

Is there a difference between a prophet and a prophesy? A question posed to the Bible Study students at Mansfield a few weeks ago. One insightful young woman braved an answer - a prophet is someone who can prophecy from God. They have the ability to glean insight and speak to people with a message about the future. A prophet must be able to prophesy but not every prophesy comes from a prophet.

In today's text we have Jesus as king, priest, and prophet. Jesus told his disciples to go into the village and untie the young colt that they will find, one that has never been ridden. And if someone asks them about what they were doing, they would simply reply that “The Lord needs it”. And the events took place just as he had predicted.

Sometimes the idea of Jesus as prophet makes us uncomfortable. Its not as familiar an image for us as Jesus as shepherd. There aren't many pictures painted of Jesus as prophet. And even more so, we don't necessarily know if we want to hear what Jesus has to say. We would rather have prophets be remote figures from the Old Testament, or people that we shy away from today. But Jesus was a prophet. He not only spoke about what the disciples would find in this particular situation, but the death that he would face as well. Jesus has the power to predict future events, just as the prophets of old.

And Jesus also came to fulfill what the prophets said of him, the messiah, the chosen one of God. Riding into Jerusalem we can hear the echoes of Zechariah, *Lo, your king comes to you; triumphant and victorious is he, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.*” And Jesus quotes directly from the prophet Habakkuk when the Pharisees try to silence him and the crowd saying, *I tell you, if these were silent, the stones would shout out.* For Luke, Jesus is a prophet because he fulfills what is said about him from the prophets who came before and Jesus fulfills what he says about his very self. Jesus redefines the office of prophet. For how many prophets truly predict what is going to happen to themselves? And for how many of those who do, does what happens to them change the very course of the world? Jesus is a new type of prophet, a role that he can only truly fill, because he both proclaims the word of God and *is* the word of God in the flesh. And now the Word of God is once again entering into the life of the people, the lives of those who seem to just keep missing the point, in order to reveal to them who God is and what the Kingdom of God is about.

The people expect Jesus to be their king, but for Luke Jesus' kingship is not quite what the people are looking for. The disciples want someone who will free them from the grips of Roman rule. They want an insurrection. No wonder the pharisees fear Jesus' presence and try to silence the crowds. They fear that Jesus may be who the crowds say he is. They fear what will happen on the eve of the Passover celebration - their opportunity to retell the story of God's freedom. The people are looking for a new Exodus, and they want Jesus to be their leader.

But Jesus rule and reign is not of this world. Its not about conquering Rome or defeating Pilate and his Roman army who are entering into the city to make sure an insurrection doesn't take place. Jesus' is the king of the Kingdom of God. Which surpasses Roman principalities and rule. He will judge the ends of the earth. But he is also a humble king, who comes into Jerusalem not upon a horse, but a colt. Not with an army, but amongst disciples singing the Psalm of Peace, *“Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest heaven!”* But the people cannot recognize the peace that he brings, because they are looking for peace as they define it, freedom as they define it. They have no peace in their hearts, so they cannot recognize the peace Christ brings. And because they have fear in their hearts instead of

peace, they will be lead to chants of hate and death by the end of the week instead of this Psalm. There is no peace in Jerusalem this week. Between this procession and the crucifixion. Between the rulers of this world and the King of God's reign.

Once again, not only the crowds but the pharisees misunderstand Jesus 'peace. They hear the Psalm, the very Psalm they have studied and taught about, as a chant for war, a political chant against the empire. So they hush the crowds. But Jesus replies that if the people are silent even the stones will cry out. Jesus knows that by the end of the week the crowds will turn from him and his most intimate friends will flee into silence to protect their own lives. But even if this crowd is silent, God will reign. Even if he faces an unspeakable death, God will reign. The Kingdom of this world will not silence the cry of the Kingdom of God.

While the people recognize Jesus as King, he is entering into Jerusalem to fulfill his priestly duty. Jesus has come to offer himself as a living sacrifice to cleanse us of our sins. He has come to die so that we may live. And because of this Jesus is the mediator between God and ourselves. Sometimes in the midst of the Palm Sunday story it is hard for us to look ahead. We like the joy of this Sunday and next. The joy of the procession of Christ and his resurrection, but the sacrifice in between speaks of Christ's love for us.

Christ as prophet, king, and priest. Christ entering into Jerusalem amongst "a whole multitude of disciples" who wanted him to be something else. Friends, are we like those multitudes? Do we pick and choose who we want Christ to be in our lives and try to contain him to our will and image? Does Jesus version of peace that makes us choose between love of God and love of nation make us uncomfortable? Do we want a humble King or a strong ruler? Do we want to hear what the Word made flesh is trying to tell us or see the love that he displays for us on the cross?

All too often I think we are like the crowds that day. Letting our own wishes and anxieties dictate who we want Jesus to be. Looking for the peace outside of ourselves, while our hearts rage with mistrust and misunderstanding. But Jesus rode into Jerusalem that day confident in who he was and what he had to offer. He didn't change himself to fit into our molds. Rather he came as priest, king, *and* prophet to show us the word of God. To teach us about heavenly peace. And who proclaims that this life does not have the final word. For the peace of Christ cannot be divorced from the hill to Calvary, and his message and sacrifice cannot be silenced. For Jesus in his completeness tells of the reign of God. Amen.