

Jeremiah - His Call and Commission

by Stephen Kaung

Stephen Kaung's sermon explores the life, calling, and struggles of the prophet Jeremiah, emphasizing God's sovereignty and the cost of faithfulness in ministry.

Duration: 1:11:07

Scripture: Jeremiah 1:5, Jeremiah 1:9

Topics: "Jeremiah"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher focuses on the call and commission of Jeremiah as a prophet. Jeremiah was surprised by God's call, but God assured him not to be afraid of people because He would be with him. Jeremiah's commission was twofold, with four negative aspects (to pluck up, break down, destroy, and overthrow) and two positive aspects (to build and to plant). The preacher emphasizes the importance of relying on God's power rather than our own abilities to fulfill our call. Additionally, God reinforces Jeremiah's commission through two visions, one of an almond tree and the other of a boiling pot.

Transcript

This is Sunday evening, May 5th, 1974, in Richmond, Virginia. Ministry is given through Brother Stephen Kahn. We do thank the Lord that we may be together remembering him and fellowshiping one with another.

To me, I feel this is like heaven on earth. Will you please turn to the book of Jeremiah? Jeremiah, chapter 1. I like to read the whole chapter. Jeremiah, chapter 1, verse 1. The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkagai, of the priests that were in Ednathoth, in the land of Benjamin.

To whom the word of Jehovah came in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah. In the thirteenth year of his reign, he came also in the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah. Unto the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah.

Unto the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the valley, I knew thee. And before thou camest forth out of the womb, I hallowed thee.

I appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. And I say, Alas, Lord Jehovah, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child. But Jehovah said unto me, Say not, I am a child.

For thou shalt go to whomsoever I shall send thee. And whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt speak. Be not afraid of them, for I am with thee to deliver thee, said Jehovah.

And Jehovah put forth his hand and touched my mouth. And Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put my word in thy mouth. See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.

And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Jeremiah, what seest thou? And I said, I see a rod of an almond tree. And Jehovah said unto me, Thou hast well seen, for I am watchful over my word to perform it. And the word of Jehovah came to me the second time, saying, What seest thou? And I say, I see a seething pot, and its face is from the north.

And Jehovah said unto me, Out of the north shall evil break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. For behold, I am calling all the nations of the kingdoms of the north, said Jehovah. And they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem.

And against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah. And I will pronounce my judgment against them for all their wickedness, in that they have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped in the works of their own hands. Thou therefore gird up thy loins and arise, and speak unto them all that I shall command thee.

Be not dismayed at them, lest I cause thee to be dismayed before them. And I said, Behold, I appoint thee this day as a strong city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against his princes, against his priests, and against the people of the land. And they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee.

For I am with thee, said Jehovah, to deliver thee. Last time when we were together, we fellowshipped a little bit on Isaiah. Isaiah was raised up by God as a prophet, roughly about 800 years before Christ.

And he prophesied during the reigns of four kings. Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah. He prophesied during a very interesting period of the life of the nation of Judah.

And we find how God gave Isaiah a marvelous vision of the Messiah of Christ. He is the Paul of the Old Testament. Now this time, God willing, we would like to share together on Jeremiah.

Jeremiah prophesied approximately 600 years before Christ. So about 200 years have passed. And Jeremiah prophesied during the reigns of three kings of Judah.

The last kings of the nation of Judah. He prophesied in the days of Josiah, in the days of Jehoiakim, and in the days of Zedekiah. And he prophesied even after the nation was destroyed.

Taken into Babylonian captivity. And we know that he was with that remnant that went down to Egypt. King Josiah, as you read in Kings and Chronicles, was an exceptionally good king.

The nation of Judah at that time was going downward. But somehow God in his mercy raised up a most extraordinarily good king. King Josiah.

It reminds me that oftentimes in judgment, God has mercy. God raised up this man hoping that his people will return. When Josiah came to the throne, he was only eight years old.

But when he was 16, he began to seek the Lord. He sought the God of David, his father. He turned not to the right nor to the left.

He did everything that was right in the sight of God. A boy of 16. And in his 12th year of reign, he was 20 by that time.

He started to purify the land of high places of idol worship. And in the 20th year, the 18th year of his reign, he began to repair the temple in Jerusalem. And you remember, he found the book of the law.

