

## The Time Has Come – Jer 1:4-19

Jer 1:4-19; This is the end of our GO conference, but certainly not the end of our GO

In fact, I hope it's the beginning of a whole new movement in our church, of people who go; And I think the time has come for some of *you* (**Intro**)

I don't know who, but I'm pretty sure that the time has come for some of you to go global; To go where others haven't or aren't, and make disciples among the nations

The keys to which are found right here in Jeremiah's example, when the time had come for him (v4-7)

*4 Now the word of the LORD came to me, saying, 5 "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." 6 Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth." 7 But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'; for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.*

When God said go, Jeremiah went – the rest of the book bears that out; He responded And the time has come for some of you to do the same; To . . .

### **Respond to God's call (v4-5)**

V5 says that Jer was set apart as a prophet, before he was born

*Before you were born I consecrated you,* I set you apart God said . . .

*And I appointed you a prophet* – a truth teller; that's the essence of OT prophets

Yes, they sometimes foretold the future as part of their warnings or encouragement, but the bulk of their message . . .

Was simply speaking the truth about the evils and sin of their day

In any case, Jeremiah was appointed a prophet

But not just any prophet – he was appointed as a prophet *to the nations* (5b)

IOW his call was *global*; And so is some of yours

Not as a prophet in *Jeremiah's* sense of the word – where your words are the direct words of God, on par with Scripture; But as a *witness* to those words

In fact, Jesus said in **Acts 1:8** – *You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

Every single follower of Jesus has been consecrated as a witness – some locally (in Jerusalem), some regionally (in Judea), some nationally (in Samaria) . . .

And some have been set apart as *global* witnesses – to the end of the earth; including some of you

The only thing left to do is respond like Jeremiah; Respond to God's call \*\*\*\*\*

- Now, if you're thinking – "Well how do I know? How do I *know* if I'm called?" . . . I think the answer comes down to this:  
If the need is painfully obvious – i.e. u can't get away fr it, and it bothers u to no end . . .  
And the thought of going is constantly there – nagging you in your quieter moments . . .  
And the urge is stronger and stronger . . . you're called  
And the time has come to respond

You don't have to know the end from the beginning

You don't have to know where you'll end up

You don't have to know every step to take – you just have to take the next one

The *next* step – that's the key to responding to God's call; take the next step

Which starts – **By going global with your . . .**

### • **Perspective**

You'll never respond to God's global call, if you don't go global with your perspective

And that means finding global news **sources** from a Christian perspective

Sources like the *Christian Post* and *SRN News* . . .

And magazines like *World* and *Team Horizons* . . .

And books like *Let the Nations Be Glad*, and biographies of those who've already gone

The first step in responding to God's call, is to go global with your *perspective* \*\*\*\*\*

The second, is to go global with your . . .

### • **Prayer**

And one of the best ways to do that, is to pick up a copy of ***Operation World***

Or better yet, go to their website and sign up for their daily prayer email

It's free, it's easy, and it features a different country in the world every day – broken down by language, religion, population, and a short video

It's very cool, very sharp, and very compelling

Or, you might pick up a copy of the ***Global Prayer Digest*** at Books & Things

It's a monthly devotional that features a low-reached/unreached people group each day, for the purpose of informing you and spurring u on to go global w/ your prayer \*\*\*\*\*

Third, go global with your . . .

### • **Money**

Jesus said in Matthew 6:21 – *Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

If God is calling you to go global, there's no better way to get there, than to send your money ahead – to invest in the place and people to whom you're called

B/c where your money is, so is your heart; And your feet won't be far behind

And then last, respond to God's call by going global w/ your . . .

### • **Life**

That's the ultimate step of course – actually going yourself

Leaving your life here, and going there – for good

Learning a new language, living in a new culture, loving new people, and telling them about the One who compels you to do such things

We don't need more short-term mission trips, we need long-term missionaries

Mission trips are good, and an important part of your discipleship . . .

But it's the *life-long* missionary who will make the difference

And for some of you, the time has come to respond

And second . . .

### **Stop making excuses (v6-7a)**

The time has come for some of you to stop making excuses

Look at Jeremiah's initial response in v6

*Then I said, "Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth."* [Excuses!] 7 *But the LORD said to me, "Do not say, 'I am only a youth'*

IOW stop making excuses!

