

Good Call!
Jeremiah and Other Learners
August 21, 2022

Overarching Theme: 2022 – The Year of the Lord’s Favor (Luke 4:19)

Instructions:

When using this material as teacher, feel free to pick and choose the point you want to emphasize in the lesson. The format of the curriculum is designed to have an abundance of information in which to refer as desired.

Core Point:

As the world awakens from 2 years of pandemic stupor, the words of Jesus proclaiming "*the year of the Lord’s favor*" is a message whose time has come. This passage from Luke 4 harkens back to the ‘year of jubilee’ of Leviticus 25 and Isaiah 61, a year of a fresh start, a clean slate and reset for everyone who can envision new possibilities with God this year and always.

Reflect on this Scripture:

Jeremiah 1:4-8 CEB

⁴ The LORD’s word came to me:⁵ "Before I created you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I set you apart; I made you a prophet to the nations."⁶ "Ah, LORD God," I said, "I don’t know how to speak because I’m only a child."⁷ The LORD responded, "Don’t say, 'I’m only a child.' Where I send you, you must go; what I tell you, you must say.⁸ Don’t be afraid of them, because I’m with you to rescue you," declares the LORD.

Commentary:

Young Jeremiah was raised in the village of Anathoth around priests, their conversation, and their actions. Because of this unique context, Jeremiah's life was fairly early fixed on the things of the LORD and his service. So, as he reflects on what made him a prophet, his conviction is an incredibly strong one. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; before you were born I consecrated you (or "ordained" you). I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5). Jeremiah's calling from God is certain, and was known to God before his birth, even before his conception.

But, just like the great Moses, whose name would have been common on the lips of the priests of Anathoth, Jeremiah heard this call most reluctantly.

"Ah, LORD God. I certainly do not know how to speak, because I am only a boy" (a *na'ar* in Hebrew, usually a child under the age of ten). Moses, called by the LORD out of the persistent flames of a bush, remonstrates with the LORD by claiming, "O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now that you have spoken to your servant; I am slow of both speech and tongue" (Ex. 4:10). Listening to Moses address the Pharaoh, and later the LORD on Sinai, suggests clearly that Moses' claims at poor speech abilities are wildly exaggerated. In short, his claims are merely an attempt to escape the call of his God.

And, precisely as at the bush, God will have none of Jeremiah's resistance. "Do not say, 'I am only a boy;' you will go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you" (Jer. 1:7-8). God will have God's way, no matter our attempts to excuse ourselves. Jeremiah's deep convictions of calling trump his unwillingness to carry that calling out. Like Moses, Jeremiah finally went at the call of the LORD.

- Adapted from Patheos.com, 1/29/13 Commentary by Dr. John Holbert

Questions to Ponder for Accountability in the Group:

1. In this passage, we learn that God had a unique calling for Jeremiah. Franciscan spiritual leader and author Fr. Richard Rohr maintains that all of us have a unique vocation. How do you respond to this assertion?
2. Since most of us don't seem to have a 'direct line' like Jeremiah did, how do we discern what God might be calling us to be or do? What has been helpful for your discernment in the past?
3. Do you have any ideas of how God might be nudging you over the next few months? If so, share with your group.
4. What might get in the way? Are there fears or excuses that might become obstacles for you?
5. Take a moment and affirm these 'godly nudges' that have been shared. Encourage one another in this ongoing, prayerful discernment. Close by praying for each other and for the "good call" that has been given to each.

Activity for the Life of a Disciple:

1. Remember to find encouragement for the day by reading the daily devotional from FUMCC.
2. Ponder and pray on this scripture this week: Jeremiah 1:8 CEB
Don't be afraid of them, because I'm with you to rescue you," declares the LORD.