And it was during his reign that the nation of Israel kept the Passover in a way that it was never kept before since the day of Joshua. So you find that Josiah was really sovereignly raised up by God for the nation of Judah. And Jeremiah started to prophesy in the 13th year of the reign of Josiah.

In other words, it was just one year after King Josiah started to purify the land. To prepare the return of God's people. God raised Jeremiah up to help King Josiah in this reform or in this attempt of returning.

Of course, Jeremiah was also a young man. He was of the priestly family. His father was Hilkajah, but not a high priest.

Because his family lived in Annapolis. But he was of the priestly family. But before he was, he entered into the temple to serve as a priest.

You know, a priest will start to be an apprentice in the temple when he was 25. And then when he was 30, he became a full-fledged priest in the temple. But before Jeremiah entered into the priestly service, God called him to be a prophet.

When he was called, he was a young man. Probably between 20 to 25. So in a sense, you'll find age-wise, he was about the same age as King Josiah.

God raised up two young men. One as the king and the other as... With the king, with his authority, he was able to make reform. He was able to lead his people away from idolatry and to return to the service of God.

He took a prophet. To really pierce the hearts of men. And to bring man's heart back to God.

A king with his authority could do the outward thing of reform. But only a priest, only a prophet. With revelation from God.

With word from God. With burden from God. With insight from God.

He could speak for God, penetrate human hearts, expose them, and hopefully lead them back to God in a real way. King Josiah was a good king. And his reform was very real.

But in spite of all his efforts, the people only followed outwardly. Their hearts were far from God. And therefore God raised up Jeremiah to prove into the hearts.

Because when God works, he always does a thorough work. He will never leave any stone unturned. And Jeremiah was raised up in this manner.

Jeremiah prophesied from the 13th year of King Josiah. Until the nation of Judah was taken into captivity. And he prophesied further on.

All together he prophesied. In other words, God used him as a prophet for about 50 years. Now what kind of a man was this man, Jeremiah? Now we know that the name Jeremiah means the Lord is exalted.

And we are told that the name Jehovah is used 700 times in the book of Jeremiah. Here you find a young man. He started young.

And he continued on. You know, sometimes a young man may start well. But does not continue.

But he was like Daniel, you know. Daniel was another man. He was called by God when he was a young man.

And he continued on to his matured age. And I think that's most beautiful. And this was Jeremiah too.

Throughout his life he had only one passion. To exalt. And in order to exalt the Lord, he had to pay a very great price.

Now brothers and sisters, do not think that if you desire to exalt the Lord, if you desire to glorify the Lord by your life, by your words, that because of that you will have a most happy, blessed, smooth time. If anyone desires to exalt himself, he may have a very smooth time. Because this is the world.

And if you agree with the world, the world agrees with you. But to exalt the Lord, especially during a time of great turmoil, of great change. You know, under the reign of Josiah there was great reform.

But it was only outward. And when it came to Jehoiakim and Zedekiah, these were wicked kings. And to exalt the Lord in season and out of season.

To exalt the Lord under any kind of circumstances. To be faithful to the Lord. To be true to the Lord.

To honour the Lord. To know nothing but the Lord himself. Jeremiah had to pay a very high price.

It is costly. So dear brothers and sisters, if you desire to exalt the Lord, be prepared to pay some cost. If you are not prepared to pay any cost, if you want to exalt the Lord and be popular, they go the opposite direction.

You will be torn. But here you'll find Jeremiah, he had only one passion throughout his life. To exalt the Lord.

And how he did exalt the Lord. From the very beginning of his life to the very end. Now what kind of a man was Jeremiah? If you read the book of Jeremiah, you will gather that Jeremiah was a kind of person who was, who had a very yielding, tender, soft, sensitive temperament.

Naturally he was not a strong heart. Naturally he was very tender. Almost like a woman.

He was very timid. Very sympathetic. Full of love.

Naturally he would like to be a friend of everybody. That was the nature, the temperament of that person. When God called him to be a prophet, he drew back in trembling and saying, who am I? I'm but a child.

He was timid. How he loved the children of Israel. How he would be most happy if he could bring some good news to them.

And yet because of their stubborn rebellion against God, he had to proclaim judgment after judgment. And the judgment was final. And brothers and sisters, when he was doing that, he wept.

He couldn't take it. He couldn't bear it. Again and again he told the Lord, Lord, leave me alone.

I don't want to speak for you. It is just too much. And yet he said the fire was just burning within his bones.

