

## Has God Done This With You?

### *What Sort of Relationship Do You Have With God?*

Years ago God rather forcefully and decidedly let me know I was to be a pastor. The communication, although not audible or visual at all was so clear that I could not pretend He had not spoken to me. I had no interest in being a pastor. It did not at all seem like a good career or anything I would like to do. I loathed public speaking and was actually afraid to give speeches. No one in my family had ever been a pastor and although I was friends with a pastor, it didn't seem like being a pastor was all that fun. There was a two year period where I pretended that God did not want me to be a pastor but rather just called me to help people in some sort of Christian ministry. But in the end, I accepted God's direction and was ordained to be a pastor. I realize that many do not believe any such thing could have happened to me, that God literally directed me into my future vocation, but none can shake me from my certainty that God did just that. I am struck by the lack of trust many, even in the church, have that God speaks directly to people, not just prophets or super spiritual people but those like you and me.

When Jeremiah became a prophet, he certainly had a tough time of it. In fact it was brutal for him. Listen to how the Lord let Him know what his career was to be. **The word of the Lord came to me, saying, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."** (Jeremiah 1: 4-5 NIV) It was pretty clear. We have no idea how the LORD got this across to Jeremiah. Perhaps through a dream or maybe just in his thoughts, the words broke through. It was very specific, what Jeremiah picked up though. Unmistakable it seems. Jeremiah wasn't exactly keen on the idea. In fact he argued against the direction. **Ah, Sovereign Lord," I said, "I do not know how to speak; I am only a child."** (Jeremiah 1: 6 NIV) Jeremiah protested, "I can't". It is much like Mary's reaction to being told she would bear the Messiah. **Mary asked the angel, "How can this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?"** (Luke 1: 34 CSB) Both were legitimate concerns. Logically, the direction God gave made no sense. It is ok with God if you protest the direction He gives you. You can even think what He says to do is nonsense. The Lord isn't offended by your reaction. You can tell Him, "I can't". You might be absolutely correct when you make that assessment. Beware though of saying, "I won't!" It didn't go very well for Jonah when he told God "I won't" and it was disastrous for the people of Israel who were told to cross into the Promised Land when they said, "We won't!" I am certainly making the assumption that God will tell you to do something, perhaps many times He will tell you what to do. Be very careful, when you have an inkling the Lord has spoken to you, not to say, "I won't."

Notice what happened here with Jeremiah. A supernatural transaction took place. God made Himself known in time and space, broke the barrier of the natural turn of things. The Bible of course is filled with those instances. What happened was God centered and not a result of imaginative musing on Jeremiah's part. Let's take a look at what Jeremiah had to live with to bolster our claim that Jeremiah did not come up with the idea on his own that it would be great to become a prophet. He was raised in the village of Anathoth. It was a rural community and like most small towns, everyone knew everyone else's business. Jeremiah's dad was a priest in the town. His task was to help the people live in a godly way. Baal worship was widely practiced and loyalty to the LORD was in most places in Israel, nearly nonexistent. **Then the Lord said to me, "There is a conspiracy among the people of Judah and those who live in Jerusalem. They have returned to the sins of their forefathers, who refused to listen to my words. They have followed other gods to serve them. Both the house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken the covenant I made with their forefathers."** (Jeremiah 11:9-10 NIV) With faith in God disappearing, priests lived a lonely and impoverished life. Jeremiah grew up seeing his father ignored and his life work scorned. Somehow Jeremiah discovered that as he followed God faithfully and prophesied what the LORD directed, he was not only rejected by the people of Judah, in his very own hometown he was hated enough that a conspiracy arose there to kill him. Listen to what Jeremiah uncovered. **Because the Lord revealed their plot to me, I knew it, for at that time he showed me what they were doing. I had been like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter; I did not realize that they had plotted against me, saying, "Let us destroy the tree and its fruit; let us cut him off from the land of the living, that his name be remembered no more."** (Jeremiah 11: 18-19 NIV) The LORD admitted the people of his hometown hated Jeremiah. **"Therefore this is what the Lord says about the men of Anathoth who are seeking your life and saying, 'Do not prophesy in the name of the Lord or you will die by our hands'--(Jeremiah 11: 21 NIV)**

