

Jeremiah #1 Jer1:1-19 “The Word Comes” CCH 04MAY25

V10

- Estimates vary,
 - but apparently the average person speaks around 16,000 words a day¹
 - and despite rumours to the contrary men and women speak around the same amount!
- Some of those words are fairly insignificant...
 - But some words have incredible power and impact.
 - “This is a declaration of war”
 - “Will you marry me?”
 - Or equally momentous: “The Wi-Fi is not working” (!)
 - Words can have great power.
- But joking aside there are no words like those spoken by Almighty God.
 - And for around half an hour each Sunday morning
 - we focus on these all important words.
 - And actually for 12 weeks we’ll focus on God’s words
 - as they are spoken TO and THROUGH Jeremiah.
- Today as we focus on chapter 1 we are going to see The Word Comes.
 - In 2 parts
 - First God speaks in history
 - Second God speaks through humanity.
 - And a lesson from each part
 - LISTEN UP
 - SPEAK UP.
- **So let’s pray.** And then launch into the first point. (hammer).

1) LISTEN UP... GOD SPEAKS IN HISTORY (v1-3)

- V1-3
- There are a few things to note about these verses.
- **1) These words are very human words.**
 - These are the words of Jeremiah... v1.
 - I think one of the things that attracts us to Jeremiah is that more than perhaps any other prophet, his personal experiences and personality come through. Human words.
 - We know that he’s a young man v7. “I am only a lad/youth”.
 - Likely a teenager still under his parents roof.
 - He would have been a member of CCHY!
 - He’s an outsider- probably from the family of the rejected priesthood of Abiathar in Anathoth (1 Kings 2:26)

¹ <https://www.reference.com/science-technology/many-words-speak-day-68b7ff8bd0b6943e>

- No wonder he wasn't popular.
 - And we feel some of his pain as we read his book.
 - Very vulnerable, very honest, great pain.
 - Jeremiah the weeping prophet.
 - By the way that doesn't mean he was weak.
 - He was incredibly faithful, brave and persevering.
 - But like Jesus, he did weep and he did care. *"Oh, that my head were a spring of water and my eyes a fountain of tears! I would **weep** day and night for the slain of my people". 9:1.*
- **2) Human yet never forget **these words are divine.****
 - But v2 "The word of the Lord came to him".
- This is consistent with what the New Testament says that
 - Bible words are **100% human** but they are **100% divine**
 - *"For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit"* (1 Peter 1:21).
 - So what we are going to see this term has a very human quality, God was superintending every word that was written,
 - so I hope we come with the right attitude
 - [This is not just a blog or a recipe or a pinterest page.](#)
 - This is the Word of the living God speaking to us!
- **3) There are a lot of words here.**
 - Jeremiah is the longest book in the Bible by word count².
 - Look how thick my ESV Scripture journal is!
 - There's no way we can cover it all.
 - So this series we'll just cover ch1-24
 - And while we'll try to fill in some of the gaps in lifegroups, you'll need to supplement it with your own reading if you want to get the most out of it.
 - Why not read it in your own quiet times, a bit at a time.
- **4) These words were spoken in history.**
 - V2-3: As in elsewhere in Jeremiah we get some timestamps that tell us the exact timeline.
 - The scholars can date that pretty accurately to 627BC to 587BC.
 - Faithful speaking the truth for 40 years. Day in day out.
 - Jeremiah lived through 5 kings, though only 3 get a mention here.
 - But the big thing he lived through was the attack of Jerusalem by the Babylonians, and the **EXILE**- that's an important word for this book. It means the people being thrown out of the promised land and taken to captivity in Babylon.

² <https://overviewbible.com/word-counts-books-of-bible/>

- For those who want a detailed timeline of the history and geography of Jeremiah, and also the structure of the book, which cycles through the same timeframe **4 times**, it's on p2&3 of the dig deeper.
- Human./divine/many/historical words!
- **So lesson: I hope we can see that we need to LISTEN UP!**
 - It's not primarily Charlie who is speaking to you on a Sunday, though I am seeking faithfully to be a vessel to bring these words of Jeremiah to you accurately. Please pray for me.
 - But through Jeremiah **GOD IS SPEAKING TO YOU.**
 - I love Hebrews 3:7 "as the Holy Spirit says" and then he quotes some OT.
 - Not as the Spirit said. PAST TENSE.
 - As the Spirit SAYS. Present tense.
 - When we open up our Bibles, the Living God is speaking to us!
 - You want to hear the Spirit's voice?
 - Listen to the Bible.
- God's human, divine, many words, come in history.
- Just like God's son, Jesus, THE WORD came in history.
 - We have a speaking God!
 - We know the exact words that Jesus spoke when he was on earth.
 - Sometimes the gospel writers even use the Aramaic words he would have used
 - "Talitha Koum"- little child/little lamb get up.
 - GOD HAS SPOKEN TO THIS PLANET AND SPEAKS TO DAY!
Listen up!
 - Pay attention.

