

Seedling Group Questions for the week of February 3 – Epiphany 4C

The sermon for February 3 can be found at www.saidanotherway.org

Questions for opening up

What do you listen for in a sermon? Why?

Have you ever been tapped for a job or task that initially seemed beyond your ability? What happened?

Read Jeremiah 1:4-10

What reasons does Jeremiah give or have for not being able to fill the role of being a prophet? What reasons do people often give for not sharing their faith or taking on additional challenges and opportunities in their faith life?

Jeremiah will end up having to bear very difficult news to the people of Israel. What kinds of things (strategies, tools, etc.) help people break difficult news? What works best for you when you receive difficult news?

What kinds of assurances does God give to Jeremiah that he will be able to complete his tasks as prophet? Do any of those assurances speak to you as you put your faith into action? Why or why not?

Read Luke 4:21-30

Why do you think Jesus' words provoke such anger in his hometown synagogue?

How would you describe Jesus' posture toward the crowd in this scene? How does this square with your overall picture of what Jesus is like?

Putting things together

Jesus quotes two stories from Scripture that challenge their understanding of what God's kingdom is like. Can you think of (and share) any stories from Scripture that challenge your understanding of God?

When do preachers (and other church leaders) "cross the line" when it comes to mentioning political or social issues?

Pastor Phillip says, "Just because we don't like the sound of something we hear in church doesn't mean it's wrong. The goal of the Word of God is not to announce something meaningful or pleasant, but to announce something that's true." What is the difference? When you reflect on your hopes when you worship and encounter the word, do you hope mainly to be comforted and affirmed, or challenged and convicted? Something else?

Making it personal

Have you ever been rejected by someone for what you believed? What happened?

How often do you think about your baptismal call to "proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed"? What is the hardest thing about carrying it out? What is the easiest?

Jeremiah 1:4-10

⁴Now 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.”

⁶Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.” ⁷But the Lord said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a boy’;
for you shall go to all to whom I send you,
and you shall speak whatever I command you.

⁸Do not be afraid of them,
for I am with you to deliver you,
says the Lord.”

⁹Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth; and the Lord said to me,
“Now I have put my words in your mouth.

¹⁰See, today I appoint you over nations and over kingdoms,
to pluck up and to pull down,
to destroy and to overthrow,
to build and to plant.”

Luke 4:21-30

²¹Then [Jesus] began to say to [all in the synagogue in Nazareth,] “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” ²²All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, “Is not this Joseph’s son?” ²³He said to them, “Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, ‘Doctor, cure yourself!’ And you will say, ‘Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.’” ²⁴And he said, “Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown. ²⁵But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; ²⁶yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. ²⁷There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian.” ²⁸When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. ²⁹They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. ³⁰But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.