Christ as Prophet

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Date: 23 June 2024

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[0:00] Who is Jesus Christ? We may answer that question in many ways. He is the Son of God. He is the true light. He is the perfect man. He is the Lord. He is the Good Shepherd. He is the Savior.

Over the centuries, Christian thinkers have brought together all the various strands of the Bible's teaching on who Jesus is. And in our Westminster Shorter Catechism, questions number 23 through 26, they summarize their findings by describing Jesus as a prophet, a priest, and a king. Over the next few Sunday evenings, I want to review what it means for the Jesus in whom we have faith, the Jesus we love and worship, to be our prophet, priest, and king. Anything we can do, anything at all, to increase our knowledge of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done for us will help us grow in our faith in Him and our assurance that what He lovingly did and continues to do, He has done and is doing for us.

In question 24 of the Shorter Catechism, if you've got your phone, you can always Google it, you know, the Shorter Catechism asks, how does Christ execute or perform the office of a prophet? How does Christ execute the office of a prophet? And it answers, Christ executes or performs the office of a prophet in revealing to us by word and spirit the will of God for our salvation. Christ executes the office of a prophet in revealing to us by His word and spirit the will of God for our salvation.

In this short teaching on the offices of Jesus, we want to be assured that God has all the bases of our salvation covered. God has left nothing to chance. We want to fill our worship with mind and heart, and we want to be confident as we go out with the gospel to a needy world that what we're offering to others is something we ourselves are enjoying, spiritual life in all its abundance.

So, we want to understand the Catechism's answer to the question of how Christ performs or executes the office of a prophet under three headings. Jesus as revelation, Jesus as revealer, and Jesus as redeemer. Revelation, revelation, revealer, and redeemer. First of all then, Jesus as revelation, revelation. In John 1 verse 18, we read these words, No one has ever seen God. The only God who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known.

[3:19] Now, God is a spirit. He has no bodily form, and therefore, no one has ever seen God. Furthermore, God is infinitely holy, so no one can ever see God. Even the sinless angels must hide their faces from His radiant majesty. How then can we know a God who we cannot see? And John answers the question by saying, The only God who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known. Now, you'll see this verse comes at the end of John's introduction to the gospel, an introduction which begins with the words, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Later on, we read in verse 14, And the Word, remember the Word who was in the beginning with God and was God, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. So, the Word who was God became flesh and dwelt among us.

And now we learn that this Word, who was God in verse 18, has made the unseen God known. The Jesus of whom John writes is a real man in that He is flesh of our flesh and bone of our bone, but He is more, He is the Word who has come from the Father's side to make God known to us.

A few questions earlier in question and answer 21 of the Shorter Catechism, we read these words, The only Redeemer of God's elect is the Lord Jesus Christ, who being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was and continues to be God and man in two distinct natures, and one person forever. Please don't zone out in me with all this technical language, but this is who our Lord is. He is the eternal Son of God, who has become man. The Jesus who we see being baptized in the River Jordan is the eternal Son of God, who has become man. The Jesus we see weeping at the grave side of His friend Lazarus is the eternal Son of God, who has become man. The Jesus we

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see dying on the cross is the eternal Son of God, who has become man. Let's never forget the supreme dignity of Jesus.
Yes, even the Jesus we see lying dead in a garden tomb. But why would the blessed Son of God leave the glories of heaven to become flesh and dwell among us?
[6:28] Why would He subject Himself to the sufferings of life in a sinful world, and ultimately to the tortuous death on the cross, where He, on our behalf, endured the just penalty of our sin?

