

The True Prophet of God

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[0 : 0 0] Well, we're continuing our study that we just got started last week. And the verse that's been coming up, whether it's in our lesson or from other messages, is from Hebrews, where it says, Fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.

Well, God has graciously provided and preserved His Word as recorded in the Bible for us to actually be able to see Jesus.

We sit around at home and sometimes pull out the albums, and we're reminded and our children, grandchildren can see people that they'd never seen before.

People who are indeed are part of history, but they've never seen, and so they can open up that album and be introduced a little bit more with someone that they have not seen.

Well, the Scriptures is that true inspired album that we can look into and get an accurate understanding of who Jesus is.

[1 : 1 1] We fix our attention on Him there, and His Holy Spirit illuminates our minds to the precious realities of Himself and then nurtures within our hearts a greater love for Him.

He who is truly the prize and the treasure that we are to run after, that we fix our eyes on. And actually, that was Paul's testimony.

Once he was converted, he fixed his eyes, his mind's attention on Jesus Christ, and when he saw Him in truth for who He is. Again, I've read these verses before as well.

This is his evaluation. Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For His sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ. So he saw Christ in truth and who He is and came to this conclusion that everything else in comparison that I was looking to for my purpose, my identity, my value in life, well, that to him was considered as rubbish.

[2 : 3 4] He had another pursuit. So we too want to see, to know Christ as that ultimate gift and treasure and prize for all of life.

And again, so we look into the Bible to see Jesus. Last week we saw Him as the seed of the woman. This week we see Him as the true prophet of God. And again, we're using drawing from Alistair Begg's book and Sinclair Ferguson's book titled Name Above All Names.

And they help us fix our eyes on Jesus this morning as that true prophet of God. And they do this by using four words all beginning with the letter R.

The first word is required. So think of the word required as meaning something that is essential or indispensable. Our fallen condition requires us to have Jesus as our prophet.

He is essential. We need Him. He is required in our lives. The entrance of sin into our nature as human beings has produced a spiritual death certainly and an ignorance of God, spiritual blindness that we cannot see Him in truth of who He is.

[4 : 0 5] Paul describes this deadness in Ephesians 2. And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived, in then the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind.

And we're by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind. That was our nature. That's what we were born with. And out of that nature, we moved and weren't seeing the reality of who God was, even the reality of ourselves, our own condition.

He goes on in Ephesians 4, 17-19, Now this I say and testify in the Lord that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, those unbelievers, in the futility of their minds.

They're darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardness of heart, their hardness of heart.

They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. So the effects of sin on us as human beings has affected the way we think, the conclusions we draw out of the ignorance of our hearts, our inner mans.

[5 : 48] Paul again, writing to the Corinthians, says, And even if our gospel is veiled, it's veiled to those who are perishing. In their case, the God of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God.

Sometimes you might ask an individual, Well, why don't you follow Jesus Christ and walk in His ways? And they say, I just don't have time for that right now.

And, you know, I think this or that. And, of course, they don't give the truth of the reality of themselves because Satan has blinded me and I'm ignorant of the reality of God and my true condition.

No. But it is because of their depraved condition, their fallen spiritual condition, that each person enters this world darkened in their spiritual understanding.

Remember, Pastor John, just a few weeks ago, spoke about Nicodemus and Jesus said, Unless one is born again, he cannot see, he cannot perceive that which is invisible, the kingdom of God, God Himself.

[7 : 04] He just can't see it. And that's why it makes no sense to people when you bring Christ to them, the good news of the gospel. They don't see it. And make those choices not to believe, not to follow.

Doesn't see their desperate condition. And Begg writes in the book, this darkness, an internal darkness, is so deep that man as man is blind to the very fact of his blindness.

Talk about a hopeless condition. He doesn't even see that he doesn't see. How desperate is that? It's very desperate.

If he does see himself in turmoil and trouble, people do recognize that there's trouble in the world, even trouble in their own lives at times. Usually they would look to worldly explanations for his troubled life.

