

December 16, 2007

“Jesus: A Prophet Like Moses”
Deuteronomy 18:15

FCF: Longing to know the will of God

PROPOSITION: (anchor) Jesus, our great Savior, is the Prophet.
(magnet) And, as such, we must turn our hearts, our very ears, towards Him.

SCRIPTURE INTRODUCTION:

“I just want to know.” That strange package that arrived this week – what is it? Is it for me? I just want to know. It’s a laudable impulse. I read recently of NASA’s future moon shot plans. A new name and logo has been created for the next generation lunar lander. Move over *Eagle*. The *Altair* has landed. In fact, looking back into NASA history, this month marks the 35th anniversary of the last moon shot, Apollo 17. “I just want to know.” That’s what drives exploration. It’s a laudable, God-given impulse.

So too is the longing to know His will. We were made in the image, according to the likeness, of our Creator. We were made to know Him, for relationship with Him. And so that longing, however expressed, is deeply engrained. Now, that said, that longing is often expressed in less than helpful ways. But the One who made us has sought us out. And that’s what Christmas is all about – God revealing Himself to man.

SCRIPTURE READING: [Deuteronomy 18:9-22](#)

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION

SERMON INTRODUCTION:

I mentioned already that we were created as image bearers and the implications of that in terms of our longings for God. I should also add that the reason for those longings gone awry is the Fall. All aspects of our humanity have been stained and scarred – including our minds, our thoughts, our understanding. Such is why we see such error, ignorance, stubbornness, and untruthfulness all around us. And within us. And, again, not just generally but especially in our longings for God. They are fallen longings.

Yet still longing, we go looking elsewhere. Moses is addressing that in our text. And such errant searching goes on today. Horoscopes and psychic hotlines. Guru bestsellers and celebrity interviews. Reliance upon the opinions of those around us. And, of course, flippant feelings that change with the weather. We need more than that.

Which brings me to this. What was the role of the prophets? The Scriptures are clear. They were chosen by God to speak and act on His behalf. This is why they could utter such words, “*Thus says the Lord.*” For He had. And so, into a world of darkened minds and abiding hunger, they spoke. They revealed – in their foretelling what was to come and in their forthtelling what was meant to be. Such was the role of the prophets.

But while Moses was speaking of a line of prophets to come, he had in mind one prophet in particular. This would be the Prophet, the Messiah, the Christ. This became all the more clear when the voice of prophecy fell silent for the 400 years between the Old and New Testament. And what was His role? What is the role of this Prophet? Just as before – to “reveal” God. To minds and hearts darkened, He would come to make known the Truth. And He has come. This Prophet has come. And His name is Jesus.

Which brings me to another question. How should we respond to such a Prophet? Simply this. Given who He is and all He has shown Himself to be, we must turn our hearts, our very ears, towards Him. Looking to Him, longing to hear and heed what He says. And this becomes all the more apparent when you consider His prophetic ministry.

I. THE MANNER OF THIS PROPHET

Beginning simply with the manner of this Prophet and His ministry.

A) *Expected*

In some respects, Jesus was just as people would have expected. He taught.

1. All other teachers

And certainly the people were used to being taught – both in the past and in the present.

2. This teacher

They even referred to Him at times as “Rabbi.”

B) *Unexpected*

So, His teaching, what He revealed, was expected. But, oh, how He revealed!

1. All other teachers

The messages of the other teachers were second hand. They weren’t original to them. And worse, they were in some respects second rate. Even the most godly of prophets had their limitations in that their ministries only lasted as long as they did. And some of them had incidents of significant failure as well. And that’s not to say anything of the false prophets. And so, as hope and experience, promise and reality collided, longing grew.

2. This teacher

And so this Prophet was immediately recognized as different. There was an immediacy to His words (**READ Matthew 7:28-29**). He spoke of heaven as if He’d been there. He spoke of God as if He knew Him. He knew what He was talking about in a deeper way.

And so, with Jesus, this Prophet, we see the expectations and the longings met.

Illustration:

One of last year’s holiday movies was “Night in the Museum” – the story of a night watchman working in a museum where the exhibits come to life each night. One of the subplots has to do with a tour guide laboring over a research paper on Sacagawea. She’s hit a writer’s block. If only she could get inside the moccasins of her subject. The books are only taking her so far. But, in a turn of events, through the museum’s magic, she meets her subject. There she is – Sacagawea, the Shoshone Native American woman who accompanied Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery. What more could she ask for? She can now go to the source. She’ll know what she’s talking about!

Application:

How much more so with us and Jesus, the Great Prophet! Last week we were wrestling with the question in considering Jesus as the descendant of Eve, “*Does He know? Can He relate?*” Yes, He does. Yes, He can. And here, we can follow that up with, “*Well, we have His teaching. And it sounds good. But does He know what He’s talking about? Can I trust what He’ll say?*” Yes, indeed we can. For this is no ordinary prophet. This is the One for whom all the others were commissioned – the Son of God.

II. THE MESSAGE OF THIS PROPHET

So, with the very manner of His ministry, Jesus, the Great Prophet, shows Himself worthy of our hearing and heeding. And all the more so with His message.

A) *God’s Ways*

And what was His message? At minimum, revealing the ways of God (**READ John 12:49-50**). Jesus always said exactly what the Father gave Him to say.

1. God’s Word

What He said was the very Word of God.

2. From God Himself

The very Word of God from God Himself.

B) *God Himself*

But, given that Jesus the Son of God is the second person of the Triune God, His message was not merely the ways of God but God Himself.

1. The fulfillment of the prophecies

Jesus, even as He stood reading from the prophecies, was the One who fulfilled them.