He did it, as John tells us in verse 18, to make Him known. Jesus became a man in order to reveal to us who God is and what God is like. He did it so that if we want to know who God is and what God is like, we need only look at Him and listen to Him and watch Him.
A. M. Ramsey was the Archbishop of Canterbury in the mid-20th century, and he famously said these words. He said, God is like Christ, and in Him there is no un-Christlikeness at all. I'm going to repeat that because it is crucial that we understand this. God is Christlike, and in Him there is no one Christlikeness at all. If ever we should ask ourselves, if someone should ask us, what is your God like? We can answer, God is Christlike. The God of the Old Testament, He is like Christ. The God who reigns supreme and who does whatever pleases Him, Psalm 115, He is Christlike. The God who sits on the throne of power and sovereignty, He's Christlike. The God-man, Jesus Christ, makes God known. There is nothing in the words and actions of Jesus which is not like God, and there's nothing in God which is not like Christ.
Now, a prophet is someone who speaks about or on behalf of God. He speaks about or on behalf of God. There are other aspects to being a prophet, such as being commissioned by God, but at base, a prophet is someone who speaks about or on behalf of God. Who better to speak about God and on behalf of God than the Son of God Himself? Who better to reveal who God is and show us what God is like than the Word who has become flesh? Think of the great prophets of the Old Testament. Think of Samuel and Elijah and Isaiah. These were outstanding men. And what they spoke about and on behalf of God was true.
Yet, they were one step removed from God Himself, and therefore, although we cannot, although we can trust their words because they were inspired by the Holy Spirit, as fallen men, they themselves, as human beings, did not reveal what God was like.
[9:23] But when it comes to how Jesus speaks about God and on behalf of God, we're on an altogether different level. In Hebrews chapter 1, we read these words, long ago, at many different times, and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, Isaiah, Samuel, Jeremiah. But in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. For all that the Old Testament prophets spoke about, and on behalf of God, it wasn't enough. So, the Word Himself became flesh and declared who God is and what God is like. He is the ultimate and final revelation of God, the infinitely greatest prophet, and what He does and says is not just true, but it's more than enough for us all.

We don't need any more prophets because He has done all we needed done, and He has said all that needs to be said. Now, this is a life-changing truth. What does Jesus tell us and show us about who God is and what God is like? What does the compassionate heart of Jesus toward lepers and outcasts, what does it tell us about the heart of God? What do the woes pronounced by Jesus against the Pharisees tell us about the righteousness of God? And what does the love of Jesus in washing His disciples' dirty feet tell us about the love of God? In particular, what does the cross tell us about God? What does the cross tell us about God?
The cross is the test of all things. The cross is the test of all things. On the cross, Jesus is revealing to us the love and justice of God, the compassion and tenderness of God's heart toward us. Christ the prophet, declaring by His self-sacrificial death the infinite, eternal, and unchangeable love of God's heart for sinful men and women like us.
If ever we want to know who God is and what God is like, look to that cross and see the Son of God making Him known through His blood, through His sweat, through His tears, in His cries, in His prayers, and in His death. And then look from there to that empty tomb and the victoriously risen Christ appearing to His unfaithful disciples. And what were His first words? Peace be with you.
[12:11] Let's bring this down to situations we face in our daily lives. When we're going through hard times and we question where God is and what God is doing with us, look at the Jesus who chose not to spend His time with the proud and the haughty, but with the suffering and with the lonely. And listen to Him as He says, do not let your heart be troubled. Trust in God. Trust also in me.

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This is where God is. He is with the suffering. He is with the doubting. And this is what He's doing with us. He's drawing us to trust in Him more deeply and showing us how resourceful He is and how much He loves us. Christ is the revelation of God. He makes God known to us.
Well, secondly, Jesus, not just as revelation, but Jesus as revealer, revealer. The catechism asks the question, listen to it carefully, how does Christ execute the office of a prophet? And it answers, Christ executes the office of a prophet in revealing to us by His Word and Spirit the will of God for our salvation. In other words, the prophetic office, Jesus, engages in, isn't just something He did in the past. It is still operative today. He is still speaking about and on behalf of God. He is still revealing to us who God is and what God is like.
During His earthly ministry, it's easy to understand how Jesus could talk. After all, He was with His disciples bodily, and He used His larynx as voice box. But if Jesus today in heaven is still engaged in His prophetic ministry, how does He speak to us here in Thornwood? And how does He reveal God to us here in 2024?
And our fathers in Westminster answered, He does it by His Word and His Spirit. He speaks to us through His Word and Spirit. This is how the risen and exalted Jesus continues to execute His office as a prophet from heaven. He reveals God to us and what God is like by His Word and His Spirit. He speaks to us in His Word, the Bible, and tells us who God is, revealing to us the will of God for our salvation.
[15:16] And the Word never goes forth alone. Rather, it is reinforced, inspired, and driven home by His Holy Spirit. In 1 Thessalonians 1 verse 5, the Apostle Paul writes, Our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.

