

WORSHIP

Suggested worship songs: Another in the Fire, Nothing is Impossible, Anchor of Our Lives, Battle Belongs, Been So Good, Stand Strong, Awesome God

WELCOME

What tough situation have you persevered through so far this year? In what ways have you experienced God giving you the strength to not give up?

WORD

JEREMIAH 1:4-10, 19

Now the word of the Lord came to me saying,

⁵ "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
And before you were born I consecrated you;
I have appointed you a prophet to the nations."

⁶ Then I said, "Alas, Lord ^{1a}God!
Behold, I do not know how to speak,
Because I am a youth."

⁷ But the Lord said to me,
"Do not say, 'I am a youth,'
Because everywhere I send you, you shall go,
And all that I command you, you shall speak.

⁸ "Do not be afraid of them,
For I am with you to deliver you," declares the Lord.

⁹ Then the Lord stretched out 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 appointed you this day over the nations and over the kingdoms,
To pluck up and to break down,
To destroy and to overthrow,
To build and to plant."

¹⁹ "They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you," declares the Lord.

Tough situations in life calls for perseverance as we go through them. To persevere means to continue faithfully despite opposition, difficulty, or delay; to endure with trust in God when life says, "give up." Have you felt like giving up at one point in your life? Noah probably did as he built the ark for a hundred twenty years while being mocked because there was no rain the whole time. Moses led Israel for forty years and persevered despite their constant complaints and rebellion. Jeremiah the prophet is another man of God who persevered despite suffering opposition, rejection, social and emotional isolation, imprisonment, beatings, and forced exile. Yet, Jeremiah faithfully delivered God's message for forty years even if he didn't see the people repent.

ANCHORED IN GOD'S PURPOSE

To be anchored in God's purpose is to understand that God formed you and set you apart for a calling before you were even born; when you know who you are, you will know what your purpose is (**Jeremiah 1:4-5**). That's why our enemies are constantly trying to keep us from knowing who we really are, *"...to build their identity on shaky ground: appearance, sexuality, popularity, political affiliation, achievements, or trauma --- anything except the image of God. For if they don't know whose they are, they'll neither know who they are, nor the purpose for which they exist."* (Rev. Edmund Chan).

Those who are in Christ are set-apart, to be different from the world as God's adopted children through Jesus (**Ephesians 1:4-5**). God's children are those who receive Jesus, those who believe in Christ (**John 1:12**). If you don't know the purpose for a certain tool, you have to consult the manufacturer. If you know whose you are, then you will understand what you were made to do, like Jeremiah did. If you know you are God's child, then you will know your purpose --- to do good works that God has prepared for us to do (**Ephesians 2:10**).

Area of Life	Without Identity in Christ	With Identity in Christ
Self-worth	Insecure, constantly comparing	Christ-Confident, secure in God's love
Purpose	Chasing success or popularity	Living for God's calling and glory
Relationships	Seeking approval, compromising values	Loving purely, selflessly
Failure	Defeated, ashamed	Redeemed, learning through grace
Courage	Fearful of rejection	Bold in sharing faith and truth

Our identity precedes our activity --- not the other way around! We must be anchored in God's purpose --- to make disciples (**Matthew 28:18-20**)! Jeremiah experienced rejection and isolation, but he persevered because he knew who he was and was anchored in God's purpose. Jeremiah also knew that God was with him, he was...

ASSURED BY GOD'S PRESENCE

Jeremiah was young when God called him, and he was giving excuses, trying to avoid the call (**Jeremiah 1:6**). If you find yourself giving excuses to God for your inability to pursue His calling, remind yourself that God's presence is your assurance (**Jeremiah 1:7-8, 19, Matthew 28:20, Psalm 46:1,**

Exodus 33:14, Psalm 23:4, Isaiah 41:10).

God is there for you, but the question is, are you walking with God? Are you appropriating His power in your life? Jeremiah understood what it meant to be lonely, and there is personal cost to living out God's purpose in your life (**Jeremiah 15:17-18, 16:1-2**). But let us be assured by God's presence, no matter what we're going through (**Isaiah 43:1-2**). Jeremiah's fear was that he was too young and unable to speak, but God assured that He will empower the young prophet (**Jeremiah 1:9**). Today, the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and the complete Word of God empowers us. We have everything we need to persevere because God is the one who will do it in our lives.

