

God Knows You
Jeremiah 1:4-10
Luke 13:10-17

This passage in Jeremiah is one of the most comforting passages in the Old Testament. It affirms that God not only knows who we are, but has known us even before our parents knew us! God knows us better than anyone else does. Not only does God know us, but God also calls us to certain tasks and gives us the gifts to do them. There may be times in our lives when we wonder what our purpose in life is. We wonder what we are supposed to be doing and feel inadequate for the things that need to be done in our society. Yet God not only knows us deeply, but God also knows we are more capable than we often give ourselves credit.

Being known by God can help us when we feel alone or inadequate.

There was a "Ziggy" cartoon that pictured the small, pudgy man, sitting alone in a boat, drifting toward a tunnel with the sign above, "Tunnel of Meaningful Relationships." Loneliness is a growing problem in our society. A study by the American Council of Life Insurance reported that the most lonely group in America are college students. Next on the list are divorced people, welfare recipients, single mothers, rural students, housewives, and the elderly.

To point out how lonely people can be, a pastor mentioned an ad in a Kansas newspaper. It read, "I will listen to you talk for 30 minutes without comment for \$5.00." The pastor commented, "Sounds like a hoax, doesn't it? But the person was serious. Did anybody call? You bet. It wasn't long before this individual was receiving 10 to 20 calls a day. The pain of loneliness was so sharp that some were willing to try anything for a half hour of companionship."¹

Remembering this Jeremiah passage in times of loneliness can help us overcome our fear of isolation. Like Jeremiah, God knows and has known each one of us. God knows us even more deeply than our parents or other loved ones. God has known each one of us long before anyone else did. And God continues to know us during every point in our lives. When we are feeling great and joyous, and when we are feeling grief and pain, God knows our innermost self and God cares.

Yet God not only knows us, but God also created us for a purpose. Each person has been created for their own unique purpose. God also encourages and calls each one of us to use our lives for that purpose. For Jeremiah, that purpose was to proclaim God's messages to God's people. Although just a boy when he was called, Jeremiah was told that God was with him and would remain with him. God had created and called Jeremiah to be a prophet to the nations. God will guide him to go where he needs to go and tell him what to say to the people. Jeremiah would be a prophet who would speak the truth of God, whether it was to build up or tear down. Jeremiah would speak the truth, and God would protect him from harm. And all Jeremiah had to do was put his trust in God and follow God's lead.

¹ <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/l/loneliness.htm>

When he was a small boy, Bruce Larson attended church every Sunday at a big Gothic Presbyterian church in Chicago. The preaching was powerful and the music was great. But for him, the most awesome moment in the morning service was the offertory, when twelve solemn, frock-coated ushers marched in lock-step down the main aisle to receive the brass plates for collecting the offering. These men, so serious about their business of serving the Lord in this magnificent house of worship, were the business and professional leaders of Chicago. One of the twelve ushers was a man named Frank Loesch. He was not a very imposing looking man, but in Chicago he was a living legend, for he was the man who had stood up to Al Capone.

In the prohibition years, Capone's rule was absolute. The local and state police and even the Federal Bureau of Investigation were afraid to oppose him. But single handedly, Frank Loesch, as a Christian layman and without any government support, organized the Chicago Crime Commission, a group of citizens who were determined to take Mr. Capone to court and put him away. During the months that the Crime Commission met, Frank Loesch's life was in constant danger. There were threats on the lives of his family and friends. But he never wavered. Ultimately he won the case against Capone and was the instrument for removing this blight from the city of Chicago. Frank Loesch had risked his life to live out his faith. Each Sunday at this point of the service, Bruce's father, a Chicago businessman himself, never failed to poke him and silently point to Frank Loesch with pride. Sometime he'd catch a tear in his father's eye. For his dad and for all of them this was and is what authentic living is all about.²

The good news in Jeremiah is that God not only knows us and loves us, but when we fulfill God's purpose for us, then God is by our side. God never failed to be with Jeremiah. Through the tough times and the joyous times, God was with Jeremiah. Even as a small boy, God stood by Jeremiah and directed his ways and guided his speech. God reminded him not to be intimidated by those who could destroy him, but to trust that God would always be by his side.

Jeremiah had an extraordinary faith, there is no doubt about that. He lived his entire life with a desire to trust in the God who knew him before he was even born. Following Jeremiah's example is not an easy task, but we must also remember that even Jeremiah wasn't perfect. God has a purpose for each one of us. It may take years before we finally figure out what that purpose is, but when we trust in God and follow God's lead, then God will show us the path we are to take.

Rejoice! For you are known, loved, and called by God! Go out into the world, fulfilling God's purpose for you and rejoice that you are not alone! Amen.

² <http://www.sermonillustrations.com/a-z/a/alone.htm>

Prayer:

Gracious and faithful Lord,
You know us better than anyone. Fill us with your peace and love so that we will have the courage to follow your lead and choose the path you lay before us. In Jesus name we pray.
Amen.