

A Prophet Among Them
Ezekiel 2:1-3:4, John 6:60-69
April 30, 2017

And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them. (Ezekiel 2:5)

1. Prophets are called to speak _____ into specific situations.

Ezekiel 2:4 ***The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord says.’***

Ezekiel 3:4 ***He then said to me: “Son of man, go now to the people of Israel and speak my words to them.”***

Amos 3:7 ***Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.***

Jeremiah 23:21-22 ***I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied. 22 But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds.***

2. Prophets call people to a _____.

Isaiah 1:19-20 ***If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; 20 but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.” For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.***

Ezekiel 18:30-32 ***“Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. 31 Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? 32 For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!***

Isaiah 55:6-7 ***Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.***

Malachi 3:10 ***Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.***

Jeremiah 4:1-2 ***“If you, Israel, will return, then return to me,” declares the Lord. “If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray, 2 and if in a truthful, just and righteous way you swear, ‘As surely as the Lord lives,’ then the nations will invoke blessings by him and in him***

they will boast.”

3. _____ has a prophetic role for Woodbury Church.
I Timothy 4:14? **Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.**

I Thessalonians 5:19-21 **Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt 21 but test them all; hold on to what is good, 22 reject every kind of evil.**

4. _____ has a prophetic role for the Community.
Matthew 28:18-20 **Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”**

Mark 16:15-16 **He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”**

Acts 1:8 **“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”**

John 20:21-23 **Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone’s sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”**

5. _____ is the better way.
John 6:68-69 ⁶⁸**Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. 69 We have come to believe and to know that You are the Holy One of God.”**

John 14:6 **Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.**

6. People must _____ to God’s Word _____.
Ezekiel 2:5 **And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them.**

II Chronicles 36:15-16 **The Lord, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. 16 But they mocked God’s messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.**

Psalms 137:1 **By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered**

Zion.

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And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them. (Ezekiel 2:5)

- Have you ever met a prophet? Or heard one speak?
- Maybe you have and didn't know it.
- You might even be a prophet. That's a real possibility.
- So what does a prophet do?
- Foretell the future?
- Preach judgement, wrath and doom?
- Tell people they need to repent?
Sometimes they do all these things, but not always.
- How do you know if you've ever met a prophet?
- Or even if you are one?

1. Prophets are called to speak God's Word into specific situations.

Ezekiel 2:4 ***The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says.'***

Ezekiel 3:4 ***He then said to me: "Son of man, go now to the people of Israel and speak my words to them."***

- Scroll
- The prophet doesn't really prophesy for the people but for God!
- Puritan William Perkins *The Art of Prophecy* 1592
- He meant preaching.
- Preaching – true preaching – is one form of prophesying,
- but not the only one.
- Eg. Caiaphas in John 11:49-53 "it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish."

Amos 3:7 ***Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.***

Jeremiah 23:21-22 ***I did not send these prophets, yet they have run with their message; I did not speak to them, yet they have prophesied. 22 But if they had stood in my council, they would have proclaimed my words to my people and would have turned them from their evil ways and from their evil deeds.***

2. Prophets call people to a better way.

Isaiah 1:19-20 ***If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the good things of the land; 20 but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword.” For the mouth of the Lord has spoken.***

■ **Call to Confession for today (in context)**

Ezekiel 18:30-32 ***“Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. 31 Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? 32 For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign Lord. Repent and live!***

■ **Call to Worship for today**

Isaiah 55:6-7 ***Seek the Lord while he may be found; call on him while he is near. 7 Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon.***

■ **Offertory Sentences for today.**

Malachi 3:10 ***Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the Lord Almighty, “and see if I will not throw***

open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.

Jeremiah 4:1-2 “If you, Israel, will return, then return to me,” declares the Lord. “If you put your detestable idols out of my sight and no longer go astray, 2 and if in a truthful, just and righteous way you swear, ‘As surely as the Lord lives,’ then the nations will invoke blessings by him and in him they will boast.”

3. The Session has a prophetic role for Woodbury Church.

I Timothy 4:14? Do not neglect your gift, which was given you through prophecy when the body of elders laid their hands on you.

I Thessalonians 5:19-21 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt 21 but test them all; hold on to what is good, 22 reject every kind of evil.

- They are encouraging people to do the daily devotions
- “In the sermon *Another 40 Days, Plus 10*, Pastor Rod said he believes “the time is now” for God to pour out His Holy Spirit on our community and begin to fulfill many of the wonderful visions He has shown us over the years. How do you see God working at Woodbury Church as we prepare for the Pentecost Festival on June 4?” They are inviting people to join them in their small groups.
- They are inviting people to join them in their small groups.
- The Session has a prophetic role to call the congregation to get on board with what God is doing.
- They are doing that by opening their homes and leading discussions and so on.

4. Woodbury Church has a prophetic role for the Community.

Matthew 28:18-20 *Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

- What does Jesus want His church to do?

Mark 16:15-16 *He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. 16 Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”*

- Again, what does Jesus want his church to do?
- What happens to those who believe?
- What happens to those who don't believe?
- Can they believe if the church doesn't tell them?

Acts 1:8 *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

- What does Jesus want His church to do?
- Where? What is our Jerusalem?
- Who empowers us to do this?

John 20:21-23 *Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”*

- What is Jesus doing with us? Sending us.
- What happens to those we forgive? Those we don't forgive? (Cf. Mark.)

- Who empowers us to do this?
- You are the light of the world.
- You are the city on a hill.
- If you don't tell people God's better way, how will they know?
- Our neighbors and family members waste away and wallow in guilt and unforgiveness because they do not know that a prophet is among them.
- If we are silent, they will not know that a prophet has been among them.
- If that prophet is timid or tired in its witness, they will not know that a prophet is among them.
- We are here to show people a better way.

5. Jesus Christ is the better way.

John 6:68-69 ⁶⁸ ***Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ We have come to believe and to know that You are the Holy One of God."***

- People left Jesus. They stopped listen to Him.
- Peter understood that Jesus is the only way.

John 14:6 ***Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.***

- Gospel

6. People must respond to God's Word in faith.

Ezekiel 2:5 ***And whether they listen or fail to listen—for they are a rebellious people—they will know that a prophet has been among them.***

II Chronicles 36:15-16 ***The Lord, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. ¹⁶But they mocked God's messengers,***

despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy.

Psalm 137:1 ***By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.***

- I bet they sobbed, “There was a prophet among us. We should have listened!”
- Watchman. Ezekiel 33:1-9

- Session, I don’t know whether the congregation will listen to you. Some church members want to stay consumers.
- Some may suffocate with an inward focused religion instead of a God-sized, life changing faith. Keep inviting them. Keep sharing God’s Word.

- Church, I don’t know if the people of our community will listen.
- That’s not your job. You share the word! You invite them.
- God will handle whether they respond or how they respond. You are not responsible for *their* response.
- You’re responsible to speak God’s Word to our community.
- If you tell them and they respond, lives will be changed (Marriages, addictions, healings. ...)
- And they will know a prophet has been among them.
- YOU are that prophet.
- Even if they don’t listen they will know that a prophet has been among them.

- Tell them God’s life- giving Word.
- God’s saving Word.
- The Word of God’s Love in Jesus Christ.
- Tell them by inviting them to church.
- Tell them by sharing your faith, Tell them ...
- And whether they listen or fail to listen they will know that a prophet has been among them.