

Jeremiah 1: 4-10

Trinity St. James, Bayfield August 21

I can remember my first rodeo. Rodeo was something I wanted to do for a long time and while it would not be my first barrel race, my first rodeo had me doubt everything I knew. I suddenly felt like I was not ready, this was the big league. To make matters worse, I drew Saturday performance. I had asked for Slack, which to keep this simple, it is when we ride without much of an audience, all for the same money but a much more low-key run. So now I am riding for the biggest audience of the weekend at my first rodeo.

While I can't say God told me to enter that rodeo, I think I can relate to Jeremiah and the question of "am I ready?" Jeremiah is about 12 when God came to him, to tell him it was time to fulfill his destiny, to be a prophet to the nations. What a daunting thought for a boy to have. It is understandable his doubts. He has not had the teaching to follow in his father's footsteps, now God is telling him it is time for him to be a Prophet to the nations. Makes my self doubt about the rodeo look small in comparison. As a boy it must have seemed impossible to have anyone listen to him. How would he get God's word to the people? God reassures him, I am with you. Then the Lord put out his hand and

touched Jeremiah's mouth and said "Now I have put my words in your mouth".

I am not sure about you, but I know I have had times when speaking God's word is something I am not always confident to say. Like Jeremiah, I wish to say not me! When I finally received my licence as a lay reader, I was at first excited to have finally accomplished the goal. Then I was reminded of the responsibility it comes with to share God's word. Then the rush of self doubt came in. Can I do this? Thank you to everyone who have said they enjoy and understand what I am trying to say. It helps and gives me the confidence to keep doing this.

Often in life we need to remind ourselves that God is there to guide us in the direction he wishes us to go and in how we share his word. There are the big self doubts, the promotion at work, life as a new parent, what church do I attend. Then there are the smaller ones, where do I go for a vacation, do I invite my neighbour to church.

Recently I had a buddy preparing himself for a surgery that he was told the odds were higher of a bad outcome than a good outcome. He and his family decided to go for it. I had, for a few days leading up to his surgery, a strong feeling of praying with him. I didn't know how he would feel about it and the night before he was to go to Toronto for the surgery a book of prayers came off my bookshelf with a book I was

reaching for. My friend came to mind, so I sent him a healing prayer. I feel this is God helping me to share his word and find what to say.

In our lives we will often feel not ready and uncertain how our words or actions will be received by others around us. Our Jeremiah lesson is about him becoming a prophet and his uncertainty to follow God's plan and how God is with him on this journey. We can put that lesson in our lives by listening to our heart, God's whisper, and remember that no matter God is with us and will, when needed, put his words in our mouth.

Jeremiah went on to be a great prophet to many kings. My first rodeo did not go according to plan but was not the all embarrassing run I thought it would be. My friend had a successful surgery and is now halfway through his radiation treatments and my wondering how he would feel about me sending him a prayer for healing? His words back to me were "Thank you my friend." Amen