March 7, 2022

As God's children, we can courageously take action on what God has called us to do for Him. One of the things God has called us to do is to speak His Word so that others, too, can experience the more abundant life. Sometimes that can be challenging. For example, have you ever wanted to share God's Word with someone yet held back for fear of receiving a negative reaction? Perhaps that person was in a position of authority, such as a supervisor or local official. To courageously live for God, we want to fearlessly speak His Word.

The Book of Jeremiah provides an inspirational example of a believer who accomplished that godly goal, becoming the prophet God needed him to be for Judah. Jeremiah lived in perilous times, yet he courageously accepted God's call to the ministry and spoke God's Word without fear, regardless of the circumstances.

Living courageously for God does not mean that we never have doubts, worries, or fears—it means that we overcome them by believing God's Word. That was the case with Jeremiah. His initial response to God's call to minister as a prophet was, "I can't do it."

> *Jeremiah 1:6:*
> *Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I* am *a*
> *child.*

Jeremiah was not literally a child at this time. He was a young man, a priest from the Levitical city of Anathoth, just outside of Jerusalem. The issue here is that Jeremiah was afraid that he was too young to be taken seriously by the religious and political leaders of Judah.

God knew that Jeremiah was up to the task, but his fear of speaking the Word had to be addressed. In the least common denominator, fear is the only thing that ever defeats the believer. God went on to encourage Jeremiah by addressing that fear directly.

> *Jeremiah 1:8:*
> *Be not afraid of their faces: for I* am *with thee to deliver thee,*
> *saith the Lord.*

"Be not afraid of their faces" means to not be afraid of people's rank, station, or position. Jeremiah would not have been able to carry out his ministry if he had allowed himself to be intimidated by powerful people who might be angered by his message. In essence, God said, "Don't be afraid, Jeremiah. I am with you and will deliver you no matter what obstacles you encounter." God repeated that promise of deliverance in verse 19 of the chapter, and when revelation from God is given twice, that truth is established. Jeremiah believed God, recognizing and overcoming his fear. He did not focus upon the pressures and opposition he faced during his life. He focused upon God's Word and the promises therein.

> *Jeremiah 15:16:*
> *Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was*
> *unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by*
> *thy name, O Lord God of hosts.*

There is no room for fear in a heart that is filled with God's Word. Throughout his ministry, Jeremiah stood against the top leadership of Judah, including kings, princes, and priests. At times, they fiercely fought against him, but Jeremiah emerged victorious because he did not give in to fear. He believed that God would deliver him.

There are many lessons we can glean from our study of Jeremiah's calling to the ministry. For example, each one of us, as born-again believers, has been called to a ministry. We have the ministry of reconciliation, and God has committed His Word to us so that we can carry it out (II Corinthians 5:18,19). We, too, can defeat fear by claiming the promises of God's Word. We are more than conquerors in any situation (Romans 8:37). Like Jeremiah, the Word is the joy and rejoicing of our hearts.

We find many Biblical records of men and women who believed God instead of being fearful, and the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah is a tremendous example of that. Jeremiah lived in perilous times, yet he courageously accepted God's call to the ministry, speaking God's Word without fear, regardless of the circumstances. Being without fear, even in a pressured situation, is God's will for us today. We can beat fear by first recognizing it, and then focusing on and taking action on the promise of God that defeats it. We can speak the Word of God without fear, as Jeremiah did. There is no room for fear in a heart that is filled with God's Word.