

Introduction

When I was in sixth grade, I lived in a mobile home that was split into apartments. A family moved in next to us from California; they had a son in my grade. I remember playing in our front yard one day and I became very burdened to share the gospel with him. I think I said a couple of things, but didn't really build up the courage to speak about the gospel explicitly. Within a few days, he moved away and I never saw him again.

I grew up in church and knew the Bible and the gospel. However, as an 11-year-old, I did not have an understanding of deep theological or biblical truths. In fact, I probably would have made quite a few mistakes in explaining the gospel to that boy. *Was I really the right person to share the gospel with him?*

Main Idea

[Jeremiah 1](#) answers the question, *what should I do with God's word?* God has given us His word. *Should we neglect it? Should we trust it? Should we tell people about it or respect other people's space and keep it to ourselves?*

This chapter explains in the context of Jeremiah's call to be a prophet that **God has given us His word to proclaim to others.**

Context

God's people should proclaim God's word in the context He places us.

Jeremiah

Who was Jeremiah? [Jeremiah 1:1](#) "1 The words of Jeremiah, the son of Hilkiah, one of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin,"

Jeremiah was a priest, who lived in Anathoth in the territory of Benjamin. Verse 5 also indicates that God called Jeremiah to be a prophet.

Setting

When did Jeremiah prophesy? [Jeremiah 1:2-3](#) "2 to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. 3 It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, and until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the captivity of Jerusalem in the fifth month."

After Solomon's reign, the people of Israel divided into two kingdoms, ruled by different kings. At this point in history, the northern kingdom, called Israel, had been overthrown by the Assyrians. The southern kingdom, called Judah, remained, but would soon be overthrown by the Babylonians.

Jeremiah began proclaiming God's word in the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign, which was about 627 B.C. He continued preaching until Jerusalem was taken captive by the Babylonians, which was about 586 B.C.

Significance

Like Jeremiah, God's people are **all** called to proclaim God's word. This does not mean that God's people are all called to be prophets or apostles. In fact, I would argue that **none** of us are called to be prophets or apostles. God **revealed** Scripture (His word) through prophets and apostles ([2 Pet 1:20-21](#)). God's revelation of Scripture was completed in Christ ([Heb 1:1-2](#)) and finished in those whom Christ appointed as His apostles. We are not **waiting** for God to reveal His word to us. He **has revealed** it. We need only **proclaim** it.

Verses 2-3 do more than give us the historical setting of this book. These verses remind us that we all **proclaim God's word in the context He places us**. By God's sovereignty, Jeremiah lived from (before) 627 B.C. until 586 B.C. By God's sovereignty, Jeremiah lived in the kingdom of Judah. By God's sovereignty, you are alive in 2026. By God's sovereignty you live in (or near) Faulkner County. If God has placed you here and now, then you should proclaim His word here and now.

In Faith

God's people should proclaim God's word in faith.

Knowing God

Jeremiah had a **relationship** with the Lord. [Jeremiah 1:4-5](#) "4 Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 5 "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.""

What did God do for Jeremiah? He **formed** Jeremiah in the womb ([Jer 1:4](#)). The Lord gives life and the Lord gives us children. I read an article a while back about a European country that had nearly eliminated Downs Syndrome, which sounded like good news. But the article explained that Downs had been removed by aborting babies with Downs before they were born. Every child, no matter how inconvenient you think he/she may be, is formed by the Lord.

The Lord also **knew** Jeremiah ([Jer 1:5](#)). This does not mean that the Lord knew **about** Jeremiah. The Lord had a relationship with Jeremiah; He intimately knew him. The Lord

consecrated (or set apart, made holy) Jeremiah ([Jer 1:5](#)). He was devoted to the Lord. Finally, the Lord **appointed** Jeremiah to be a prophet to the nations ([Jer 1:5](#))

When did these things occur? The Lord knew Jeremiah before he was formed in the womb ([Jer 1:5](#)). The Lord consecrated and appointed Jeremiah before he was born ([Jer 1:5](#)). God's plan for Jeremiah **preceded** Jeremiah's deeds. All that God did for Jeremiah was based on God's grace, not Jeremiah's merit.

Eyes on self

Jeremiah was hesitant to proclaim God's word. [Jeremiah 1:6-8](#) "6 Then I said, 'Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.' 7 But the Lord said to me, 'Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, declares the Lord.'"

Jeremiah was hesitant because he was young. However, **age is not a prerequisite for proclaiming God's word**. God told Jeremiah to proclaim His word when he was young. God told **Moses** to proclaim His word when he was 80. Both men said they were unfit for speaking on behalf of God ([Exod 4:10](#)).

What reason do you have for not telling others the word of God, whether telling the gospel to unbelievers, teaching the next generation of believers, or teaching mature believers? Whatever reason you have for not speaking God's word, listen to God's response to Jeremiah. "Do not say _____, for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak" ([Jer 1:7](#)).

Jeremiah wrongly looked at himself to determine if he could proclaim God's word. If you look at yourself, you will probably find a reason to be silent.

Eyes on the Lord

The Lord directed Jeremiah's attention to what **He** had done and would do. [Jeremiah 1:9-10](#) "9 Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, 'Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.'"

Jeremiah's ability to speak God's word depended on what the Lord had done. The Lord put His words in Jeremiah's mouth. The Lord set Jeremiah over nations and kingdoms, meaning that He placed Jeremiah in a place to proclaim their condemnation and their salvation. Jeremiah was not greater than nations and kingdoms, but the Lord is. Jeremiah did not overthrow kingdoms or build kingdoms. Jeremiah was called to proclaim the words that the Lord placed in his mouth. The Lord would accomplish His word ([Isa 55:10-11](#)). **We proclaim God's word in faith**, trusting Him to accomplish His word.

