

Sermon 30 January 2022 – Family Sunday

Good morning again everyone and a special welcome to our Sunday school today. I trust you all had a good holiday and are well rested to face the year ahead.

A year that will be full of things you need to do. Some old and some new. If you are going to a new school, you will have to make new friends and meet new teachers. Or your parents may give you new chores this year, with more responsibility. Some things you will be comfortable with and enjoy doing. Other things you may not be comfortable with because you may not have done it before or may not enjoy it. How do you feel when you are given a difficult task to do? Or given a task you have never done before.

Scared...worried... not sure if you will do them right/ get them right. And that's ok. We all feel scared and unsure sometimes especially when we need to do things we have never done before. Or when we think that what we need to do is just too difficult.

In the Old Testament reading today we heard the story of a young boy called Jeremiah. In this story God gives Jeremiah a big job to do. Listen what God says to Jeremiah - "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." (Jeremiah 1:5). Wow, God knew Jeremiah, and had a plan for his life before he was even born! God wanted Jeremiah to be a "prophet to the nations."

Now who can tell me what a prophet is or does? (Wait for answers...) That's right. A prophet is God's messenger. In the bible a prophet is someone God chooses / calls to speak for God or on behalf of God. To tell the people where they are going wrong and to help them find their way back to doing the right thing. To guide them in living as God wants them to live. This means that prophets often told people to change their ways when they were doing the wrong thing. For Jeremiah, this meant that he had to speak the people and to Kings and rulers. Whoa...that is a big job. Can you imagine a situation where you may need to tell your friends or parents, or the church council or the government that what they are doing is wrong? Speaking to your friend about what is right or wrong is one thing. But your parents or the church council or the government...well that is something else. Isn't it? Would you be able to do that?

Have you ever tried to tell someone that what they are doing is wrong? And...what happened? Did they listen to you? Or did they get angry and upset and say unkind things

to you. Speaking up for what is right is never easy. Prophets had to be brave. Most people don't want to be told that what they are doing is wrong.

But prophets also encouraged people. Telling them about God's love and faithfulness. And even this is not an easy job. When people are feeling down and going through tough times, they don't always see God working in their lives. And so even when you are encouraging and comforting people, they may not listen to you or believe that what you are saying is true.

Jeremiah is clearly not comfortable with this job that God wants him to do. And he says, "Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy." When you find something difficult to do, do you sometimes say to your parents or teachers, 'Ah, why me? I can't do that. It's too difficult. I have not done it before. I am still too young.' Jeremiah clearly sees himself as someone who is too young to do anything special or important. And he did not know what to say, or how to speak, to important people like kings and rulers. He was scared and nervous. He probably thought that no one would take notice of him or listen to him.

But God says to Jeremiah, "Do not say, 'I am only a boy'...Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you... I have put my words in your mouth." (Jeremiah 1: 7-9) God is promising Jeremiah that he does not have to do this on his own. God will be with him all the time. God will give him courage and tell him what to say. Like Jeremiah, God calls each one of us to serve him. To share his love and grace with all people. Sometimes that means speaking the truth and standing up for what is right, even when we are scared.

Now, not all of us are called to be prophets. This was Jeremiah's call. Each of us is called to serve God in different ways. Sometimes it takes many years, and the help and guidance of different people, to discover what God is calling you to do for him. But there are some things that we are all called to do. Things that we can do with God's help. We are all called to speak the truth and stand up for what is right and to share God's love with all people. We need to remember that no matter what God calls us to do, God is with us. Walking along side us. And so, when you find yourself in a situation where you need to speak the truth, stand up for what is right and share God's love, I want you to remember what God told Jeremiah, because God is saying the same thing to us. **"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... Do not say, 'I am only a boy'...Do not be afraid...for I am with you... I have put my words in your mouth”

Isn't it wonderful to know that God formed (shaped) us? That God knows us, calls us by name and sets us apart to serve him. That God has a plan for our lives - each one of us – and that God will give us the courage and the words to stand up for what is right because God is with us!

Let us pray

Loving God, you call us and put your words in our mouths. Give us the courage to always speak the truth, stand up for what is right and share your love with all people.

Amen