

Jeremiah's Zeal  
By Trey Sullins

What if in the near future everyone around you was going to lose their lives? Imagine having the only message that will save people. Out of love, you spread this message to the people, but their only response is rejection. Rather than heeding the warning, they mocked. In a situation like this, it would be hard to stay focused on preaching the word. It would be hard to continue spreading that message. The book of Jeremiah contains the account of this same thing as it happened to him.

Jeremiah was a prophet called by God. As the son of Hilkiah the priest of Anathoth, Jeremiah grew up in Anathoth and knew the word of the Lord (Jeremiah 1:1). During the reign of Josiah in Judah, the Lord directly spoke to Jeremiah and told him what he needed to do (Jeremiah 1:2). God gave Jeremiah the words that he was to speak to the people. God told him that he would be there for him and make him strong (Jeremiah 1:17-19).

God's message for Jeremiah to preach to Israel was one of repentance. Israel had betrayed God and turned against His commandments. Their repentance was the only thing that would save them (Jeremiah 4:1). Out of love, Jeremiah took this message out to the people and begged them to hear the Lord. However, rather than heeding the warning and obeying the message, the people rejected Jeremiah and betrayed him. Even Jeremiah's own family turned against him and mocked him. Israel completely rejected Jeremiah and refused to repent.

In Jeremiah 20:9, Jeremiah showed his great zeal and conviction for the word of God. After being mocked and rejected, Jeremiah was at a low point in his life. He said, "I will not make mention of Him nor speak anymore in His name." Jeremiah had finally decided that he was done and he could not preach anymore. After coming to this conclusion, he realized that he could not stop, "But His word was in my heart like a burning fire." He could not hold it back. He could not stop proclaiming the word. Though everyone around him mocked and waited for opportunities to bring him down, he still continued to try to spread the message of God.

Similar to Jeremiah, God has called Christians under the New Testament. In Mark 16:15-16, Christians are commanded to take the word of God out to the world. If Christians do not take this message out to the world, then who will? It is the responsibility of every Christian to spread the word. Not just preachers or some Christians, but all Christians need to teach the word of God.

Although God has not given it in the same way, God has given Christians His word. Like Jeremiah's message, it is a message of repentance. They must preach the word exactly as it was given, because that is the only way to save the world. He has called every Christian to take out the saving message just like He called Jeremiah. It is only through the grace of God that people have been given the saving word, therefore they must tell others (Ephesians 2:8).

Looking to Jeremiah's example, Christians must be strong and continue spreading God's word. Even though they will be mocked, they must continue preaching the Lord's message. The words of God need to be in the heart of Christians like a burning fire. It must be so strong that it cannot be held back. Christians have the only message that can save every person from the coming destruction, and it is God's command that they take that message out to the world. Christ's church

must have a strong zeal for the word of God and study it intensely (2 Timothy 2:15).

Is the word of God in your heart like a burning fire? Christians must realize that destruction is coming, and they have the only message that can save people. Christians must understand that God is calling them, God has given His word, and God desires strong zeal from His people. This message should be such a strong fire in the heart that it is impossible to hold back. Picture seeing people in eternal punishment that could have been saved but were never told the saving message.