ANTICIPATING GOD'S PROMISES

Anticipating God's promises is more than just waiting for them --- anticipation has an element of joy, like anticipating Christmas when we were kids. You were excitedly looking forward to the gifts, etc. If you want to persevere, you have to anticipate God's promises. God promised Jeremiah that He will use the prophet to accomplish great things for His purpose (**Jeremiah 1:10**). Jeremiah was to proclaim God's word to the people --- to repent, come to the Lord, otherwise there will be judgment (pluck up, break down, destroy, overthrow) if the people do not listen. But there was also the promise of restoration (build, plant). Jeremiah anticipated God's promises through his continued challenges:

Jeremiah 36:26 - King Jehoiakim ordered his arrest
 Jeremiah 37:15-16 - Beaten and imprisoned in a dungeon
 Jeremiah 38:6 - Thrown into a muddy cistern to die
 Jeremiah 43:1-7 - Rejected and forced into exile

What kept Jeremiah going despite these? God's promise to be with him and deliver him (**Jeremiah 1:19**)!

We all go through emotional turmoil and spiritual suffering, like Jeremiah (**Jeremiah 9:1**). He was constantly in tears and sorrowful because people did not listen to the Lord (**Lamentations 3:17-21**). When you lose hope, you experience depression. Jeremiah processed his feelings and did not lose hope by remembering God's faithfulness based on who God is (**Lamentations 3:21-24**). Anticipating God's promises empowers us and gives us hope. We can hold on to God's promises as we persevere (**Jeremiah 29:11, Romans 8:28**); eternal perspective fuels earthly perseverance. Even when you feel disappointed with yourself, be encouraged by God's good promises for your life (**Philippians 1:6**). Jeremiah persevered and was faithful, though he did not see the fruit of his ministry. Many lives have been influenced for God through his prophecies that have been fulfilled and continues to be fulfilled through Jesus (**Jeremiah 31:31-34, Hebrews 10:16-18**)! In Christ, we have forgiveness of sins and because of the Spirit in us, God's laws have been written in our hearts that we may obey and live them out. Through Christ, anyone who seeks God with all their heart will find Him (**Jeremiah 29:12**). Jesus also faced what Jeremiah experienced, and more. But He persevered in accomplishing God's purpose, so that you and I can be forgiven, and become God's children!

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. In what area of your life do you need to persevere today?
2. Which point/s (Anchored, Assured, Anticipating) resonates most with your current situation and what is God asking you to apply?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people you know who need perseverance in their situation right now. Pray and ask God's help on their behalf. Let them know that they can be assured of God's presence if they put their trust in Christ as Savior and Lord. Share the gospel this week to someone who may be about to give up and encourage them with God's promises.

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- For legislators to promote and support bills and laws aligned with God's Word.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented.
- Praise God that the rest of the living Israeli hostages have been restored to their families safely! Continue to pray that even all the dead hostages will be returned to their families for burial.
- For Israel's war with terrorists to end according to God's purpose and for His glory. For Jewish people worldwide who are experiencing a surge of antisemitism; may this lead them to the Messiah, Jesus as they turn to God for help and comfort.
- For protection of Iranian, Syrian and Lebanese Christians and other minorities, and freedom from oppression. Pray for the gospel to spread rapidly throughout their region.
- Pray for persecuted Christians in Africa ---

many have been beheaded or murdered; earnestly seek God's intervention to stop the bloodshed. Pray for freedom from oppression, that God's word and His people bring them comfort and hope.

- Earthquake victims in northern Cebu, Davao Oriental Seek God's mercy upon our land. May many more Filipinos turn to Jesus!

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God, and make disciples
- For elders, pastors, deacons, and families to become holy, humble, harmonious, happy, and heart-working)
- For ministries and church expansions worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain (MMRC)

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper and intimate relationship with God
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends

MEMORY VERSE

Jeremiah 1:19

"They will fight against you, but they will not overcome you, for I am with you to deliver you," declares the Lord.