I don't care how young you are; I don't care if you can't talk

Those are not your concerns; They're mine God says

And the same is true of you; Your shortcomings are not your concern  
Your gifts, or lack thereof, are not your concern  
Your age, young *or* old, is not your concern; Nor is your stage in life (Halverson's)  
Your concern is to respond, God's concern is to use you  
And use you he will, if you stop making excuses

And then . . .

#### **Obe God's commands (v7b)**

That's essentially what he's says next in v7b – *for to all to whom I send you, you shall go, and whatever I command you, you shall speak.*  
IOW don't give me your excuses, give me your obedience

Listen, God didn't save you to sit, he saved you to go  
Whether it's across the street, over the river, or around the world . . .  
He called you to go; To do what *he* wants, not what you want

Does that mean if you go global you'll end up doing something you don't want to do? No!  
When David said in **Psalm 37:4** – *Delight yourself in the LORD, and he will give you the desires of your heart* . . .  
He didn't just mean that God will give you what you desire . . .  
But that he will give you the desires in the first place  
So that as you delight yourself in him, his desires become your desires, and you end up doing the very thing you want \*\*\*\*\*

And the time has come for some of you to act on it – to obey the commands of God that have been written on your heart

Fourth, is to . . .

#### **Trust God's protection (v8, 18-19)**

In v8 God continues – *Do not be afraid of them* [i.e. the people to whom he's sending you], *for I am with you to deliver you, declares the LORD.*”  
And he returns to this thought in v18-19 saying – *And I, behold, I make you* [Jeremiah] *this day a fortified city, an iron pillar, and bronze walls, against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, its officials, its priests, and the people of the land. 19 They will fight against you, but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, declares the Lord, to deliver you.*”  
God uses the metaphors of a fortified city, to convey his *protection* of Jeremiah  
The only thing left for him, was to trust it

If you go global, you *have* to trust God's protection  
Otherwise you'll be sick with worry, and paralyzed with fear – fear of sickness, fear of persecution, fear of evil, fear of the unknown, and fear of death  
All of which will distract you and prevent you from accomplishing the work God has for you

Brooks and Nina wouldn't stay in Yembiyembi 10 *days* let alone 10 *years*, if they didn't thoroughly *trust* God's protection  
And the same is true of our other global partners – they trust God's protection  
Whether it's from political unrest, religious persecution, or unsafe infrastructure

- Does that mean you'll never suffer if you respond to God's call? Not at all  
We live at the mercy of a fallen creation, with natural disasters that take a toll  
Not only that, but according to 1 Thess 3:3, we are *destined* it says, to *suffer* at the hands of sinful men  
Not that we need fear them, but we *do* have to trust God's protection in their midst  
And all the more so, if you go global

In addition to *that*, the time has come for some of you to . . .

#### **Receive God's provision (v9)**

That's the next key to going global with your life – receive God's provision  
In v9 Jeremiah writes – *Then the LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth.*  
That was God's provision, enabling Jeremiah to fulfill his mission  
The point of which, is that – where God leads, God provides

He's not going to leave you hanging, and he's not going to let you down  
He's going to touch your life, and probably already has, to give you everything you'll ever need, to do everything you need to do – no less, and no more  
The only thing left to do is receive it

Like the provision of partners to help you, and the wisdom of leaders to guide you, and the blessings of friends to encourage u – those are God's provisions  
As are your God-given abilities to carry you, and the presence of his Spirit to fuel you, and the example of Jesus to sustain you

Where God leads, God provides  
So instead of worrying about what you *can't* do in going global, receive God's provision for what you *can* do

Sixth, the time has come for some of you to . . .

#### **Embrace your mission (v10)**

*10 See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant.”*  
Your mission may not include the overthrow of *nations*, or having any *authority* over them like Jeremiah – but it *will* include breaking down barriers to the *gospel*  
And uprooting false *beliefs*; And destroying strongholds, and arguments, and lofty opinions *raised against the knowledge of God* (2 Cor 10:4-5)  
It *will* include that; Not to mention building up the believers and planting a church

All of which requires that u fully embrace it from the get-go, b/c it's not going to be easy  
The epitome of which is the example of the early missionaries from Britain who went to Africa – they so embraced their mission . . .  
That they shipped their belongings in coffins, b/c they knew their premature death was certain, due to hardship and disease

Your mission won't be easy, but it is important  
And key to fulfilling it, is fully embracing it

Which is next to impossible, if you don't . . .

