

Commit Your Cause to the Lord Jeremiah 20

Introduction

- Kyler Murray story
 - Heisman Trophy winner
 - Quarterback for Oklahoma
 - Already drafted in the first round by the Oakland A's as an outfielder
 - Contemplating entering the NFL draft
 - Where is his heart: baseball or football?
 - Signed up for the NFL combine; if he goes he could be forfeiting 4 million dollars
 - However if he is drafted in the first round of the NFL draft he could sign a contract that would make 4 million dollars look like pocket change
 - What a dilemma?
 - Where will he commit his cause?
- Persevering in times of Uncertainty
 - Prophet Jeremiah
 - Two visions of uncertainty
 - Give you a word and see it through
 - The people I'm sending you to will not listen, and they will be destroyed
 - Jeremiah has been faithful to the call
 - Today we will see that he has been put in prison for delivering the message
 - How long will Jeremiah endure?
 - **Jeremiah 20:12**
 - Jeremiah has committed his cause to God
 - Jeremiah is continuing to persevere through the uncertainty
- What cause are you committed to?
 - How does your cause reflect your faith in God?
 - More valuable than 4 million dollars
 - The unexpected is bound to happen at some point in our life. Moments of doubt will push us to the edge. However, if God's will is the cause of our life, then we can commit our cause to Christ.

Evaluate Your Cause

- **Jeremiah 19:14-20:2**
 - Jeremiah's message is delivered "in the court of the Lord's house"
 - Pashhur's territory
 - As priest, he is the one who would dictate the message
 - Jeremiah's message is not a message that Pashhur wants the people to believe.
 - Heard Jeremiah prophesying destruction
 - Beat Jeremiah
 - Put him in stocks for one day
 - Persecution of the faithful is not new. It happens in the Old Testament and the New Testament

- What cause are you committed to?
 - Evaluate that cause to determine if it is God’s will or your will.
 - Despite the judgement that occurred to Israel as a result of not listening to God’s message, their response to God didn’t change in the New Testament.
 - Jesus
 - Book of Acts
- The significance of Jeremiah proclaiming this message “in the court of the Lord’s house.”
 - Not only was Jeremiah proclaiming a message that the Pashhur, the priest, did not want to hear, but it was a message of indictment against Israel
 - Jeremiah 7:3-4, “Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in these deceptive words: ‘This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.’”
 - God’s presence had been removed from Israel
 - They couldn’t hide behind the temple
 - Disaster was coming no matter what Israel had come to believe
 - If God is not present in our cause, you can be sure that you will fail.
 - Evaluate your cause
 - If your cause is God’s will, then the uncertainty and hardship will be worth it all
 - If your cause is your own will, then there’s a good chance that God is not present, and it only leads to our own destruction.

Allow God’s Will to Prevail

- Jeremiah 20:7
 - Jeremiah has been faithful to proclaim God’s message, but it is clear that he had doubts.
 - Jeremiah turns to God in prayer (again; Jeremiah 11-12)
 - Who accuses God of being “deceptive?”
 - Jesus, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:47b-ESV)
 - “Jeremiah cannot find satisfaction in the public arena, nor in social relations. He is finally driven to face the theological reality of his life and vocation.”¹
 - Did you know you were a theologian?
 - You don’t have to go to seminary

¹ Walter Brueggemann, A Commentary on Jeremiah: Exile and Homecoming. Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1998, Kindle Loc. 2261.

- You come to understand God through your life experiences, your response to God, and how you live out your faith
 - You find what a person is really made of when they experience hardship.
 - Jeremiah was experiencing hardship that didn't make sense
 - Jeremiah was experiencing hardship that he couldn't resolve on his own.
 - Jeremiah's calling was being questioned.
 - How does your cause reflect your faith in God?
 - Our cause should be shaped by God
 - Potter's Wheel from last week
 - Evaluate our cause, so that God is the one shaping it
 - Jeremiah recognizes that things have not worked out as he thought they might, but he also recognizes that "you are stronger than I, and you have prevailed."
 - Jeremiah's cause is greater than himself.
 - God has prevailed in Jeremiah's life, despite Jeremiah's weakness
 - Youth
 - Unable to Speak
 - MMBC is a wonderful example of a small church doing big things
 - Reaching the community
 - Small Budget
 - Bigger commitment- God has prevailed
- **Jeremiah 20:8-9**
 - Jeremiah knows that the message is not popular, and he knows that persecution may await him, but he can't help but do what God has called him to do because he has committed his cause to the Lord.
 - Jeremiah is able to persevere because he has committed his cause to the Lord no matter what he faces.
 - Jeremiah is allowing God's will to prevail
 - Despite our doubt and hardships we must allow God's will to prevail; that's called PERSEVERANCE!

Be Authentic

- We tend to recognize people who do things their own way, stand out from a crowd
 - Trailblazer
 - Confident and Bold
 - Authentic
- The Christian Life is the most authentic, bold, and courageous life one can live
 - Every calling is unique
 - Uncertainty around every corner
 - Confident and Bold in Christ who leads us
 - Lead people to Truth
- If we are going to lead authentic lives, then we should pray authentic prayers
 - Prayer is not about saying all the right things

- Prayer is about expressing what is truly in our heart, even the nasty, the doubt, the anger, etc.
- Jeremiah's prayer is authentic because it expresses all sorts of emotions
 - Deceived (7)
 - Committed (12)
 - Grateful (13)
 - Ashamed (18)
- Everything is not going to make sense, especially not in the heat of uncertainty
 - Jeremiah didn't stop doing what God called him to do
 - However, he also didn't hide how he was feeling from God
 - When we are authentic with God, I think it allows God to become real to us
 - Everything isn't going to make sense
 - But God's presence is with us, encouraging us to keep going

Wrestle with God's Word, but allow it to prevail in your life

- "We are trained in the biblical faith to take lightly what the experts say, the scholars say, the pollsters say, the politicians say, the pastors say. We are trained to listen to the Word of God, to test everything against what God reveals to us in Christ, to discover all meaning and worth by examining life in relation to God's will."²
- Jeremiah is wrestling with God's Word, while he is also speaking the Word that God gives him.
 - Jeremiah 20:8-11
 - Following through on God's Word is hard, but Jeremiah keeps doing it
 - God's Word proves to be Truth, not just in judgement, but also in redemption
 - In times of uncertainty, one thing is always certain; the Truth of God's Word
 - Jeremiah 20:14-18
 - Jeremiah knows that everything, the ups and the downs, are all part of his calling
 - Takes us back to Jeremiah 1- appointed to be a prophet before he was born
 - He knows what he has to do, despite the hardship
- The Truth of God's Word is difficult to except and fulfill
 - Consider it as a two-edged sword
 - Hebrews 4:12, "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."
 - It cuts to the truth by providing hope, convicting, and also trying our faith- we must wrestle with God's Word! This is what Jeremiah was doing.
- But as we wrestle with God's Word, we must allow it to prevail!

² Eugene H. Peterson, Run with the Horses: The Quest For Life At Its Best. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009. Pg. 87.

- Commit our cause to the Lord
- Persevere through uncertainty

Conclusion

- What cause are you committed to?
- How does that cause reflect your faith in God?
 - Evaluate Your Cause
 - Be Authentic
 - Wrestle with God's Word, but allow it to prevail in your life.