

Whatever I Command You, You Shall Speak
By Trey Sullins

There is an old saying that goes: a poor workman always blames his tools. A person like this will never get ahead because they will always be finding another excuse. We often hear excuses every day from others and sometimes we make them ourselves. Excuses can be a dangerous thing and especially so when they get in the way of our work for God! The book of Jeremiah begins with Jeremiah attempting to make an excuse. God's responses to Jeremiah can prove to be a great lesson for us and ensure that we are great workers in the Lord's kingdom.

God's attitude towards Jeremiah's excuses tells us a lot about God. God in Jeremiah 1:5 made the call, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...I ordained you a prophet to the nations." Jeremiah responded, "Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth" (Jeremiah 1:6). The Lord replied to Jeremiah, "Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you" (Jeremiah 1:7). Though Jeremiah tried, God was not going to accept this excuse. God requires obedience from His people and His character is such that He will not tolerate anyone trying to clear themselves from His work.

Furthermore, think about why such an excuse really did not make sense. God already told Jeremiah that He knew him before he was formed in the womb and that He already chose Jeremiah before he was born. The omniscience God certainly knew whether Jeremiah was capable or not. An all-knowing God would not choose someone He knew was not capable and set him up for failure. God's attitude towards excuses shows us that we should never attempt to make them to our God. God knows each one of us and still desires "that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). This tells us with certainty that there is no excuse for us living righteously and being God's people today.

Besides rejecting Jeremiah's excuse, God also told him that he was going to accomplish the task for which he was chosen. God helped Jeremiah do this in two main ways. First, God was going to tell him the words which he had to speak; the latter part of Jeremiah 1:7 says, "And whatever I command you, you shall speak." As if he needed more reason to not make excuses, he would be told every word and did not have to come up with this message on his own. Second, God was going to deliver him through this task: "Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you" (Jeremiah 1:8). When you are directly speaking to the Almighty God and He tells you that He will deliver you, then you have absolutely nothing to fear. We find ourselves in the same situation as well. God has delivered His word to man and preserved it for us (2 Timothy 3:16). Because of this, we already have the words of God which we must speak to the world. Also, just like Jeremiah, God has said that he will deliver us not only from evil (Galatians 1:4), but also into heaven someday (1 Corinthians 15:3). These promises come to those who are faithful and obedient to Him; therefore, we should not absolve ourselves of speaking those words to the world.

The word of the Lord has come to us. As God's creation we must choose to be obedient to Him if we want the hope of heaven! By looking into the great book of Jeremiah we can learn God does not accept excuses and we should never attempt to make any excuses! Luke 12:7 reveals to us that God cares about us so much that He knows even the number of the hairs on our head. A God who

is that loving deserves our earnest faithfulness and work. We should always strive to live for Him and never be caught saying, "Behold, I cannot speak."