

**Jesus is... Prophet**  
**Deut 18:14-20, Acts 3:17-26**

Brothers and sisters, what do you expect in a sermon?

Something interesting to listen to? Something inspirational or encouraging? Practical advice that you can take home and put to work in your life? Deep insights? Or maybe it doesn't really matter to you - as long as it's done in twenty minutes?

Which kind of raises the next question – what should you expect in a sermon?

There's the old story about a rural church where bad weather had struck on a Sunday morning and only one old farmer had made it out for the Sunday service. So the pastor asked him if he thought he should still go ahead with the service seeing as he was the only one there.

The farmer said *"well pastor" if only one cow comes into the barn – I still feed 'em"* So the pastor, proceeded to go ahead with the service and preached the sermon. After he was finished, he asked the farmer, *"so how was that?"* to which

the farmer replied *"well pastor, if only one cow comes to the barn, like I said – I feed 'em but I don't make them eat the whole bale of hay!"*

So brothers and sisters, what do you expect in a sermon?

What should you expect from a sermon? Perhaps those of us who understand learning theory may wonder – given what we know about effective ways of learning and learning styles – should we even have sermons?

Well brothers and sisters, not surprisingly I'm going to say yes – not just because its what I do, or because we find sermons in the bible... our two passages this morning are excerpts from sermons... its not even because Jesus preached sermons and therefore we ought to do the same – though that is getting closer to the reason... and our sermon focus for this morning. The answer brothers and sisters, as to why we have sermons, is because Jesus is Prophet.

Now when we say Jesus is Prophet, we are not saying that Jesus is THE prophet in the sense that He is the ultimate

prophet who speaks for God, in the way that Muslim's say that Muhammad is THE prophet. Nor are we agreeing with their assessment that Jesus was only A prophet and denying Jesus' divine nature as God. What we are stating in saying that "Jesus is Prophet" is that Jesus holds the Prophetic office.

Now, its important to make sure we understand where Jesus receives this office from – as the rest of where we go from here this morning kind of hinges on it. He doesn't receive it from His divine nature. Since a prophet speaks For God, Jesus can't speak For God because He is God, He speaks AS God.

Rather this prophetic office is something He receives in His role as the Mediator, is assumed by Jesus when He assumes our human nature and all that it means to be human in the incarnation.

On this point brothers and sisters, we're going back a few Sundays to the message on confessing that Jesus is Human and how we learned that being human is not a liability; "we're

*only human after all"* rather it is an incredibly high calling! We are made in God's image!

Brothers and sisters, it was always God's plan and intention to elevate and glorify human beings and put all things under them as we have seen Him do with Jesus. Psalm 8:5-6 *"You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor. You made them rulers over the works of your hands; you put everything under their feet."*

So in confessing Jesus is Prophet we are acknowledging our high calling and saying something about ourselves and this world. We are created in the image of God and officially tasked to steward it, and thus we say that human beings have or hold office. There is something official about us.

This is a simple but effective way of explaining what it means to hold office and the authority which comes along with it. God did not give this responsibility and authority to any other creature. Dinosaurs were awe inspiring, dolphins are clever, chimpanzees are downright incredible – but only humans

were officially tasked to rule the creation and hold office as such. And there are three offices that we are officially given in that regard by God – that of King, Priest and Prophet.

Now its pretty easy to assume we have a kingly office when we read God’s mandate in Gen 1:28 *“fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”* Kingship involves governing, this one is obvious.

But there is the office of Prophet and Priest as well. Consider the fact that God speaks to Adam about not eating from the Tree of the Knowledge of God and Evil before He creates Eve, thus when Eve is created Adam must then speak to her on behalf of God to tell her what God had said. Prophet.

And prior to Eve’s arrival, Adam speaks to the creation as one made in God’s image and names the animals, and it says whatever he called them – that was their name. This is Adam functioning in the Prophetic office, speaking to the creation on behalf of God.

Now we don’t get to see how the Priestly role functioned before the fall – but we do see God paying deference to it when He calls Adam to give an account of what happened when they had disobeyed God – not that God didn’t know what happened since God is omniscient. But Adam has the office of Priest – speaking to God on behalf of creation, so God operates within this official framework He created and asks Adam for an account.

Adam’s response is unfit for a priest – there is no intercession or confession of his own sin or of Eve’s, rather He blames Eve and then God, and God then calls Eve to account in this Priestly role, and in the same way she blames the serpent.

But, we’re getting ahead of ourselves to next Sunday. For today we just need to take notice of how Sin immediately affects Adam and Eve in these offices because we want to take a closer look at the results of Sin affecting the Prophetic office as that is described in our scripture passages this morning.

We don't have much to go on that would describe how the prophetic office would function prior to the fall, apart from deducing out that if God created the world through speaking His Word, that Adam and Eve would have reflected this in some way as God's stewards who would continue speaking His Word to the Creation as they continued to develop it.

