

A Prophet's Job Description

Scripture Reading — Ephesians 4:7-13

Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up... — Ephesians 4:11-12

It would be a mistake to think of prophets in the Bible as only predicting the future. That was not their task. Their primary role was to make known the Word of God, and this often involved calling people back to obedience to God. They denounced injustice, idolatry, and empty rituals.

It was often dangerous to be a prophet. People mocked, imprisoned, and persecuted God's prophets. Jeremiah, for example, was thrown into a pit of mud, where he would have died if he hadn't been rescued (see Jeremiah 38). Stephen, the first Christian martyr, knew this well. Before he was stoned to death, he asked, "Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute?" (Acts 7:52).

It makes us think twice when we see that God has called us to be prophets. He calls us to bring his Word to the people around us today.

The blessing comes when we see the church edified. The body of Christ is built up. We grow spiritually over time. We "reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God." We don't have an encyclopedic knowledge of the Bible instantly at our baptism or when we profess our faith. Only in heaven will we reach "the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." In the meantime, God's Spirit works in us and through us to bless others and the church.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for giving good gifts to your children. Help us to use our spiritual gifts to build up your church and the lives of the people around us. Amen.

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