

Fourth Sunday After The Epiphany

Jeremiah 1: 4-1-10

January 31, 2016

My Fellow Redeemed In Christ,

Can You Imagine How You Would Feel If Every Morning You Woke Up And You Didn't Know Who You Were Or What You Were Supposed To Do That Day? Such A Life Would Be Empty Of Meaning And Purpose. But, **“What Is The Meaning Of Life?” “What Is The Purpose Of Life?”** Sadly Most People Don't Even Think About This...They Just Kind Of Stumble Through Life. But Many Americans Might Say That The Meaning Of Life Is **“... The Pursuit Of Happiness.”** But What Is Happiness? Doesn't Happiness Come And Go? And Shouldn't Life Be More Meaningful Than Simply Pursuing What Makes Us Happy? And On Our Death Bed How Will We Find Happiness? So Again I Ask, **“What Is The Meaning Of Life?” “What Is The Purpose Of Life?”** This Morning Through The Prophet Jeremiah God Helps Us To Answer These Questions.....**“What Is The Meaning Of Life?” “What Is The Purpose Of Life?”: “Knowing And Speaking For God”.**

I. At Least That's What We Learn From Jeremiah.

A. God Tells Jeremiah: **“Before I Formed You In The Womb I Knew You.”** Jeremiah Was Not The Result Of The Blind Forces Of Chance And Nature. God Created Jeremiah By Forming Him In The Womb Of His Mother. When We Use Scientific Language About Conception And Birth, Terms Such As **Sperm, Egg, Fetus**, We Can Lose Sight Of The Fact That God Is The Source Of Life...All Of Life....He Created The Sperm, He Created The Egg...And The Fetus Is A Human Being Who Is Being Formed By God As King David Writes In Psalm 139: **”You Formed My Inward Parts; You Knitted Me Together In My Mother's Womb” (V. 13, Esv).** Surely This Has Something To Say About Abortion. At One Time You And I Were Also In Our Mother's Womb Being Formed And Knitted Together By God. But There Is More...And This Is Important....God Also Planned For Us To Be Born. This Means That From God's Standpoint No Human Being Is An Accident Or Unwanted.....But Loved By God. And This Means That God Has A Plan For Every Human Being As God Tells Jeremiah: **“Before I Formed You In The Womb.....I Knew You.”** And This Also Applies To You And Me As King David Says In Psalm 139: **“Your Eyes Saw My Unformed Body; All The Days Ordained For Me Were Written In Your Book Before One Of Them Came To Be” (V 16, Niv).** .Are You Already Hearing The Idea Of Meaning And Purpose? And Of Course This Is True Of Jesus Christ Has Well.....His Birth Was No Accident But Planned By God Before The Creation Of The World As Peter Says In His First Letter: **“He Was Chosen Before The Creation Of The World, But Was Revealed In These Last Times For Your Sake” (1: 20, Esv)”**

B. Did You Catch The Last Part Of What Peter Says? : **“{Christ} Was Chosen Before The Creation Of The World.... But Was Revealed In These Last Times For Your Sake” (1: 20, Esv).** God Planned To Send Jesus Into Our World For Us As The Angels Told The Shepherds, **“For Unto You Is Born This Day In The City Of David, A Savior, Who Is Christ The Lord” (Luke 2: 11, Esv).** To Be Our Savior And He Came Exactly As God Planned It As Paul Says In His Letter To The Galatians: **“But When The Fullness Of Time Had Come, God Sent Forth His Son, Born Of Woman....” (4:4, Esv), “The Fullness Of Time Had Come”.** Jesus Came At The Time God Planned For Him To Come... To Be The Savior. And Jeremiah Was Born At The Time God Planned It And For A Purpose As God Told Him, **“Before You Were Born I Consecrated You; I Appointed You A Prophet To The Nations.”** Of Course, Jeremiah Didn’t Know About This Plan Until It Was Revealed To Him By God. And So It Is With Us. We Did Not Know About God’s Plan For Us Until He Revealed It To Us In Jesus Christ... As The Apostle Peter Says In His First Letter, **“{Christ} Was Chosen Before The Creation Of The World... But Was Revealed In These Last Times For Your Sake” (1: 20, Esv)”.** You Know The Gospel Of Jesus Christ. How He Lived A Holy Life In The Place Of Your Sinful Life, How He Died On That Cross To Cancel Your Debt Of Sin To God, And How He Was Raised From The Dead To Give You Eternal Life. And Even Your Faith In Jesus Was Planned By God Before You Were Born As Paul Says In His Letter To The Ephesians: **“...He Chose Us In Him Before The Foundation Of The World... In Love He Predestined Us For Adoption As Sons Through Jesus Christ, According To The Purpose Of His Will” (1: 4, 5 Esv)** Yes, Just As God Chose Jeremiah To Be His Prophet God Has Chosen You To Be His Baptized Forgiven People, His Son, His Daughter.

ii. And We Learn That Those Who Are Chosen By God Are To Tell Other People About Him...