And he couldn't, couldn't restrain himself. He had to speak. His love for his people was so great.

He wanted to see the welfare of his people. To see how the people of God would return and be blessed. And yet they considered him as, he was misunderstood.

You do not know how much this man suffered. Of all the prophets you find in the Old Testament, probably none surpassed Jeremiah in this sense. That he was so identified with the messages he delivered.

That you can almost see the messenger and the message. You know, this is the height of prophecy. To prophesy does not mean that you just utter some words of God.

And yet you are as an observer, as a spectator. It is true. The spirit of prophecy can come upon an ass.

And that ass can prophesy. But that ass has nothing to do with what he prophesied. But the height of prophesying is when the prophet, and the words that he prophesied become one.

And then you have the height. And in no other prophets in the Old Testament, you will find it is more true than in the life of Jeremiah. What he prophesied was what he was.

He was so identified with what he prophesied. And that was Jeremiah. He did a very unpopular job.

He was unpopular to the very end. I wonder if a true prophet is really honored while he is alive. We do not know how he died.

But we know because his love for God's people. Even after the nation of Judah was destroyed by Babylon. And he, among all the people, he was allowed to go free.

And yet he wouldn't. He identified himself with a remnant. He warned the remnant not to go down to Egypt.

But they went. And in spite of himself, he went down with them. And we were told by tradition that he was stone to death.

Never popular, but always faithful. Even though naturally he was timid, soft, tender. And yet God raised him up as a strong city.

A pillar of iron and brazen walls. He is to, everybody is to be against him. And he is against everybody.

I really think that he really can be called Antipas. You know who Antipas was? You remember where that name occurs? Revelation. In the book of Revelation you remember there is one called Antipas.

But in history we do not find such a person by that name. So most likely we have to interpret it according to the word. And the word is two words.

Antipas. Anti-everybody. Because everything has gone wrong.

Therefore, in order to stand with God, you have to be against everyone and everything. And you find that Jeremiah was not such a person. And how much he suffered for that.

He was not by nature that kind of person. You know, some person by nature is anti-everything. But this is again Jeremiah's nature.

It is for the Lord's sake. And in his weakness we find the power of God being protected. No one can prevail against him.

Not even himself. The Lord has prevailed in that life. Brothers and sisters, so when we read the book of Jeremiah, we need to understand that person.

If you understand that person, then what he prophesied becomes living. They are not just words spoken by someone. But you find that all these words are really squeezed, oppressed out from his heart.

He is going, he was going through a press. The burden of the Lord was with him. And thank God he was faithful to the end.

And I hope this will serve as a little bit of introduction to help us in our study, in your study of the book of Jeremiah. Because we cannot study the whole book in three sessions. So for our time together, we would just like to pick out a few things.

And learn together the lesson that God wants us to. This evening we would like to fellowship on the call and commission of Jeremiah. And that you'll find in the first chapter.

Verse four. And the word of Jehovah came unto me, saying, Before I formed thee in the valley, I knew thee. And before thou comest forth out of the womb, I hallow thee.

I appointed thee a prophet unto me. One day the word of God came to this young man. He was preparing himself.

He was being prepared for the priesthood. And unexpectedly, God called him to be a prophet. He was surprised by the Lord.

He was thinking that he would just continue to do what his father was doing. But God has something different for him. And isn't that true? That sometimes God does surprise us.

We may think that we are prepared for something. And everything seems to be pointing to that direction. And suddenly you'll find the Lord, say, there.

So the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah and said, I formed thee in the... Before I formed thee in the valley, I knew thee. God called him to be a prophet. And God's calling is based on three things.

Number one, God's calling is based on God's foreknowledge. Before I formed thee in the valley, I knew thee. God is the omniscient God.

He knows everything. He knows everything about you before you are formed by him. With him, with his knowledge, everything is present.

There is nothing unknown, nothing in the future. God said to Jeremiah, before I formed you in the valley of your mother, I knew you already. That is the foreknowledge of God.

Now this is tremendous because we do not have such knowledge. And we do not know how such knowledge operates. It is beyond our understanding.

But God being God, he foreknows everything. He foreknows. And you know, God's calling is based on his foreknowledge.

That is the first thing. The second thing. And before thy cometh out of the womb, I hallowed thee.

Before Jeremiah was born, God had already set him apart. In other words, divine election. Jeremiah was divinely elected.

