

# Prophetic calling may mean accepting conflict, Brisco insists

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PLAINVIEW—For the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, accepting a prophetic calling from God meant experiencing a life of conflict, Tommy Brisco told faculty and students at [Wayland Baptist University](#).

Brisco, provost and chief academic officer at [Hardin-Simmons University](#) in Abilene, delivered the Willson Lectures at Wayland.

✘ Tommy Brisco, provost and chief academic officer at Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, delivered the Willson Lectures at Wayland. (Wayland Photo)Part of the turmoil Jeremiah experienced stemmed from his lifelong isolation—social, political, religious and personal, since he was unmarried and his own family shunned him, Brisco said. That isolation was part of the prophetic call—a 40-year journey during which none of his prophecies came to pass, he noted.

## Sources of conflict

Another source of Jeremiah's conflict came from his prophetic pronouncements about the destruction of the temple, which had become a symbol of God's covenant to the people of Judah. Jeremiah attacked Judah's belief that its people could do what they wanted and still maintain the covenant with God.

Jeremiah's prophecies of doom led to a conflict with false prophets who disputed Jeremiah's status as a prophet, since none of his prophecies had been fulfilled.

“What would you do if you worked for 35 years and had nothing to show for it?” Brisco asked.

### **Need to be recognized**

Modern ministers who similarly see little results need to recognize, “We are called by God, but we live in a broken world,” he said.

Jeremiah also struggled with inner conflict. In Jeremiah 20, he began to explore the depths of his pain, cursing the day he was born. He questioned God about his constant message of death and destruction that was met with nothing but derision and ridicule. But no matter how desperately he wanted to stop, he could not escape his calling, and he continued to preach the message God gave him.

Ultimately, Brisco noted, Jeremiah was vindicated. In the New Testament, when Jesus asked the disciples who people thought he was, they replied some said he was Jeremiah.

Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet, because even though he was called to preach a message of destruction, he did not wish destruction upon his people, Brisco explained. Jeremiah was caught between an insistent God and a resistant people who would not listen, he said.