



the
eastside

STORY
GUILD

— AT HOME —

ESG at Home:

**STORY
AND
CREATIVE
RESPONSE
INVITATION**

Jeremiah - Part 1

If you want to listen to Melanie reading this, the audio version is on our website!

STORY:

When I was born my Mama and Papa were delighted, filled with wonder and gladness. They named me Jeremiah which means 'God lifts us up' and our home was lifted up with love: God's love, Mama and Papa's love, love for God's people and for God's justice and compassion in the world.

But when I was an adult, I got a different sort of a name, a harsh nickname: 'Danger Everywhere!'

"Hey, there goes old 'Danger Everywhere'" the people would mock. "Let's see what bad news he has today!"

"Oi! Jeremiah! What's up, Danger! You got any big announcements for us? Wait, let me guess – There's danger everywhere, and we better watch out!?"

That's what they said, God's people; ordinary people as well as the priests and the city rulers and even the king. And sometimes it made me crazy:

"God! I'm doing what you called me to. This was all your idea, but every time I bring the people your news they make fun of me or chase me out of town. Sometimes I swear I'll just keep quiet but then the fire of your message fills my heart to burning and I have to let it out. You're the only real God, you hold everything in your hands, so I've got no choice but to trust that you're holding my life, too. Don't let me down!"

God's calling came to me when I was just a boy. It was like he put holy words inside my mouth. And I could feel those words there, sitting on my tongue, all through my teenage years, when I moved

to Jerusalem to attend Communication School, when I took extra classes in the Temple to learn the work of God's priests. And then, when I was 18, the moment came when I chewed the words and swallowed them and opened my mouth to speak them to the people. That was my calling, to be a prophet, God's messenger, bringing words from Yahweh to the nation.

Things were messy throughout the land of Judah, and especially in the capital city of Jerusalem in those days. Our country was right in the middle of three powerful nations: Egypt, a big deal country to the south; Assyria, the northern empire that used to rule over lots of the smaller nations but was now losing its grip on power; and Babylon, the up and coming power in the region, bullying in from the east. And our leaders in Judah were busy trying to make political alliances, get on the right side of the people in power, join forces with the nations they thought would come out on top. There was no way that was going to end well. A real mess.

But you know what was even messier: the state of our hearts! The whole country was supposed to be focused on worshipping God and following God's ways of justice and kindness. That was kind of our thing. But did anyone do that? No! Everyone was out worshipping any idol they could find, anything carved out of stone or wood that they could pray to. Hello! What fools can convince themselves that a block of stone or a stump of wood can hear you when you pray to it and pay it all your attention? Well, apparently the fools that live in my country, because all of Judah was doing it! And while they were at it, they added greed and selfishness and stealing from the poor and straight up meanness to the pile of mess.

So God had quite a few words for me to say about all this. And most of those words were not at all popular. Lots of big warnings: "Danger everywhere! Watch out! You keep ignoring God's ways and following your own ways and you're going to end up in trouble!"

So I became the man with two names. The name everyone knew: 'Danger Everywhere!' The messenger who only brings us bad news that we don't want to listen to (even if it's true). And the name my parents gave me, the name at my heart: Jeremiah. 'God lifts us up.'

- *I wonder if you've ever had to tell people something that they didn't want to hear.*
- *I wonder how Jeremiah felt when the people called him, "Danger Everywhere!"*
- *I wonder how Jeremiah felt when his parents called him, "God lifts us up!"*
- *I wonder what your name means.*

All ages:

Jeremiah was a prophet. This meant God gave him important messages to tell the people around him. An important part of being a messenger is making sure your message is heard loud and clear. And to do this well, messengers have to know their audience. They must know how the people will hear their message the best.

Let's create a film together! With an important message! This will be a process that we embark on over a few weeks, as we follow Jeremiah's story. Right now, the form and structure of the film is unknown, it really depends what you come up with! It will change and evolve as we contribute the pieces.

For this week, start by thinking about what you want to tell the world, the people around you. What do you hear God saying to you, that could give others hope? Think about what Jeremiah said, the *"fire of your message fills my heart to burning and I have to let it out."* What is the message in your heart?

1. Spend some time in quiet, talking and listening to God.

Here are 2 prayers you can try:

Into God's Hands Prayer

Think about something or someone that makes you feel sad. Sometimes we call these sad, heavy feelings "burdens." Draw large hands on a piece of paper and inside the hands draw the people, situations, or feelings that are like heavy burdens. As you draw, think about God's hands being big enough to hold all of our burdens. You may want to pray these words as you draw: "I place this in your strong and caring hands, O God."

Now listen for God's message. Is there something God wants the world to know about how God's hands are holding our burdens?

The Zoom Prayer

Zoom out and think of something happening in the world that you would like to pray for. Now, zoom in and imagine one person living in that situation. Imagine what it may be like for that person and what they would be hoping that people would be praying for. Pray a prayer to God based on what you have imagined in your zooming in. Now listen for a message of hope from God. What hopeful thing does God want the people in this situation to know?

2. Write down your message. Try to get it down to one sentence. Pretend you had 10 seconds of time to say anything you wanted on TV, and the whole world was listening... what would you say?

3. Think about your audience, the people in our world. How do they hear messages best?

- Short commercial?
- Newsreporter style?
- Interesting/funny speech?
- Through a story?
- Art? (A series of images?)

4. Pick one format (from the list in #2 or something you made up) that you're interested in to tell your message.

5. Email me your **a) message, b) your chosen format, and any other ideas** you have. I will get back to you on your next step!

In the meantime, here's Kid President with his message for the world...enjoy!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-gQLqv9f4o>

**CHECK-IN
QUESTION:**

**WHAT WAS THE
LAST THING THAT
MADE YOU LAUGH
OUT LOUD?**

We'd love to know your answer!
Please send us your answer, as
well as any responses to the cre-
ative response.

**You may write us back or film
a video and email us!**