

Message for Sunday, August 24th 2025

Scripture: Jerimiah 1: 4-10

Message title: What is Your Calling?

Welcome

Announcements: Giving Options; Special offering for AUGUST-the ARC. The new one for September will be the Jerome Food Bank. There will be a new member class on Sunday, September 14th after worship. Hospitality is looking for volunteers to assist on Sunday, September 14th. Bible Study at 5PM on Wednesdays in your office.

Fellowship of Love Song

Call to Worship

L: The Lord is our rock and refuge.

P: God is our fortress in times of trouble.

L: The Holy One saves us from the hand of the wicked.

P: God delivers us from our foes.

L: Christ heals us from our infirmities.

P: The Spirit frees us from the chains that bind us.

L: Rest in the Source of our refuge and our strength.

Unison Prayer

Great Healer, we are beaten down by life's suffering. Make us whole, O God, and help us share your healing with the world.

Free us from the demons that shackle our spirits, and set us free from the chains that bind us, that we may help break the chains of others. Amen.

Offering Lead In

L: As we come to our time of offering, let us remember that giving is an opportunity to respond to God's generosity with our own.

Song

Scripture: Jerimiah 4:1-10

⁴ Now the word of the LORD came to me saying,

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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.”

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⁶ Then I said, “Ah, Lord GOD! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.”

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⁷ But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am only a boy,’ for you shall go to all to whom I send you, and you shall speak whatever I command you.

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⁸ Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you, says the LORD.”

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⁹ Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me, “Now I have put my words in your mouth.

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¹⁰ See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant

Message: What’s your Calling?

It’s no secret that this year has been a year of significant change. Significant change for me and significant change for the church here in Cottonwood. Our change isn’t done either, we are still growing and figuring things out as we adjust to this new working relationship. I’ve been very upfront in talking about this transition with all of you, and have shared in conversations about how I feel things are going. I promise you there is a point to this that ties into our passage today, just bear with me for a little bit.

You see this passage is one that has been preached at many youth events and has held a very sacred spot in our liturgy for as long as most of us have been alive. We use the words in our baptism covenant when we talk about God knowing us before we were formed. We talk about how God can call anyone, even young people (and old ones too).

We use this passage to both affirm who we are in God and who we are called to be by God. I don’t want to mess that up with this passage because I believe it holds very true to those purposes that it has been used for. I do however want to put a little bit of a different reflection and spin on it. To do this I want to address some of the history around this passage and one way it has been used.

Jeremiah is agreed to have been written by one person, Jeremiah. This is a sharp contrast to his contemporary Isaiah. Jeremiah is around the same time as Isaiah.

He is speaking words of doom and destruction for the people of Jerusalem. He is given a hard word to preach and with it a hard life to live.

This passage has been used to speak as proof against abortion. I want to call attention to the fact that this passage isn't about that at all. Yes it says God knows you in the womb, however it isn't attempting to discuss abortion. If you are using it as such than what you are doing is using the passage as a theological justification. Don't say "scripture says" because what you mean is "how I interpret scripture to mean..." This of course is not what I want to reflect on, it's just one of those important topics I always feel I need to vent on. What I really want us to reflect on is calling.

You see, a few months ago, I was in a conversation with our bishop as he asked if my calling had changed to be a teacher instead of being a pastor. I found this to be a misleading question. I think what he was driving at is has my calling changed? The answer is yes, of course it has. Now bear with me again because I'm using myself as an example for a very complex topic that affects all of us. You see, I don't believe that a person's calling in life is something that is fixed in time for all eternity, something to be decided on by others, whether you are living up to it or not. What God calls you to is something wholly you, wholly unique, and ever growing. To think we serve a living God who speaks words of wisdom, power, grace, and love into our lives, only wants us to do or be one thing for all times is to short-change God's role in our spiritual lives.

I think that the bishop's question has helped me to formulate what I am saying today. That is: Our callings are living vibrant parts of our relationship with God. This extends to the fact that each of us are called for something and that calling grows, adapts and dare I say, evolves as we live our lives and form relationships with others. It also grows as our relationship grows with God. The purpose of this sermon is not a justification of my calling, a fact that I am more confident of each day. I have always seen teaching as a part of my ministry. Now more than ever. The purpose of this sermon and of this scripture today is to remind you that you are called too. What are YOU called to?

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I don't believe that God just calls just ministers or certain people to work for the church. Frankly, I have met bar tenders and cooks that are more in touch with God than some pastors. I believe that God does know you, and has called you to be the person you are, to put your hands to good things...notice I didn't say holy things but good things. To live up to your calling.

Our callings grow. They changes as we go through life. Some of us cannot do the things we once did, and it hurts. But don't shortchange your calling by God. Perhaps your calling has grown to do things you have never thought of before or has changed to have a different role. I can't tell you what that is, but what I can say is, you need to think about it.

This isn't a young person thing, this is a walk with God thing. This is our calling, to live our lives for the purpose God has set before us.

What is your purpose? What is your calling? Amen.

Pastoral Prayer/ The Lord's Prayer

Song

Benediction

Song

Goodbye