

Sermon Series: “Facing Life’s Problems with God’s Hope”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—
1/9/2005

Title: “Handling Inferiority”

Text: Jeremiah 1: 4-10

Intro.: *Ills.: Antz—search for significance* (video used for children’s message bleeding into intro for message)

Theme: Setting the value of our life on God’s standards rather than the world’s will give us purpose not only to live for tomorrow but to actually carry out the significant tasks which God has for us to do.

Setting your real value

- How the world define our net-worth
 1. Possession
 1. **Ills.: Luke 12: 13-21—Jesus’ discussion and Rich Fool Parable**
 2. *“For not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.” Luke 12: 15*
 2. Power
 1. *As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, or if due to strength, eighty year; Yet their pride is but labor and sorrow; for soon it is gone and we fly away. Psalm 90:10*
 3. Prestige
 1. *So when you give to the poor, don't announce it with trumpet fanfare . . . in order to be praised by people. I can guarantee this truth: That will be their only reward. Mat 6:2*
- How God sets the value of your net-worth
 4. God made us
 1. An awesome and wonderful creation
 - **Ills.: The 7 real wonders of the world**
 - *I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. Ps. 139: 14*
 2. An existence which gets God’s full attention
 - Jeremiah was given God’s validation -- **“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you.”v.4-5a**
 - We receive assurance that our life is important, noticed, and valued -- **Print and read Psalm 139: 1-6**
 5. God has redeemed and declared us holy with a holy purpose
 1. God declared Jeremiah’s life holy, prenatally – **“Before you were born, I set you apart for my holy purpose. v.5b**
 2. *Before the creation of the world, he chose us through Christ to be holy and perfect in his presence. Because of his love he had already decided to adopt us through Jesus Christ. He freely chose to do this Eph. 1:4-5*
 3. No matter past or present circumstances of your life, you are a divinely set apart life with undiminished value
 - Important when as a spouse or child you are demeaned by a mean-spirit parent or spouse
 - Important when a coach or teacher tears you down rather than builds on your God-given strengths
 - Important when in a fast-paced culture your parenting, work, academic, or athletic skills don’t stack up
 - Important when your past fallibility/sin makes your personal soul whipping unbearable **Print Jeremiah 1: 6-8**

Value-driven purpose

- Letting God define what is my worthy purpose in this world
 1. Jeremiah was commissioned as a “prophet of God” **Print and read Jeremiah 1: 9-10**
 1. A power appointment — *“I send you” “command you to say”, “I am with you,” and “I will rescue you”*
 2. We have a significant appoint giving us a “set apart”(holy) significance in our life and to our immediate world
 - *Jesus said, “Go in all the world, tell everyone the Good News, everywhere.” Mark 16: 15*
 - *“We are Christ’s ambassadors, and God is using us to speak to you. We urge you, as though Christ himself were here pleading with you, ‘Be reconciled to God!’” 2 Cor. 5: 20*

- **Ills.: Chance or Providence?**

2. But look at the fine print of God's contract/covenant with us
 1. Jeremiah was called the *weeping prophet* given a "no win" task to a unrepentant and destruction bound people
 - *'You will hear clearly but never understand. You will see clearly but never comprehend. Matthew 13:14*
 2. Often our audience will not be receptive but that does not define our significance
 - *"A student is not better than his teacher . . .if they have called the master Satan himself, they will certainly call the family members the same name." Matthew 10:24-25*
- Our significance comes in our identification with Jesus who has called us out, set us apart, given us a holy role
 3. *I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live I live by believing in God's Son, who loved me and took the punishment for my sins. Gal 2: 20*

Search for Significance

Elapsed Time: This scene begins the movie and lasts approximately five minutes. Content: *Antz* is rated PG for language and menacing action. *Citation: Antz* (Dreamworks, 1998), rated PG, written by Todd Alcott, Chris and Paul Weitz, directed by Eric Darnell and Tim Johnson V.; submitted by Jerry De Luca, Montreal West, Quebec

The real 7 wonders of the world

A teacher asked her students to list what they thought were the *present* Seven Wonders of the World. The students cast the most votes for:

1. Egypt's Great Pyramids
2. Taj Mahal
3. Grand Canyon
4. Panama Canal
5. Empire State Building
6. St. Peter's Basilica
7. China's Great Wall

While gathering the votes, the teacher noted that one student had not turned in her paper yet. She asked the girl if she was having trouble with her list. The girl replied, "Yes, a little. I couldn't quite make up my mind because there were so many." The teacher said, "Well, tell us what you have, and maybe we can help." The girl hesitated, then read, "I think the Seven Wonders of the World are:

1. to see
2. to hear
3. to touch
4. to taste
5. to feel
6. to laugh
7. to love

Citation: getSynergized Newsletter (7-27-03); submitted by Phil Myers, Chesterton, Indiana
Chance or Providence?
Late one evening a professor sat at his desk working on the next day's lectures. He shuffled through the papers and mail placed there by his housekeeper. He began to throw them in the wastebasket when one magazine--not even addressed to him but delivered to his office by mistake--caught his attention. It fell open to an article titled "The Needs of the Congo Mission."

The professor began reading it idly, but then he was consumed by these words: "The need is great here. We have no one to work the northern province of Gabon in the central Congo. And it is my prayer as I write this article that God will lay His hand on one--one on whom, already, the Master's eyes have been cast--that he or she shall be called to this place to help us." The professor closed the magazine and wrote in his diary: "My search is over." He gave himself to go to the Congo.

The professor's name was Albert Schweitzer. That little article, hidden in a periodical intended for someone else, was placed by accident in Schweitzer's mailbox. By chance his housekeeper put the magazine on the professor's desk. By chance he noticed the title, which seemed to leap out at him. Dr. Schweitzer became one of the great figures this century in a humanitarian work nearly unmatched in human history. Chance? No. Providence. *Citation: Dan Betzer, Ft. Meyers, Florida. Pentecostal Evangel. Leadership, Vol. 12, no. 3*

Jeremiah 1:4-10

⁴The Lord spoke his word to me, ⁵"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart for my holy purpose. I appointed you to be a prophet to the nations."

⁶I, Jeremiah, said, "Almighty Lord, I do not know how to speak. I am only a boy!" ⁷But the Lord said to me, "Don't say that you are only a boy. You will go wherever I send you. You will say whatever I command you to say. ⁸Don't be afraid of people. I am with you, and I will rescue you," declares the Lord.

⁹Then the Lord stretched out his hand and touched my mouth. The Lord said to me, "Now I have put my words in your mouth. ¹⁰Today I have put you in charge of nations and kingdoms. You will uproot and tear down. You will destroy and overthrow. You will build and plant." [GW]

Psalms 139:1-6

¹O Lord, You have searched me and known me. ²You know when I sit down and when I rise up; You understand my thought from afar. ³You scrutinize my path and my lying down, and are intimately acquainted with all my ways. ⁴Even before there is a word on my tongue, Behold, O Lord, You know it all. ⁵You have enclosed me behind and before, and laid Your hand upon me. ⁶Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; It is too high, I cannot attain to it.