

...with groans that words cannot express
Romans 8:26-39 and Jeremiah 1:4-10

Good morning and a very warm welcome to each of you as we gather this morning to worship the Lord. As always, it is such a joy and such a blessing to be able to gather together, even in a way such as this, knowing that the presence of the Lord is not confined to geographical location, to a specific building nor to a specific day and time – and this is such wonderful news for us, and it is an immense comfort. Christ, appearing to His disciples after the crucifixion, gives them the Great Commission, telling them to go and make disciples of all nation, and to baptise them but still reminds them in Matt 28:20, **“And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”** And after all the Lord has done for each of us, knowing that we are called by His name and loved by Him, we are commanded in Colossians 3:12-13 and verse 17, **“¹²Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you... ¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”**

Let us Pray:

How Great Thou Art - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_rWMQp2Hho

Living in times such as these, one of the many challenges we face in this life is our propensity to give people more power to control our lives than we ought to or even than we realize. It is a wonderfully uplifting moment for example, having a difficult task set before you, where there are people edging you on, having them offer encouragement, trying to give you that little boost of confidence... and lets face it, who hasn't needed this experience from time to time. But we do have this way about us, where we allow this external chatter to have a negative effect on us. We allow this negativity to influence the way we think, the way we act, the way we carry ourselves, often with effects lasting far longer than we'd like. There has been a recent trend circulating on social media called the 'put a finger down challenge' and the essence of this is to put a finger down if something applies to you or if you have experienced a certain situation... No, we are most certainly not going to be playing this game however, it has got me thinking about all the times people have looked at others and commented or acted in such a way that negatively impacts them. Now you can I'm sure recall at least one moment like this, a moment where you were told that you were never good enough, a moment where you were led to believe that you were nothing, that you could never amount to anything, maybe unknowingly or unintentionally, you have done this to someone else. Listen to this from **Jeremiah 1:4-10:**

“⁴The word of the Lord came to me, saying,

**⁵“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
before you were born I set you apart;
I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”**

⁶“Alas, Sovereign Lord,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.”

7 But the Lord said to me, "Do not say, 'I am too young.' You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. 8 Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you," declares the Lord.

9 Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, "I have put my words in your mouth. 10 See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant."

Now of course I do not want to read into this passage nor do I want to suggest something that is not there. I do not suggest that Jeremiah's response is because someone told him that he was too young, that he was not good enough, that he would amount to nothing... but it does echo at least a very familiar response in our own context. When God saw Jeremiah, when God looked at him and thought, 'Yes, *this is the guy I want*', what do you think God saw? Was it a superior intelligence, superior brawn, did Jeremiah pose a genetic gold mine which enabled him to excel at all things which would otherwise be impossible for most?

I believe that what God saw in Jeremiah was the same thing He saw in Moses – who responded to God's call with an attempt to avoid the task at hand and these words, ***"I am slow of speech, and tongue."*** It is, I believe, the same thing He saw in David who, according to scripture is described as being ruddy with a fine appearance, the youngest and in essence the least qualified to be a great king. I'm sure that, as a young boy standing in front of this giant of a man, Goliath, David questioned. Isaiah who, when called by God, did not simply say, 'sure, *that's fine*' but rather despaired in his own failure and guilt with these words, ***"I am a man of unclean lips"***. And was it not Thomas who refused to believe unless he saw the risen Christ with his own eyes? Was it not Peter who, in the moments of fear and despair denied Christ after walking with Him for three years? And did Paul, who persecuted the Christian believers himself not end up being persecuted and possibly, in the face of that persecution, struggle to find the right words to say in those times of struggle? So what is it then that God saw? Simply put, I believe He saw human weakness, human frailty, human fallibility dancing with a faithful heart.

When Jeremiah acknowledges his human weakness, when he says to the Lord that he is unable to do the task which God is calling him to because he is too young, God shows him that it is not about his own human weakness, it is about the strength and the enabling of God. We at times, by listening to and giving into the negative comments or actions of others, we can so easily give up the strength and the courage God is trying to instil in us, we allow others to rob us of that gift because we so often doubt, we second guess, we question and we run away from the opportunities presented to us – for fear of not being good enough.

But I think it so important to acknowledge and accept our weakness. It may sound strange but I suggest that we go as far as to embrace them even. Why? Because when we do this, we remove from others the power that we've given to them which enables them to use our weakness against us, and once we've done that, we can begin to rely more fully on the power of God, knowing that He can use our weakness for His glory. **Romans 8:26-27** ***"26 In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans. 27 And he who***

searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for God's people in accordance with the will of God.

The Spirit brings about hope, He brings about a sense of reliance on God, With groans that words cannot express, He intercedes on our behalf. No matter what people might make you feel sometimes, no matter what troubles you're facing this day, it doesn't matter if the words have completely escaped you, this is a hope to hold on to. Do not allow other people or even your own insecurities to rob you of the joy of this truth – You are dearly loved by God, you have been bought at great cost and you are so special in His eyes. And this morning, it is my hope and my prayer that you would hold onto these words as Paul continues from **Romans 8:31**:

More Than Conquerors

31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

***“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”***

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Let us pray:

I want to encourage you this morning and assure you that you are not alone in whatever it is you are facing. If there are any specific prayers you have please leave a comment below, or log onto our website, click on the prayer tab at the top and then prayer requests, we have people who will pray for you and who will pray with you. We are all part of the Body of Christ, there for each other, lifting each other up to the Lord.

Great are you Lord - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vQLMnPYoR9k>

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