

Seeing Jesus in the Prophets
JitOT #6 | Isaiah 6:1-8
November 14, 2021

Pre-Sermon Remarks

PRAYER

Introduction

- Basketball season in swing | *Air Ball: Spontaneous Large-Group Precision Chanting*
 - **Cherrill P. Heaton** As any director of a church choir or secular chorus knows, getting a mere 20 or 30 trained singers to sing or chant together and in tune is not always easy. Yet without direction, instruction, a conductor or a pitch pipe, thousands of strangers, massed in indoor stadiums and arenas, are able, if stimulated by an air ball, to chant, 'Air ball,' in total and rhythmic unison.
- Human are remarkable in our connectedness
 - Created in the image of God and relational
 - Mirror neurons that reflect each other's emotions
 - Ability to band together to solve problems
- When it goes bad, it can be really bad
 - Societal: Nazi germany, mob/riot, groupthink, emperor's new clothes
 - Biblical: the flood, tower of babel, judges, kings "all the people worshipped Baal"
- Edwin Friedman: Rabbi, but also a family therapist | group dynamics
 - Tension between togetherness and individuality

Togetherness vs. Individuality

He noted three trends related to groups

1. In anxiety, togetherness wins | Don't be the tall nail
2. Herding creates more anxiety | Nobody has the distance to see with objectivity
3. Mature individuality is demonized |

Edwin Friedman As its regression deepens, it will turn the togetherness principle into the supreme goal that rules every member and transcends all other values. In the herding family, dissent is discouraged, feelings are more important than ideas, peace will be valued over progress, comfort over novelty, and cloistered virtues over adventure...Rather than support those who stand tall and take on the most disturbed members, the herding family will adapt to the symptom-bearer (alcoholic, delinquent, substance abuser, gambler, hot-tempered one) and undercut anyone who attempts to define himself or herself against the forces of togetherness. They often characterize that person as "cruel," "heartless," "insensitive," "unfeeling," "uncooperative," "selfish," and "cold."

**Hold this idea in mind as we think about the prophets of the Hebrew bible...*

Prophets

- All throughout the Bible | Abraham first, all the way through the book of Acts
- Specific group, monarchy-exile | collection of major and minor prophets
- More preacher, less fortune-teller | Yes, some predictive elements, but even the things that we now understand as predictive prophecy aren't like it is in the movies

Prophetic Ministry

1. Identity: diverse minority
 - a. Men and women (Huldah w/ Josiah in 2 Kings), popular & obscure, social diversity, historical diversity, stylistic diversity (Jeremiah vs. Joel), gift diversity (miracles, leadership, boldness)
 - b. **Persecuted minority!**
 - i. *gAsP* Israel was polytheistic article
 - ii. The group experienced anxiety: war, famine, violent transitions of kingship
 - iii. The group gravitated toward unhealth: idol worship, injustice
2. Focus: worship and justice | different prophets have different focal points, but basic two:
 - a. Worship: **Isaiah 44** [grows a tree, cuts it down, makes a fire, cooks some food] ¹⁷He makes a god or his idol with the rest of it. He bows down to it and worships; he prays to it, "Save me, for you are my god." ¹⁸Such people do not comprehend and cannot understand, for he has shut their eyes so they cannot see, and their minds so they cannot understand. ¹⁹No one comes to his senses; no one has the perception or insight...
 - i. *Don't you remember what Yahweh has done for you?*
 - b. Justice: **Isaiah 59** [your sins have separated you from God] ⁹Therefore justice is far from us, and righteousness does not reach us. We hope for light, but there is darkness; for brightness, but we live in the night...¹⁴ Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands far off. For truth has stumbled in the public square, and honesty cannot enter. ¹⁵Truth is missing, and whoever turns from evil is plundered. The Lord saw that there was no justice, and he was offended.
 - c. Summary: love God and love your neighbor
3. Temperament: sober and hopeful
 - a. Sober warning | **1 Kings 22**, Ahab and Jehoshaphat, 400 prophets saying "everything is great, don't worry about Aram, you'll be victorious!" "There is still one man who can inquire of the LORD, but I hate him because he never prophesies good about me, but only disaster. He is Micaiah son of Imlah." ¹³The messenger who went to call Micaiah instructed him, "Look, the words of the prophets are unanimously favorable for the king. So let your words be like theirs, and speak favorably." ¹⁴But Micaiah said, "As the Lord lives, I will say whatever the Lord says to me."
 - b. Hope for the future | Isaiah's promised new king, Ezekiel's new heart, Jeremiah's new covenant, Daniel's new eternal life, Isaiah's promised new heavens and earth

So, were they successful?

Samuel Schultz and Gary Smith Through these messages the prophets hoped to persuade the people of Israel and Judah to turn from their selfish ways and dedicate their lives to God's service. Although the pagan people in Nineveh responded to Jonah's message, and the postexilic community responded to the challenge from Haggai and Zechariah to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem, most prophets never record any kind of positive response.

The Road to Emmaus

Luke 24 ¹⁹ So they said to him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how our chief priests and leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. ²¹ But we were hoping that he was the one who was about to redeem Israel.

1. Jesus' diverse ministry: healing/miracles but also washing feet, conversations and empowerment of men and women, bold proclamation but also a wise sage telling parables, leadership but also servanthood, strong and yet vulnerable to the point of death
2. In the minority: opposing groups included family, religious leaders, disappointed masses who just wanted to feel good and get bread, political leaders
3. Focused on both worship and justice
4. Both sober and hopeful

Jesus said that all the prophets were pointing to him, he embodies their very message

- Death, resurrection
- Calls us to follow him and learn his ways

Prophetic Like Jesus

1. Both principled and passionate
2. Both confident and humble
3. Both connected and defined