2. The Author of the prophecies

And more, He was the Author of them as well (**READ John 1:14-18**). Do you hear? Jesus revealed not just the will of God by His teaching but God Himself through His life. More than any prophet, in Jesus, we see God. In Jesus, we see God. For He is God.

And so, His words went far beyond those of any other prophet (**READ John 6:28-29**). And who is the One whom God has sent? (**READ John 14:6**) He has come, not to provide a program or steps to a new-and-better-you but a person, a Savior, Himself.

Now, if this strikes you as rude and scandalous, then you've heard me right. This is counter to any notion that "all roads lead to heaven" or that "we're all worshipping the same God." Not according to Jesus. He knew the message. And He is the message.

Illustration:

Here's the thing. It matters what you believe and it matters about a whole host of things. Mistletoe, for instance. Yes, there are the sentimental traditions surrounding hanging it and stealing a kiss. But did you know it's a parasitic plant? And, worse, that it's poisonous? Eating the berries or the leaves can cause some pretty severe digestive distress. Well, what if, after I tell you that, you refuse to believe it and decide to go home and snack on the decorations? What do you think will happen? Do you think your refusal to believe will change the way things are? Try it and let me know how it goes.

Application:

I stress this because of the infection plaguing our day I would describe as a false humility. The prophets cry out and the Prophet no less, "*Thus says the Lord!*" And we say, "*Well, we can't be sure. We don't want to be dogmatic or offensive about this so let's boil down the opposing views to the lowest common denominator.*" Feigning the bent knee of humility, we are but posturing with the stiff neck of arrogance. If God has spoken, God has spoken. And in Christ, God has spoken. The Prophet has come.

Little wonder then Paul urges (**READ Colossians 3:16a**). Little wonder then God spoke forth from heaven at Jesus' Transfiguration (**READ Mark 9:7**). Listen indeed!

III. THE MEANS OF THIS PROPHET

Given the manner, given the message, we need to hear and heed the words of this Prophet. And given His means of His working as well. Bowing in joyful submission and in awestruck wonder as to how He reveals Himself to us. He is like no other. You see, the problems were not just with the prophets but with the people as well – stubbornly refusing to listen, attacking and twisting the message. And those problem haven't gone away. They're just as real today as they were then. And what does Jesus do?

A) *Through His Word*

He speaks through His Word. Which is just what we need – an inspired, inerrant Word. Jesus is no longer here in His human body. That phase of His mission is complete. But His prophetic work still continues. He still reveals God to us. How?

1. His apostles

Through His apostles (**READ John 14:25-26; 16:12-15**). This is crucial for the life of the church and the writing of the New Testament, for the authority and reliability of the message. Jesus worked through the Holy Spirit to have written what He wanted written.

2. His prophets

Which is much the way He worked centuries before through the prophets. Even then, in the centuries before He came, the words of the prophets were the Word of the Prophet.

B) *By His Spirit*

He speaks through His Word. Through His Word and by His Spirit. Again, think with me as to what we need – not just the Word itself but the ability to really hear it.

1. Illumination

And so He illumines our hearts that we might have the ability to understand what He has had written (**READ Ezekiel 36:26-27**). This Prophet speaks and works change within us!

2. Enablement

And more – not just the ability to understand what is there but the enablement to go forth and live and proclaim it as well. Listen to Peter as he explains in the Pentecost sermon how the prophet Joel's words have come to pass (**READ Acts 2:17-18**).

This is true now of us, of all who have bent the knee to this great Prophet!

Illustration:

Now what are the implications of this? How are we prophets? (**READ Luke 2:8-18**). There are two parts to this. The news from the angels to the shepherds. And then the news through the shepherds to all they met. To the shepherds and then through the shepherds. To nobodies and then to everybody. Such is the pattern still today.

Application:

In that sense, we are now prophets – revealing God and pointing others to Him. And don't be fooled. People around us are searching for truth. They can't help it. And yet that search often takes them to all the wrong places. Which explains all the "truth fads" we see come and go. It's an unspeakable tragedy. Yet it's also a great opportunity. For this news can then go to us, through us, and then to them. That's the pattern.

Again, the fulfillment of these things has come. Jesus was and still is the Prophet. His work goes on. Many here can testify to that very thing. He is still speaking. And He delights to work through the lisping voices of people like us in the lives of others.

CONCLUSION:

And you thought this was just a baby! You thought His coming into this world was just a warm sentimental occasion! No. Light has burst upon, ripped into, pierced through the darkness – dark as it is. And this light is so bright, the warmth so real, people wandering out in the woods still experience something of it spilling over into their lives this time of year. Why, after all, is this the season of lights? Lights in the trees, the windows, even on houses? Because Jesus, the prophet like Moses, was born into a dark world that would be dramatically changed by His life and death. That light has just dawned. His work has just begun. He will return and bring it to completion, driving every shadow out of sight. This child is no ordinary child. He's the great Prophet.

So, whatever your questions, come to Him. He can handle them. *"Does my life have purpose?" "You don't know what I've done. Is there any hope for me?" "My marriage, my family is a wreck. I don't know what to do. I hardly have the strength to go on." "My future seems so uncertain. And what does seem certain scares me. Who will be there? What hope can I have?" "Is all this real? Could it all be true?"* Listen. Don't take my word for it. Take His. Whatever your questions, come to Him. He can handle it. You won't believe who's coming for Christmas. Jesus, the great Prophet.

PROPOSITION: (anchor) Jesus, our great Savior, is the Prophet.

(magnet) And, as such, we must turn our hearts, our very ears, towards Him.