

Summary: “What Do You See? Fulfilling Purpose, No Excuses”

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Primary Texts: Jeremiah 1:1–12; Esther 4:13–14; John 18:36; 2 Cor. 10:3–5

Jeremiah 1:3 *It came also in the days of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah, king of Judah, until the carrying away of Jerusalem captive in the fifth month. 4 Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying: 5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you;*

Before you were born I sanctified[a] you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.” 6 Then said I: “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.” 7 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. 8 Do not be afraid of their faces, For I am with you to deliver you,” says the Lord. 9 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. 10 See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, To root out and to pull down, To destroy and to throw down, To build and to plant.” 11 Moreover the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Jeremiah, what do you see?” And I said, “I see a branch of an almond tree.” 12 Then the Lord said to me, “You have seen well, for I am ready to perform My word.”

Thesis: How you see—with Spirit-given vision, not just physical sight—determines how God can use you. Vision silences excuses and activates purpose right where you already are.

1) Vision vs. Sight

- Dr. Myles Munroe’s: *“I think that the greatest gift God ever gave man is not the gift of sight but the gift of vision. Sight is a function of the eyes, but vision is a function of the heart.”*
- We act out of what we see internally; no one acts beyond their beliefs and understanding.
- Best motivator of action: **God’s purpose and love of neighbor.**
- Worst motivator: **self-interest.**
- Greatest enemy to purpose: **accepting limitations and making excuses.**

2) Jeremiah’s Context and Call

- Jeremiah ministers in a **divided kingdom** (Israel & Judah). Israel already fell; Judah still “with God” yet drifting into idolatry and injustice.
- God’s word to Jeremiah (Jer 1:4–10):
 - **Before birth**—God *knew, formed, sanctified, appointed* him.
 - Jeremiah’s **excuse** (“I’m too young / can’t speak”) is **dismissed** by God.
 - God gives a **threefold redirection**:
 1. **Command**: “You shall go...and speak.”
 2. **Prohibition**: “Do not fear their faces.”
 3. **Promise**: “I am with you to deliver you.”
 - **Provision**: God touches Jeremiah’s mouth, putting **His words** there—**empowerment**.
 - **Assignment**: “Root out, pull down, destroy, throw down”—then **“build and plant.”**

3) Inside the System, Yet Unconformed

- God often uses people **already inside** systems if they refuse to be conformed.
- **Jeremiah**: born into priestly establishment, yet called to confront corruption.
- **Esther**: positioned in power and tempted to silence; Mordecai reminds her she’s there **“for such a time as this.”** She risks comfort to **challenge an evil decree.**

4) Two “Kingdoms”: Counterfeit vs. Christ’s

- Dr. Hudson contrasts “**Christianity without Christ**” with the **Christianity of Christ**:
 - **Manifest Destiny** and the **Doctrine of Discovery** (historical justifications for conquest and displacement) and **chattel slavery** were systems that harmed people. These products of a version of Christianity without Christ.
 - **Frederick Douglass** identified the two kingdoms: the pure Christianity of Christ and the hypocritical Christian religion of his time.
 - *“I love the pure, peaceable, and impartial Christianity of Christ; I therefore hate the corrupt, slaveholding, women-whipping, cradle-plundering, partial, and hypocritical Christianity of this land. Indeed, I can see no reason, but the most deceitful one, for calling the religion of this land Christianity. I look upon it as the climax of all misnomers, the boldest of all frauds, and the grossest of all libels.”* (1845 - Frederick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave)
- Contemporary **White Christian nationalism** seeks to wield state power to impose religion. Jesus said, “**My kingdom is not of this world**” (John 18:36); the Gospel changes **hearts**, not by coercive law.
- Christians hold **dual citizenship**: we preach the Gospel, love neighbors, pursue justice, and elect **competent public servants**, but we do not try to “Christianize” worldly power.

5) Excuses vs. God’s Plan

- God **ignores excuses**—they only “work” for the one making them.
- **Inadequacy** is real, but not a hiding place; the God who formed you **increases capacity**.
- Expect **trouble** for obedience; God already factored it in and promises **presence and deliverance**.

6) Weapons and Work of the Kingdom

- Our warfare is **not carnal** (2 Cor. 10:3–5). We **pray, speak truth to power, show up, help people**, and support leaders who serve the **common good** rather than self-interest.
- “Rooting out” includes exposing deception; “building/planting” means constructive actions that bless people and communities.

7) “What Do You See?”—The Almond Branch

- God asks Jeremiah **what he sees** (1:11–12).
- **Almond branch**—earliest to bloom—pictures God’s **watchfulness and swift action**.
- Key: Jeremiah didn’t need full interpretation to obey; he only needed to **see** what God showed.
- When Jeremiah saw **God’s adequacy** more than his own inadequacy, God declared, “**You have seen well... I am ready to perform My word.**”

8) Applications & Practices

- **Confession**: Renounce excuses; receive assignment **where you are**; refuse fear; trust God’s presence.
- **Act where placed**: Identify your **sphere** (home, work, school, civic board, ministry team).
- **Two moves each week**:
 - One “**tear down**” act (truth-telling, intercession, challenging injustice).
 - One “**build/plant**” act (mentoring, proposing just processes, starting prayer/helps initiatives).
- **Discernment**: Judge by **fruit**, not labels; avoid fruitless arguments; invest in people with **ears to hear**.

9) Closing Appeal & Prayer

- Place hope in **Christ**, not systems. Worldly empires fail; God’s kingdom endures.

- Ask for grace to **discern** counterfeit religion, to **shine light** without anger, and to participate in God's change by **changed hearts leading to changed conditions**.
- Call to salvation, consecration, and **immediate obedience**—letting the “light turn on” and walking out purpose with **no excuses**.

Bottom line:

Seeing with **kingdom vision**—not merely with natural sight—positions you to confront lies, build what blesses people, and walk confidently in the assignment God prepared **before you were born**.