

When Worlds Collide  
Jeremiah 20:7-13

I know it sound's strange, but I keep finding myself referring to Seinfeld's George Costanza. He was the lead rogue among the rogues of that show. In George Costanza, debased humanity was put on display in all of its ugly glory. Everyone loved watching him and loved to laugh at him, not realizing that they were laughing at themselves in some way. There is a little George Costanza in all of us.

For example, There was that episode where George was losing his mind because as he put it "His worlds were colliding" George was terribly upset about the prospect of his diner friends wanting to get to know his girlfriend. You see, George had been playing the game of being two different people: to his friends he was what he was what he called: "**Independent George**", a funny, snarky, guy to hang out with, but to his girlfriend he was "**Relationship George**," Loving, kind, socially conscious, decent, an opposite to the other George.

If those two worlds collided, according to George, his friends would learn how he acts with his girlfriend and it would destroy his image in their eyes. At the same time, his girlfriend learning how he acts with his friends would destroy his image in her eyes. All of that meticulous care that expend on crafting his persona for each of the worlds would come to naught. He might lose both his friends and girlfriend. His worlds would Collide. Crash#!! as Kramer would describe it to Jerry.

We all have done this to one extent or another When I was a teenager, my girlfriend was from a different High School. My friends didn't know about her and she didn't knowmy friends. The worlds did not collide. Like George, I thought I had it all figured out.

I would later come to understand that it's way more honest when your girlfriend and friends are not in separate worlds, but in the same world. You make that happen to be who you are all the time. One should evermore seek to be the same person in all of his would-be worlds. If you don't find a way to do that, you'll lose track of who you are and you will live by the script that is required for each of your worlds.

Indeed, there are some times when we need to censor ourselves as we talk to others who do not know us. Part of being polite. One, most certainly might have more intimate and revealing conversations with those he has grown to love that would not be had with others. That's normal. Yet we should strive to live in just one world. We should avoid living double lives and multiple personalities not simply because it's difficult to manage all the worlds, but because we would be living truthfully.

The two worlds of Jeremiah were colliding big time in today's Old Testament Lesson, Jeremiah 20. On the one hand he was a man of faith, a man of God, but on the other he was neighbor and citizen of faithless Jerusalem. Listen to how he describes his colliding worlds:

“I have become a laughingstock all the day, everyone mocks me” Jeremiah 20:7

“The word of the Lord has become for me a reproach and derision all the day long” Jer. 20:8

“I hear many whispering, “Terror on every side,” Denounce him “say my close friends”  
whathing for me to fall Jer. 20:10

The world of God and the world of faithless Jerusalem collided in the life of Jeremiah. When he spoke the word of God, the people of Jerusalem mistreated and abused him. They imprisoned and mocked him.

How could they be so mean? Jeremiah's words were really their last chance with God; if they would hear the words and repentant, the coming wrath of God would be turned aside. Why would they not listen? He was trying to help them.

Things really don't change all that much do they. Regardless of which century People have never really liked listening to God. Many are offended by his Word. What has cause this offense? For one thing, Satan, who has always done his best to keep people from hearing and understanding the word of God. For another thing, our own human nature, corrupted by sin, want's nothing to do with God. So we are really kind of stuck between a rock and a hard place. Satan and our own sinful nature constantly countering the Word of God as we hear it. It's a wonder that anybody is ever saved!

Against these enemies, God's Word first unleashes his perfect Law. This is not human law, which is flawed with human weaknesses. This is Law coming from the Holy one who created us. It's wonderfully pure. Beyond reproach or loophole.

But the sinful human nature bristles at the thought of being told what to do. This rebellious spirit of man finds many ways to rationalize disobedience, or to deafen our ears to God's voice. Sometimes, man finds it easy to repeat the devils original words: "Did God really say that? Is it really the Word of God?"

And then, God reveals His Gospel, you would expect people to gladly accept His message of love and grace in Christ, but the Gospel is even more offensive to people than the Law. It is foolishness to them. The sacrifice of the Cross, which is the sweetest treasure to those who believe, is considered disgusting to those who do not.

And the Gospel is just way to particular in it's details for many in our day. Jesus Christ has won justification for us in His suffering and death. There is “no other name other name under heaven by which we must be saved” says the Lord. We are saved in Christ and Christ alone. So particular that it it offends people. People like to think that all their friends are going to heaven will make it no matter what gods they follow so they remove the particulars from god, assuming he's wrong. And so they water down their faith.

So Jeremiah, like every Christian, found himself in the unenviable position of being rejected by people. He was a lonely man, as we read in the Old Testament Reading. He regrets the collision of worlds that his proclaiming the truth was causing. But it wasn't really his fault, It wasn't God's fault. It wasn't the fault of the truth. The world simply reacts badly when it hears the truth. Should we then fail to proclaim it? No. We were called to proclaim it. By virtue the faith that has been given to us, we have been called to give an account of the hope that we have. We are meant to bring the world of God into this world of sin..not to keep it separate like so many of us do in our lives.

When faced with the daunting task of speaking the Gospel and the awful prospect of being rejected, most people do what Jeremiah tried to do and say nothing and steer the conversation away from God whenever possible. For goodness sake, Don't let the worlds to collide! Do not let your friends or neighbors or anyone else know anything about the Lord who now comforts your heart. Our sinful natures, given their way will lead us into this duplicity... where we withhold what we consider most dear from the people we love.

But here's the thing, despite the obvious struggle Jeremiah had within his soul, god did not cast him off. He didn't say “I'm done with you Jeremiah, you can no longer be my prophet,

I'm going to find someone else whose better and more resilient than you!" He didn't say that. That's what's remarkable about our Lord and what makes him different from other so-called Lords. He knows what and who we are and still calls us his own.

You see, The call to faith is not the call to perfection but rather to a life- long struggle against the wiles of the devil and the desires of the flesh. As Jesus said in Matthew 10:22 "The One who endures to the end will be saved." We are not called to be perfect, we are called to endure. So have trouble and having a struggle is quite normal. Any Christian who says otherwise is not being truthful. There is no such thing as the perfect Christian. God knows we're struggling with all of this stuff, and yet he still calls us his own, He forgives us and saves us in his son. So you haven't brought your worlds together yet. So what. Work on it. Recognize the importance of living truthfully and begin to let your line shine.

Live in one world, the world of God, do not be ashamed of it, and invite others into it.