

Sunday School at Home God's Story Written on our Hearts
MARCH 21, 2021

Sharing our Bible Story for Today

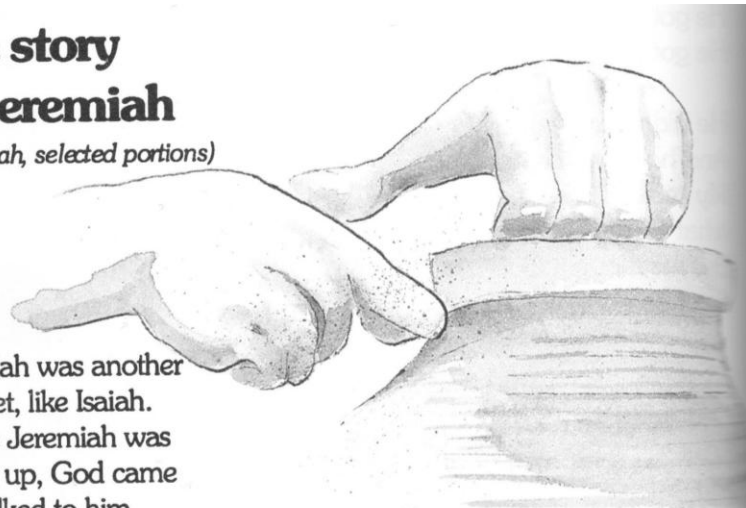
This week our story comes from Jeremiah. Jeremiah was one of the important prophets in the Hebrew Bible – so important he has a whole book named after him! In the Bible prophets are often reluctant to speak. Usually most of the people don't want to hear what they have to say most of the time. But prophets keep on telling the people what God has asked them to tell the people, even when they know the message will not be popular! Prophets help us hear what God is saying to us today and give us take heart and find the courage to take the next step to get there!

The Story of Jeremiah

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**The story
of Jeremiah**

(Jeremiah, selected portions)



Jeremiah was another prophet, like Isaiah. Before Jeremiah was grown up, God came and talked to him.

“Before you were in your mother’s body, before you were born, I chose you. I decided you should be a prophet.”

“But God,” said Jeremiah. “I don’t know the right words to say. I’m just a child.”

“Don’t say you’re just a child,” said God. “You must tell people the things they need to know about me.”

Jeremiah felt as if God had touched his lips. “I will help you know the right words to say,” said God.

So Jeremiah started talking to people, telling them about God. Sometimes people got very angry at Jeremiah. They didn’t want to hear what God had to say to them.

“Mind your own business,” they told Jeremiah. “We can do anything we want. We don’t care about God.”

One day God asked Jeremiah to go to a place where people make clay pots. Jeremiah watched as a potter tried to make nice round pots.

When the pots didn’t turn out right the potter mashed the clay into a lump again.

“Aha,” said Jeremiah. “Now I see what God is like.”

So Jeremiah went back to the people and said, "You are like clay in God's hands. God has tried very hard to make the Hebrew people be good people. But if you don't try to live in God's way, God will do just what that potter did."

"What's that?" asked the people.

"God will smash you back into a lump and start all over."

The people just laughed. They didn't care what Jeremiah said. Sometimes that made Jeremiah very angry. Sometimes it made him very sad. But Jeremiah kept trying.

One day Jeremiah got so angry, he went to the potter's house and got a really big pot. Then Jeremiah went back to the people.

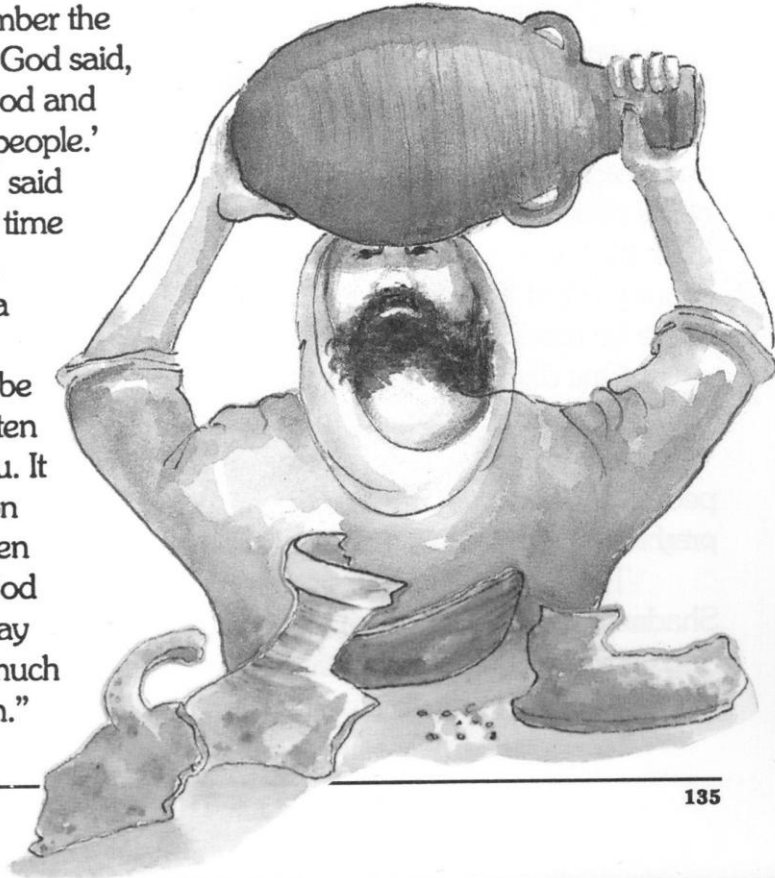
"Look!" he yelled. "This is what God will do to you if you don't start paying attention!"

