

Jesus as Prophet (Dr. Paul Utnage)

Text: John 7:1-24

From the Sermon:

Why, if we love a prophecy, do we struggle with the prophet? We struggle with the prophets because a prophecy tells us what to expect, but a prophet tells us what God expects of us. And we don't like that nearly as much. Mr. Rogers taught us to sing, "What do you do with the mad that you feel? When you feel so mad that you could bite?... What do you do? Do you punch a bag? Do you pound some clay or some dough?" No, just think of this song, "I can stop when I want to." But can you? Can you just stop the anger if you want? A prophet reminds you of your incapacity. What about Jesus' prophetic words about forgiveness? "You have heard that it is said, 'you should love your neighbor and hate your enemy'. But I say to you, 'love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. And pray this way to your Father in heaven, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.'" In that moment, he was a prophet. And now you understand why we don't like prophets. Somehow, when it is a prophetic voice telling us how God expects us to act, we don't want to hear those words. We look for any shortcuts, or escapes, or at worse plain old denial.

But what if what was happening was that the prophet told you what God expects of you and what you can expect that God will provide for those who can't meet those expectations? What if the prophet told you about obedience and compassion for people who fail at obedience? That's what Jesus is doing in this amazing public discourse in the temple. He comes with the voice of God, with the authority of God to tell us that God expects obedience to his Word, but he also comes with the heart of God to tell us that God provided the help we need according to the abundance of his compassion and power."

Opening Interaction: A "Would you rather? Icebreaker question.

Would you rather know the best or the worst moment of each day before they happen?

Read the passage and Discuss:

- In this passage, what details seem important? Does anything jump out at you?
 - What is the author communicating to the audience?
 - What does this passage teach us about God?
1. Have you ever thought about Jesus as a prophet?
 2. How is it that Jesus not only qualifies as a prophet, but as the fullness of all things prophetic?
 3. What implications does this have for believing in and following Jesus?

Calvary Season of Prayer: Praise

Have a group member pull up calvary.church/prayer and read the weekly blog. This week is about praise. After reading, ask your group if each would pray aloud for another person in the group. (Ideally, everyone prays for someone, and all get prayed for.)