

Speaking to the soul

Obedience

“O Sovereign LORD,” I said: “I can’t speak for you! I’m too young!

The Lord replied: “Don’t say, ‘I’m too young,’ for you must go wherever I send you and say whatever I tell you.” Jeremiah 1:6-7

Jeremiah followed in the well-worn tradition of trying to avoid doing what God was calling him to do. His words remind us of Moses, who responded to God’s call from the burning bush with a long list of reasons why he was a most unsuitable candidate to lead God’s people. Jeremiah tried the same approach, feeling that his age was the reason why God would need to look for someone else. His words were, of course, absurd, because he was addressing them to the creator of the world! God had formed Jeremiah in his mother’s womb and, even before he was born, had set him apart to be a prophet.

Times haven’t changed that much, and people are still offering God reasons why he has chosen the wrong person. When people were suggesting that I might be called to be a minister, I was eager to find a way of avoiding this. My excuse was that I was far too sensitive and knew that I couldn’t cope emotionally with accompanying people

through a bereavement. I felt it was foolish to go forward for ministry if I couldn't take a funeral service. My thinking was careful and logical but completely wrong because I hadn't factored God into my calculations. I had forgotten that, since he was the creator of the world, he would be able to give me the strength to help people at such times. You may not be surprised to learn that my time spent with grieving families has been among the most powerful and effective of my ministry. That's God for you!

On the face of it, Moses' and Jeremiah's objections to God seemed entirely reasonable, but they were wrong because God is God. He is perfectly able to give us the strength, wisdom and gifts to do whatever he calls us to do.

QUESTION

What excuses have you used to avoid serving God?

PRAYER

Lord God, I thank you that you have work for me to do. Forgive me for those times when I have tried to slide out of obedience to you by making excuses. Amen

