

Deceptive Words

Jeremiah 7

Introduction

- Illustration of bad cell phone reception
 - How do we respond when the reception goes in and out on your cell phone?
 - Talk louder thinking that it will enable the other person to hear us
 - Talk slower and more pronounced as to make our voice clearer
 - However, the real problem is in the reception
 - Unless we move to a place where the signal is stronger, the reception will continue to go in and out
- Sermon Series: “Perseverance In Times of Uncertainty”
 - Study of the life of Jeremiah the Prophet
 - Two visions of Uncertainty
 - I’ve got a word for you to share, and I’m going to see to it that my word is fulfilled
 - The people that I’m sending you to are not going to listen
 - What is the point of Jeremiah’s calling?
 - Jeremiah is often referred to as the “Weeping Prophet”, however it is his perseverance through uncertainty that really tells his story.
- In times of uncertainty, one thing is always certain; God’s Word is always True.
 - Jeremiah experienced uncertainty between his calling and the response of the people to God’s Word
 - You could say there was “bad reception”
 - In order for Jeremiah to persevere, he has to stay tuned into God’s Word
 - The Jews experienced uncertainty between taking God’s promise for granted, and the Words of judgement that Jeremiah was sharing on behalf of God
 - There was “bad reception” here also
 - If the people were going to persevere through uncertainty, they were going to have to step away from the deceptive words that had come to believe about themselves, and listen to the words Jeremiah was sharing on behalf of God
- Here’s what I would like for you to consider this morning
 - Some of us are going to be in the situation like Jeremiah
 - There is conflict between what we have been called to, and the results we are experiencing
 - Life is going to throw some curve balls our way; things we don’t expect
 - The key for us to persevere through the uncertainty is to remember what God has called us to
 - Our circumstances may change, but God does not
 - Some of us are going to be in the situation of the Jews
 - If we don’t make some changes in our life, we are going to head down a path of destruction
 - God is trying to speak to us, but we are not listening

- We are going to have to move closer to God to pick up good reception

The Word of the Lord Came to Jeremiah

- **Jeremiah 7:1-2**
 - This phrase, “the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah” is key to Jeremiah’s calling
 - In chapter 1, this phrase showed up four times
 - “I’ve got a word for you to share with the people, but the people are not going to listen to you.”
 - The phrase is significant because in times of uncertainty, one thing is always certain; the truth of God’s Word.
 - Jeremiah questions God’s calling in Chapter 1
 - “I’m too young”
 - “I don’t speak well”
 - God’s response, “I’m going to give you the words to speak”
 - This phrase defines Jeremiah’s calling
 - Jeremiah does not have to rely upon his inadequacies to fulfill God’s Will
 - God is going to give him what he needs to fulfill God’s will
 - Perseverance is about allowing God’s word to define our lives
 - Caller I.D. is a wonderful thing
 - Before caller I.D. you had no idea who was calling you
 - You know when someone calls, you can look at the number, the name, even the location, before answering the phone
 - If it’s a number you don’t know, you may not answer the phone
 - It may be a number you do know, you just don’t want to talk to who is on the other line
 - But if it is a close friend or family member, you will probably answer the phone, and chances are you will address the person by name, before they introduce themselves.
 - In times of uncertainty, one thing is always certain; the Truth of God’s Word
 - God is calling you today
 - You have the choice to either pick up the phone, or ignore the Caller
 - Take advantage of the opportunity this sermon series provides
 - Study the Book of Jeremiah
 - Use the reading Plan
 - Read, *Run with the Horses*, by Eugene Peterson
 - **Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.” (ESV)**
 - Let’s answer the call, as the Word of the Lord comes to us!

Hear the Word of the Lord

- **Jeremiah 7:2-4**
 - The Temple is the setting for Jeremiah’s sermon
 - The temple is where the presence of God dwells
 - The temple is where the word is proclaimed

- The temple is where God’s people come to repent, and respond to God’s Word
- Imagine the Temple as a cell phone tower
 - If you want good reception, this is the place to be
 - However, notice, that there is some interference going on
 - It’s like trying to tune the radio into one station and yet mixed signals are coming through the speakers
 - “Hear the word of the Lord!”
- Jeremiah’s Message
 - Amend your ways and deeds
 - Not living up to their calling
 - Being a blessing to the nations (vs 5-7)
 - Keeping the Ten Commandments (vs. 8-10)
 - The Nation of Israel’s purpose was dependent on them listening to God’s Word
 - If you want to be certain of your purpose, hear the Word of the Lord!
 - All sorts of uncertainty enters our lives, when we don’t listen to God’s Word
 - Live in obedience to God’s Word to live out our purpose
 - The privilege to dwell in the Temple
 - God’s Presence- Word of the Lord spoken
 - Defines the promise of God for the people
 - Den of Robbers (vs. 11)
 - Jesus used this same description when he cleared the money changers from the temple courts
 - Instead of a place of worship, it became a self-serving place
 - Not living the Ten Commandments, and then coming to the temple and declaring they were delivered
 - Shiloh (14-15)
 - Temple in the North
 - Place where the priest Eli served
 - Priest that Hannah went to when praying for a son, The Prophet Samuel
 - Eli mocked her
 - Had sons who did not follow God
 - Family line demoted by Solomon- same line that Jeremiah came from
 - Temple was destroyed by God due to the sin of the people