A. That’s What He Told Jeremiah: **“Before You Were Born I Consecrated You; I Appointed You A Prophet To The Nations”.** God Chose Jeremiah To Preach God’s Word. This Included God’s Law Which Condemns Sin And Threatens God’s Punishment: **“I Have Set You This Day To... Pluck Up And To Break Down, To Destroy And To Overthrow.”** And So In Jeremiah 7: 20 We Read: **“Therefore Thus Says The Lord God: Behold, My Anger And My Wrath Will Be Poured Out On This Place.” (Esv).** But Jeremiah Was Also To Proclaim God’s Love And Forgiveness As We Read Later In Jeremiah, **“Behold, The Days Are Coming, Declares The LORD, When I Will Make A New Covenant With The House Of Israel And The House Of Judah,.... For I Will Forgive Their Iniquity, And I Will Remember Their Sin No More.” (31: 31, 34, Esv).** Jesus Christ Was The Fulfillment Of These Words As He Says At The Giving Of His Supper: **“...This Cup That Is Poured Out For You Is The New Covenant In My Blood.” (Luke 22: 20, Esv).** The New Covenant Is Jesus Christ In Whom There Is Forgiveness Of Sin ... And Life. Like Jeremiah, Jesus Was Sent By God To Tell Everyone

About His New Covenant As Jesus Says In Our Gospel Lesson: **“I Must Preach The Good News Of The Kingdom Of God...For I Was Sent For This Purpose” (Luke 4: 43, Esv).**

B. And God Has Also Chosen Us... As His People... To Bring This Good News To Others As Peter Says In His First Letter: **“But You Are A Chosen Race, A Royal Priesthood, A Holy Nation, A People For His Own Possession, That You May Proclaim The Excellencies Of Him Who Called You Out Of Darkness Into His Marvelous Light” (2: 9, Esv).** To Be Called **“Out Of [The]Darkness”** Of Sin And Death, People Have To Hear About Their Sin And God’s Wrath And The Judgment Day As We Confess In The Creed **“...He Will Come To Judge The Living And The Dead”**.. If There Is No Judgment Day What Would Be The Point Of Jesus Christ As A Savior? But We Especially Need To Tell People How Jesus Died On The Cross To Cancel Their Debt To God And That In Him There Is No Condemnation But Only Forgiveness And Life.

C. But Our Natural Response Is To Make Excuses. That’s What Jeremiah Did: **“Ah, Lord God! Behold, I Do Not Know How So Speak, For I Am Only A Youth” (V. 6, Esv).** Sound Familiar? It Does To Me. Many Years Ago When I Thought That Perhaps The Lord Was Calling Me To Become A Pastor I Made All Kinds Of Excuses.....**I Wasn’t Smart Enough, I Wasn’t Holy Enough, I Wasn’t A Good Speaker...And, Now Don’t Laugh, I Was Too Shy.** Have You Made Excuses For Not Telling Others About Jesus? You Need To Understand That God Doesn’t Accept Our Excuses. What Did He Say To Jeremiah? **“Do Not Say ‘I Am Only A Youth’; For To All To Whom I Send You, You Will Go, And Whatever I Commanded You, You Shall Speak....I Am With You To Deliver You....Behold, I Have Put My Words In Your Mouth”**. Jeremiah Was To Quit Making Excuses And Trust That God Would Help Him Do What He Was Being Told To Do. And So It Was With Me. I Finally Went Off To The Seminary Trusting That God Would Be With Me And Bless Me In What He Had Called Me To Do. And So It Is With You. God Has Promised To Also Help You And Be With You. Remember What Jesus Said? **“Go And Make Disciples Of All Nations”** And Then What Did He Say? **“And I Will Be With You Always.”** If You Have Not Yet Done So, Like Jeremiah And Me.....You Have To Stop Making Excuses And Trust That God Will Help You Tell Others About Jesus Christ As Peter Says In His First Letter: **“But In Your Hearts Honor Christ The Lord As Holy, Always Being Prepared To Make A Defense To Anyone Who Asks You For A Reason For The Hope That Is In You; Yet Do It With Gentleness And Respect” (3: 15, Esv).**

Conclusion: So Then You Are Not Here By Accident. You Are Not Here Because Of The Impersonal Forces Of Nature Or Evolution. God **Planned** For You To Be Born And For You To Have A Relationship With Him In Jesus Christ. And Part Of His Plan Is That You Tell Others About Him: Family, Friends, Associates, Neighbors....Anyone Who Will Listen. **Perhaps You Can By Bring Someone To Our New Adult Information Class That Starts On February 11.** You Can Do It. For The Same God Who Created You

And Made You His Child In Jesus Christ....Has Promised To Be With You And To Help You Do What He Has Planned For You To Do. **“What Is The Meaning Of Life?” “What Is The Purpose Of Life?”**
“Knowing The One True Living God And Speaking For Him”. After All, What Else Will Matter When Jesus Returns To Judge The Living And The Dead? And On That Day Can You Imagine Your Joy In Seeing Someone Going Into Eternal Life With YouBecause... Well BecauseYou Told Them About Jesus? Amen.