

Small Group Guide

Jeremiah Series | Week 1 | Jeremiah 1-2

"Formed, Sent, and Called Back"

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide is designed to help your group move from hearing the Word preached to wrestling with it together. Work through the sections at a pace that fits your group. Not every question needs to be answered. Let the conversation go where the Spirit leads.

BIG IDEA

God sovereignly forms and sends His servants into a drifting culture to speak His Word, expose empty cisterns, and call His people back to Himself.

GETTING STARTED

Use one of these opening questions to help your group settle in and begin thinking about the sermon's themes before diving into Scripture.

- When you think about the word "calling," what comes to mind? Is it a word that feels personal and real to you, or does it feel like something reserved for pastors and missionaries?

- Have you ever felt unqualified for something God seemed to be asking of you? What did that feel like?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES FOR REFERENCE

As you work through the discussion, you may want to have group members look up and read aloud the following passages. Rather than reproducing the full text here, engage with these sections directly from your Bible.

- Jeremiah 1:4-10 -- God's call and commissioning of Jeremiah

- Jeremiah 1:11-19 -- The two visions and God's promise of presence

- Jeremiah 2:1-13 -- God's lawsuit against His people and the image of the broken cisterns

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE SERMON

These are the central truths from the message. Review them briefly before discussion or return to them as anchors throughout your conversation.

****1. God forms His servants with full knowledge of the age into which He sends them.****

Jeremiah was not born into the wrong generation, and neither are you. God is not caught off guard by the moral confusion, cultural pressure, or spiritual shallowness of our time.

****2. The answer to fear is not self-confidence. It is the presence of God.****

God did not build Jeremiah up by inflating his self-esteem. He redirected Jeremiah's eyes from his own weakness to the divine presence that would accompany him.

****3. God watches over both His promises and His warnings.****

The vision of the almond branch is a reminder that God is not selective about which of His words He fulfills. His promises are certain. So are His rebukes and His discipline.

****4. Spiritual drift is never harmless.****

It always ends in thirst, shame, and bondage. Judah did not abandon God in one dramatic moment. They drifted quietly and steadily while maintaining the forms of religion.

****5. Idolatry is leaving the fountain for a broken cistern.****

We become like what we worship. Whatever we draw our life, identity, security, and satisfaction from other than God is a broken cistern -- man-made, leaking, and ultimately unable to hold what we need.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Work through these questions together. They are grouped by theme and move from observation to personal reflection to application.

SECTION 1 -- Formed and Called (Jeremiah 1:4-10)

****1.**** The sermon pointed out that the Hebrew word for "formed" in Jeremiah 1:5 is the same word used for a potter shaping clay. What does that image communicate about how God sees the people He calls? How does it change the way you think about your own life and purpose?

****2.**** Jeremiah's response to God's call was essentially a list of reasons he was not the right person for the job. What reasons do you tend to give God when He calls you toward something uncomfortable or difficult?

****3.**** The sermon made this statement: "God never sends His people on the basis of charisma. He sends them on the basis of His Word and His presence." Do you genuinely believe that? What in our church culture makes that hard to believe?

****4.**** Verse 10 outlines the work as four tearing-down verbs before two rebuilding verbs. The sermon said, "God must expose before He restores. He must uproot before He plants." Where have you seen that pattern at work -- either in your own life or in a church community?

SECTION 2 -- Watching Over His Word (Jeremiah 1:11-19)

****5.**** The almond branch vision carries the message that God is actively watching over His Word to perform it. The sermon noted that this is both comforting and terrifying. In what ways do you find it comforting? In what ways do you find it sobering or even unsettling?

****6.**** The sermon said: "God does not adjust His standards because our current generation finds them uncomfortable." Where do you see the most pressure -- inside or outside the church -- to soften, reframe, or set aside parts of God's Word?

****7.**** God promises Jeremiah that he will be "a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls" even as the culture turns against him. What does it look like practically for a believer today to stand firm without becoming harsh or defensive?

SECTION 3 -- The Broken Cisterns (Jeremiah 2:1-13)

****8.**** God opens His lawsuit against Judah not with anger but with tenderness, remembering the early devotion of His people. Why do you think God begins there? What does that tell you about the heart of God toward people who have drifted?

****9.**** Jeremiah 2:5 says the people went after worthlessness and became worthless. The sermon called this "one of the great spiritual laws of Scripture -- we become like what we worship." Where do you see that principle playing out in the culture around you? Where might it be playing out in your own life?

****10.**** The sermon listed several modern broken cisterns: political certainty, consumer Christianity, performance and appearance, sexual autonomy, comfort, entertainment, and self-definition. Which of these do you think is most tempting for people in our specific community and church culture? Which is most tempting for you personally?

****11.**** The sermon described Judah's pattern as wanting God's protection without His exclusive claim -- wanting a religious connection without covenant loyalty. Be honest: in what areas of your life are you most tempted to want God as helper or therapist but not as Lord?

****12.**** The sermon ended with a call not simply to feel bad but to return. What does returning to God look like practically -- not in theory, but in the actual rhythms of your week?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one or two of these as a group to focus on this week. Consider checking in with each other before your next meeting.

****Examine your cisterns.****

Spend time this week in honest prayer, asking God to show you what you are drawing life, security, identity, or satisfaction from other than Him. Write it down. Bring it before the Lord and ask for grace to return to the fountain.

****Sit with your calling.****

If you have never seriously considered that God formed you intentionally and sovereignly for the time and place you are in, take time this week to reflect on that. Read Jeremiah 1:4-10 slowly. Ask God what it means for your specific life right now.

****Practice faithful presence.****

The sermon described Jeremiah as faithful, wounded, obedient, and full of the Word of God -- not hip or polished, but present and faithful. Identify one context in your life this week -- a workplace, a neighborhood, a relationship -- where God is calling you to faithful presence rather than impressive performance.

****Return to first love.****

Reflect on what your relationship with God looked like at its most tender and dependent. What has changed? What has drifted? Take one concrete step this week to return -- whether that is returning to a discipline you have abandoned, a conversation you have been avoiding, or a repentance you have been postponing.

CLOSING PRAYER PROMPTS

Close your group time by praying together. Use these prompts to guide your prayer if helpful.

- Thank God that He is the potter who forms with intention and purpose.
- Confess any broken cisterns your group identified -- both personally and collectively as a church.
- Ask for the courage to speak and live faithfully in a drifting culture without fear of disapproval.
- Ask God to make your group and your church people who are loyal to the living God rather than to the forms and appearances of religion.
- Pray for those in your group and in your church who may be far from God right now -- that the God who exposes would also be known as the God who invites and restores.

LOOKING AHEAD

Next week the series continues in the book of Jeremiah. As you prepare, consider reading ahead in the text and coming ready to discuss what it means to remain faithful when the message you carry is unwelcome.