He was divinely set apart, even before he was born. And of course, divine election is according to foreknowledge of God. Not because you have done anything.

It just pleases him to choose you. And you know, in Romans, we are told that before Jacob and his brother Esau were born, when they were still in their mother's womb, God said, I love Jacob, I hate him. To prove that divine election is not according to works, because they haven't done anything good or bad.

It was according to his foreknowledge. Whom he foreknows, he predestined, predestined that we may be conformed to the image of Christ. So here you find number one, foreknowledge.

Number two, divine election. And then number three, I appointed thee a prophet unto the nation. Appointment.

Divine appointment. When you come to this matter of calling, you find God is sovereign. And he is the one who initiates everything.

He calls according to his foreknowledge, by divine election, and with divine appointment. Now brothers and sisters, we may not all be divinely appointed to be prophets. And yet, you find the same principle work with every one of us.

God foreknows everything. Even before he forms us, he knows us. And if you read Psalm 139, you will find that even before our bones are being connected, all our days are already numbered in his book, recorded in his book.

He knows everything. God knows us before we are born, before we are formed. And this is true with every one of us.

God foreknows, and thank God, according to his foreknowledge, he has elected us. Not because you are in anything better than anybody else. It is just because he knows, and he elects us.

Thank God for that. You know, when I was young, I was puzzled by this divine election. I thought it was a hard doctrine.

Hard to swallow. But the older I go, the more I like that. I love it.

I love it. If it's not because of his foreknowledge and his divine election, I won't be here. Thank God.

Dear brothers and sisters, God knows you before. God has chosen you in Christ Jesus. He has set you apart with a plan.

There is a divine appointment with everyone. You do not choose which member of the body of Christ you want to be. It is by divine election.

It is by divine appointment. Thank God he has called us. He has called us into the body of Christ.

You just do not happen to be in that body. You just do not try to join that body. It is by his foreknowledge, through his divine election, that we are now in the body.

And dear brothers and sisters, do you know that? Being divinely elected to be in the body of Christ, God has appointed to each one of us a place in that body. We are members one of another in that body. No one chooses to be which member of that body he or she wants to be.

It is according to divine appointment. It is easy to say that. But probably it takes some time for you to accept it.

I think we have a tendency, always like to be somebody else. I think we have a tendency, always think that somebody else's job is more excellent than ours. More noble than ours.

We always like to be on the other body. But brothers and sisters, remember one thing. We are called to be members of the body of Christ.

And it is all by divine appointment. He has appointed you, maybe to be an eye, or maybe to be an ear, or maybe to be a nose, or maybe to be a mouth, or maybe to be a hand, or maybe to be a foot, or maybe to be... It's all by divine appointment. God has set us apart with a definite reason.

There is a service, a ministry, that we can minister unto God and to His people. And it's all by divine appointment. You remember Paul again and again said, Paul, an apostle, not by man's will, but by the will of God.

It is divine appointment. What your calling may be, brothers and sisters, does not depend upon yourself, upon your choosing. What your calling in the body of Christ may be is by divine appointment.

And what we need to know is, what is that divine appointment? And remember, it is only to the humble that the divine appointment will be made known. Oftentimes we do not know our place in the body of Christ. It is because we are proud.

We do not want to be where God has put us. We think we deserve something higher. Just like the ear will say to the eye, I'm not I, therefore I do not belong to the body.

Or the foot will say to the hand that I'm not the hand, I'm too low, so I'm not of the body. All by divine. And dear brothers and sisters, if we can accept divine appointment and to function accordingly, the body will be built up under the hand.

So here you'll find God called Jeremiah. God said, I appointed thee a prophet unto the nations. Primarily, his prophesying was towards the nation of Judah and Jerusalem.

Because this was God's people. And yet you'll find he prophesied also of the nations that surrounded the nation of Judah. He was appointed a prophet unto all the nations.

And in similar manner, brothers and sisters, we are all appointed to be an apostle, a prophet, a teacher, an evangelist, a helper, or whatever it may be. And you'll find primarily it is for God's people. But if hindrance were reached to us, that was the calling.

God called Jeremiah to a definite ministry. And when Jeremiah heard this calling, what was his reaction? Here you'll find he said, and I say, Alas, Lord Jehovah, behold, I cannot speak, for I am. Now actually, Jeremiah at that time was not a little child.