There is a prerequisite to proclaiming the word of the Lord. You must have the word of the Lord in your mouth. God has revealed His word to us in Scripture. *How well do you know Scripture? How devoted are you to knowing Scripture?*

You do not need the word of a pastor in your mouth. You do not need the word of a biblical scholar in your mouth. Scripture says that God gave the church pastors ([Eph 4:11](#)), but faithful pastors fill the church's ears with Scripture. And faithful believers fill their eyes, ears, and hearts with Scripture when they get home. We cannot proclaim God's word unless it is in our mouth.

In Truth

God's people proclaim God's word in truth.

Almond branch

Verses 11-16 give two prophecies that shape Jeremiah's life. First, the Lord gives Jeremiah assurance of His word. [Jeremiah 1:11-12](#) "11 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, 'Jeremiah, what do you see?' And I said, 'I see an almond branch.' 12 Then the Lord said to me, 'You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it.'"

The Hebrew word for almond (אֶמְשֵׁי) is **very** similar to the word for watching (רָאָה). So, God uses the almond branch to teach Jeremiah to trust His word. Jeremiah will not proclaim God's word in isolation. The Lord will watch over His word and will bring it to pass.

Do you have confidence in God's word (Scripture)? Your confidence in Scripture will be reflected in your confidence of proclaiming. If I am confident that the Lord will accomplish His word, then I can proclaim His word as truth to an unbelieving world with confidence.

Boiling Pot

Second, the Lord previews Jeremiah's message. [Jeremiah 1:13-16](#) "13 The word of the Lord came to me a second time, saying, 'What do you see?' And I said, 'I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north.' 14 Then the Lord said to me, 'Out of the north disaster shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land. 15 For behold, I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, declares the Lord, and they shall come, and every one shall set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its walls all around and against all the cities of Judah. 16 And I will declare my judgments against them, for all their evil in forsaking me. They have made offerings to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands.'"

Judah had drifted into idolatry. They sacrificed to false gods. They worshipped false gods - gods that they had made, rather than the God who made them. The Lord's message for Jeremiah was that He was sending an enemy from the north to overthrow Judah, including

the city of Jerusalem. This invasion was not by chance. This was the Lord's judgment against those who had rejected Him.

The message of the gospel that we proclaim today is much like this vision. The gospel is not just that we can be saved. The gospel is that God's kingdom has come when Jesus, the Savior, came. Those who do not worship Christ or submit to Him are outside of that kingdom; they are worshipping false gods. Therefore, they are destined for eternal wrath and condemnation. Although it is difficult to tell people that they are destined for wrath, it is important that **God's people proclaim God's word in truth**. People need to be warned. We should not soften the message of the gospel.

Without fear

God's people should proclaim God's word without fear.

Do not fear

The Lord told Jeremiah that he should not fear those whom he warns. [Jeremiah 1:17-18](#) "17 But you, dress yourself for work; arise, and say to them everything that I command you. Do not be dismayed by them, lest I dismay you before them. 18 And I, behold, I make you this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land."

Why would the Lord need to encourage Jeremiah that he need not fear? Such fear was warranted. Jeremiah will be frequently opposed, including arrested and thrown into a pit. The Lord has sent him to warn people of impending judgment against their idolatry. They did not want to hear this message. If Jeremiah holds back God's word out of fear, then he will be made to fear before his opponents.

I am with you

Importantly, God explained why Jeremiah should not fear. **The Lord would be with him.** [Jeremiah 1:19](#) "19 They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, declares the Lord, to deliver you.""

Notice that the Lord does not promise Jeremiah safety. In fact, He warns Jeremiah that people **will** fight against him. Jesus warned His disciples in the same way. If they hated and persecuted Jesus, then His followers should expect the same hatred and persecution when we are faithfully proclaiming the gospel. **Perhaps we don't experience the same persecution as Jesus because we are not proclaiming God's word as faithfully as He did.**

Jeremiah's boldness came from the Lord's promise of His presence. "I am with you" ([Jer 1:19](#)). Jesus commanded His people to make disciples, proclaiming the gospel and teaching God's word ([Matt 28:19-20](#)). Our ability to make disciples rests on Christ's presence with us. He said

that He had all authority in heaven and on earth and that He would be with us always ([Matt 28:18, 20](#)). Our confidence in sharing the gospel rests in Jesus's promise to always be with us.

Conclusion

What should God's people do with God's word? [Jeremiah 1](#) explains that **God gives His word to proclaim to others.**

In closing, I want to give two practical responses to this passage. First, you should regularly commit time to personal Bible reading and study. Unlike Jeremiah, we have the full revelation of God's word. Read the Bible broadly, so that you have a sense of all of Scripture. Read the Bible carefully, so that you have an understanding of Scripture. We grow in our relationship with the Lord through personally reading and studying Scripture. We can only proclaim God's word if we know His word.

Second, proclaim the gospel to people. God has placed you in the time and place you live. God has also given you family and friends who do not know Him. God has also given you opportunities to interact with people. *For what purpose has God sent you to this time, this place, and these people?* He didn't place you here just to live your life and then die. God placed you here so that people would know Him through His word. I don't know if my sixth-grade neighbor **ever** heard the gospel. **You** are responsible for whether **your neighbor** hears the gospel. God's people are only faithful and obedient **if** they are proclaiming the gospel.

The Lord gives His word to proclaim to others.