



I'm Not Something Enough  
Sermon on Jeremiah 1:4-10  
Pastor Julie McCain, Nov. 22 & 23, 2014

*Please pray with me. Speak, O Lord, in words that we can hear. Open our hearts to your word, and plant the light of your grace deep in our hearts. Amen.*

In a recent Covergirl cosmetics ad, Ellen Degeneres says this: Girls Can't. Sometimes you hear it. More often you feel it. Girls can't rock. Girls can't be strong. Girls can't rap. And then there is a barrage of voices and images telling us all the things girls can't do, and then tone of the ad switches, and lots of different famous women flash across the screen as examples of what girls ARE capable of doing.

And I know that it's probably just part of their marketing campaigns and their ploy to get me to buy more, but I love that many companies, from Covergirl to Dove, have in the last few years chosen to run ads with positive messages, to counteract the many negative messages we hear.

And yet even if every tv ad in the world took on a positive message, we'd still be left with a keen awareness of our limitations and with voices of self-doubt that whisper in our ears and sometimes have the power to stop us dead in our tracks.

**And as Ellen says, sometimes you hear it, but more often you feel it.**

Jeremiah feels that way.

In so many words, he tells God that he simply can't do what God wants. There is no way, because he is just Jeremiah.

→ Not old enough or important enough or experienced enough to be a prophet, of all things.

I'm not BLANK enough.

And we could fill that blank in with a lot of different things, with objections that we might have, reasons why God probably shouldn't use us.

I wonder if you'd me come up with a list, of other objections that someone might have.

Just shout them out if you can think of one.

I'm not BLANK enough.... What other things could we fill in that blank with?

- I'm not smart enough, not kind enough, not good enough.  
→ We could come up with a long list, and you can probably fill in your own blank here, too, with what might apply to you.

Brene Brown is a storyteller who researches that I'm not something enough feeling.

She says that its power over us lies in the fact that we often think we're the only ones with this problem.

We think that we're the only ones, and then we sometimes get scared that someone else will find out that we're not WHATEVER enough.

Often our reaction, then, is to shut our mouths and hope that if we don't talk about the feeling that we're not something enough, that it will simply go away. The trouble is, that's not the way it works.

I want you to take a second and glance around this room. Every person you see in this room experiences the I'm-not-something-enough problem.

Brene Brown found that it is a universal feeling.

This means that when you and I feel this way, if there's one thing we are NOT it is ALONE.

And it follows then, that, while the worst thing we can do is bottle it up, the the remedy for the I'm not something enough voice is to tell someone about it and suddenly it loses its power to shame us.

And I want to tell you a bit about my own struggle with this question and its intersection with God's call in my life.

The very first time I realized that I might be called to be a pastor, the thought terrified me, and so I set out to write down all of my objections to that call, all of the reasons why it really would not work for me.

Like Jeremiah, on the list were things like: I'm too young, and I ironically, that don't know how to talk to people, which obviously, I figured out! and when I finally finished making my list I had accumulated a whopping 112 reasons!

Then and there I let God know that He'd have to walk me through these roadblocks and give me what I needed if I was going to ever be a pastor.

Over the course of the next few years, I spent time praying over each of the things on my list, and slowly I watched as God took down the roadblocks, one by one. Years later, I wrote a poem that by the grace of God, really signaled me finally putting that struggle to rest.

The end of it goes like this:

Am I something enough?

For this church, these people, this call, this Jesus?

Am I something enough?

And there are so many competing answers.

So many attempts to bury the question.

But I've tired of burying it.

So instead I'm giving up on it entirely.

It didn't seem to be getting me anywhere,

except farther away from where Jesus is leading.

And as it turns out, on my own I'm not anything enough.

But Jesus is, and he's leading somewhere dance-on-the-tables good.

So I think I'll wear that collar.

And when you think of the idea of call, you might think immediately of pastors and prophets. But each and every one of us has a call that reaches into our daily lives.

This week I had lunch with someone who shared that she feels called to go out of her way to be welcoming and friendly to all people, but particularly to those of other faiths or ethnicities. And that is exactly what Jesus did.

He welcomed everyone, and he loved everyone, and he went out of his way to make sure that the forgotten were no longer forgotten, ->so I'd say she's following God's call just about as well as any of us could.

But what's clear from Jeremiah's story, and from mine, is that God doesn't call those who are already something enough. He doesn't call those who are already smart enough or good enough or kind enough.

He calls you and he calls me, just as we are, and then along the way he makes us good enough.

But now that we've fleshed out a list of all our flaws.

and the reasons why God shouldn't call us, I want you to help me make a different kind of list.

I want to make a God list, of all the things God is doing in the midst of our limitations and our fear. **So open your lesson insert** to our Jeremiah text and what I want you to help me find all the verbs that are connected to God, that show all the things that God is doing. Shout them out as you find them.

- Formed, knew, consecrated, appointed, send, command, am with you, touch my mouth, appointed.

There are at least 10 verbs there. In the midst of Jeremiah's limitations and his inadequacy, God knows him, consecrates him, appoints him, sends him, commands him, is with him... Do you get the point? God is hard at work to claim and call Jeremiah.

And the thing that that you and me and Jeremiah and everyone else who God calls have in common is that none of us are perfect.

- ➔ If we're honest, none of us are really good enough to DESERVE to be claimed and called by God.
- ➔ And yet the miracle of this whole God story, the miracle of Jeremiah's story, and of yours and mine, is that somehow, for some reason, God still claims and calls us.

For you see, the one who knew us even before he formed us in our mothers' wombs knew very well that we wouldn't get it right all the time. He knew Jeremiah's flaws and he knows ours, and yet STILL he calls us to follow. Not because we're good enough. But because he loves us. Amen.