

“Becoming the Imagined” I Corinthians 13:1-13, Jeremiah 1:4-10 1/31 /2010
Kenmore UMC

Known by God, imagine who God calls you to be and all God calls only you to do.

Have you ever seen or been the parent in the pool trying to coax their child to jump into the pool and saying they will catch them? It is a battle of visions. The child sees cold water, the child sees danger, choking, the child sees he can't do that swimming stuff and he or she will drown, and the parent sees coolness on a hot summer day, the safety of their child when they are around water, the parent sees the fun and joy the child will have in the water.

Picture God talking with Jeremiah. Jeremiah sees fear at what others will do with him, he sees his inadequacy; and God sees what Jeremiah can do with God's words in him, God sees the power of possibility through God reliance, God sees pulling apart in order to build up.

What do you see? The fears and inadequacies of your lives or the assurance and possibilities of what God can do?

In telling of his call to ministry Jeremiah calls us to remember and claim, not what we cannot do on our own, but what we can do with God.

Becoming the Imagined

Jeremiah invites us to see what God sees in us and Jeremiah reminds us it is not our words and our doing, but God's words and God's doing through us.

Jeremiah's call to ministry is our call. Dr. James Calvin Davis of Memphis Theological Seminary has said: *"It is an invitation to every Christian to witness to the gospel by investing with radical grace whatever worldly roles God opens to us. John Calvin assured, "No task will be so sordid and base, provided you obey your calling in it, that it will not shine and be reckoned very precious in God's sight. As Martin Luther famously said about parenthood, when understood as Christian vocation, even changing dirty diapers is done for the glory of God."*

You see **the Bible is personal**. It is written to us, individually and as a body. It is written about ordinary people, like us, too young like Jeremiah and too old like Abraham and Sarah. Too impure like Isaiah, and too seemingly sure of himself like Saul, who became Paul through God's imagining. Over and over it tells of people, ordinary people becoming what God imagined, what God created them to be.

Like any parent, God has dreams for us. God invites, encourages, urges, calls us to imagine all that God has done in us and all that God wants to do through us.

One of the most unnoticed, powerful lines in the Bible to me is at the end of Paul's chapter about the greatest gift of all, love. Just before the well known, oft quoted conclusion, *"now faith, Hope, Love abide, these three, but the greatest of these is love."* These words that proclaim to us that we do never jump into the water of life on our own and in that great and glorious day when we meet our Maker we will understand what has always been true. Verse 12 ***"For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known."***

God has, God does, God will know us, God has known us since before God formed us in our mother's womb; God knows who we are and who we have become, and God knows who we will can become.

Max Lucado says it well in response to his own, our own question *“Why does God love you so much? The same reason the artist loves his paintings or the boat builder loves his vessels. You are God’s idea. And God has only good ideas. “For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”* Ephesians 2:10

So what does God imagine us to be individually and as the body of his son our Lord Jesus Christ?

People so filled with God’s love that we realize Love is not so much another spiritual gift, but the way in which God intends us to practice all of our gifts.

People so responsive to God’s call that we tear down the barriers to people’s full development, to everyone’s relationship to God and build up connections to God and God’s people.

People who respond to the needs of others, like the suffering in Haiti and the months and years it will take to rebuild their brokenness. Out of the brokenness and rubble of their lives new life can emerge

God imagines us to be whole people, known by God, gifted by God’s Spirit, loved by God’s son. People embraced by love to live that love in a broken world, patient, kind, not envious, or boastful or arrogant or rude insisting on its own way. Not irritable or resentful, but lives that rejoice in the truth. Lives that can bear all things, believe all things, hope all things and endure all things, because God’s love never ends.

God knows you, God knows us and God loves us enough to call us to be God’s people, tearing down hatred and violence and building up God’s people and God’s world.

God invites us to become all God imagines we can be.

Amen.

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