

Jeremiah - The Tender Warrior

Jeremiah had a 40 year ministry that spanned the ruling of 5 kings. He was a tough but tender prophet who had a very tough job--for every prophecy he gave, he had several false prophets who would say just the opposite. Over his 4 decade ministry, not one person was converted. However, his prophecies would later be read by the nation and give hope and renewed faith in God to them.

Jeremiah was a youth when God first called him. God told him not to even worry about the people and assured him that He would equip him and that he need not fear. He was God's spokesperson though he did not see any results during his ministry. He kept his eyes focused on God despite the circumstances that surrounded him.

The people were charged with committing evil--they forsook the Lord. Jeremiah bid them to return to the Lord; and, the nation did experience a brief reform during the rule of King Josiah. However it did not last, it was only an emotional eruption without lasting results. The politicians and the false prophets lied to the people saying, "Peace, Peace" when there was a no peace. In contrast, Jeremiah preached in the temple--telling the people not to trust in their works, their minds, their money or their might--to trust only in God. They did not heed his warning and he prophesied against them. Consequently, they were broken like a clay pot smashed on the floor. Jeremiah is arrested and he quits the ministry. However, the word of the Lord could not be shut up and it burned in his heart. He writes a letter to the people which they did not read it until years later during their captivity in Babylon.

Say it! Play it! Pray it!

Objectives:	Play out the book of Jeremiah and God's love and discipline of His people. Gain insight into your own faith. Have fun with your family.
Number of Players:	5 or more (narrator, God, Jeremiah, Pashhur, False Prophets, the Israeli people, the Babylonian People (if you don't have enough people, double up on the roles)
Length:	30 minutes - 1 hour
Set up:	You can get as elaborate as you like. As the Narrator is reading, the separate characters should act out what is being said and dramatize how these events make them feel.
Props:	earthen bowl that can be broken (when you come to this part make sure you are in a place where the bowl can be broken and cleaned so as not to cause harm to anyone) a platform or steps where Jeremiah can stand above and talk to the people something to use as stocks where Jeremiah is taken

Scene One: God is talking with Jeremiah

Narrator: The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah, of the priests who were in Anathoth in the land of Benjamin, to whom the word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah the son of Amon, king of Judah, in the thirteenth year of his reign. It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of

Flight 34: Destination: Jeremiah 1-52

Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month.

God (to Jeremiah): Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.

Jeremiah: Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.

God: Do not say, 'I am a youth,' For you shall go to all to whom I send you, and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you.

Go and cry in the hearing of Jerusalem, saying, 'Thus says the Lord: I remember you, the kindness of your youth, the love of your betrothal, when you went after me in the wilderness, in a land not sown. Israel was holiness to the Me, the first fruits of My increase.

What injustice have your fathers found in Me, that they have gone far from Me, have followed idols, and have become idolaters?

I brought you into a bountiful country, to eat its fruit and its goodness. But when you entered, you defiled My land and made My heritage an abomination. The rulers also transgressed against Me; the prophets prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit.

Therefore I will bring charges against you, and against your children's children I will bring charges. For my people have committed two evils: They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns; broken cisterns that can hold no water.

Scene Two: Jeremiah speaks to the people.

Narrator: Jeremiah goes to the people and tells them all that the Lord has told him.

Jeremiah: You have left your first love. Return, O backsliding children, says the Lord, for I am married to you. I will take you, one from a city and two from a family, and I will bring you to Zion. Return, you backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.

Narrator: Although these prophecies brought about reform during the reign of King Josiah, it did not last. The people again turned away from the God who loved them. So God sends Jeremiah again to the people to prophesy their destruction and captivity.

Jeremiah: O you children of Benjamin, Gather yourselves to flee from the midst of Jerusalem! Blow the trumpet in Tekoa, and set up a signal-fire in Beth Haccerem; For disaster appears out of the North, and great destruction. Therefore I am full of the fury of the Lord. I am weary of holding it in. I will pour it out on the children outside, and on the assembly of young men together, For even the husband shall be taken with the wife, the aged with him who is full of days. And their houses shall be turned over to others, fields and wives together; For I will stretch out My hand against the inhabitants of the land, says the Lord. Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, everyone is given to covetousness; and from the prophet even to the priest, everyone deals falsely.

False Prophets: Peace, peace, there is peace in the land. What Jeremiah says is a lie. We prophecy peace in the land.

Jeremiah: Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it. Then you will find rest for your souls.

Israeli people: We will not walk in it. We will not listen.

Narrator: Because the people would not heed the word of the Lord, He again had Jeremiah prophecy to them.

Jeremiah (speaking for the Lord): Thus says the Lord: Behold, a people comes from the north country, And a great nation will be raised from the farthest parts of the earth. They will lay hold on bow and spear; They are cruel and have no mercy; Their voice roars like the sea; And they ride on horses; As men of war set in array against you, O daughter of Zion.

Jeremiah (speaking from his heart to the people): We have heard this report of it; Our hands grow feeble. Anguish has taken hold of us, Pain as of a woman in labor. Do not go out into the field, Nor walk by the way. Because of the sword of the enemy, Fear is on every side. O daughter of my people, Dress in sackcloth and roll about in ashes! Make mourning as for an only son, most bitter lamentation/ For the plunder will suddenly come upon us.

Jeremiah (speaking for the Lord): Hear the word of the Lord, all you of Judah who enter in at these gates to worship the Lord! Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Do not trust in these lying words, saying, 'The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord.' Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the might man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; But let him who glories, glory in this, That he understands and knows Me, That I am the Lord, exercising lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight. Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and you shall be My people, And walk in the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well with you.

Narrator: But they did not obey or incline their ear, but followed the counsels and the dictates of their evil hearts and went backward and not forward. They did not obey the Lord's voice or incline their ear, but stiffened their neck. They did worse than their fathers.

God (to Jeremiah): Go and get a potter's earthen flask, and take some of the elders of the people and some of the elders of the priests. Then you shall break the flask in the sight of the men who go with you. And say to them "Thus says the Lord of hosts."

Jeremiah (to the people): Even so I will break this people and this city, as one breaks a potter's vessel, which cannot be made whole again; and they will bury them in Tophet till there is no place to bury.

Narrator: Now Pashhur the son of Immer, the priest who was also chief governor in the house of the Lord, heard that Jeremiah prophesied these things. Then Pashhur struck Jeremiah the prophet, and put him in the stocks that were in the high gate of Benjamin, which was by the house of the Lord.

Jeremiah: I will not make mention of Him, Nor speak anymore in His name. But His word is in my heart like a burning fire Shut up in my bones; I am weary of holding it back, And I cannot.

Narrator: Jeremiah continued to prophesy in the name of the Lord. Telling the people of their captivity to come and also how the Lord would save them out of captivity and also of the new covenant He would make with the house of Israel and Judah.

Jeremiah: Thus says the Lord, After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts



FAMILY STUDY

that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart.

God (to Jeremiah): Behold, the days are coming, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days. I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Discussion: Have each person share how it felt to them to play the role they did and what insights they gained about the people they played. Questions to consider: Why did Jeremiah continue to prophesy even though the people did not listen to him or obey his words? When have you been in a similar situation where you had to tell something that people did not want to hear or you were ridiculed or called a liar? What characteristics of God do you see in the book of Jeremiah? What are some of the characteristics of Jeremiah? Do you or any of your family members share some of Jeremiah's character traits? What did the people do wrong? What steps can you take to make sure that you do not follow in their same errors?

Prayer: Close in prayer thanking God for His provision and for all that you have learned and the fun you had with your family.