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**Reflection**

**March 24, 2025**

**Luke 4:24-30**

Prophets draw our attention to the Truth we would rather ignore. In speaking about the widow of Zaraphath and the leper Naaman from Syria. Jesus makes a radical statement about God's faithfulness to the poor, the foreigner and the outcast. The people of Nazareth were so enraged at his words, they wanted to throw him over a cliff to his death.

I share some of the thoughts of Franciscan Dan Horan's commentary on this text:

I wonder what examples Jesus would give today? Would he point to the racial tension in our country? Would he remind us of the dignity of people with disabilities, death row inmates or, so important right now, immigrants. Or would he challenge us to befriend people of different political persuasions, or someone who does not share the same religious convictions?

As followers of Jesus, we are called to be prophetic voices for justice in our world. I have to ask myself: Am I righteously angry and moved to action and prayer? Or am I afraid that God would ask such a thing of me?

Throughout the Old Testament every prophet **called to proclaim the Word** of God tried to get out of this responsibility. (consider Jonah or Jeremiah who thought he was too young). These would-be prophets understand that accepting God's call meant accepting a certain degree of risk and rejection.

To be a prophet is to announce the gap between how we are living as a society and how God wants us to live, particularly when the wealthy and powerful are benefitting from the suffering and oppression of the poor. Announcing the gap between these two realities is risky because it unsettles the comfortable and demands concrete social change. Is that actually what is going on now and part of our challenge? I think we are experiencing this struggle right now.

We all know that being a prophet is not about predicting the future.

Rather, it is about bearing God's righteous news, which is **good** news for the poor and weak and often disturbing news for the wealthy and powerful. For this reason, Jesus can say that, "no prophet is accepted in his own native place."

Not only do prophets face social pressure to be silenced, but they are also dismissed by those who knew them earlier in life. Those who are closest to us—friends, sibling, neighbors, co-workers- are often so familiar to us that we know their weaknesses and imperfections. We may be quick to ignore or reject difficult truths they try to share, even if they are correct—and the message is from God!

I guess we need to ask ourselves:

- when do I find myself dismissing hard truths others challenge me to see?

- or are there times when I find myself rejected when I relay a difficult message to those who know me well?

- What do I need to do to better hear the prophets in my own life that proclaim God's message to me?

I think we need to realize that God calls people in every generation to announce good news to the poor, and challenging news to the powerful. And then we need to ask God to inspire us to ask for the strength and faith to announce God's vision of Peace in difficult times and help us to hear the prophetic message that God is proclaiming to us through others.

We need hope to recognize God at work in these difficult situations, and a humble reliance on God.

I conclude with some words from Pope Francis:

He asks us, at this midpoint in our Lenten journey, to look at how we have progressed so far. And he suggests these questions:

- Have I turned to you, O God, more faithfully in prayer?

- Have I been attentive to the ways you, O God, have made yourself known to me in the people and circumstances of my life?

Let us listen with a prophetic ear as we seek the answers