

God sent Ezekiel. Most reject him as so many prophets before him. **I send you to a nation of rebels, who have rebelled against me;** they're called **imprudent** (obstinate), **stubborn**. *I know, none of you can relate to that.* Ezekiel responds like me facing this group, 'Why me? To the likes of you? How am I suppose to accomplish this? Look at these rebellious people. How?' Not by your power or strength, **but say to them, thus says the Lord, by my Spirit.** The Holy Spirit working in me to bring you His Word and gifts, and, and, the Holy Spirit working in you in the means of His Word.

God's Law working against your rebellion, condemning you, teaching you how to live, to cause you to live repentant;

God's Gospel -brings His works of the Christ -forgiveness and life, to restore you, heal you, welcome you rebellious children. It's called grace. It's yours.

Rebellion. Americans know rebellion well. We celebrate our nations' 245nd birthday of rebellion. At a Lutheran church in Virginia, Pastor Muhlenberg entered the pulpit to preach his last sermon; he's a good friend of George Washington, Patrick Henry. He speaks from Ecc. 3, **there is a time for everything, a time to love, and a time to hate; a time for war, and a time for peace.** *"Now is a time for war. No one wants it. But times it is necessary."* He takes off his vestments in the pulpit, to display a colonels uniform in Washington's army. Drums start to play, walks out of the church, 300 men then enlist. Pastor Muhlenberg's brother is also called Pastor Muhlenberg. He famously stated "as long as King George doesn't oppose me preaching the Gospel, I will not oppose King George". He didn't enlist, until the British burned down his Lutheran church.

Even as we have seen in a smaller way this past year. There is Christians concern if rebellion is God-fearing, according to God's Word, or if it's insurrection against God in accord with Romans ch.13.

Interesting, the Liberty Bell, google it if you don't know it, named because the inscription on it: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof," Lev. 25:10. That verse is about God's forgiveness. As a symbol of our freedom during the revolutionary war, the bell was hid under the floorboard of Zion Lutheran Church in Allentown Pennsylvania to protect it from the British who sought it to melt it down. The Church, even this House should be a place where any forces, any government dare not tread as if they have any authority in this place.

Rebellion can be a good thing; righteous, God-fearing, according to His Word to protect our family and neighbor, stop evil, oppression. We must

take a stand upon God's truth and let people be offended -as they were in Nazareth. Jesus speaks the truth of their rebellion, to repent, the Kingdom of the Christ is at hand.

Today, as then, people have their own ideas about God, their own truth. God's Word, Jesus is offensive. You're called upon to rebel in faithfulness; to stand for what's good, right, and pure and holy. To not this Gospel, your liberty in it, this Word, Sacrament ever be taken away. We will not be moved from God's truth. The only way God ever measures success in His church: faithfulness to His Word. People will be offended by us, as we speak the truth in love -in love- and gentleness, to fake news against God's Word. Be honored to join the ranks of Jesus and His faithful people as people reject, rebel against you for His sake. God help us.

Rebellion can be bad, very bad. Realize you are not less sinners -as those before Ezekiel, or in Nazareth that day with Jesus. The call is still the same. Repent. We are indeed rebels, all of us. Despite His perfect love and care, you rebel. 1st Commandment. We should fear, love and trust in God above all things and we fear, love and trust in our selfish, rebellious ways. He provides all we have; daily gives all we need, everyday, to support this body and life and you are a rebel to think 'I've earned it, I deserve things, I want to do what I want to do. I have good reasons for rebelling, not helping others and giving more. He gives and gives and you rebel in coveting, insecure, aren't satisfied with what He gives. He gives you a home and we rebel against His good gifts and weddings vows -do not love and honor as we should. You rebel everyday against God, your loved ones, not to mention others in your life. Repent.

What happened in that Nazareth synagogue that day, takes place here every Sunday. He desires you be here, to hear Him speak, give you the gift of His presence. Even greater than it was for them with Jesus standing there -He is here to join His sacramental presence to you. That we be repentant, faithful rebels, amidst this culture and our own flesh. For you, Jesus overcomes your rebellion of sin by being rejected in your place. And this the greatest offense of all, that your forgiveness, redemption isn't found in your acceptance of Jesus, but in His acceptance of you. He welcomes rebellious children into His Kingdom, makes you holy, you dwell in His liberty, proclaimed to inhabitants of this land.