Actually, at that time, he was probably in his early twenties. From twenty to twenty-five, possibly. And you know, as a young man of twenty to twenty-five, oh, he knows everything.

He thinks he knows everything. As a young man of that age, certainly, if a call should come to him, he will accept it right away. He says, fine, I'm waiting for that.

I'm prepared for that. I'm more than equal for that job. Isn't that like young people? But listen to this young man.

When God's call came to him, he said, Alas, Lord Jehovah, I cannot speak, for I am. Now he was not acting like Moses when Moses was eighty years old. You remember Moses when he was forty? He was ready.

So he went out. And then when he was eighty, he was unready. And when God called him, he said, Who am I? Cannot speak.

Who am I to appear before Pharaoh? Oh, no, no. I'm not that kind of person. And God was angry with him.

And you remember another man, Zechariah? When he was burning incense in the temple, the angel appeared to him and said, Now you will have a son. And he will be the forerunner of the Messiah and so forth. And Zechariah, who had been praying all his life for that, and said, How do I know? And the angel said, Because you do not believe, you are not able to speak.

But here you find with Jeremiah, he was not reacting like Moses. He was not reacting like Zechariah when he said, Alas, Lord Jehovah, I cannot speak, I'm a child. He was not trying to reject it.

He was not trying to evade it. He was not, he wasn't disbelieving God at all. On the contrary, his reaction was like Mary, the mother of Jesus.

You remember when the angel came to Mary and said, You shall have a child, the Holy One. And Mary said, How can it be? I'm a virgin. I'm not married.

And when the angel told him, It is God's Spirit. The power of God shall overshadow you. Therefore, the one that is born is the Holy One.

And you remember Mary says, I'm a handmaid of the Lord. Be it. And the attitude of Jeremiah was in that category.

Even though he was a young man, yet he was not careless, nor rashful. There was a depth in that young man. He knew it was a great privilege to be called a prophet, to be God's mouthpiece.

What a privilege that is. And yet he knew the great responsibility involved. He knew that in himself he was not competent.

He said, Lord, I cannot. I'm not matured enough. Even though I know you, yet I do not know you enough.

I'm not ready yet. Not that I'm not willing, but I'm not ready yet. I'm fearful in that I will fail.

I will fail you. You know, this is the attitude of Jeremiah. Oh, brothers and sisters, oftentimes when God's calling comes upon a person, if that person really knows the Lord, the reaction will be like Jeremiah.

Oftentimes before God calls, we already answer. But when a real calling comes, when you begin to realize what is involved, to speak, you know you're but a child. You cannot speak.

It is the humility that you find in Jeremiah. And brothers and sisters, God rejects the pride and exalts the humble. Oh, how important it is that there is a spirit of humility when God's call comes to us.

May there be such a spirit of humility. The spirit of humility is the spirit of Christ and is only in that spirit you're able to respond to. You're able to fulfill God's calling.

So, Nehemiah said, I cannot speak. I'm but a child. And God knows it.

And God said, do not say you are but a child. For thou shalt go to whomsoever I will send thee. And whatsoever I command thee, thou shalt say.

Be not afraid of them, for I am with thee to deliver thee, saith Jehovah. Do not say you are a child. Why? Because you are just a rapture.

I am the one who will send you where you need to go. I am the one who will put my word into your mouth that you will speak. Do not be afraid of people.

I'm with you. In other words, to fulfill a calling never depends upon ourselves. If you think that you can fulfill God's calling, you will fail.

But when you realize that it is not you, but it is the power of God in you, then you will be able to fulfill it. Now, what was Jeremiah's commission? Verse 9. And Jehovah put forth his hand and touched my mouth. And Jehovah said unto me, Behold, I have put my word in thy mouth.

See, I have this day said thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to set. His commission was twofold. The negative and the positive.

Four negatives and two positives. The negatives are to pluck up, to break down, and to destroy and to overthrow, to tear it to pieces. What a destruction.

God is never interested in patching jobs. Whenever God does a thing, he does it thoroughly. Jeremiah was not commissioned to patch up something.

Jeremiah was commissioned to do a thorough job, to break down, to destroy, to tear in pieces. Everything that is not of God must be completely set apart. God had no desire to patch up things.