Jeremiah threw the pot down on the ground. It broke into many pieces.

But the people still wouldn't listen.

Jeremiah reminded the people about the promise God had made to Abraham and Sarah and to all the others. "Remember the promise. Remember the covenant when God said, 'I will be your God and you will be my people.'

"Listen," said Jeremiah. "The time is coming when God will make a new covenant with you. It will be a covenant written down inside you. It will be written on your hearts. Then the people of God will live every day knowing how much God loves them."



Thinking and Talking about the Story

What does it mean to know something by heart? What do you know by heart? What might it mean to have God's promises and love written on our hearts, like Jeremiah says in today's story?

Can you think of some people who might be prophets today? Maybe a young person like Greta Thunberg? Or a wise elder like former senator Honorable Murray Sinclair? Or a musician or artist with a strong message like IsKwe or William Prince? (Greta is from Sweden. Did you know that the other three are all from right here in Treaty One Territory Winnipeg!) Remember a prophet will not always be well known or famous, or even popular!

I wonder where you find the courage to say and do hard things? Think of a wise person who is older than you are now, and ask them how they have found courage to say and do hard things. We can learn so much from listening carefully to our stories! Often we forget to ask one another what is written on our hearts – what is most important to us. Can you find a way to honour their message with a poem, a thank you card, or a drawing or image?

God is still speaking to people today! What is God writing on your heart? What important message might God be asking you to share? Create a paper heart and choose some colours that will encourage you to use your voice and take action. Write some words or draw some images to remind yourself of what God might be writing on your heart!

When the world is facing big changes, we especially need prophets. Maybe you would enjoy this song about Jeremiah written away back in 1970, another time of big changes! Just do an internet search for this song: *Jeremiah was a bull frog! (Joy to the World)* by *Three Dog Night*. (Or many other artists will have also covered this popular song.) If you ask someone older they probably have this song on an album or cassette tape!

Do you play guitar or ukulele? Find the chords and learn the song yourself!

Putting the Story into Action

- 1) Have you looked at *"Take a Sacred Pause"* in our Sunday School at Home resources? Paying attention outdoors is a wonderful way to listen for God. When we love the world that God created we want to take care of it and we find more courage to speak out and act up to protect the earth!
- 2) Do you have a question about the story? Send us an email and we will respond! We love questions – the harder the better! And I still haven't received any questions!
- 3) Did you explore this week's story in another way – by acting it out or drawing pictures or some other creative idea, or by doing some research and learning about a justice issue that matters to you? We encourage you to share what you are learning with your church family! We miss being together in person!

Carman United Church and St. Andrew's United Church families - to share your responses to this week's story visit Carman United Church Face Book page or email the church office Karen.mcgill@crossroadsunited.com. Visit www.crossroadsunited.com and see Sunday School At Home to view previous lessons and stuff people are sharing.

Immanuel United Church families –If you are willing to have your art shown before or during worship, please ask your grown-ups to take/help you take a picture of your drawings and send the picture(s) to Ha Na to be shared before or during the service on Sunday.

Praying at Home

What does God want us to do?

Here is how another prophet named Micah answered this big question:

Do justice.

Love kindness.

Walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:6-8)

Try sharing this every day at mealtime (or some other time when you are together at home) until you know it by heart! Celebrate all the ways you do these things!

Sunday School at Home Resources for the season of Lent and Easter Sunday (2021) prepared collaboratively by Immanuel United Church in Winnipeg and Crossroads United Pastoral Charge (St. Andrew's United Church in Elm Creek and Carman United Church)