- Now we are primarily listeners. The main thing we are going to do this term is LISTEN, and God willing OBEY! That's the main lesson.
 - We are not Old Testament **capital P** Prophets.
 - None of us will receive a new revelation from God.
 - We have the wonderful old old story of the gospel, revealed in the Bible.
 - Jesus is THE prophet that the OT has been waiting for.
 - In the beginning was the WORD.
 - We don't need to add to him. The Final Word.
- But we are **little p** prophets (Acts 2) "your sons and your daughters will prophesy".
 - And so in a secondary little p way we are to pass on this revealed finished word to others.
 - So I think it's legitimate as well as thinking about **listening up**,
 - to also think about **speaking up** as we move into the next section.

2) SPEAK UP... GOD SPEAKS THROUGH HUMANITY!

- Did you see the structure of this section?
 - V4 The word of the Lord came to me
 - V11 The word of the Lord came to me
 - V13 The word of the Lord came to me again.
 - The Word is almost like a character an individual in the story.
 - In fact God's Word is the key player in the book.
 - So let's launch in.
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- V4-5 God tells Jeremiah that he is known before he is born, and appointed to speak. Because God knew he would be born.
 - In a richer and deeper way God knew Jesus before he was born, because he already existed eternally with the Father.
 - But both were called to speak God's word.
 - The difference with Jeremiah was that like Moses he had excuses.
 - V6.
 - But hang on, as tempting as it is, when God gives you a job to do you don't make excuses.
 - V7.
 - Note the MUST. And then comes the killer reason.
 - V8.
If God is with you. It will be OK. **A) He's with you!**. Same reassurance for Moses. Same reassurance for us.
 - It comes in v8 and in v19. "I am with you and will rescue you"
 - It's the same reassurance for us.
 - We aren't prophets, we aren't apostles. But when Jesus commissioned his followers to go and make disciples of all nations, we picked up the baton. And he said "And surely I am with you always to the end of the age".
 - "But Lord, I don't want to be a teacher in TROGs. I'm happy to supervise. But I could never run a session".
 - "But Lord I could never give lead the prayers at church".
 - "But Lord I don't want to talk to tennis partner about Jesus".
 - "But Lord I don't want to tell my classmates the gospel".
 - I would get the message wrong.
 - I'd mess up my words.
 - They'd think I'm an idiot.
 - Take someone else.
 - V7 YOU MUST GO. I AM WITH YOU. That's enough.

- V9 God even touches Jeremiah's mouth, like he did with Isaiah, setting it apart for his use.
 - And he puts words into that mouth.

 - In fact in v10 we see how powerful these words are.
 - Those **6 verbs** are really significant.
 - They come again in the book in chapter 18 at the Potters wheel,
 - and in ch 31 at the New Covenant.
 - 4 destructive words: v10
 - *Uproot, tear down, destroy, overthrow.*
 - (we are going to see a lot of that in the book-judgement. It's not an easy message)
 - But look at the next 2: constructive words:
 - *To build, to plant.*
 - That's fascinating. Overall God is doing something constructive, though it is a destructive process (involving the invasion and of Jerusalem in the process).
 - But he's overall building up.
 - In fact, and this is amazing- God does his work through his word.
 - **& he uses your words**
 - V10 I appoint YOU OVER NATIONS AND KINGDOMS.
 - What?
 - Jeremiah isn't a king or a governor.
 - And yet the words that he speaks are going to be so powerful that it seems Jeremiah, or at least his words are going to do these 6 things.
 - It's like being told to go and talk to president Trump and Zelensky and Putin and that through what you say you'll bring down and raise up nations!

 - ➡ We had a bit of a discussion in our lifegroup last week about how evangelism should feel a joy, but it can feel more like a burden, and there were some honest conversations about how if we're really honest we don't really want to do it.
 - But whether we want to or not, whether we enjoy doing it, that's not the point.
 - We have the message of Jesus Christ.
 - God has stepped into our world with saving good news.
 - Whether we feel bold or not, we have an obligation. **SPEAK UP. He's with you.**
 - And he will use your words.
 - I've seen and you've seen the power of Words to make people become Christians, because God has used words to do that in your life.
 - Of course we find evangelism difficult. But that's not the point.
 - The point is really obedience.
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- Next comes a little word picture in v11-12.
 - It's just a short section but it's important.
- **V11 B) He's watching to fulfil his word**
- This happens a lot to the Prophets who were also called SEERs.
- Amos and Zechariah had similar experiences
 - They SEE something of significance.
 - This is the first oracle for Jeremiah.
- Perhaps God is tuning him in.
 - Calibrating his receptivity.
 - What do you see?
 - I see the branch of an almond tree. Hebrew **SHAQED**
 - God has a sense of humour. He likes a pun.
- V12. WATCHING. Hebrew **SHOQED**
- It's like saying "She's hunting for bargains in Huntingdon"
 - "He's chattering with his mates in Chatteris"
 - "you're sawing a tree in Sawtry"
- Almond, **Shaqed**. Watching **Shoqed**. Shocking!
- ~~I learned this week that in the UK there's an old saying about the order in which trees blossom.~~
 - ~~"Oak before Ash, there'll be a splash" in other words just a little bit of rain.~~
 - ~~"Ash before Oak, there'll be a soak".~~
 - ~~Apparently this year it will be a less rainy summer. We'll see!~~
- ~~Well in the Middle East the Almond was the first to bud in the spring.~~
 - ~~So you would be watching for the Almond to bud (similar words).~~
- Well God is watching for his word to come to fruition.
 - Like an Air traffic controller who gives the command for a plane to land and then watches it come in.
 - Or like a teacher who says you may now start your exam, and then watches to see the students turning over the page.
- God is watching to see his word come about.
 - His word achieves its purpose.
- God's words are not like me with my family. "Right everyone, let's go to the car, we're going for a walk". No-one to be seen.
 - God's words are powerful. "Behold the power of his word: He spoke – creation came to be"
- God is watching.
 - **WE also need to remember this.**

