**Morning Greeting By: Dave Lambert 2-4-16**

Good morning! One of the most interesting characters in the Bible is a man named Jeremiah. God called Jeremiah into prophetic ministry in about 626 BC, to reveal the sins of the people and warn them of the coming consequences. Like Jonah, he was a reluctant prophet, but for different reasons. Jonah didn’t like the people he was called to preach to and he *wanted* them to suffer the consequences. Jeremiah was unsure of himself; he was young and felt ill-prepared for such a ministry. I think many of us doubt that we have the goods to do what God calls us to do, too. I have always identified with Jeremiah; I doubt myself as a public speaker. I don’t like to be confrontational. I like to fit in. Jeremiah, in addition to his practical doubts, is thought by many scholars to have suffered from clinical depression. If you have ever struggled with self-doubt, maybe Jeremiah’s story will speak to you, too. This morning, let’s listen in on God’s commission to this significant prophet:

“Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you,” declares the Lord. Then the Lord stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. “See, I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”

Jeremiah 1:8-10

That’s pretty good stuff, right? Would you like God give you some of that kind of personal encouragement? Me too! God said, *“Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to deliver you. I have appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”* Wow! OK, Lord, I got this---let me at ‘em! Um, wait a minute---deliver me? Deliver me from what? During the course of his ministry, Jeremiah had quite a bit of trouble. He was attacked by his own brothers, beaten and put into the stocks, imprisoned, threatened with death, thrown down into a cistern to starve to death, and was publically opposed by the other prophets.

While Jeremiah was prophesying coming destruction because of the sins of the nation (which made him very unpopular), a number of prominent prophets were prophesying peace and good times. Not only did Jeremiah have to prophesy against Jerusalem, he also had to publically confront these popular false prophets. If you’re a person with some self-image problems, this could be a problem! God eventually delivered Jeremiah, but it was a pretty rough road on the way to that deliverance. In the end, his message was even more powerful because he had lived through the difficulties that come with being with God in tight places. I’m speaking to someone this morning. You know what God wants you to do and you just don’t think you can do it. Let me encourage you to be faithful to God and to His call on your life. If you decide to walk away from what God has called you to do, it will rob you of power and you will always regret it. Hang in there this morning and let God demonstrate all He has for you. It may be hard...but God will see you through!