

**Title** Jeremiah, an Example of Perseverance  
**Speaker** Phil Beachy  
**Speaker's Residence** Millersburg, OH  
**Date** Wednesday, April 6, 2011  
**Venue** Ridgeview Mennonite Church, Intercourse, PA  
**Program** Beachy Amish Mennonite Ministers' Meeting 2011  
**Transcriber** Cory A. Anderson (www.beachyam.org)  
**About this document:** *This transcript may be distributed freely. The sermon was transcribed during the live presentation and then later edited for clarity. The material presented is not necessarily endorsed by the above organization(s) or transcriber(s). The content of this transcript is not guaranteed, though every effort was made for accuracy and clarity.*

Greetings to all that are here. It's good to be here with those of like precious faith. In answer to the question to this morning if there's more here for fellowship or for sermons, there's a lot of fellowship going on. [*Much talking still in the lobby; hush, and then a flood of people coming in.*] There are voices that wear like polyester, they don't wear out. That was this. The eternal God is our refuge. Many of you have expressed you're praying for this time. Just coming from the workshop reminds me of that: the text without a context is a pretext--as we look in Jeremiah and an example of perseverance. I asked for Ben, do you have clarification, other pointers?

I like to use at least two or three Scriptures to set the foundation and context. What are we talking about, and what do we put it into? What about the context? I Corinthians 10:11. [*Reads verse*]. I'm simple enough to believe that if God's Word says it, there's something there to glean. James 5:10. [*Reads verse*]. Background on Jeremiah: Because of this, and I give this as an encouragement to you in our humility, we don't want to lift ourselves up. You, as ministers or teachers, will learn more than the student. I'm interested in learning more. II Peter 3:18, grow in grace and in--what? Knowledge. How are you going to do, unless you get into the book? It's one of the prophetic books. It's the longest book in the Bible. There are fifty-two chapters, we'll barely get through chapter one.

I sense that I'm the only thing standing between you and supper.

We'd like to look at perseverance--as in needed for a race. Perseverance goes deeper than physical stamina. It includes the strength that comes from enduring the reproach from following God. There's the added aspect that only God can give. It includes the strength that comes from rejoicing in the reproaches that come from following God--to tenaciously hang on until the goal is accomplished. The book in its totality and the overall message of Jeremiah is my aim today--to simply draw encouragement from this book. Yeah, it's in the Old Testament, many don't turn to it first for inspiration, but as always, the Word is alive.

Turn to Jeremiah Chapter 1. In the first chapter (if we get the message) here, it helps us understand what the rest of the book is all about. The same way, if we get Genesis 1 correct, it helps us understand the rest of the book.

Attack you they will, overcome you they can't. That was fulfilled many times in this narrative. Jeremiah was attacked, beaten, put in stock, imprisoned by the king, thrown into a cistern, opposed by a false prophet, and when Nebuchadnezzar took over Jerusalem, he released him and ordered he be treated well. God called him around 626 BC and it continued to around 586 BC, or even later. Some meanings of his name could include Yahweh exulted. He prophesied in Judah, while Israel was taken captive by then. The Southern Kingdom was more faithful (and it lasted more years) but then did eventually fall. God called Jeremiah to a life of singlehood. He was born into a priesthood family. Chapter 1 lays the groundwork. He's given a task greater than his natural ability. The very first words he hears from God is comfort. Jeremiah 4, [*reads first few verses*]. The very first words God said to him, before you were born and were still in the womb, I formed you. I knew, I sanctified, I ordained you. The plan is given in the first message that God gave him. You might say, so what? This is the so what: Isn't it a comfort in your ministry that the God of creation not only formed you, but He also knew you. David referred to this is Psalm 139. God knows who we are before we ever come into existence. That's comforting.

