

## February 3, 2013 Communion

*Do prophets exist anymore? Are there people in our time who speak a truth that is holy and troubling? These are good questions to frame our listening to scripture this morning.*

### **Jeremiah 1: 4-10**

*This passage may sound familiar because there are consistent elements to the stories of the calling of each of the prophets. Jeremiah's call is most like that of Moses and Isaiah. What sets him apart is that Jeremiah was to speak to Gentiles as well as Jews about the need to destroy and to restore. Let us listen with anticipation.*

<sup>4</sup>This is what GOD said:

<sup>5</sup>Before I shaped you in the womb, I knew all about you.

Before you saw the light of day, I had holy plans for you:

A prophet to the nations—that's what I had in mind for you."

<sup>6</sup>But I said, "Hold it, Master GOD! Look at me. I don't know anything. I'm only a boy!"

<sup>7</sup>GOD told me, "Don't say, 'I'm only a boy.' I'll tell you where to go and you'll go there.

I'll tell you what to say and you'll say it. <sup>8</sup>Don't be afraid of a soul.

I'll be right there, looking after you." GOD's Decree.

<sup>9</sup>GOD reached out, touched my mouth, and said, "Look! I've just put my words in your mouth—hand-delivered!

<sup>10</sup>See what I've done? I've given you a job to do among nations and governments—a red-letter day!

Your job is to pull up and tear down, take apart and demolish, And then start over, building and planting."

### **Luke 4: 22-30**

*This story begins exactly as we might expect with Jesus, an observant Jewish rabbi, attending synagogue and reading from scripture. Everything changes when he offers his interpretation. Those assemble tried to silence and discredit him but their hostility fails to deter Jesus from his task. Listen to this compelling story.*

<sup>22</sup>All who were there, watching and listening, were surprised at how well he spoke. But they also said, "Isn't this Joseph's son, the one we've known since he was a youngster?"

<sup>23</sup>He answered, "I suppose you're going to quote the proverb, 'Doctor, go heal yourself. Do here in your hometown what we heard you did in Capernaum.' <sup>24</sup>Well, let me tell you something: No prophet is ever welcomed in his hometown. <sup>25</sup>Isn't it a fact that there were many widows in Israel at the time of Elijah during that three and a half years of drought when famine devastated the land, <sup>26</sup>but the only widow to whom Elijah was sent was in Sarepta in Sidon? <sup>27</sup>And there were many lepers in Israel at the time of the prophet Elisha but the only one cleansed was Naaman the Syrian."

<sup>28</sup>That set everyone in the meeting place seething with anger. <sup>29</sup>They threw him out, banishing him from the village, then took him to a mountain cliff at the edge of the village to throw him to his doom, <sup>30</sup>but he gave them the slip and was on his way.

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

**THANKS BE TO GOD.**

## **Sermon**

When Jesus made his hasty retreat from the synagogue in his home town, he joined a long line of scorned men of God.

Consider this observation from the Colledgeville commentary.

Jeremiah knows that prophets lead a lonely life, are frequently scorned, often persecuted, and with few exceptions rejected during their lives. God, however, commands (v. 7). Jeremiah's only comfort is God's promise, "I am with you to deliver you" (v. 8). It is consoling to observe that God regularly promises to be "with" those who have been commissioned for different tasks in his service.

We call people who go public with their calls for a better, more loving world – zealots, reactionaries, bleeding hearts, radicals.

- In Canadian history – suffragettes seeking vote for women.
- Social gospellers seeking fairness to new immigrants/poor.
- Nestles' boycott – our convenience should not come at endangerment of others.

Now, idle no more, has come to our TV's, radios, newspapers, Facebook, Twitter -> even our streets.

AND many are ready to run them out of town much as Jesus was driven out of Nazareth.

Purpose of a prophet is to speak of destruction and restoration.

- To end what has been and build something new.
- AND you have to do this in the face of rejection and opposition.

As we sit in this church, so many millennia after Jeremiah and Jesus we may wonder, even a bit smugly, how those people could not have recognized greatness in their midst how they could be so angry and blind and foolish.

I wonder, will we look back at Idle No More the same way one day?

Idle No More grew from the work of 4 Saskatchewan educators – all first nations women.

Sylvia McAdam

Sheelah McLean  
Jess Gordon  
Nina Wilson

It began in November with a 'teach-in' in Saskatoon to educate people about the repercussions of the omnibus budget bill C-45.

Then U of M law graduate, Tanya Kappo organized a meeting in Alberta and used Facebook and Twitter to get the word out.

Free Press reporter, Mia Robson wrote an incisive article in the Jan. 26<sup>th</sup> issue.

**What are its objectives?**

The Idle No More movement would like the federal government to repeal all legislation that violates treaties, including those that affect environmental regulations, such as the budget implementation bills C-38 and C-45. It seeks to educate and revitalize aboriginal peoples, empower them and regain sovereignty and independence.

In a January 4<sup>th</sup> CBC interview:

"We're going to get off the couch and we're not going to be idle anymore," McAdam said about the nascent idea behind the movement. And we said, 'Why don't we just call it Idle No More?' and it just stuck."

McAdam said recent coverage of the movement has focused on Spence and other First Nations chiefs, but insists they do not speak for the movement.

"I think those portray a message of aggressiveness," McAdam said. "That's not peaceful."

She said she is worried about the movement's core message, about protecting land and water in Canada and promoting indigenous sovereignty.

You can find plenty of media material online that suggest the many ways that Idle No More has been hijacked by the of First Nations and other groups.

Prophets, generally, did not fight back – instead, they kept moving relentlessly to their goal -> they stayed focussed on the core message.

I heard a radio interview with Alberta lawyer, Tanya Kappo and was delighted to find a transcript of a Free Press interview Jan. 25/13.

That the difference with Idle No More, it's not about anger, it's about trying to approach it from a place of love.

Reflecting on living conditions and the wave of assaults vs. Aboriginal girls in Thunder Bay she said:

Idle No More coming from a place of love really challenges that. We're not those people you keep saying we are. Yes, those are social conditions we

face. Yes, those are realities we live. But that's not who we are. It's never who we chose to be."

While I would never suggest that Idle No More is a Christian protest movement, I wonder... if its focus on love, family, caring, for Creation, ending historic injustice and oppression, peace and collaboration... doesn't sound a little like a prophet of old... a little like God's messengers at work in our midst??

Friday – CBC morning show

- Panel with Red River College journalism instructor.
- Executive with social media filtering and ethics.
- First Nation justice representative.
- Marci Marcusa, editor of Morris free paper – piece disparaging aboriginals.
- Thompson Manitoba daily paper chose to shut down its Facebook site because of racist – anti-aboriginal comments flooding in, in January.

Does this remind you of Jesus in the synagogue??