- God's words have an effect. Sadly sometimes they confirm people in their unbelief. Some are "ever hearing but not perceiving".
 - But sometimes they bring life to the dead.
 - Hands up if you became a Christian in the last 10 years.
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- Last God Wants the whole message shared
- But there's another word picture to come in the final section
- V13.
 - A pot.
 - Scalding water. This is very painful. Bad news.
 - Poured out on people v14.
 - And a very significant the compass reference.
 - From the North.
 - That's the direction invaders came.
 - Assyria a few hundred years ago.
 - There'll be another invader from the North.
 - They probably at this point in Jeremiah's ministry weren't flashing warning bells on the radar yet, it was too early, but they would grow to be the next superpower. They might have been looking South to Egypt.
 - This time **Babylon** is coming. Here's a map! On the dig deeper.
- V15-16
 - Enemies setting up their courts in the gates of the city where business was done.
 - Exactly that happens in 39:1-10.
 - God is watching to see his word come about.
- **And God is coming in judgement to send his Son Jesus to judge the living and the dead. And God is watching. It will happen. And we have that message to share.**
- V17-19.
- I think that phrase in v17 is important. "Say to them whatever I command to you!".
- God wants his servant to give the bad news and the good news.
- **C) HE WANTS THE WHOLE MESSAGE SHARED**
- **It's the same for us today.**
 - We have no liberty to just give the positive bits. V3 there'll be building and planting. Good news from God.
 - We have to tell the bad news too "uproot, tear down, destroy, overthrow".

- We have to explain to people that there is bad news. Sin & Judgement.
- We can't be selective about the message.
- Christianity is good news, but it's only good news because it's a rescue from bad news.
- God made this world.
 - He loves you, he loves your neighbour.
 - Each person in this town has a unique dignity and worth
 - There are amazing people who have done sacrificial things for their family and friends.
 - But each of us has rebelled against God.
 - Each of us lives in God's world as if it's OUR word that counts, our throne that matters.
 - It's why there can be such hostilities not only between nations, but between individuals, marriage partners, brothers and sisters.
 - We have rebelled against God.
 - And we will face judgement for that.
 - As Rico Tice puts it we need to do "Honest evangelism".
 - ▲ Which doctor do you want?
 - Only good news- ah fine, no need for a scan your health 100%
 - I've done a scan and some blood tests and I'm afraid there's bad news. It's serious. But now that we know there's something wrong we can do something about it.
- We are going to see in the book of Jeremiah that there is great news. There is hope. There is a rescue. Jeremiah is promised it in v19.
- But we do no-one a service by keeping quiet about the bad news.
 - Judah is lost.
 - They have turned from God.
 - They are under judgement.
 - The coming weeks are going to be tough as we look at Judah's lostness- her prostitution and rebellion.
- But we need to know this. Because it's the state that we were in without Christ. And even having come to faith, we often have areas of our lives that we are seeking to keep at arms length, and this book will expose our idols, and challenge us to turn back to God.
- But there is good news too. Lost sheep, but God is rescuing them.

- V10 again.
- DESTRUCTION.
- But it's CONSTRUCTIVE DESTRUCTION v10.
 - To build and to plant.
- So as we begin this series on Jeremiah.
 - **First will you listen?**
 - Preachers can sometimes spot when people fall asleep in church.
 - Preachers can sometimes spot when people tune out.
 - God always spots it.
 - WILL YOU LISTEN?
 - Will you determine now to do what Jeremiah is going to tell you to do. However difficult.
 - And then **will you speak?**
 - As little prophets, we aren't Jeremiahs. We don't bring new revelation.
 - But we do pass on the message that has been revealed in Jesus.
- We don't really have a choice.
 - V7 YOU MUST GO TO EVERYONE I SEND YOU AND SAY WHATEVER I COMMAND YOU.
 - ~~God wants the whole message shared.~~
 - ~~But He's with you.~~
 - ~~He uses his word.~~
 - ~~And he's watching his powerful word to see that his word is fulfilled.~~
- **Let's respond in song.**