

Devotions for June 27-July 3, 2011

Monday, June 27, 2011: *Young* Daily reading: Jeremiah 1:1-10

Jeremiah is not a bullfrog. He's a prophet. When Jeremiah is just a young boy, the Lord speaks to him and offers him a plum position as "spokesperson of God." Jeremiah becomes a member of the clergy class, with all the robes and honor. But Jeremiah is not so anxious to take God up on His offer. In true God-follower form, he declines God's generous offer. He says that he is too young and can't really speak that well, so God will do much better with someone else. But God speaks into Jeremiah's doubts with strong words of comfort and commission. Look back at Jeremiah 1:7. God promises to speak through him and be with him no matter what he faces. Have you ever felt too young or inexperienced for a particular project? Ask God for the confidence and courage to trust God in all things.

Tuesday, June 28, 2011: *Unfaithful* Daily reading: Jeremiah 2:1-6

In the long relational legacy of God and God's people, there is a story thread that remains consistent. From the time of Abraham, when God promises that he will be their God and they will be his people, the pattern of relationship swings from times when God's people are faithful and following God, to other times when God's people become unfaithful and choose to follow other gods. In the latter times, God remains faithful by entering in to speak a word of love, calling his people to repentance, bringing people back into covenant relationship. No matter how far God's people go, God remains faithful. God remains faithful in today's story, too! In your life, where have you seen the faithful promises of God? Ask God to lead you to daily repentance to follow the ways of God.

Wednesday, June 29, 2011: *Impending Doom* Daily reading: Jeremiah 8:1-3

In Jeremiah's time, God's people are unfaithful. They have become apathetic in their relationship with God, and political and religious leaders of the day look the other way when they begin to adopt the gods of the region they live in, falling away from worshipping God. A little less time at the temple, a little less time in prayer, a little more time at the marketplace and the workplace, instead. It seems innocent enough, but not to God. Enter Jeremiah. Tell them that if they don't return to the Lord and forsake all other gods, the temple in Jerusalem will be destroyed and they'll be taken into captivity by a powerful army from the north. Their sins will bring them down. Point that out to them. Show them their errors. Call them to repentance. That's Jeremiah's job. In your life, have you ever ignored words of impending doom? What was the cost? Ask God to give you a reality check and open your ears to hear words of truth.

Thursday, June 30, 2011: *That Guy* Daily reading: Jeremiah 28:5-9

Can you imagine Jeremiah's heartache? He loves his people, and he loves God. He's conflicted with his feelings as God's judgment came to fruition. Jeremiah has an ongoing conversation with God, asking God to show mercy, yet yielding to God and delivering God's harsh words to the people. After years of speaking out, Jeremiah finally cries out to God, cursing the day he was born, hating his life and what God has done to him. Yet he acknowledges that the word of the Lord is like a fire in his bones. He can't help but speak God's word, even if it brings him extreme hardship. He remains faithful to God at a great personal cost. If only God's people could do the same! Have you ever been faithful at great personal cost? Ask God for courage if that time comes.

Friday, July 1, 2011: *False Prophet* Daily reading: Jeremiah 28:10-17

For Jeremiah, it will end only when people turn to the Lord. They've been exiled in Babylon for years. They see no end to that reality in the foreseeable future, despite God's word through Jeremiah. Into this, another "prophet," Hananiah, speaks to the people, declaring "a new word of the Lord." Instead of calling the people to repentance, which is very unpopular, this new word is simply that God will relieve their burden by breaking the yoke of bondage of the king of Babylon! Good news! Their suffering will end! Within a couple of years, they will get to go back to their homes! The temple will be restored! Everything we've been hoping for will happen! God will deliver us! It's what they want to hear but it isn't the truth. Are you willing to listen to a false truth because it gives you what you want? Ask God to help you discern real prophets from false prophets.

Saturday, July 2, 2011: *Hope* Daily reading: Jeremiah 29:10-14

God changes the rules. God takes it upon himself to free his people from their bondage. God does for God's people what they cannot, will not, do for themselves. God will make it happen – and has. God has a future for all of us. God comes to us, not in some prophet like Jeremiah to bring words of judgment, but in Jesus, the Living Word of God, who brings God's Word of forgiveness and love. Our sin is real. In Jesus, our sin is forgiven. We are delivered from our bondage. We are released from our captivity. We are restored and given new life. God has done it. God is faithful. Where do you need a good dose of hope? Ask God to give you hope for today.

Sunday, July 3, 2011: *Three Things* Daily reading: Jeremiah 3:31-33

Practice these steps and see what transformation God has in store for you. First, repent. Let's get over ourselves, admit our sin and selfishness, and change our ways. Second, believe the gospel. Feeling condemned for sin is only part of the story. Embrace God's amazing love in Jesus, and live into the freedom Jesus gives you. You are now free to serve others instead of yourself. You're free to turn outward and love God and your neighbor. Third, be a Jeremiah. Speak a word of correction to those who are sinning. Speak God's word of change when you see injustice happening. Help restore covenant community by speaking truth in love; let it flow from your lips and into the communities of faith that are a part of your life. Ask God to give you the power of the Holy Spirit to do these three things.