And I say this because there's a sense of how this changes when God says to Adam that he will now "*eat the plants of the field by the sweat of his brow*" (Gen 3:19) So the Sin frustrate the prophetic office from functioning as it should have for us in our work with the Creation. This task now becomes an adversarial relationship – which is really all we've ever known.

Sin also affects the prophetic office with regards to our relationship with God, we don't have access to Him anymore as Adam and Eve first did. We were put out of His presence and the way back was blocked by an Angel with a flaming sword. We no longer know what God's Word or His will is.

Now you might think – big deal, just work a bit harder and go on with life, who needs God anyway?! Well its not that easy when our purpose for existing and how we were made requires us to be in relationship with God and hearing from Him, and Sin twists this in a number of ways.

We read about two of them in the first verse of our passage from Deuteronomy 18 where Moses says "*The nations you will dispossess listen to those who practice sorcery or divination.*" Sin does not respect the fact that God has cut off, limited, His divine communication with us and warps the prophetic office to think that we can somehow find ways around this by looking at the stars, reading omens, or contacting the spirits.

And for those whom God does communicate with, and put His words in their mouth, Sin can tempt them to withhold something that God has said. So they do not pass on the whole message or the correct message for fear of what those who hear it might do in response.

And in vs. 19 and 20 we read that those who hear God's Words might not listen to the prophet who is speaking them, or that a prophet might add some words to what God has spoken, or tell people to do something that God has not actually commanded or speak for a false god!

Sin also affects what prophecy is needed for. Prior to the fall there was no danger in communicating with God, but in vs. 16 we read how Israel's encounter with God at Mt. Sinai and hearing His voice and seeing His divine presence in fire terrified them to the point of perishing and they requested someone to speak on behalf of God.

So prophecy is needed to protect us from God, but it can also be fatal to ignore prophecy because you don't know the danger of presumptively entering into God's Holy of Holies for example. Or, if you listen to false prophecy, you will be instructed to do things which deliberately provoke God's anger, like worshipping Golden Calves and praising them for delivering you from Egypt. So, sin leads us to ignore true prophecy and embrace false prophecy and both result in what

is described in Acts 3:26 as "*wicked ways.*" And brothers and sisters, these wicked ways are still a problem in our world today.

There is still false prophecy today, and it states that we can create our own realities and make our own truth, and you've heard me many times on how that warps what we believe about human sexuality and marriage, so I'll just point out that its also responsible for our belief that's ok to abort the lives of children, and assist others in taking their own lives because we determine it is necessary and good.

And there is still prophecy from false gods as well, claiming that you will find your way to the divine through practicing Buddhism, or through practicing Islam or some other false religion.

And we still have prophecy which adds to what God has said and presumptively says things in God's name which He has not endorsed – like "*God wants you to be happy! God wants you to follow your dreams and have the and best things in life!*"

And we still neglect to say ALL that God's Word says to us. We'd rather skip over the sections of the scripture which talk about sin, hell, eternal punishment, God's wrath and how things like divination and sorcery; which include tarot cards, psychic readings, horoscopes, new age crystals and so on, are so offensive to Him.

And it is still fatal to us brothers and sisters. From the outright murder and suicide committed in abortion and Maid, to the spiritual death we experience from ignoring the Word of God and not knowing or understanding the Gospel and the Orthodox Christian Faith, all of this is the consequence of how Sin still affects that Prophetic office.

And how this affects each of us, and whether we are even aware of it or not, illustrates how what we know and believe and about who Jesus is... affects our ability to be at our best as His followers.

But there is good news brothers and sisters, God has prophesied that He will redeem this Prophetic office. We read about this in our scripture passages this morning.

Peter says in Acts 3:18, making reference to Christ's redemptive work on the cross, that God *"had foretold [this] through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer."* And then later in vs. 24, he says, with respect to Christ's subsequent resurrection, ascension, and outpouring of the Holy Spirit, that *"all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days."* So the good news about the prophetic office is that prophecy is being used to redeem prophecy.

Thus Peter links Jesus with the prophecy we read in Deuteronomy 18 this morning, where God tells Moses *"I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name."*

Now its no surprise Peter connected Jesus to this, listen to what Jesus says about himself in John 12:48-49 *“There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken.”*

So what does it mean then that Jesus is a prophet like Moses? Well, Moses led the nation of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, Jesus will lead the nations out of slavery to Sin by paying His life as a ransom for Sin. (1 Tim 2:6) Moses received the Law of the Covenant for the people – written on stone tablets, Jesus fulfilled the Law of the Covenant in a new way and will write the Law on their hearts. (2 Cor 3:3)

Moses interceded for the people of Israel when God was going to destroy them and reminded God of His promises to spare them, Jesus is the mediator between God and all humanity and gives us His righteousness to pardon us. (2 Cor 5:21) Moses was a judge for Israel who could settle disputes and make things right according to God’s will, and one day Jesus

will return as judge and make ALL things right according to God’s will. (Acts 17:31) And lastly Moses spoke to God’s people to have them turn away from idolatry and as Peter says in Acts 3:17 Jesus was sent to the Jews to bless them by having them turn from their wicked ways.

