

So for my first Sunday here the Gospel reading tells of Jesus returning to his home town and being rejected by those who know him best. "A prophet is not without honour except in his hometown and among his own kin, and in his own house."

I am originally from Kitchener, not too far and I was thinking if these words would apply to me today I may be in some trouble. But then I realized that even Preston and Galt are not Hespeler, much less Kitchener, so I should be safe.

Jesus describes himself as a prophet- what is a prophet? Someone who announces the word of God, speaks on behalf of God. When we look at the Old Testament the prophetic word comes in two forms. We have a tone that is more condemnatory and warning in nature. God's people have fallen off the right path; they are dabbling with false gods; they are acting unjustly; they are abusing the orphans and the widows. We read in today's first reading from the Prophet Ezekiel-he is being sent to speak to a nation that has rebelled against God, a people who are impudent and stubborn.

Now the prophetic word can also be a word of comfort, of consolation. When the people were suffering, when they were under attack, oppressed by foreign powers, God would send prophets to them to assure them. Soon God will act; you will be free. God will restore you to your homes and you will be prosperous again.

The prophet speaks God's Word. So, have I been sent to Hespeler to be a prophet. Not in the sense of the biblical prophets- I don't think so. You will receive no direct message from God from me.

However, all of us are called to immerse ourselves in God's word and there discover the prophetic word, message that applies to me and my situation. We need to listen, to be formed by the word and then changed by the word. The prophetic word is there we just need to pay attention.

Not sure if any of you follow the Munk debates on social media. It is a pretty well-known forum for political dialogue and social commentary in Canada. About a month ago they hosted a virtual dialogue with a British author by the name of Douglas Murray, the topic being, "the future of free speech and liberal institutions in light of Covid-19." I was struck by something he had to say.

He said the expression, "My truth." is really quite absurd. He cynically called it an *Oprahism*. That we are somehow supposed to discover and live out of our own personal truth is nonsense. For what does the expression "my truth" really mean? To quote, "You can never really understand me but at the same time you must understand me." Let it sink in "my truth" What are I am really saying when I turn my personal experience into an idol and call it my truth? It creates an impenetrable wall. It creates a wall that cannot really hear the prophet speak.