

The Ten Basic Steps: Step #9: Exploring the Old Testament

Lesson 7: Jeremiah-A Witness Who Stood Alone

Objective: To serve God faithfully in the face of discouragement.

Read: Jeremiah 1, 20, 21

Memorize: Jeremiah 23:29

1. Jeremiah's Call
2. Jeremiah's Arrest and Prayer
3. Jeremiah's Prophecy
4. Life Application

If you think it is difficult to stand for Christ in your home, on your campus, or in your community, draw some encouragement from Jeremiah.

He was a prophet who endured. He acted as God's faithful messenger in spite of many attempts on his life. His enemies challenged his prophetic honesty. He lived in constant friction with religious and political authorities. And little wonder. He recommended national surrender to the Babylonian Empire and called Nebuchadnezzar, Judah's most hated enemy, the "servant of the Lord" (Jeremiah 25:9,27:6). Furthermore, he incited his colleagues to desert to the enemy and was accused and convicted of treason.

Sometimes he complained to God about the misery of his office. But he was so sorrowful for the fallen condition of Israel that despite all of his hardships, he persisted in speaking the word of the Lord faithfully and earned the title of "weeping prophet."

Jeremiah is an example to us of sticking to a task despite all odds - especially in a time when many Christians lack long-term commitment to the things of God. Sometimes, like Jeremiah, we must be willing to be a witness who stands alone in the midst of incredible opposition to proclaim the word of God and faithfully obey His commands.

Jeremiah's Call

Read Jeremiah 1. When facing scripture that commands you to speak for Christ, have you ever felt, "Why, I could never do that. I have no training for it!" What did Jeremiah say?

To be effective in speaking, one must have something to say. Where do you get the right message? 1:7-17

In what way does God touch our mouths today? Ephesians 5:18

Opposition of the intensity that faced Jeremiah is unknown in America, although it is common in some parts of the world. How can these verses help us overcome situations we face? Jeremiah 1:8, 18, 19

Jeremiah's Arrest and Prayer

Read Jeremiah 19:14-15. In verse 14, we see that not only what Jeremiah said but where he spoke (and to whom) were under the Lord's direct guidance. This was observed in Elijah's life as one of the secrets of effectiveness. The secret is to be filled with God's Holy Spirit. He will lead us to those He wants us to touch. As a result, Spirit-filled Christians share their faith with others at every opportunity. The apostle Paul records in Colossians 1:28, "Everywhere we go we talk about Christ to all who will listen" (TLB).

Verse 15 was Jeremiah's unpopular message in a nutshell: condemnation upon the capital city, Jerusalem; the Babylonian armies would destroy the city. He advised the people to surrender and avoid the horrors of a siege that could not be resisted for long since God was on the enemy's side.

Read Jeremiah 20.

How did punishment affect Jeremiah's testimony (20:1-6)?

Verses 7-18 are an example of the abrupt interruptions interspersed throughout the book of Jeremiah. What do these prayers reveal about the apparent fearlessness of the prophet?

Since his message brought him so much unpopularity, what did Jeremiah consider (20:8,9)? Why did he reject that idea?

How did his enemies think they could get the best of him (20:10)? What thoughts restored His confidence (20:11)?

How can you relate Jeremiah's attitude to your experiences in witnessing for the Lord? How can Jeremiah's example help you?

Jeremiah's Prophecy

Read Jeremiah 21. How do you think feelings of despair and frustration influenced the prophet's obedience to God?

When asked by the government for a word of comfort and security, what response did Jeremiah give?

What decision did the prophet declare that his hearers must make?

Life Application

List the discouragements you may be facing, and what you have learned from Jeremiah's life that will help you cope with them.

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