He doesn't turn to God and his counsel. You see them turning and giving the explanations, well, it's a disease or it's just strictly a mental disorder that's causing me to make these kind of conclusions and decisions that lead to these problems that I'm experiencing.

[8 : 26] Psalm 14, one says, the fool says in his heart, there is no God. Because of that, because that is what is settled in his inner being, his thinking, outwardly, he functions like there is no God in his daily walk.

His ability to think clearly about God, himself, his purpose in life, what is even morally right or wrong, is severely, severely limited because of this darkness that exists within and left on their own. People, certainly as individuals, but then also as societies, will only devolve into eventual chaos. It may look good for a while, but eventually following this way of thinking leads to chaos and corruption as they follow the inclinations of their own sinful hearts.

I mean, many of us here can give testimony of how that was true in our own lives. Genesis 6-5, we read of that historical event, really, the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

And then Romans 1, Paul gives additional extended descriptions of man's internal inability to perceive reality and truth about himself and how this sin within, this nature, has affected his ability to think right and come to accurate conclusions.

[10 : 12] And just selected a couple verses and phrases. Verse 21, they became futile in their thinking. Their foolish hearts were darkened. Verse 28, they didn't see fit to acknowledge God.

I mean, to them, it makes no sense. Why would you think that I should even go that way? Don't you want to have a good life and God in your life?

No. In fact, I don't. And why would I ruin what I'm enjoying right now? They don't see fit to acknowledge God and gave them up to a debased mind.

So sinful man cannot come to accurate conclusions about himself and God. So someone who is unaffected by the consequences of sin is needed to bring truth, light, and life into the world to deliver man out of his bondage of sin, the spiritual ignorance of his depraved spiritual condition, his ignorance about God, essential truth, wisdom that's necessary for a life that can flourish in the world

even today, a life that's in right relationship to God, himself as an individual, others around him, and even the rest of creation.

And God was the one, the first one to bring that truth, that life and light in the man's darkness. And we saw that last week as he promised deliverance through the seed of the woman that would come and crush the head of the serpent and Satan himself.

[11:58] But God also provided an ongoing source through which his message to people would be communicated. And that source was through the prophets.

prophets and in his time the true prophet of God. And that brings us to the second our word, revealed. Prophets were to reveal or communicate God's essential truth to people.

Truth that they needed to know him. Truth for life in the world. A quote by Sam Storms, a prophet's primary function in the Old Testament was to serve as God's representative or ambassador.

By communicating God's word to his people, true prophets never spoke on their own authority or shared their personal opinions, but rather delivered the message God himself gave them.

People desperately needed to hear truth from God. So God chose godly individuals to be his special ambassadors, his prophets.

[13:08] to communicate his messages to people. Of course, we see this in the Old Testament, the examples, many examples of the Old Testament prophets.

Exodus 4.12, God spoke to Moses and said, Now, therefore, go and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall speak. And then Jeremiah was another one.

When he showed reluctance to speak on God's behalf, God spoke to him and said, Behold, I have put my words in your mouth. And that's what he was to communicate to the people.

Ezekiel 2.7, God told Ezekiel, And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house.

So don't think of the consequences that's going to come your way. Your concern is just to speak what I speak to you. What I tell you, you communicate that message to the people.

[14:11] And then briefly, Hosea 1, the word of the Lord that came to Hosea. Joel 1, the word of the Lord that came to Joel. Jonah 1, now the word of the Lord came to Jonah.

Micah 1, the word of the Lord that came to Micah. So as the word of the Lord came to each one of these prophets and others, they acted as faithful ambassadors to God.

And their proclaimed His message to the people who needed to hear it. Their messages from God. And their messages from God pointed the people to, of course, God.

They were speaking God's messages so that people would see and acknowledge, love, and follow the one true God. There were a lot of voices out there as they were going into new lands. A lot of voices directing them to other gods.

Other voices telling them, no, no, this is what's true. Follow here. Moses spoke to the people in Deuteronomy 6 and said, hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

[15:18] You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. This is something that God was instructing Moses. Tell the people this.

