

Holy Trinity Lutheran Church Des Moines, WA February 24, 2013

Jeremiah 26:8-15

Lenten Thoughts on... Resolve!

- 1. The Christian Needs Resolve**
- 2. The Christian Finds Resolve**
- 3. The Results of Resolve**

**Hymns: 345 – Lamb of God – 120 –
Closing 114 (1-3)**

All Scripture quotations from NIV 1984

⁸ But as soon as Jeremiah finished telling all the people everything the LORD had commanded him to say, the priests, the prophets and all the people seized him and said, “You must die! ⁹ Why do you prophesy in the LORD’s name that this house will be like Shiloh and this city will be desolate and deserted?” And all the people crowded around Jeremiah in the house of the LORD.

¹⁰ When the officials of Judah heard about these things, they went up from the royal palace to the house of the LORD and took their places at the entrance of the New Gate of the LORD’s house. ¹¹ Then the priests and the prophets said to the officials and all the people, “This man should be sentenced to death because he has prophesied against this city. You have heard it with your own ears!”

¹² Then Jeremiah said to all the officials and all the people: “The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the things you have heard.

¹³ Now reform your ways and your actions and obey the LORD your God. Then the LORD will relent and not bring the disaster he has pronounced against you.

¹⁴ As for me, I am in your hands; do with me whatever you think is good and right. ¹⁵ Be assured, however, that if you put me to death, you will bring the guilt of innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and on those who live in it, for in truth the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing.”
Jeremiah 26:8-15

Listen to these words which were at the heart of a recent Super Bowl commercial. (Paul Harvey’s *So God Made a Farmer* was played).

Those words were used by the Chrysler Corporation in an ad that was, first and foremost, to help sell Dodge Ram trucks. However, through the poignant words and still frame photos, the real draw of that commercial, and the reason that it was viewed over 8 million times in the week after the Super Bowl, is that it spoke about resolve. You can’t be a farmer without knowing what resolve is, and working and living with it.

Though I grew up in Lincoln, Nebraska and was surrounded by people whose calloused, dirty hands and broken, tired backs bore witness to the resolve that farmers need to have, the truth is that I can look out right now and see people for whom great resolve is just as much a needed attribute in life. The Christian NEEDS resolve and all you need to do is to look around to realize that.

There is the woman who is told that handing out birth control to young teens and recommending abortion clinics on a daily basis is just part of her job. She needs resolve to keep speaking up to her boss. She needs resolve as she finally hands in her resignation, though she doesn’t necessarily know how she will pay bills or buy food.

There is the man among us who is on the road to recovery from addiction. He needs resolve to fight the urge that fills his insides every time he passes a bar or walks by an aisle of bottles at the grocery store.

There is the mom who struggles with constant health problems and begins to wonder whether she should start listing the hospital as her part-time residence. She needs resolve to keep enduring the pain of the treatments. She needs resolve to hold onto the hope of recovery.

There is the teenage girl who is told every weekend by her boyfriend that everyone else is doing it. She needs resolve to keep saying, “No, I’m going to wait.”

Those pressures are real, and so are the pressures that come each and every day into your own life. A Christian’s whole life is really about resolve. The Christian needs resolve to fight temptation and stand up for what is right, but the Christian also needs resolve to keep coming to church, to keep studying the Word, to keep living as a parent or spouse or employee or student or child. Each day, every person that is a child of God is pressured in some way by the attacks of Satan. He brings trials and struggles into our lives. He attacks us where we are most vulnerable. He never gives up, he never, even for a moment, eases up in his effort to have us give up. His goal is to lead every one of us to the point where we say, “I can’t. I can’t go on. I don’t want to do this anymore.” It would be easier to give in and live according to the standards that this world has, rather

than doing the things that God wants me to do in my life.

And as we face our battles, the hardest days will be when we feel like we are all alone. The biggest doubts will be raised when we trip up and stumble. The most uncertainty will fill our minds when we feel like we are facing something unbearable, a challenge that no one else quite has to face. When we face those times, it is so important to remember that we are not alone. We are not alone in feeling weary; we are not alone in stumbling; we are not alone in our uncertainty about the purpose of it all. We are not alone in needing resolve.

