

Jeremiah 20: 1 – 11a; Romans 14: 1 – 17

'Easy to live with?'

**Introduction ...**

I don't think that Jeremiah would have been very easy to live with. I expect that family and friends were exasperated with him.

He was always proclaiming doom and gloom and the need for repentance. And then there were the strange things that he did:

Buying a new loincloth and then hiding it in a cleft of rock by the River Euphrates.

Breaking a potter's jug in a very public act of destruction.

Making and wearing a yoke of straps and bars.

Buying a field in occupied territory.

Not easy to live with ... and becoming in his own words which we heard tonight: ***A laughing stock all day long.***

And Jeremiah himself is not at ease with himself ... there's tension throughout his whole being.

He's not easy to live with – why? Because he's following God's call:

***Verse 9: If I say I will not mention the Lord or speak anymore in his name then within me, there is something like a burning fire shut up in my bones. I am weary with holding it in and I cannot.***

For Jeremiah – it was not easy to live out his calling – For himself or for those around him, yet for Jeremiah it was not possible to ignore his calling.

**Jesus ...**

In a similar but not identical way ... such was the case with Jesus. He too was not easy to live with for family or friends. He was unpredictable in moving around, he upset people, he criticised some people and welcomed others in a way that seemed 'topsy turvey' to many.

**For us ...**

So what does this mean for us? Is it ok for you ... or me ... to be someone that it's not easy to live with?

Well – yes ... and no ...

Yes ... if it's related to following God's call

and NO ...

if it's related to our own preferences or prejudices.

Remember some of the verses from our other reading: **Romans 14 ... *We do not live to ourselves ... we live to the Lord ... Resolve never to put a stumbling block or hindrance in the way of another. The Kingdom of God is peace and*** PTO

*joy in the Holy Spirit.*

**Conclusion ...**

Depending on our character, depending on our circumstance some of us may gain from taking one thing from this talk ... and some of us another ...

Some of us may need to be more willing to be a disturbing presence at times in response to God's call – after all in **Luke chapter 6 verse 26**, we read of Jesus saying: **“Beware when all speak well of you.”**

Others of us may gain from reflecting on when we have been an unnecessary stumbling block for others: by our words, facial expressions, actions, assumptions ...

And so – as a people together, we'll be more able to be and act as the Body of Christ – together and apart.

Amen.