I sanctified thee. Jeremiah, you've been born for a particular reason. I am going to set you aside for a specific work. I ordained you a prophet. Jeremiah, you're not here as an accident. You have a specific work to do. I'm commissioning you to a particular assignment. Some of the most critical questions our youth face today: where did I come from, what am I here for, where am I going? God addresses that very thing to Jeremiah that our hearts have questioned. What's my work? What's my purpose? God said "I formed you." You're not an accident. You're coming onto the scene here in exactly the correct time in history. I'm ordaining you and commissioning you for the work. Do you think there was question in Jeremiah's mind? When you read the book in entirety and compile the events, you get the sense that this man didn't waver or chuck it.--I'm not going to do any more of this. Right at the beginning, he was told why he was there.

In verse 6, the response was [*reads verse*]. Did you ever feel that way? What am I going to say? How am I going to speak, Lord? God said, Jeremiah, I gave you a job. Thirty-six times the word *speak* comes up. One of the greatest fears is doing public speaking. When God gets a hold of that heart, is it you who is speaking or is it God speaking? Verse 7 [*reads verse*]. Brothers and Sisters, there's something here for all of us. That was a charge given to him, and he never quit. You read the book. There's fearlessness in the life of Jeremiah because he knew who he belonged to and God would give him the words to say. Verse 8: the secret of Jeremiah's strength [*Reads verse*]. Those words are like fried chicken and mashed potatoes to me. I am different. That's Jehovah we read about in Scripture. Jeremiah, don't be afraid because I am with thee. Though all men forsake you, I am with you. Verse 10 gives his assignment: See I have this day set you over the kingdoms. There's a six-fold task: root out, pull down, destroy, build, and plant. If we miss this, it's going to be difficult to understand the rest of the book. One bishop said, "When they put their hands on my head, I thought they'd never get done, the charge was so long."

Verses 11-13, [*reads verses*]. I'm not quite sure why God is doing this. God might be thinking, "This fellow can't talk, can he see?" Jeremiah said he saw a rod and almond tree. God said, thou hast well seen. I don't know what it all represents, but what Jeremiah saw, God saw. In preaching, do you see what God has seen? If so, you have clarity of vision: if what you see is what God sees. Let's drop down to verse 17. [*Reads verse*]. Here it is. Again, Jeremiah says, get ready, be prepared, speak unto them, and he reiterates in verse nine. You say everything I told

you to say and say only that. Speak unto them, all that I command. Don't be dismayed at their faces. Brothers, Sisters, don't speak your own doctrine and spread men to your way of thinking. Don't be ashamed of it, stand solidly upon it, don't waver. Sometimes my wife asks me when it's my turn. She asks what I'm going to preach. I say, I'm going to preach the Word. You young ministers here, you probably feel like I did. What am I going to preach on? The congregation will eventually see a turning point when, if you preached every Sunday, you wouldn't be able to make much of a dent in the Book and you want to lift up the One who has charged you and given you a vision.

Verse 19, [*reads verse*]. This is God's reaffirmation with Jeremiah: They shall fight against you. Whoa! It goes on: they shall not prevail against thee. That's the secret Jeremiah claimed for his ministry. God told him clearly that He would be with Jeremiah. He would be resisted by the people. God also told him clearly, don't sweat it. I find rejoicing in that. The thought again crossed my mind, maybe the ordination charge should read differently. I say this with a bit of a grin, I guess, maybe they should. Now Brother, you're not going to be liked by too many people. They're going to fight against you. Your reputation might be put it in the dirt, but don't worry, God will be with you. Ours didn't read that way, but Jeremiah's did, from the mouth of God nonetheless. He was told, his task would be an impossible one, They would reject everything he said. But God is merciful. They would refuse it, but they could never say at a later date that they didn't realize what God was telling them. Even as Jeremiah spoke doom and destruction, there was a note of mercy in there.

Now, I want to go on a whirlwind tour. I've got a whole list of references here, and if you're struggling with sleep, turning pages and reading along may help.