- When God speaks to us, we better not take it for granted. Eventually, our hearts will harden such that we will no longer be able to hear God's voice, and then we are in real trouble!
- Trusting Deceptive Words (vs. 4)
 - The Jews had convinced themselves that they were immune to destruction because God set them apart as his chosen people
 - God's Word had no significance to his promise
 - This is why they rejected Jeremiah's message
 - Why change your ways, when you have God's promise?
 - Judgement won't take place
 - Satan wants to convince us that God's Word has no significance for our lives
 - He wants to remove the Truth from our lives
 - "Father of Lies"
 - Satan has convinced people that they don't need their spouse.
 - Satan has convinced people that they can cut corners
 - Satan has convinced people that as long as we go to church on Sunday's it doesn't matter what we do the rest of the week.
 - In times of uncertainty, one thing is always certain; the Truth of God's Word.
- Our life is dependent on whether we "Hear the Word of the Lord"
 - How is God speaking to you today?
 - Are you listening?

Don't Lose Focus During the Unexpected

- **Jeremiah 7:16**
 - Jeremiah's dilemma
 - The role of the prophet is to be a mediator between God and the people
 - However, God will not listen to prayers for the people
 - What is Jeremiah suppose to do?
 - The Unexpected
 - Leaves us in a dilemma between what we expect and reality
 - Two options
 - Do we need to "amend our ways"?
 - Do we need to persevere in our calling?
 - Jeremiah had done what God had asked him to do
 - Speak to the people what I have commanded you
 - The people have not listened to God's Word
 - Just because the people weren't listening, doesn't mean Jeremiah wasn't doing God's Will
 - **Jeremiah 7:27-28**

- What do we do when we are following God's Will but the unexpected happens?
 - Jeremiah needed to be reminded of his calling
 - **Jeremiah 1:17-19** is similar to **Jeremiah 7:27-28**
 - The Word of the Lord is the same!
 - When the unexpected happens, we can't lose focus on what our purpose is.
 - Our purpose comes from God's Word
- Illustration of bad cell phone reception
 - There are times when the conversation is not clear
 - Sometimes its not because you have bad reception, but because the person on the other end needs to move to get better reception.
 - We can't always control the bad reception because we are standing in the right place
- Jeremiah was standing in the right place, because he was doing what God told him to do
 - "The people celebrated Josiah's reform; they ignored Jeremiah's preaching. It is Jeremiah's lifelong achievement that the soggy religious mush of the masses never dulled his perceptions nor muted his insistent witness."¹
 - Even though the people weren't listening, Jeremiah would need to persevere by continuing to do what God had called him to do
 - Jeremiah's calling was not dependent upon the response of the people, Jeremiah's calling was dependent upon God
 - Our calling is not dependent upon the circumstances, our calling is dependent upon God. Sometimes we have to persevere through circumstances that are less than ideal.
 - If we are standing in the right place with God, then God has our back
 - God will deliver us in the end
 - He will see his purposes through
 - Don't lose focus during the unexpected

Move in the Right Direction

- **Jeremiah 7:23-26**
 - The Jews were moving in the wrong direction!
 - They did not obey God's command
 - They walked in their own counsel
 - Stubborn hearts; Stiffened their necks
 - Are you moving backward instead of forward?
 - God speaks and instead of moving closer, you move further away
 - God calls, and instead of picking up the phone you keep letting it ring

¹ Peterson, Eugene. H. Run With the Horses: The Quest For Life At Its Best. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009. Pg. 70.

- The reception isn't good, but instead of moving in the right direction you just talk louder, expecting God to hear you.
- God sent prophet after prophet
 - Each prophet communicated the same message
 - Despite the hardships, the people just kept moving away from God; they didn't listen
 - **Jeremiah 7:34**
 - Eventually Exile was their end
 - We will suffer the same fate!
- Are you moving in the right direction?

Conclusion

- In times of uncertainty, one thing is always certain; the Truth of God's Word
 - Some of us are going to be in the situation like Jeremiah
 - There is conflict between what we have been called to, and the results we are experiencing
 - Life is going to throw some curve balls our way; things we don't expect
 - The key for us to persevere through the uncertainty is to remember what God has called us to
 - Our circumstances may change, but God does not
 - Some of us are going to be in the situation of the Jews
 - If we don't make some changes in our life, we are going to head down a path of destruction
 - God is trying to speak to us, but we are not listening
 - We are going to have to move closer to God to pick up good reception
- Are you listening to God's Word?
 - Hear God's Word today
 - Let it define your life instead of your circumstances
 - Persevere during times of uncertainty