#### **Believe God's promises (v11-12)**

That's the next key here to going global with your life – believe God's promises

*11 And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Jeremiah, what do you see?" And I said, "I see an almond branch." 12 Then the Lord said to me, "You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it."*

To understand this, you have to understand that in Hebrew, the original language of the OT, the word for *almond* sounds like the word for *watching*

So God uses a play on words here, to get across the fact that *his* word, *his* promises – would come true

He was watching over them to perform them, to bring them about

And he still is; God is *still* making good on the promises of his word, as found in this book  
Including the promise from Isaiah that his word will not return void, but that it will accomplish its purpose and succeed in its intention (Is 55:10-11)

If you don't believe that, you'll never make it going global

The hardships are too many, the obstacles are too big, and the hearts are too hard  
In fact, you'll never make it at *all* in serving the Lord – here, there, or anywhere  
You *must* believe God's promises, in order to go where others haven't, or aren't

And when you do . . .

### **Stay the course (v13-17)**

Stay the course *as* you go, and *when* you go

*As* you go, b/c the process of going global with your life is measured in years

It's going to take some of you 5 years to get from here to there; Stay the course

And when you get there, stay there

That's the idea in v13-17, where God essentially warns Jeremiah of **4 THREATS** to his ministry – and they're not unique to him; we all face them; The first of which, is . . .

### **1. Opposition**

*13 The word of the Lord came to me a second time, saying, "What do you see?" And I said, "I see a boiling pot, facing away from the north." 14 Then the Lord said to me, "Out of the north disaster shall be let loose upon all the inhabitants of the land [like a boiling pot that spills over]. 15 For behold, I am calling all the tribes of the kingdoms of the north, declares the Lord, and they shall come, and every one shall set his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, against all its walls all around and against all the cities of Judah.*

All of which happened shortly thereafter in 586 BC, when the Babylonians laid siege to the city, destroyed it, and forced the survivors into captivity; It already happened

And the point God was trying to get across, was stay the course

Opposition *will* come; And when it does, stay the course; Fulfill your mission

Do what I've told you to do

The second threat to your ministry will be . . .

### **2. False Religions**

*16 And I will declare my judgments against them [against the people God says], for all their evil in forsaking me. They have made offerings to other gods and worshiped the works of their own hands. 17 But you, dress yourself for work*

Listen, when you're involved in cross-cultural missions, the bondage of false belief and the attraction of false religions on those to whom you're ministering . . .

Is frustrating at best, and destructive at worst

And God's like – don't be distracted by it; stay the course, and get to work

Which by implication, addresses the third threat to GO, and that's . . .

### **3. Laziness**

*17 But you, dress yourself for work; arise, and say to them everything that I command you.*

IOW get up, get dressed, and get going

Set aside your desire to be culturally comfortable, physically comfortable, and spiritually comfortable – and get at it

Laziness is not just a threat to ministry here, but everywhere

And then fourth, the fourth threat to going global from v17b, is . . .

### **4. Discouragement**

*Do not be dismayed* [i.e. distressed, troubled, discouraged] *by them* [the people to whom you're going], *lest I dismay you before them* [lest I shame you by giving you over to your fears and discouragement in front of them].

Discouragement is a plague in GO; And a huge threat to the work of ministry

Especially discouragement due to the enormity of the task; And the loneliness

And the seeming futility of it at times; And the overwhelming responsibility of it

But God's like – don't succumb; be not dismayed; stay the course \*\*\*\*\*

#### **• The time has come for some of you, hasn't? (Summary)**

Maybe you've been sitting there thinking, "How did he know?"

Or maybe you've had a sense for some time that God is calling – and you can't shake the need, or the thought, or the urge

If so, the time has come to stop making excuses and start responding

To stop balking, and start walking – by taking the next step

Pray – God, the task seems overwhelming to us; The call too much to bear

The sacrifice too much to make; The cost too much to pay

The obstacles too big, and the process too long

But in this we trust – that you are greater, and stronger, and higher than any of it, and all of it put together

As you continue in prayer, just remain seated for a minute, and listen to these words