And you remember what our Lord Jesus said in his parables of new and old? You do not patch up an old dress with a new piece of cloth. You do not put the new wine into an old wine skin. You'll find with God, when he does a thing, it's always the why does it need to be broken down? Why should there be destruction? It shows that something has already gone wrong.

Something has already gone out of God's will. And for that reason, you'll find the destroying, the breaking down is negative. Of course, God's purpose is never negative.

God's purpose is always positive. But before God can do his positive work, because man has already done so much, you have to break down and destroy first. How, brothers and sisters, do you think we want to help God? We have helped him so much that he has to do lots of destruction work.

The more you help him, the more he has to pluck up. He has to tear it to pieces. Oh, if we do not do all these things and let him have a clear ground, then he will be able to plant and to build up.

But because we are so helpful, he has to do a lot of it. And here you'll find, God said, these negative things, but these are not the purpose, the end. The real aim is to plant.

And you remember in 1 Corinthians chapter 3, Paul says the same thing. Paul says, we are fellow laborers. And you are God's husbandry and you are God's building.

So here you'll find husbandry is to plant. And building, of course, is to build up. When you plant a thing, it speaks of inner life.

Oh, what God desires to do is to see plenty and life increases until it will bear fruit a hundredfold, sixtyfold, and thirtyfold. But unless you plant the seed first, you will not have the fruit. And that's what God always wants to do, to plant, that life may multiply and to be able to grow.

Not only to plant a matter of life, but also to build until we have received His life. And as the life of Christ begins to increase in us, then these lives have to be built up together. And in building, you know, lots of discipline is involved.

So Jeremiah's mission was twofold. On the one hand, to break down. On the other hand, to build up.

Oftentimes, when you read the book of Jeremiah, you think that he is only doing the negative work. He never does the positive thing. But if you read more carefully, you'll find that he does.

Although you find the negative things are four in number and the positive only two. And that's the reason why sometimes we are, we misunderstand. But actually, you'll find the commission is for Jeremiah to build up.

And brothers and sisters, this is also our commission. God's intention is that we may plant and we may build. But in order to accomplish, we have to, to break down, to destroy, and to tear in pieces.

Brothers and sisters, oftentimes you'll find we build what we should tear down. And we tear down what we should build. We do not see the difference.

We do not have the spiritual design. Why? Because we are doing everything. Instead of waiting upon the Lord and letting Him show us, let His Spirit lead us.

Then we will be able to tear what it should be torn and to build what should be built. And to reinforce that commission, God showed Jeremiah to vision, to sign. The first sign, verse 11.

And the word of Jehovah came to me, saying, Jeremiah, what see is thou? And I say, I see a rod of an almond tree. And Jehovah said unto me, thou hast well seen, for I am watchful over my word. Somehow you'll find the order is reversed.

When God gave commission to Jeremiah, God gave the negative side first, and then the positive. To pluck up, and then to plant. To destroy, and then to build.

But here, in reinforcing the commission, when God gave him two visions, the visions seem to reverse the order. God first gave him a vision of a rod of almond tree. And then the second vision is a seething pot coming from.

Now when you see such a vision, what will be your understanding? Now you must remember that Jeremiah, he was trained as a priest. And you know, in the history of priesthood, a very special incident happened. Most extraordinary incident happened in the history of priesthood.

And every priest who studied to be a priest must have learned this history. And it was basic to priesthood. And you know what it is? One day some people came and said, Why is it that only Aaron can serve in the tabernacle? God's people are all holy.

Can we not all serve? Why should Aaron usurp the service of God? We were also God because we are God's people. We are all holy. In other words, you'll find there was a controversy over who.

And you know how God settled that question? God said, All right, every tribe prepare a rod. You cut from the tree, have a rod. So every tribe had a rod with the name of the tribe on it, and on Levi's rod, the name of Aaron.

And these twelve rods were left before the ark of God. So did I. And you remember the next morning when they took the twelve rods out? All the eleven rods remained dead rods. They were still dead.

But Aaron's rod budded. And there, a rod of almond tree. Now Nehemiah was trained to be a priest.

He couldn't forget that incident. Because that was basic to priesthood. So when Nehemiah, Jeremiah, when Jeremiah saw that vision, no doubt his mind would immediately go back to Aaron's rod that budded.

No doubt about that. In the scripture, always speak of revelation, resurrection. Because almond tree is the first tree after winter that begins to bud and start to bear fruit.