Verse 18: the thrust to princes, kings, and the people. Chapter 2:8. In verse 8, *pastors* is added to the list: pastors, priests, peoples, kings would stand with Jeremiah. Here and there he had some lone friends who would help him out. God always has someone in the shadows. No one is friendless; there is usually someone we can turn to. For the majority of his life, most people said, "No thanks." Take the prophets for an example of suffering affliction. We'd like to think as ordained men, it's easy sledding, but most of us enjoy a certain amount of respect. Jeremiah did not have that. He preached a message no one was willing to listen to. Chapter 13, "My people have committed two evils..." Again, Jeremiah was the last prophet to speak to Judah until Babylon came and took the people away in exile, and he lived through that whole period. His ministry spanned five reigns. You sometimes wonder why the destruction is so total. Because the people's rejection of God was nearly total.

I would expect if not all of you who have been in the ministry for any length of time, you bear some scars. Misunderstandings, rejection, object of slander, object of rejection, object of a number of things. How do you go on when those things happen when you are accused of things that are not true? I've been there and I know some of you have been too. Where do you go to find strength to go on? Isaiah 40:28 [*reads verse*]. In verse 29 [*reads verse*]. "...But, they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength..." (Verse 31). What a criteria! If you missed it—"they that wait upon the Lord." People burn out because they're trying to push their own agenda...Saul experienced that while the enemy was coming. He did what he shouldn't have done and sacrificed. I don't find this man ever spoke out of turn. Where is the secret of your

strength? What is it that keeps your engine running? Let's go back to Jeremiah. What are some of the things he faced in the ministry?

The second is rejection, I wish we could look at more passages, but you've got the Book, read it. He faced rejection, discouragement, abuse, persecution, ridicule, was mocked, threatened with death. How many of those same things do you face? Have you been rejected, discouraged, ridiculed, or mocked? The things I face in my ministry and you in yours are not that different. If Jeremiah could be faithful in all of these things, than why can't I? Jeremiah, an example of perseverance. He was told not to marry or go to weddings or to funerals--a single man all his life, but he was almost fearless in proclaiming the message God gave him. Do I have a reason for throwing in the towel? There were times he was discouraged. There were times he felt like giving up. Jeremiah's ministry prompted his enemies to plot against him, his own brothers and relatives wanted to kill him and shut up the message coming from his lips. He complained to the Lord. Jeremiah 12, I wish this passage would read differently in a sense, but God asked Jeremiah some questions. The missions are impossible; they don't listen; do I have to keep on? I'm tired on this! It would be nice if God took Jeremiah into His arms and whispered encouragements to him. Listen in 12:5-6, [*reads verse*]. See, if you think this is bad, it's going to get worse. It wouldn't be consoling for me. What would you do if it's horses you have to keep up with? How will thou do in the swelling of Jordan? [*Reads verse six*]. That's just one snapshot and I hope that encapsulates the message I have for you.

Chapter 20:9: The persecution starts. Up to 19, there's a message God is giving him. There's not a lot of opposition, but now there is opposition big-time. [*Reads verse 9*]. Jeremiah says the same thing: I'll just not speak anymore, I won't say anything in His name. The verse isn't finished. "But the word was in my heart..." David in Psalm 39:3, [*reads verse*]. I felt that way already. Be quiet, sit back, and observe from the sidelines. There was something within; there was a fire kindled in his heart that could not be quenched. Hard as it is to accept, there is going to be opposition. Lord, I'm the only one, just get rid of me. God says that you don't see what I see. Those experiences were troubling for Jeremiah. Job felt that way. Elijah felt that way. And on, and on, and on--- A lesson in endurance. II Timothy 2:3, [*reads verse*]. let's get rid of the idea that we are going to be treated with velvet gloves and people are going to say all kinds of nice things. That does not shelter you in any way, shape, or form. Satan has his crosshairs right on you and wants to destroy your ministry. The Bible says, endure hardness. Prepare yourself for that. Expect to be hurt, it will happen at times. Maybe no direct attention but even with direct attention, be forewarned, and endure hardness. Endurance is based on hope. A runner will endure rigorous training; the runner fears not having enough energy to finish a race, and also fears finishing but still having energy. We want to live without having any regrets.

Galatians 6:9, [*reads verse*]. Let's not be weary. Revelation 10:10, [*reads verse*]. I will give you the crown of life. Be faithful and God bless.