Our scripture lessons today serve as proof of that. First we see Jeremiah, a man who was sent to preach to sinful, rebellious people. And as he went and preached to the people, this is the feedback he received. ***“As soon as Jeremiah finished telling all the people everything the Lord had commanded him to say, the priests, the prophets and all the people seized him and said, ‘You must die!’”*** And in the face of that rejection, the easy thing to do would’ve been to say, “I can’t. I can’t go on. Jeremiah was to continue preaching, but we know that Jeremiah often struggled. Jeremiah was known as the “Weeping Prophet,” and more than any other, we can see his struggles. As we look at Jeremiah’s words in Scripture, we see the torment that he felt in his life. We hear that he often struggled to go on. He certainly felt pressure to give up. Jeremiah certainly needed resolve.

Then we look at Jesus. He too, was sent on a mission. His mission was to go out and preach, facing rejection from his own people. He was to face the fiercest of Satan’s temptations and not stumble, even at one point. He was to suffer terrible punishment and a brutally painful death. And all along the way, he had people telling him that he didn’t need to go on. Our Gospel lesson from Luke gives us one such account. ***“Some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, ‘Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.’”*** Every step of the way, Jesus knew every painful detail of what was going to happen. And though he is the almighty Son of God, he was also true man just like we are. And in the Garden of Gethsemane on Maundy Thursday, we saw as even Jesus struggled with what lay in his future. His soul was overwhelmed. He pleaded to his Father, “Take this cup from me!” Jesus, also, needed resolve.

Yet, here is the truth that allows us to continue forward. The Christian who needs resolve finds resolve. And finding that strength to go forward and persevere begins by knowing and understanding that it is the Lord who sends us. Jeremiah did not go on his own to face the people of Israel. He was going by the will of God. Jesus came to this earth to carry out

salvation according to the eternal plan and purpose of God the Father. We also are placed in every situation in life by God himself. What confidence that can instill; we are in those difficult places for a purpose.

That purpose is to speak and live God’s truth. It is to carry out God’s Will, no matter what our missions might be. For Jeremiah, that mission was to preach and preach and preach, even as he faced the harshest forms of objection and rejection. He was to tell the Israelites the truth of who they were and the truth of what would happen to them. For Jesus, that mission was to be the Savior of the world. He was to live the perfect life that no other person on this earth could do. And then he would suffer death that would count as a payment for each person’s sins. For all of us, the mission is to live as Christian people. If that means speaking up for the truth of what we believe on a daily basis, let us do it. If that means battling a specific temptation day after day, let us do it. If it means fighting off apathy, let us do it. Let us carry out our Christian callings with resolve.

Let us trust that as we do, we go with God’s love and his power to sustain and push us through. Though God’s people might feel alone at times, though they might feel overwhelmed, though they might feel lost; the truth is that they are not at all dependent on their own resolve to get them through. Those who trust in the LORD will never be put to shame. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not be faint.

Those who know that the LORD is behind them can continue on, they can be filled with resolve that comes from God himself.

Though Jeremiah was told by men to stop speaking or face death, he responded with resolve, ***“The LORD sent me to prophesy against this house and this city all the things you have heard. Now reform your ways and your actions and obey the LORD your God. Then the LORD will relent and not bring the disaster he has pronounced against you. As for me, I am in your hands; do with me whatever you think is good and right. Be assured, however, that if you put me to death, you will bring the guilt of innocent blood on yourselves and on this city and on those who live in it, for in truth the LORD has sent me to you to speak all these words in your hearing.”***

Though Jesus was told by men to turn from his mission and not forward, he responded with resolve, ***“‘I will drive out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.’ In any case, I must keep going today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem!”***

Just like Jeremiah and Jesus, you will be challenged every day as you go forward as

Christians. You know that the LORD sends you out, to speak and live his truth, going with his love and power. So go forward, filled with the resolve that can only be found in those who are of God. Amen.