So in the scripture, almond tree always speaks of resurrection. It is in the power of this resurrection that the priesthood is to be established. Brothers and sisters, who can serve God? Only those who serve God in the power of the resurrection of the life of Christ.

We are dead rod. There is no life in us. We cannot serve God's purpose.

But with the power of His resurrection, we are able to minister unto God and unto His people. So priesthood is based upon the power. It is not by anybody saying, I'm holy, therefore I can serve.

Who has the power of His resurrection is fit to function as a priest. The same principle is true with a prophet. A priest must serve in the power of resurrection.

So is a prophet. A prophet is not to serve in his own strength, but a prophet is to serve in the power of the resurrection. You remember Paul, mentioned in 2 Corinthians, he said, we are giving the ministry of the new coming.

Not of letter, but of spirit. Not written upon stones, but written upon human hearts. Who is competent to be ministers of the new covenant? Paul said, we are not competent at all.

Our competency is, brothers and sisters, how can we minister? How can we function? How can we fulfill our calling in the body of Christ? No matter what special calling it may be. No matter what particular work God is calling you to do. But we are all being called to serve in the house of God, in the body of Christ.

Now, how are we going to fulfill our calling? It is with the law of elementary. It is in the power of His resurrection. As we know the power of His resurrection, then we are able to minister life unto those who will receive life, and even death to those who deserve it.

You remember Paul said, we are the sweet savor of Christ, the fragrance of Christ, the order of Christ. And to those that are dead, death. To those that are alive, life.

Who is competent? It is of God. And that is exactly what you find here. Jeremiah was to minister to God's people.

He was to minister to God's people as a rod of almond tree, or with a rod of almond tree. He was to minister with the power of the resurrection, of resurrection. And as he ministered in this power, it will be life to those who accept it.

His ministry, but death to those who reject it. It's very serious, but it is very real, very real. So here you'll find God's rays of Jeremiah to plant with that spiritual authority that comes out of resurrection life.

And this is the only way that we can minister. We can be of use. Sometimes it may mean death, and yet it is resurrection power.

It is resurrection power. And that is what God has raised Jeremiah up for. And then you'll find the second vision.

The second vision is a seething pot coming from the north. And we know in history this was fulfilled with the coming of the Babylonians. Because the children of Israel refused the prophecy of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah ministered to them in the power of resurrection. It should be life to these people, but because they rejected him, therefore God's judgment finally came upon the people. 23 years later you'll find the judgment again to fulfill.

Until they were taken into Babylonian captivity for 70 years. In other words, because they did not receive the ministry, the prophetic ministry of Jeremiah, therefore judgment came upon them. And this is always true.

Always true. Whenever people minister in the power of his resurrection, and it is life to those who receive, and it is always death to those. And because of the seriousness of this commission, God encouraged

Jeremiah and warned him too.

God said, be not dismayed lest you be dismayed before God. In other words, just go on with the Lord. Do not be afraid.

If you are afraid, you will be made afraid. But if you are faithful, God said, I will make you a strong city. A pillar of iron and brass wall.

You will be against all nations, all people, the kings, the priests. They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, the Jehovah today. And how true it is in the life of Jeremiah.

You find that he was literally against the kings and the priests, and even the false prophets and the people. He was against everybody. And how they tried to persecute him.

They thrown him into prison. They put him into dungeon. And yet the Lord preserved him.

No one can prevail against him, because the Lord was with him to deliver him to the very end. So brothers and sisters, this should be an encouragement. Again, we will say, God has called us into this body of Christ.

We are all set apart and divinely appointed in each of our... And it is our commission to plant and to yield. But sometimes we have to pluck up and destroy. It is in the power of his resurrection that we minister.

And the effect is very huge, but we don't need to be afraid. The Lord is able to deliver us. So I think tonight we will just fellowship on this calling and commission of the prophet Jeremiah.

Shall we pray? Lord Jesus, how we praise and thank thee that it does not depend on us, but it is up to thee to call. And it is by thy power that any is able to fulfill what thou has called. Oh, how we praise and thank thee there need not be struggle.

We can rest in faith, knowing that thou does it and thou will do it well. Oh, we just commit ourselves to thee, yield ourselves to thee. Lord, we would be like Jeremiah, even though we are timid.

And yet, Lord, we are in thy hand. May thy will be done on each one of us. Have thy own way and glorify thyself.

We ask in the name of thy son, our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

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