Jeremiah had to know that was the spiritual climate in his village when he accepted the calling of God to be a prophet of the LORD. He most certainly would be despised, if not hated. Do you really think Jeremiah would have come up with the idea of being a prophet of God on his own? Do you see the supernatural component to Jeremiah taking that

particular vocation? Let's turn to something most extraordinary. It almost takes my breath away as I consider this part of Jeremiah's life. Listen to what he had to say about how things were for him. **O Lord, you deceived me, and I was deceived; you overpowered me and prevailed. I am ridiculed all day long; everyone mocks me. Whenever I speak, I cry out proclaiming violence and destruction. So the word of the Lord has brought me insult and reproach all day long.** (Jeremiah 20: 7-8 NIV)

What sort of life was that? Notice just how miserable Jeremiah was. Can you feel the anguish of soul? Do you sense the great despair in him? He goes on to sound much like Job, who wished he had never been born. **Cursed be the day I was born! May the day my mother bore me not be blessed!** (Jeremiah 20: 14 NIV) Later he adds this. **Why did I ever come out of the womb to see trouble and sorrow and to end my days in shame?** (Jeremiah 20: 18 NIV) It is most painful to read. But something transformative took place, something supernatural in scope and it is astounding to consider. In the midst of this agony, at a time when many would have rejected God and condemned the Lord for letting them suffer, Jeremiah lifted up the banner of praise for God. **Sing to the Lord! Give praise to the Lord! He rescues the life of the needy from the hands of the wicked.** (Jeremiah 20: 13 NIV) How can someone in such distress and reeling with depression come to that conclusion? It is neither natural nor normal to make such a mental about face. There was in fact a supernatural transaction. God shifted Jeremiah's thinking, transformed his perspective. God can do the same with your thinking. What might seem hopeless and insurmountable, a wrecked life can be brought to a state of peace and even joy, fresh insight and clarity.

We don't give this statement by the Apostle Paul enough consideration. **Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!** (2 Corinthians 5: 17 NIV) When you put your faith in Jesus Christ crucified and resurrected for your salvation, a supernatural transaction takes place. Christ literally becomes a part of you, and you are a new creation of God. Something so unique to you as your thinking is transformed by the presence of God in and through you. What you could not comprehend or process before you had Christ in you is now your skillset. All bets are off as to your capabilities when the supernatural transaction takes place in you. There is not a mechanism for getting a reading on what you can or cannot do. You have God in you and that changes everything. This past week I posted a video on YouTube and in Facebook but to my disappointment, I was told by my wife that only part of the video was playing. The last part was cut off. I had to take down the video and I for the longest time could not figure out what went wrong with the video. I thought I might have to completely reshoot and edit it. I spent a considerable amount of time praying and almost immediately I was shown what went wrong. However, now that the video was completely available to post, I was very dismayed by its quality. I felt I did a terrible job of presenting, and the audio quality was not good. I considered chucking the entire project and not posting it at all. But I have Christ in me and He prodded me to put it back up for viewing. It was viewed on Facebook in Manila and Malaysia over four thousand times and shared by seventeen different people. Almost two hundred viewers gave it a "thumbs up or a heart" and more than one hundred left affirming comments. Christ in me took what I thought was an inferior product and used it for His glory.

You cannot be certain at all what you are capable of doing if Christ is in your life. Rather than quitting on something or giving up, call on Jesus Christ in you to turn things around or show you what to do next. Pray and ask God to meet you and connect with you. When you do, a supernatural transaction takes place and you become God's to empower, to inspire and to take you along where you could never have gone before. Jesus Christ is not the miracle worker for you; He is the miracle in you and nothing about you is small and insignificant with Him in your life. Make this week one of supernatural activity as you live with full recognition that Jesus Christ is part of you.