It's what they needed to hear. A lot of other voices out there. But no, there is one God. The Lord your God is one. Love Him. Don't let your affections go in any other direction.

Their messages pointed the people to God's wisdom, to His commands, that when followed would bring them blessing. Deuteronomy 5.29, Moses told the people what God said about them and how He would bless them if they would follow His commands.

Oh, that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever.

They needed that truth again from God about Him and His command. And if they loved Him and obeyed Him, life would go well with them. They couldn't just assume and act on the information they had in their own minds and come to the kind of conclusions that would have life go well with them, whether it's in this world or the world to come.

[16:42] They needed this truth from God. But the prophets also directed them to the true prophet of God that was to come. And it was through Moses that God revealed His plan to send the true prophet of God.

He would be one worthy of greater honor even than Moses. In Deuteronomy 18.18, Moses said, The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your brothers.

It is to him you shall listen. That's the purpose. The prophet is bringing a message from God. The people, the part, the responsibility of those who are hearing the prophecy, the message from God, is to listen, to receive it.

Jesus would be that true prophet of God. In Acts 2, we read that Peter declared to the people that Jesus, whom they killed, was indeed the prophet that was to come that Moses spoke of. He preached in his message. Moses said, The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you.

[18:01] And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people. And all the prophets who have spoken from Samuel and those who came after him also proclaim these days.

Skipping over to verse 26, God having raised up his servants sent him to you first. to bless you by turning every one of you from your wickedness.

The writer of Hebrews also wrote about how God spoke through the prophets. But there would come a time when he spoke through one greater than the prophets. And that was his son, Jesus Christ. Hebrews 1, 1 and 2, long ago at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. prophets. But in these last days he has spoken to us by his son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. So the message they spoke brought God's light into their darkness so that they could see and hear truth again that they needed to love and obey and follow God.

[19:11] These are desperate message of truth that people need it. And notice that this practice of God graciously took place over the ages.

Now this is something that struck me last week as we talked about the seed of the woman. That information, that prophecy, that message from God came right after Adam and Eve's sin. And how through the ages, Satan's desire was to destroy that seed of the woman, but he was preserved.

Well, that's kind of what's going on here this morning. God kept working through the ages in protecting that seed of the woman, the line of the seed of the woman, and eventually the seed himself, Jesus Christ.

Nothing Satan put forth to stop God's plan of the seed of the woman coming into being, thwarted God's mission.

[20:21] And the same thing this way. God kept sending prophets with his messages to people. People in need, in need to hear from him. And how long did that take?

Well, I looked that up a little bit from the fall of man and that message that God provided to Adam and Eve right up into the birth of Jesus Christ was 4,000 years.

4,000 years approximately, God was sending his messengers with a message of hope to people who needed to hear it. 4,000 years.

I hope you're impressed with that. That was just something that I was impressed with. God's faithfulness throughout the ages, sending to people who would not hear many times, who would not receive the message.

Of course, there were those that did receive and believe, but by far the majority would not listen and therefore continued to live in their darkness.

[21:29] When God's time, Jesus was revealed as the true prophet of God. We're still in that second hour of reveal. And the true prophet, Jesus himself, was revealed.

Simeon was one of those to whom it was revealed. And we read of his testimony in Luke 2. When Jesus was brought to the temple by his parents, Simeon said to God, Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace according to your word.

For my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples a light for revelation to the Gentiles. and for glory to our people Israel.

What was the desperate need that people, humanity is in? Darkened in their understanding. They need truth and information that they cannot gain just from themselves, their own reasonings.

They needed something outside and beyond themselves. And Simeon's recognizing that Jesus is that one, that promised one, a light for revelation.

[22:38] revelation to the Gentiles. We can rejoice in that and give thanks in that. He would be that light of revelation. He would be that truth.

He would bring the truth from God to the people who needed to hear. Even the Samaritan woman at the well had heard of such a one, this promised one.

Even the Messiah, the Christ, was to come. In her conversation with Jesus at the well in John 4, she perceived that Jesus was a prophet. And then she brought up some differences in regard to the place and the manner of worship.

