, but instead he brought me here. God gave me this calling. Maybe you feel that the place you are at in life is where God has called you to be, but maybe you don’t. Maybe you are in your place very reluctantly. You didn’t choose this life. In fact, sometimes you admit to yourself that you have to get out of this. God put you here, but I don’t want to be here. If we were in a court of law and God said that this is where I am supposed to be, I would shout, “Objection, your honor!”

That’s basically what Jeremiah did when God called him. The word of the LORD came to Jeremiah saying, “I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” (verses 4,5) “Objection, Sovereign LORD!” “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” (verse 6) I can’t be a prophet to the nations. I don’t have the words. I don’t have the knowledge. I’m too young. No one will take me seriously. I am not qualified to do this, LORD.

Do those objections at all sound familiar, like something you have said when it comes to sharing God’s Word with someone else? “I’m not a pastor. I don’t have enough Bible knowledge or know the right passages to be someone who tells others about God. This isn’t my place. Besides, who would even take me seriously? They wouldn’t listen to me. I’m just a student. I’m just a kid. I’m just me.” I know that I have thought and spoken those objections. “Who am I to tell others what to believe? Am I God?” And so I decide it’s not my place. I don’t do what is hard, what is a little scary, and say from God’s Word what needs to be said. I work to salve my conscience that this isn’t on me, that I am exempt. But am I really?

God says, “Preach my Word.” We object, just like Jeremiah. Objection, LORD! This is not my place. I’m too young.

But then the LORD answers back, “Overruled.” “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.” (verse 5)

The LORD knows us before we even come into being. He knows exactly how many days on earth we will have. He knows everything that we will do. Before we have done anything, he lets us know that he has a calling for us. Even in the womb, the LORD sets us apart for his purpose, his plan. Youth has nothing to do with this. The LORD knows exactly where to use you at any age. In fact, the LORD has used young people in the past and has encouraged them to boldly proclaim his Word. He said through the Apostle Paul, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.” (1 Timothy 4:12) You can’t be too young or too old to live for God and serve as an example for others, to fulfill his calling for you.

Objection! I don’t even know where I would go, who I would go to.

Overruled. “You must go to everyone I send you to.” (verse 7) I will put these people into your lives. Proclaim me to them.

Objection! I don’t know what to say. I don’t have the words. I’m not eloquent enough. I’m not persuasive enough. There is so much that I don’t know. Give me time to study, to become wise with years and words.

Overruled. "Say whatever I command you..." (verse 7) Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth." (verse 9)

The LORD has given us his Word – his solid, completely 100% true, accurately and carefully preserved Word. You have come to know that message and believe it. We, same as all people, were sinful by nature. All of us deserve to be cut off from God, destroyed, demolished, uprooted because of our disobedience and obstinance against God. However, we, like Jeremiah, like every believer, have been chosen by God's grace. He pictures his grace to us this way: "All day long I have held out my hands to a disobedient and obstinate people." (Romans 10:21) This love from the LORD is not earned. The LORD did everything for us. He lived the required perfection for us. He clothed us in his righteousness. He wiped out our debt of sin, paid for our disobedience and obstinance against him. This was all given freely by him without any stipulation that it must be paid for. This is what the Word of the LORD says. These are his words that he has put into our mouths so that we can share what we know and believe.

On top of all that, the LORD also promises, "...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." (Isaiah 55:11) So, at the end of the day, it's not about your persuasiveness or your learnedness. It's about proclaiming the word of the LORD, and then stepping back for him to go to work to either uproot, tear down, destroy, overthrow, or to build and to plant. The LORD does the actual convincing.

Objection! I don't want to tell people things that will uproot, tear down, destroy or overthrow. I just want to give people a positive message. I want them to be happy. I want them to be happy with me. If I tell them all this bad stuff that will happen to them, they're probably going to hurt me, want to throw me off a cliff like they did with Jesus.

Overruled. "Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the LORD. (verse 8)

The LORD repeatedly renews and enforces his promise to always be with us, even right now, and especially whenever we are telling other people about him. Even though we may not be able to see him, touch him, feel him, his Word is faithful and true. He keeps his Word, fulfills it. So, yes, he absolutely is with us just as he was with Jeremiah throughout his whole ministry as a prophet. He is our Immanuel, our God with us. He is the one who is with us always to the very end of the age. You are never alone when you are sharing God with others.

The LORD is also our shield and our very great reward. Nothing can separate us from him and his love constant love for us. That means that even though he allows persecution and hatred to come at us, he will indeed rescue us from all of that, just as he did for Jeremiah.

Objection! I'm not Jeremiah. I'm not a prophet. I am not called to this. This is not my responsibility to go and tell others about God.

Overruled. The LORD overrules our objection on this point not from this section of Jeremiah, but many other times in the Word that he has given us. Repeatedly the LORD calls us his priests, the people who taught others God's Word and served the LORD with their whole lives. In the Old Testament, we are called to, "Sing to the LORD, praise his name; proclaim his salvation day after day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous deeds among all peoples." (Psalm 96:2-3) In the New Testament, we are described with this identity and this purpose: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Peter 2:9) You and I, we are not Jeremiah, but we are most certainly called by the LORD to proclaim and share his Word, to tell others about him.

Maybe you noticed that all these objections are about me, my qualifications, my youth, my uncertainty, my knowledge (or lack thereof), my possible persecutions, my specific calling from the LORD. The LORD patiently overrules our objections along with Jeremiah's. This is where we reverse how we are looking at the call to proclaim the Word of the LORD. Instead of looking at ourselves, look to the LORD and then to the people you can tell. We live out our callings to the LORD by telling others about him. This is how we serve the LORD as his priests. Think of the eternal welfare of the people we tell. The LORD has put us specifically into their lives. Will the LORD use us to build these people up to know the LORD, to know his salvation, to know of a God who loves us so much that he gave up his life for us, that he lived perfectly for us, that he did everything for us that we would have all the benefits of living forever in perfection in heaven? We don't know, but it is what the LORD has called us to do.

No more objections, your honor. Send me out with your Word to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant. Amen.