

Read: Jeremiah 20:7-13

I Can't Help It!

Jeremiah 20:9

But if I say, "I will not mention his word or speak anymore in his name," his word is in my heart like a fire, a fire shut up in my bones. I am weary of holding it in; indeed, I cannot.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

You see the present wrapped under the Christmas tree. You know exactly what it is because you helped wrap it. You know exactly who it's for because you helped pick it out. You can't wait to see them unwrap it because you know how much they'll love it.

But Christmas is still days away! It's harder and harder to keep it a secret because you know how happy they'll be about it. Keeping your lips sealed and not ruining the surprise for them is a real struggle. You want to say something so badly!

In a way, that was how Jeremiah felt. But he didn't feel that way about a present wrapped under a tree. He felt that way about a greater gift—the gift of God for his people.

Jeremiah was a prophet sent to God's people both to correct them when they were wrong and to comfort them when they were sorry and hurting because of the wrong they had done. However, not many people wanted to hear what Jeremiah had to say. They made his ministry miserable.

As tempting as it was for Jeremiah to save himself from the hurt and heartache by just keeping his mouth shut and not speaking God's Word to God's people, he couldn't help it! He had to say something. He knew the words he had were God's words and they were exactly what God's people needed. He described it as being like a fire in his heart that had to be released. He just couldn't keep it to himself.

Have you ever felt like Jeremiah? We may be afraid of being let down if people we think are excited to hear about Jesus end up being disinterested afterward. Or, we may be afraid of saying anything because we think we know someone else might respond angrily.

But like Jeremiah, we can't help it! We have to share the best news anyone else can ever hear! We have to tell them about their Savior—we just can't help it!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Have you ever had a secret that was hard to keep?
- How does it make you feel when someone else is excited by good news that you got to share with them?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Share an example of a time you've been afraid to share something with someone else because you didn't know how they'd respond.
- Make a list of people you know who don't believe in Jesus. How might you be able to tell them about him?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- What is your worst fear about talking to an unbeliever about Jesus? Now imagine that fear playing out. How would you respond and handle it?
- If we cannot relate to the feeling that Jeremiah described, what do you think it takes for a believer to feel that strongly about speaking God's Word to others?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Jesus, free us from any fears that would keep us from making you known to others. Give us boldness and passion to proclaim you to others! Amen.