

Luke 3:1-14

“A Prophet”

December 6, 2015

God sent His prophet to tell the people that the Messiah/Savior is coming. He was to prepare the way for the Lord. He was to make strait the path for their coming King. In those times that meant to go over the roads that the king would travel on and smooth them out and fill in the pot holes. In God’s language that means repent of our sins, recommit to Christ and change our sinful ways so that we can find forgiveness in our Savior.

John the Baptist calls the people a brood of vipers. Today we would consider that politically incorrect language. John tells them to produce fruit in keeping with their repentance. Again our society would say that this is judging us and we reject anyone who judges us. Then they quote the Bible; “Judge not lest you be judged.” Well we are all going to be judged on Judgment Day. The person who ignores or denies their sin will be condemned and we could have warned them. Love gently, gently warns us so that we do not face the Judgment of Hell. Sadly we often have to wait till they bottom before they will listen and repent.

Half of God’s Law tells us what we should not do! We are not to kill, steal, lie, covet our neighbor’s possessions or living relationships and we are not to have sex outside of marriage. The other half of the Law tells us the positive things we

are to do. We are to love God above all things and love our neighbor as our self. In our text we are to be content with our pay and share our wealth with others. Likewise in the commandments we are told to speak positive things about others and even when they deserve our condemnation, we speak positively about them. In addition we are to support and encourage marriage rather than finding fault in others and their marriages.

We are the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod. We stand by God's Word and we seek to apply God's Word to our lives, our standards as a congregation and as a Synod and the direction we are headed into the future. We take stands that are politically incorrect because God's Word has spoken to us. Like Luther we first search the Scriptures and the recognized early church fathers to understand the meaning of God's Word before we take our stand. Likewise we are humble enough to admit that sometimes we get it wrong and change our ideas as long as we see that they agree with God's intention found in God's Word. This makes us unpopular in our world which is afraid to offend.

Advent is a time to examine ourselves personally, as a congregation, as a Synod and as the Christian Church in our world. Remember that the Pharisees and Sadducees were the Church Officials. They had gone astray and John the Baptist was assigned by God to call them to repentance. The Church Officials of Jesus time were the vipers that John the Baptist was calling to repentance. We don't want

to be in their shoes and face the Judgment of God because we crucified the Savior. Martin Luther spoke up in his time because the church had gone astray. Do we need to speak up because the church is going astray? Yes, we care about the feelings of others, but we cannot keep our mouths shut. We are called to be like John the Baptist and prepare the way for the Lord. We are called to speak gently to ourselves, the church and our world so that some will see the need to travel the path of repentance, recommitment to Christ and change.

I hope that we are here because we have taken the first step and committed ourselves to Christ. I hope that we have taken the second step and realize that faith is not a feeling but a commitment to Jesus Christ and the Triune God. I hope that we have taken the third step and realize that God does not bless us because we have been good. God blesses us out of His undeserved grace and mercy. I hope that we have taken the fourth step and realized that we are here because we are lifting up our praise and thanksgiving to God because His undeserved grace and mercy brings us forgiveness and eternal life. Whatever happens to us in this life, we are blessed by His undeserved grace and mercy. Christmas is the time we celebrate the beginning of this journey of God's grace in Christ through the Child born in Bethlehem. Amen.