Let's change this topic. When she was being confronted more and more about choices that she made in her life and her immoral lifestyle, and bringing up these differences, she said, the woman said to him, I know that Messiah is coming, he who is called Christ.

When he comes, he will tell us all things. So somewhere along the line, she heard the message of the coming Messiah, Christ, from somebody.

[23 : 54] The prophets of God certainly had been faithful in their proclamation of God's message. She was expecting that he would have the answers about true worship and not just true worship, but everything else.

She said, he'll tell us all things. So the Spirit of God, working in this woman's life, she had heard the message of the coming of Christ from somebody.

She was experiencing truly the hardness of life in her life. So let's not discount people who are going through those experiences.

I've been guilty of that before when I've worked on various sites and locations and come in contact with people that we would describe as, man, that person is ungodly.

There's no way that person would ever come to Christ and not understanding providence of God, bringing people into this person's life with the message that they needed to hear in their darkness.

[25 : 10] On one such occasion, I saw a van that was really painted up wildly that this guy used to drive to work. Frank Coniglio was his name.

Big bulk of a guy. Nobody would go against Frank. You know, on the construction sites. And he was one of those that had characterized never will this guy come to Christ.

Well, I saw his van pulled into this house one day. Maybe Frank lives there. I said, I'm going to go in and say hi to Frank. I had been away from this construction place for a while. And went to the door, knocked on the door.

The guy came to the door and said, does Frank live here? No, Frank doesn't live here. I saw this was his van. And he said, no, no, I got that from Frank.

I said, well, how's Frank doing? He said, well, Frank got Jesus in his life. That's the way this guy put it. I thought, okay, shame on me.

[26 : 13] You know, God had been working in his way, sending messengers to Frank, and Frank came to Christ. Never did see Frank again, or meet Frank, but somehow that name is stuck in my mind.

Well, here's this woman, hardness of life, going day after day, coming to the well, you know, experiencing, coming in the heat of the day, didn't want to be there probably with the rest of the women of the village.

They knew her reputation. And here's Jesus. Isn't that interesting? At the well, at the same time, having this conversation with her.

She had heard along the way something of the Messiah. And when he comes, he'll tell us all things. So there was some sort of hope within her, right? In her struggle of life, there was this little seed of hope, possibly, that somebody is going to come and really make things right.

Well, interesting. Jesus' response to her in verse 26. Jesus said to her, I who speak to you am he.

[27 : 31] Wow! You know, every time I read that phrase, here's this woman in desperation in her life, confusion, living with the consequences of bad choices that came out of her darkened understanding, having this little seed of information that somebody is going to come, some Messiah, and he'll tell us all things.

I'm him. That true prophet of God. I'm the one, the prophets have been talking about all these years, I'm the one who can bring life and light into your darkness and your mind.

I have the answers to life's questions. Your darkened mind can't perceive and lead you to those right conclusions. What a message of hope.

And indeed, we know the end of the story for that woman and how her life was changed as he received the message from the true prophet of God, Jesus Christ.

Well, there were others who gave similar testimony. The 5,000 people that Jesus fed after seeing Jesus performed this great miracle of feeding them, the people said, this is indeed the prophet who has come into the world.

[28 : 52] Now, there's other examples that we could give, but the conclusion of the matter is that Jesus was revealed as the true prophet from God. He is the one who is the light.

He brought the message of light, the good news of the gospel to darkened minds of people, of sinners. sinners. That brings us to our next R, recognized.

This is a step that must take place in the hearts and minds of sinners, those who are still in their bondage to sin, darkened in their understanding.

The prophets gave the message from God that this true prophet of God would come. The true prophet of God has come and spoken truth to people and it's been preserved for us in the Bible. Well, this step of recognition must take place in the hearts and minds of sinners. Alistair Begg writes, ultimately, Jesus must be recognized, not merely as a messenger of revelation from God, but as the very source of the revelation.

[30 : 05] Jesus is not only the revealer, he is the revelation. Jesus was the embodiment of all that the prophets had previously said.

