**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

**Watertown, WI**

 **“A Prophet Like Me”**

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Midweek Advent 1, December 4, 2024

*Deuteronomy 18:15-22*

At the beginning of Creation, God walked in the Garden with Adam and Eve. There was no sin, pain, death, or separation from God. Then, Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s only command. They doubted God’s Truth and believed Satan’s lie. In their disobedience, they brought sin into the world. Sin came into the world and infected not only Adam and Eve, but all of creation. As a result, they were separated from God and humanity became enemies of God.

The rest of the Bible is the story of God fixing that problem. Of course, the final solution to the problem of mankind’s separation from God was Jesus’ death on the cross when He reconciled mankind to Himself by taking our punishment for us.

The entire Bible is God slowly revealing the fulfillment of His promise to Adam and Eve in the garden. He is teaching His people what Jesus is going to look like, what He will do, what He will say, where He will be born. Everything about Jesus is revealed in the Old Testament.

There are three main “offices” in the Old Testament: Prophet, Priest, and King. Each of them teaches us something about Jesus. This Advent, we will spend each week talking about one of the offices and what it teaches us about Christ.

This week, we begin with the office of Prophet.

Part of the problem with man’s separation from God is how hard it is to communicate, or rather, it is our inability to take to heart the words that He speaks to us. At times, God speaks to us directly, but by and large, God uses means to communicate to His people. Sometimes it is through angels. Most of the time, however, God uses prophets.

A prophet in the Old Testament was a mouthpiece of God. Over and over again, the children of Israel fall away from God. Over and over, they forget or forsake the Word of the Lord. They leave the God who saved them from slavery and go after the false gods of the nations around them. Their unfaithfulness and idolatry cause the gap between them and God to grow even wider.

Yet, God does not forsake them. He doesn’t give up on them, stop speaking to them, or stop reminding them of His love and His promise. At times, His love for them is expressed through the harsh preaching of the Law. His prophets do not hold back from condemning the Israelites and their idolatrous ways. Yet, other times, when Israel has been brought low, when they are repentant, His prophets speak sweet words of the Gospel to them.

What was their reward for being God’s mouthpiece? What was their reward for speaking God’s Word to His people? Jesus tells us in several places that the people to whom the prophets were sent killed them. The message that they were sent with angered the people so much that the people killed them.

The prophets served a purpose: they brought God’s Word to the people, and they continued to remind the people what God had told them. But they were just normal people like you and me. They lived and they died. Their role was to point to Christ. John the Baptist is the last prophet, and his job was to prepare the way for Christ, to bring the people to repentance.

Jesus Christ came to this earth as a prophet. He spoke the word of God to the people because He was, and still is, the very Word of God itself. He came to this earth not only to point to the Light, but to be the Light. Jesus is the fulfillment of all the prophets, and He is the fulfillment of all their prophecies. He brought with Him a message of repentance and forgiveness.

He came to this earth to speak the Word of God, and because of that message, He was hung on a cross. He, like the prophets before Him, was killed by those He was sent to save. Yet, in His death, His very words were fulfilled. In His death, the sins of the world were forgiven. In His death, the separation between man and God was erased. We have been made right with God, and one day, we will walk with God again. One day, all the pain and the suffering of this world will be over. One day, cancer and disease and natural disasters will no longer ravage this world.

One day, all the prophesies of our Great Prophet will come true. Jesus prophesied that the dead will be raised, and in His own resurrection, He became the first fruits of His prophecy. One day, all the dead will be raised and those who have put their faith in the Words of the Great Prophet Christ will raised to eternal life.

In the name of Jesus, Amen.