So, there is good news – God promised to redeem the prophetic office, He promised a prophet like Moses as part of this, we can see how Jesus fulfills this and even goes beyond it and undoes the all consequences that we identified.

Because Jesus fulfills this promise - there are people who will listen to what He says. As a result this prophecy facilitates repentance, it causes people to turn from their wicked ways; especially turning away from false prophecy, false prophets, sorcery and divination.

And Peter notes in vs.19 that listening to Jesus, and turning to God results in your sins being wiped out, and experiencing times of refreshing. Quite a contrast from the deadly terror

which Israel experienced on Mt. Sinai, and consequential spiritual drought we experience from false prophecy.

And while it is still true that God will cut off anyone who does not listen to Jesus – Peter has some additional prophecy about this prophecy. Peter says in vs. 21 the holy prophets promised that *“Heaven must receive him [Jesus] until the time comes for God to restore everything”*

So there is a delay of the judgement for those who do not listen to Jesus, there is time to reconsider and change your ways... because, as Peter indicates God’s plan was for this prophet who was like Moses, to go beyond Moses and fulfill a promise that was made to Abraham to bless ALL nations.

So this is another reason why we don’t say Jesus is the Prophet – even if we only mean to say that Jesus is the prophet who is like Moses from Deuteronomy 18. Because... that would be a short-sighted understanding of why God raised up Moses to lead Israel and the purpose for which He chose them.

It would overlook the fact that Israel as a nation had a prophetic purpose as part of their calling to be a Royal Priesthood and a Holy Nation who was to be a light to the nations since they did not have God speaking to them.

But we are not overlooking this fact – so we say Jesus is Prophet as He assumes and fulfills Israel’s prophetic purpose in Himself, and thus Peter states in 2 Peter 1:19 *“the prophetic message [is] something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”*

And in fulfilling this calling of Israel, Jesus also redeems and restores the prophetic office for all humanity. In the very person of Jesus - communication between God and humanity is restored. The Word of God that we would speak to the Creation is given to us again... In fact as the Gospel of John put it, the Word by which all things were made became flesh.

Jesus is prophet, The Word of God spoken to the Creation. The God/Man who we see speaking prophetically to the creation



in His ministry on earth. He speaks and sickness is healed, He calms the storm, multiplies loaves and fishes... turns water into wine... curses a fig tree for lack of fruit, and it withers.

Jesus is Prophet! Jesus restores the prophetic office in himself - and as we are baptized with the Holy Spirit and connected to Jesus we begin to participate in that restored office through Him. Thus when the disciples notice the fig tree had withered Jesus says to them in Mark 11:22 *"Have faith in God, Truly I tell you, if anyone says to this mountain, 'Go, throw yourself into the sea,' and does not doubt in their heart but believes that what they say will happen, it will be done for them."*

We often struggle to understand what Jesus means here – but when we understand the prophetic office that Jesus restores us into, and how it involves speaking God's Word to the creation – we get a better sense of what Jesus is instructing us to do here and how it is part of His larger plan to speak a renewing Word to the entire creation at His return and make ALL things new, and then bring it to fulfilment as Adam would have, had Adam not failed the test.

And just as Prophecy plays a role in the redemption of the prophetic office, it plays a role in the completion of it as well. It keeps us looking forward to the return of Christ, the new Heavens and the New Earth, our resurrection and perfection and our glorification... and it helps our sanctification move towards completion on that day.

Prophecy is speaking God's Word to the creation, to those who were originally made to steward it and represent God to it... to those made in His image, who fell into Sin but are now are being made Holy for this task once again because God has prophesied that it would be so... Thus James 1:21 says *"humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you."*

God's Word goes out when spoken, and He Himself declares in Isaiah 55:11 *"It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it."*

So one day brothers and sisters, God's Word – Jesus Christ – will bring our restoration to the prophetic office to completion and we will exercise its authority over the new Creation in

such wonderful and amazing ways that will bring God glory and praise for all eternity...

But until that day – and to help move us forward to that day – Jesus has officially given His Church the prophetic office. Eph 4:11 says *“Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up”* and 1 Cor 12:28 *“And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets...”*

The Holy Spirit calls people into ministry in the Church to speak God’s Word into our lives, to point out our wicked ways, confess our sin, call us to repentance, put our faith in Jesus, confess Him as Lord, encourage us to stay faithful, give us hope and perspective, and remind us of where this is all going and trust God’s prophetic promises will come to pass.

The Word has prophetic power and that comes as it is spoken to us. 1 Peter 4:10 *“If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God.”*

This is why we need sermons brothers and sisters, this is why we have sermons... 2 Tim 3:16 *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness,”* and it is through being spoken to us, preached to us that the Word works to accomplish this in us.

So brothers and sisters, what do you expect in a sermon? what should you expect in a sermon? Prophecy... and why should you expect prophecy in a sermon? Because... Jesus is Prophet.

Amen.