

Neil Young
God's Prophet
April 1, 2007
By Pastor John Van Sloten

[When God made me DVD 56:01 – 59:50 freeze]

When God made Neil Young... **(1)He gave him a voice** (an **audible** voice, can hold and alto-ish tune **PAUSE** & an **authoritative** voice lead/convict/energize his listeners... **LONG PAUSE...** now for decades...

When God made Neil Young... **(2)He gave him vision** He gave him ability to “**see**”... not just the **physical** gift... but the **perceptive** one... **PAUSE...**

To see when **things are wrong** (a war, drugs, injustice w/family, w/consumerism, w/environment)... and to see when **they were right** - with hope filled eyes - **what they might one day be.. LONG PAUSE...**

When I first thought of preaching N. Young mo's ago “(3)He's like a prophet...piercing **glare**/anguished **heart** incredible **intensity**... sharp, biting lyrics...” **PAUSE**

So much of his music has this ‘**laid bare**’... “**(4)looking straight at you**” kind of ‘rawness’... they're the kind of songs that **gets in your face... makes you listen...** often carries very **unsettling truths...**

LONG PAUSE... But... also this other side [**MIKE's comment** re: describe life... sees a beauty paint a picture!...] JVS **That's prophetic too!**

[Prophets saw reality for what it was... good , bad and ugly... not just future tellers... present tellers

often [**CONVICTING**]... also [**enlivening**] expressing beauty and goodness of O's world... **dreams/ hope!**

(Soft and SLOWLY) “**There was often a very tender and reverent beauty that they conveyed**”

[It's a Dream DVD CLIP - 29:00- 32:21 fade it out]... Reading “The Prophetic Imagination” this week defn of what a Prophet in Bible did

“(5) The task of prophetic ministry is to nurture, nourish and evoke a **consciousness and perception alternative** to the consciousness and perception of the dominant culture around us...”
Theologian Walter Brueggemann in *The Prophetic Imagination*, pg 13

Prophets are called to ‘**wake people up...**’ **PAUSE...** to a new reality!... to say, “**Hey, there's more to life than just this!... open your eyes... unplug your ears look at the person beside you... listen to the birds!**”

PAUSE... whether that waking involves facing up to the ‘**wrong, the broken, or the sinful**’ in life... OR... just seeing/grasping the ‘**right, true and the beautiful**’ **Both are part of the prophetic task... PAUSE... Both are what God wants for us!! (SLOWLY)**

“Wake up... Notice what time it is... Listen... See!”

“(6) Cranes know when it's time to move south for winter. And robins, warblers, and bluebirds know when it's time to come back again. But my people? My people know nothing, not the first thing of God and his rule.”
The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah 8:7, MSG

“(7) The birds, [Young] says, "are a messenger to mankind."
Re: Neil Young in an Independent News interview, September 2005

Prophets **see** what God sees... they **feel** what he feels!

LONG PAUSE... “Did God give us the gift of compassion to help our fellow man? **PAUSE...** Did he give us the gift of love to say who we could choose?”

PAUSE... One point in “The Prophetic Imagination” really struck me... Author is talking about prophetic role to **criticize** dominant culture... to expose where it’s wrong “**(8)** real criticism begins with grieving” **PAUSE** Prophetic criticism is not really an ‘*anger*’ thing’... it’s an ‘*anguish*’ thing’...

“**You’re mad at the wrong b/c you love the right so much!**”... “Injustice hurts b/c justice is so good and so beautiful!”

God loves his world... loves justice... loves freedom loves whole ‘seeing’ lives... and beauty...

PAUSE... and when **(9)**Neil Young expresses those same sentiments he’s prophetically expressing Heart of God (whether he knows it or not... and I think he knows it in part he knows it... he has to know it!)

PAUSE...watching “Heart of Gold” DVD (**hmm... typing words ‘Heart of Gold’ I wrote ‘Heart of God!’**)... see the deep love motivated songs... see in face/heart (real beauty about the man/O’s image!!)... and in his lyrics “**(10)**Needle and the damage done [**STORY**] – ‘I sing the song b/c I loved the man!’” **LONG PAUSE**

He criticized **war** b/c **loves life**... sings “**How long?**” against **racism** b/c **loves all people**... rails against **injustice** b/c **loves freedom for all human beings**... **PAUSE...**

“**(11)** He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners...” Luke 4:18

Freedom from a blind and empty life... freedom from oppression... freedom from “**(12)** know[ing] nothing, not the first thing of God and his rule.” Jeremiah 8:7, MSG

PAUSE... On May 4th, 1970 Kent State Massacre occurred... **[EXPLAIN] [(13)image caption** [John Filo's](#) Pulitzer Prize-winning photograph of [Mary Ann Vecchio](#), a fourteen-year-old runaway and Vietnam War protester, screaming with anguish and kneeling over the dead body of [Jeffrey Miller](#), shot through the mouth by an unknown Ohio National Guardsman. The Vecchio portion of the photograph appeared on the [May 18, 1970](#) cover of [Newsweek](#) [(14) PLAY portion of SONG 0:00 – 1:08 (fade here)]

David Crosby “(15) When you saw the picture of the girl kneeling over the kid dead on the ground after Kent State, you were horrified, right? You said, how can they shoot somebody’s child for doing what the Constitution says they have the right to do? How can they do that? How can this happen?” he cried after CSN recorded the song

PAUSE... Anguish... not anger... love motivating the prophetic heart... **PAUSE...**

“**(16)** When [Jesus] saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless...” MT 9:35

“**(17)** When the Lord saw her he had compassion on her..” Lk 7:13

“**(18)**But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.” Luke 15:20

This Kent State student was someone’s son... Jeffrey Millar was also made in the image of God... **PAUSE** as is every human being! “**(19)** But as he came closer to Jerusalem and saw the city ahead, he began to weep. “How I wish today that you of all people would understand the way to peace...” Luke 19:41-42

“**(20)** What if you knew her and found her dead on the ground; how can you run when you know?” **LONG LONG PAUSE**

How could God run from us when he knew?... how could he run from our death... suffering... our helplessness... our ‘so much less than they could be’

lives?.... **PAUSE...** He couldn't... so he sent his prophets... He didn't he sent Jesus Christ...

(Spirit of Christ is still singing!!)

(21) Next weekend is Easter celebration of God with us... **[knowing/loving/healing eyes/ opening up meaning/ life]** The HS giving his love... making us new now animating love in us... X ultimate prophet... not only **declared but acted to resolve!!**

Ohio

*Tin soldiers and Nixon coming,
We're finally on our own.
This summer I hear the drumming,
Four dead in Ohio.*

*Gotta get down to it
Soldiers are cutting us down
Should have been done long ago.
What if you knew her
And found her dead on the ground
How can you run when you know?*

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