

SERMON: "PREPARE YE... A Place." Christmas Eve 7:30pm

Rev. Geoff Ross, Friday, December 24, 2021, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

"Are you ready!? Did you prepare yourself?"

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

Do you know why you are here?! What you have to do?!

Who warned you – you Pharisees/Brood of vipers!! – who told you to come?

Do you know what is happening tonight?/This night?

Do you think that because you're here you have found the kingdom of heaven?/
done the work of repentance?/that you're ready?

Or do you think that because Abraham is your father/been coming here for years –
that God isn't going to call you out?

That's why I'm here! To call you out/warn you that "the axe is already laid at the foot of the
trees/that every tree that doesn't bear good fruit will be cut down/thrown into the fire!" Time's
running out.... Better bring your good fruit/starting with repenting.

What did you come? What did you expect to see?

People ask: Who are you? And I tell them; "I am not the Christ."

Nor am I Elijah? Or a prophet. But I am the called by God – from when I was conceived – to call
in the wilderness of this/your world; "Prepare!"

To cry out as Isaiah wrote; "Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight!"

I am a voice in the wilderness – chosen by God to be a herald/messenger –

to tell/warn you that the King is Coming! Get ready! Straighten up! Fly right!

Every valley shall be filled/every mountain and hill shall be made low –

the crooked shall be made straight/rough ways made smooth;

so, do what you need to do to deal with your stuff –

your relationships/work/lies/actions/life....

Why? Because – ready or not – "all flesh shall see the salvation of God."

No; I'm not a prophet – but I've been given the task of going before the One who is coming after
me/who ranks ahead of me/because He was/existed before me/who is mightier than I/who I am not
worthy/fit to remove His sandals....

What? Sounds like a riddle?! No. it is the truth! He is the One! He is God's promised/prophesied –
long awaited/anticipated Messenger/Son! He is the one you should listen too – because He will
save you!

I call you to a baptism of repentance – of turning away from your stray ways/returning to God's
path/making the first right step. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and Fire! Trust me: He's
going to find out who's naughty or nice! And you won't want to be on the wrong side of that list!

Me?! I'm here because this is where God wants/needs me to be! When God's angel told my father
– Zechariah/the Priest – that my mother would finally have a child/son/me, he told him that I

would “be called the prophet of the Most High; that I would go before the Lord to prepare his ways/to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins.

This is my role. “By the tender mercy of our God I have been given the duty of calling God’s people/you – to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death/you, so that I might guide your feet into the way of peace.”

This was God’s plan/purpose was/still is for me: “to proclaim that the time has come for God to fulfill His promise of salvation/to redeem/restore/return Creation into a right relationship with Him/that God has remembered His Holy covenant/the oath that He swore to our ancestor Abraham – to grant us/give to us His Word/made flesh – that we/you/me will be rescued from the hands of our enemies to serve Him without fear/in holiness/righteousness – before Him/forever!” That in/through Him, we shall be saved.

That’s the message I’ve been given. It’s a message I would die for.
It’s THE message He will – as the Lamb of God – die for!

Are you ready!? I am! I’ve been from the moment I was conceived! “Even before my birth I was filled with the Holy Spirit so I could turn/return many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. I have been given the spirit of Elijah – to call/turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous/to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.” So; Did you prepare yourself?

Prepare?! How?! You ask.... To prepare yourself you need to make room/space – a place – in your life/heart/world for Him to enter in. I leapt in my mother’s womb when I first met Him! I knew – from before we were born: He is the One – and I rejoiced/leapt/gave myself to Him/God! I leapt/rejoiced and made a place for Him – and this is what He/God is asking you to do tonight!

As God prepared for His coming/as God’s plan unfolded the earth groaned/prepared itself for His birth/as Mary prepared a manger/place for Him – tonight I call on you to prepare yourselves/a place for Him/the One/Emmanuel – God with-us/me/you – and be saved! Amen.