As he said to the woman, I who speak to you am he. And this is what happened in the lives of many people. There were many who did recognize and believe.

John 7, 37-41, on the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

When they heard these words, some of the people said, this really is the prophet. Others said, this is the Christ. Again, in John 8, 28-30, Jesus said to them, when you've lifted up the son of man, then you will know that I am he, and that I can do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the father taught me.

He was a faithful messenger from God. And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.

[31 : 23] As he was saying these things, many believed in him. The true prophet, Jesus, was revealed among the people. And many people thankfully recognized him and believed him as the true prophet, even the promised Messiah, the Christ.

Beginning of John's Gospel in John 1, verse 11 and 12, he came to his own and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor the will of flesh, nor the will of man, but of God.

I trust that that our word, recognized, gives testimony of your response to the true prophet of God this morning.

Remember at the beginning of the lesson I spoke of the spiritually darkened understanding in the mind of the one who doesn't recognize Jesus as the true prophet of God, or the messenger from God, even the Christ who takes away the sin of the world.

John 1.4, John writes, in him was life, and the life was the light of man. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

[32 : 48] That's why you need to come to Christ. When you hear the gospel message, it's the light of God shining in your heart, in the darkness of your heart and your mind.

Of course, it's our prayer, the Spirit of God, use that gospel good news to grant you life and that you will see, recognize Jesus for who he is.

Even today, believe in him, confessing him as Lord, the true prophet of God. Well, the light of the glorious gospel of Christ continues to shine for people today.

So recognize Jesus as who he truly is. Don't let this day go by if you're here without Christ. Come to me, he says.

Well, it brings us to the last R. Realize. Think of the meaning of realize, not in the sense of understanding something, but in another of its meaning.

[33 : 57] To bring into being or to make real. Like you want to realize a prophet in your stock portfolio or whatever. To make it real. The good news of Jesus needs to be realized today.

It needs to be made known. The prophets before Jesus proclaimed God's message to the people and Jesus certainly faithfully proclaimed God's message to the people.

people. Even the message that he was the one sent from the Father to be the only substitutionary sacrifice for sinners that could provide them the righteousness from God that would equip them for right relationship with God.

Eternal life with Jesus Christ and his kingdom. So who are the ones to carry on the work of proclaiming Jesus' ministry today?

not as prophets who get direct divine revelation from God but as ambassadors, proclaimers of this message of reconciliation with God by faith in Jesus Christ.

[35 : 07] This message is already revealed in God's word. 2 Corinthians 5.20 Therefore, Paul is writing to the believers there, we are ambassadors for Christ.

God is making his appeal through us. I mean, that's what the prophets were doing. They were presenting a message from God. They were speaking on God's behalf.

They were faithful messengers. Jesus was the faithful messenger proclaiming the message to God, from God. For our sake, he made him to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Well, for those here this morning who have believed in Jesus Christ as Lord and confessed him as Lord, that is the mission that we have from God.

We can hear that mission presented to his disciples. You're familiar with it, Matthew 28. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you and behold, I am with you always to the end of the age.

[36 : 27] So in all of our going, we are the ones entrusted with the message from God that people in darkness still need to hear. we can live godly lives, walk in a manner worthy of God, walk in a manner worthy of the gospel, but there comes a time we must speak the message verbally so the people who are in darkness hear the truth and the Spirit of God can use that message still to bring people to the place where they recognize Jesus as the true prophet of God, Christ himself.

Let's pray. Father, this morning, we do give thanks for your faithfulness through the ages to see that your message that people desperately need to hear is proclaimed and it has been proclaimed by faithful men and women through the years.

By your power and the grace of your grace and the work of your Spirit, you've alerted, awakened many and brought us out of that spiritual death and darkness into the light and life of Christ.

Christ. Now we are entrusted with that message. Help us to be the proclaimers, Father, in how we live but also in speaking the message clearly so that others can still hear and our confidence is that as your word goes out, your message goes out, it will be the power of God unto salvation to many, many more.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Thank you. You're dismissed.