Paul preached the gospel from the Word, and the Holy Spirit powerfully applied His message and brought full conviction of its truth to its hearers. Jesus still executes the office of a prophet today by His Spirit speaking through His Word to us in power and conviction. It's as His Spirit is speaking through the Bible that Jesus is engaging in His prophetic Word.
Now, this is true not just of our personal and private study of God's Word, but especially in the context of its public proclamation, what we call preaching. As the Word is preached, the heavenly Jesus is speaking prophetically through His Word and Spirit, announcing to us, this is what God is like, and this is the way of salvation.
And this is one reason it's just so important for us to sit under an expository ministry where the Word of God is taken seriously and rightly divided, for it's through the Word that Jesus the prophet speaks. It's also the reason why in Reformed churches like ours, the pulpit is always placed in a central position signifying that the voice of Jesus in His Word is central to the health of our discipleship as Christians. But isn't this an exciting truth? Think about it this way. Every time you open your Bible and you open yourself out to the presence of the Holy Spirit by asking for His help, the heavenly Jesus is speaking to you in His office as the prophet of God.
So when you've completed your devotions and someone says to you, what did you do this morning? You can say to them, although I'm sure that we won't, but you can say to them, you know, this morning Jesus spoke to me about who God is and who I am and what the will of God is for my salvation. And another person might ask us, have you ever heard the voice of Jesus?
[18:09] To which we can answer, you know what, every time I open my Bible, I hear the voice of Jesus. And it's true. Now, I've got no doubt that there are other ways in which the heavenly Jesus can speak to people other than through His Word. For example, in many Islamic lands where Bibles are very scarce, numerous former Muslims have become Christians through dreams or visions of Christ given directly by the Holy Spirit. I've got no doubt as to the truthfulness of their testimonies. But we're to think of these as the exception, not the rule.

Generally speaking, in 99.9% of cases, our great heavenly prophet Jesus speaks to us by His Word and Spirit. And the message is clear for all of us here. If we want to know who God is and what God's will is for our lives, we need to open our Bibles and read. We need to sit under ministries where the Bible is faithfully explained and its teaching applied. We need to pray for the Holy Spirit to open our hearts by His power and to convict us of the truth and relevance of what we're reading. And this is also why, during the darker days of our experience, I can testify to this personally, we find the Bible, especially the Psalms, so very comforting because the Psalms are the words of Christ written thousands of years ago. And yet, you know, as we read the Psalms when we're in a dark place, that is fresh to us, as if Jesus Himself was standing beside us and speaking to us.

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Jesus, the heavenly prophet, speaks through His powerful Holy Spirit, applies the words of the Psalms to us, and brings us light in the darkness.
And this is also why, in our evangelism to those who are not yet Christians, we want to pepper our conversations with as much of the Bible as we can. Our words carry no authority, but the Word of God through the Holy Spirit carries ultimate authority. Our words cannot breach the defenses another person has raised against the gospel, but as the Holy Spirit powerfully applies the Word of God into that person's heart. Those defenses crumble, and their hardness to the gospel is changed into interest in the gospel. The heavenly Jesus is still executing His office as a prophet by His Word and Spirit. And that's why, you know, it is so exciting to open the Bible, because who knows what the heavenly Jesus will say to us today, and what new visions He'll give us of God. Jesus as revealer. Jesus as revealer. Jesus as revealer.
[21:17] Jesus as revealer. Jesus as revelation. Jesus as revealer. And then thirdly, Jesus as redeemer. Redeemer. In question 23 of the Shorter Catechism, we're asked, what offices does Christ execute or perform as our redeemer? And it answers, Christ as our redeemer executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in a state of humiliation and exaltation. In other words, in order for Jesus to redeem us and to save us from our sins, He needed to be made prophet, priest, and king of His people.

