

HEARING GOD: WEEK THREE

POWER OF THE PROPHETIC

Do not despise prophecies – 1 Thessalonians 5:20

I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy – 1 Corinthians 14:5

Prophecy was a major gift that was valued and cherished by the early church and should be encouraged by us.

A little bit of my (Pastor Ron's) background:

- I was a Catholic boy who Got Saved in a little Oneness Holiness Pentecostal country church. No makeup, no pants for the ladies - only dresses, no tv sets, no skating rinks... it was too close to dancing.. and no dancing for sure!
- In our little church, the members loved the prophetic shout outs... It was always screaming and usually came forth in the King James Version English with lots of thees, thous and "thus saith the Lords."
- And it was almost always the same 3 or 4 seasoned women that gave the shout out of tongues and or interpretation of tongues... And if an outsider came in with an unfamiliar voice... it unsettled the church.

This has probably been some of your experience. This was my early years in the Lord.

I was so hungry for God, but being a Catholic boy who never read the Word, I was confused about the Bible, the legalistic dress code, and the hypocrisy of some. I was conflicted by a free-for-all church setting where I felt the power of God and saw lives changed but the flare for the dramatic seemed unnecessary. Religious extremes were confusing to me as a newly saved teenager.

Determined to get some training, I went to a 4 year Bible college in San Antonio, TX.

At Bethany Baptist Church, I saw unexplained miracles!

Maybe you have had a bad church experience in a charismatic church. We are often controlled by bad or hurtful experiences and want to protect ourselves from them. But don't judge it all based on one bad experience.

When it comes to prophecies or prophetic words, we must avoid the 2 extremes:

1. Totally dismissing the prophetic.
2. Chasing prophetic words like a fortune teller.

THERE'S GOOD IN THE MIDDLE! THERE MUST BE BECAUSE WE ARE PROMISED THE POWER OF THE PROPHETIC!

1 Corinthians 14:1 "Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy"

HOW GOD SPEAKS

1. GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE INNER VOICE OF THE SPIRIT.
2. GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE REVELATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.
3. GOD SPEAKS THROUGH THE PROPHETIC VOICE OF OTHERS.

There is a lot of encouragement and instruction provided for us in the Book of Acts and in Paul's letters to the Corinthians.

In Acts 2:28,29 on the Day of Pentecost, when the newly spirit-filled Christians are prophesying in the streets, Peter quotes the prophecy found in Joel 2:28,29 NIV and said this is that!

"And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. 29 Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

DEFINING PROPHECY FOR US TODAY:

- **SIMPLE DEFINITION:** To prophesy simply means to hear God and repeat what you have heard to the right people at the right time.
- **CLEAR UP CONFUSION:** OT prophets and NT prophesying
- In OT, God directed the Jewish people through messages given by respectable prophets.

3 MAIN OFFICES LED THE NATION OF ISRAEL: PROPHET - PRIEST - KING (ONLY JESUS HELD ALL 3)

- **Prophets were authoritative** - they spoke to the people for God. (Priests spoke to God for the people.)
- Sometimes even in the OT, the spirit of prophecy would come upon non-prophets, and they would hear God and speak forth what God was saying to them. This was rare and was unsettling.
- **EXAMPLE: Numbers 11** - Moses and his 70 elders

Numbers 11:25-29 NIV 25 Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke with him, and he took some of the power of the Spirit that was on him (Moses) and put it on the seventy elders. When the Spirit rested on them, they prophesied—but did not do so again. 26 However, two men, whose names were Eldad and Medad, had remained in the camp. They were listed among the elders, but did not go out to the tent. Yet the Spirit also rested on them, and they prophesied in the camp.

27 A young man ran and told Moses, "Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp." 28 Joshua son of Nun, who had been Moses' aide since youth, spoke up and said, "Moses, my lord, stop them!" 29 But Moses replied, "Are you jealous for my sake? I wish that all the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit on them!"

PROPHECY IN THE NT IS DIFFERENT:

The gift of prophecy was not used as a means of authoritative direction for the church or individuals, rather the purpose of a Spirit-inspired prophetic word was given to build and strengthen believers.

1Corinthians 14:2 "... the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort."

PERSONAL PROPHECY CAN HAVE A PREDICTIVE ELEMENT, BUT THE PURPOSE OF A PROPHETIC WORD IS TO CONFIRM AND NOT TO CONTROL.

Prophecy is or ought to be doctrinally correct, lovingly spoken, uniquely appropriate, and encouragingly focused words that originate from the Holy Spirit, are spoken into the life of the believer by another believer, and produce life giving, Jesus-loving, biblical faith and hope."

-Nathan Finocchio

THE HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR THE PROPHETIC

- **LOVE:** a loving church is a prophetic church

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1 Corinthians 14:2 "... the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort."

- **VISION:** prophetic people love what God is doing and saying now.
- **HONOR:** when you value what others have to impart, the prophetic is released.

Matthew 10:41 ESV The one who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and the one who receives a righteous person because he is a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward.

- **BOLD LEADERSHIP:** because humans are not infallible, prophecy should be encouraged and judged by mature leaders.

1 Thessalonians 5:20-21 "Do not put out the Spirits fire. Do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything; hold fast to that which is beneficial."

- **BIBLICALLY SOUND:** prophecy must always be received and given through a theological lens

HOW TO GIVE A PROPHETIC WORD

1. **ASK YOURSELF** - is what I'm hearing biblically sound, motivated by love and encouraging?
2. **GIVEN TO AN INDIVIDUAL** - submit it with humility to be considered and tested in their spirit.
3. **GIVEN IN A CHURCH GATHERING** - avoid the confusion of the loud shout out that interrupts the flow of worship and/or teaching. Submit the word to one of our pastors/leaders so it can be weighted before it is released.

1 Corinthians 14:29-33 NIV Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 30 And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. 31 For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. 32 The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. 33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord's people.

HERE YOU FIND:

- a careful evaluation of a prophetic word.
- a loving preference to others.
- a prophetic instruction that is encouraging.
- that God expects those who prophesy to use self-control.
- when the prophetic word is released, it produces order and peace.