

## **Crosswalk Communities Discussion Guides**

### **Sept 10th**

**Icebreaker Questions (Pick at the least one question, but use as many as your group feels comfortable)**

1. What is your favorite thing to do in the Fall?

### **Bible Study Questions**

1. Have you ever read the book of Jeremiah? What do you know about the book?
2. America is generally considered to be a Christian culture. What do you think that means?
  - From your perspective, describe what our nation would be like if it truly was a culture committed to following Jesus?
  - If God were to send a message to our culture, what do you think that he would say?
  - What message do you think God would send if he was confronting the American church? What about our church?
3. Read Jeremiah 1
  - How do you think you would have responded if God had called you as he did Jeremiah?
  - What excuses does Jeremiah give to reject the calling? How do we use those same excuses today?
  - How does God respond to his excuses?
4. There are many prominent Christians who have said that the church is called to have a prophetic voice in today's culture. What do you think that means? Do you agree or disagree?
5. Read Acts 1:8: How does Jesus command here to us relate to Jeremiah's calling?
  - What can we learn from Jeremiah's calling that can help us respond to God's calling for us to be witnesses?

## Sept 10<sup>th</sup>: Jeremiah's Calling

The prophetic books of the Bible tend to be skipped over as dated messages regarding idol worship and ancient world issues. The only reason people pay attention is to search for end times predictions. However, the books of prophecy are far more relevant than we think. The book of Jeremiah was written to a culture that claimed to be following God, yet whose hearts were far away from him. Many of sins that God confronts can be found both in American culture and in the church today.

### I. Book of Jeremiah

- **Message to a spiritually lost nation that claimed to follow God:** his ministry began during the reign of Josiah. Josiah inherited a nation that had turned its back on God and attempted to do reforms. At one point, he led the entire nation in renewing their covenant with God. Yet following his death, the people quickly returned to their sinful practices. They assumed that they were good since they offered the right sacrifices and worshipped in the temple, yet their hearts continually led them away from God. The book of Jeremiah contains messages that God sent to these people.
- **Story of a man living out a prophetic witness to his culture:** The book of Jeremiah is part story telling of his struggles to convey these messages to the people. He didn't just speak messages, but lived them out. The result was constant conflict (and in some cases great danger) with the people of whom he was called to minister.

**II. Jeremiah's Calling: Jeremiah resists:** In 1:6, Jeremiah objects claiming that he can't speak and is too young. Some have suggested that he was a child, but a priest was not considered old enough to serve until the age of 30. He was likely in his 20s at this time.

- **God promises his presence:** God does not allow for any excuses. He promises that there is no reason to fear since he would be with him (v. 8)
- **Assurance that God's Word will never fail:** God then gives Jeremiah two visions. One is of an almond branch which was known for being the first to bloom in the spring. When it blossomed, people knew that spring was coming. The second vision was of a boiling pot of judgement. God's message was that his words and warnings could be trusted (1:12).

This morning we are introducing this series. Over the next several weeks we will be looking at both Jeremiah's messages and his life and see how God's words are relevant to the church today.

As for Jeremiah, we need to remember that his specific calling is an isolated incident. We are not all called to be a wandering prophet speaking on the steps of capital hill. Yet we are all called to be witnesses for Jesus (Acts 1:8). We are called to both live out and share our faith. That can be intimidating. But we have the same promise as Jeremiah that God will be with us (Matthew 28:20). Therefore, we should be listening to God's calling and stepping out in obedience.

## Conclusion