He was made a prophet for us. And it was entirely with a view to being redeemed from our sin and guilt.
Then in question 24, of course, we have, Christ executes the office of a prophet in revealing to us by His Word and Spirit, God's will for our salvation. Now we're getting to the point.
Christ executes His office of a prophet to save us. And His prophetic message reveals to us God's will for our salvation. Up till now, we might have been wondering to ourselves, what's all this business of Christ in His office as a prophet got to do with me?
Isn't it all rather abstract, irrelevant, the analysis of historical theological document? Doesn't it belong in a theological college like ETS? Give me something practical. Give me something for me. But can't we see that everything Jesus has done, He has done for me? The Word became flesh and showed me what the unseen God is like. The Word, sorry, the heavenly Jesus, He speaks today by His Word and Spirit for me. His office as a prophet is entirely geared toward me and my salvation. The me not being me, Colin Dow, but every individual here. Without His prophetic voice continuously speaking to us, we would gladly continue in sin and ignorance, never knowing that a day is coming when God shall judge the living and the dead. We would never know that God freely offers salvation to anyone who will believe in Jesus as Lord and Savior. We will never know that it's not what a man does for God, which earns his salvation, as we learn from the Heidelberg Catechism, but what God has done for us in giving His one and only son to the death of the cross. Without Christ executing the office of a prophet, we would never know that God loves us. We would never know that it's by Christ, by the cross, we are justified. We would never know that we are freely given the hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord. We would never know any of these things, any of them.
[24:30] We would never know any of these things, any of them. We would never know any of these things, any of them. We would never know any of them. We would never know any of them. We would never know any of them. We would know little or nothing about God, only that we feel guilty, hopeless, and ashamed, lonely, tormented, and confused. Going back to 1 Thessalonians 1 verse 5, what came to these people not only in word, but also in the power of the Holy Spirit, was the gospel, the good news of salvation through Christ.

Jesus, as prophet, by His Word and Spirit, shows us the way of salvation. He says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.
The will of God for our salvation consists in coming to God through Jesus. And He also says, believe in God, believe also in Me. The will of God for our salvation consists in coming to Him through faith in Jesus Christ, by believing in Jesus and trusting Him for our salvation.
In 2018, a Thai boys football team, maybe you remember this in the news, was trapped by a freak flood in a deep underground cavern. The tunnels to the entrance were completely flooded, and there was no escape. The air was running out, and the boys just had days to live. They needed to be found and rescued quickly. Eventually, a small team of British cave divers arrived in Thailand determined to save these boys. But the only way they could was to swim to the boys through over a kilometer of narrow underwater tunnels. So it's the stuff of everyone's nightmares. The only way the

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boys could be saved was by giving them an anesthetic injection, and for the divers to swim their unconscious bodies out. Underwater, over a kilometer of underground flooded tunnels.
After three days, the British cave divers rescued every single one of those boys. It was an amazing human achievement. But the thing is, it was the cave divers who did everything.
[26:45] The boys just allowed themselves to be rescued. And in the same way, Jesus has done everything by dying on the cross and rising from the dead. We have nothing to contribute to our rescue from sin and death. It is all His work. All we must do is to believe and trust that what He did, He did for us.

This is God's way of salvation proclaimed to us by Jesus the prophet. Salvation is full and free. Salvation is for anyone who will come in faith and trust to Him. Jesus the prophet calls us to come to Him. And having come once, He calls us never to stop listening and heeding His Word. He calls us to stay close to Him, to abide in Him as He speaks to us by His Word and Spirit. You know, by experience as Christians, we know that when we stop listening to Jesus' voice in His Word by His Spirit, we get ourselves in all kinds of trouble. And so, that's one of the reasons we crane our necks to hear Him speaking to us in His Word. And then at the very end, when it comes our time to pass through death into the glory of heaven, we'll hear the voice of our heavenly prophet saying to us, well done, thou good and faithful servant. To hear the very voice of Jesus.
What a prospect. What a prospect. Now, all that's left is for us to pray that the heavenly Christ will keep on speaking to us and through us as we share the will of God for salvation with a world that so desperately needs to hear good news.
Thank you.

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