

Jeremiah 20

Read Jeremiah 20:1-6: Throughout the Bible there have been imposters in the church. We are reading about a priest who was in charge of the temple, named Pashur. He was a bad representative of God to the people. God would remove him and dispose of him. This happened multiple times in the scriptures:

Thus says the Lord GOD of hosts: “Go, proceed to this steward, To Shebna, who is over the house, and say: ‘What have you here, and whom have you here, That you have hewn a sepulcher here, As he who hews himself a sepulcher on high, Who carves a tomb for himself in a rock? Indeed, the LORD will throw you away violently, O mighty man, And will surely seize you. He will surely turn violently and toss you like a ball Into a large country; There you shall die, and there your glorious chariots Shall be the shame of your master’s house. So I will drive you out of your office, And from your position he will pull you down. (Isaiah 22)

Now the sons of Eli were corrupt; they did not know the LORD.... Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD, for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.... Now Eli was very old; and he heard everything his sons did to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of meeting. So he said to them, “Why do you do such things? For I hear of your evil dealings from all the people. No, my sons! For it is not a good report that I hear. You make the LORD’s people transgress. ... Now this shall be a sign to you that will come upon your two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas: in one day they shall die, both of them. Then I will raise up for Myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in My heart and in My mind. I will build him a sure house, and he shall walk before My anointed forever. (1 Samuel 2/numerous verses)

Pashur hit Jeremiah and put him into stocks for public ridicule. The problem is that Jeremiah was telling the truth about the coming destruction of Jerusalem. He told the truth about idolatry which had affected every aspect of life in Jerusalem. When you think about it, there are always dissenting opinions on things. You don't torture and beat people who speak up with an opposing view. They hated Jeremiah just like they hated Jesus without cause. They were guilty; and Jeremiah was exposing the whole thing. Jeremiah was essentially saying that the whole system has ignored God to carry out their individual agendas.

Jeremiah did not try to save himself or moderate his comments. He told Pashur that his irresponsibility would bring terror to all who knew him. It was just like Jesus being presented by Pilate as an innocent man to the judgmental crowd. Somehow the facts were irrelevant. The charges were supposedly about not telling the truth; but in reality, it was about hatred for being exposed.

Jeremiah told Pashur that Judah would be taken captive and slaughtered, and looted. All of the money and assets of Jerusalem would be destroyed or carried off. This loss went to the heart of

what Pashur was desiring. He added that Pashur and his friends would die in Babylon; which is symbolic of the devil's castle.

It can be hard for us to make a practical application with some of these evil religious imposters like Pashur. For starters, we can expect to make enemies (like Jeremaih did) when we tell the truth about Jesus, and call out for justice. Secondly, when you start to make a difference, you can expect to feel all alone in your quest. Jeremiah saw no silver lining in his situation.

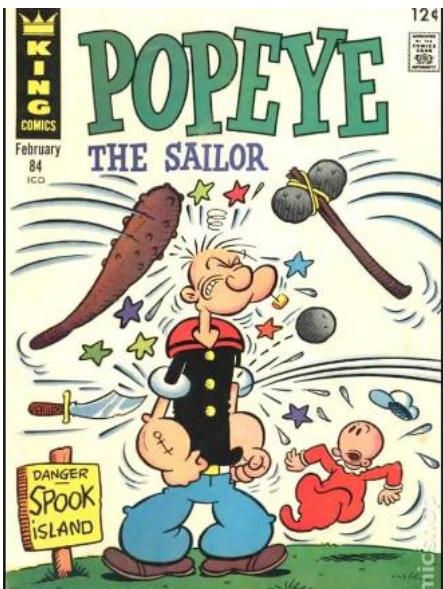
Read Jeremiah 20:7-10: Jeremiah is beginning to sound a lot like Job. He tried cooling it, and not putting himself to the hazard...but he could not hold back. The Spirit had too much passion welling up inside of him. He was losing it, with the barrage of negativity. He was becoming punch drunk from rejection and ridicule. He could not take it anymore.

Then said I: “Ah, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.” But the LORD said to me: “Do not say, ‘I am a youth,’ For you shall go to all to whom I send you, And whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you,” says the LORD. Then the LORD put forth His hand and touched my mouth, and the LORD said to me: “Behold, I have put My words in your mouth. (Jeremiah 1:6-9)

After this Job opened his mouth and cursed the day of his birth. And Job spoke, and said: “May the day perish on which I was born, And the night in which it was said, ‘A male child is conceived.’ (Job 3:1-3)

Jeremiah did not want this job to begin with. Now that he has stuck his neck out and taken risks for God, he feels a bit betrayed. Jeremiah did his part, and he was tortured and humiliated. Every time he speaks out in obedience he gets attacked. God would not let him blend in. Even his own family and friends were plotting and accusing him. He was a man without a country. His quest was very much like Jesus, with the violent responses. He finds himself in a very strange and uncomfortable place. He is in tension with both God and man. His feet are being held to the fire.

Read Jeremiah 20:11-13: Now we have a sudden reversal in attitude and perspective. It is like *Popeye who just ate his spinach*. Now he suddenly has become an impassioned crusader again. He fell in his humanity but was revived in the Spirit.



Many psalms have the same pattern. They begin in frustration and fatigue and anguish. They suddenly do a 180; and they begin to speak about God's power and victory. At first, it sounds bi-polar. Maybe we have to get to a place of being worn down to be open to the truth that is right in front of us.

Read Jeremiah 20:14-18: It is hard to feel good about your future when you have no quality of life. Jeremiah feels like a failure. He is treated like an outlaw. He really does not see the point in all of this. It would be like working in the terminal cancer unit of the hospital. He was having a hard time being optimistic about anything in his life.