

Session 2. Why should we?

What is prophecy, and why is it important

Introduction

Read 1 Corinthians 12:28, Ephesians 4:11-12 & Ephesians 2:19-20. Which is the most important gift? Which second? Which ones do we train?

What is Prophecy?

- 1) **Most important gift of Spirit** (1 Cor 12:10; 1 Cor 14:1, 5, 39). If so, it is clearly (except apostleship) the most influential gift. The office of prophet is second only to apostle.
- 2) **God speaking** (Eze 37:9; 1 Peter 4:11) Some of us are used to hearing God speak to us personally. Prophecy is simply turning that around and using it for others instead of ourselves.
- 3) **By the Spirit** (2 Peter 1:21). What are the implications of this verse?
 - a. Initiated by God – we can ask, earnestly desire, but cannot make it up!
 - b. We must speak (or write, or draw, etc)!
 - c. We need the Spirit; we may start, but the Spirit must take over;
 - d. We may begin with only one word/impression, but it grows.

How does God speak?

Some of us are used to hearing God speak to us personally. Prophecy is simply turning that around and using it for others instead of ourselves.

God speaks in many ways (over 40 in Scripture – see if you can discover them!)

Aloud rare, usually only when big decision coming, e.g. the three major turning points in Jesus' ministry (Baptism, Mat 3:17; Transfiguration, Mat 17:5; Final week, John 12:28)

Angels less rare, and becoming more common (End Times).

Circumstances God DOES use them! Earthquake → salvation of jailer (Acts 16:30).

Creation (Ps 19:1-4)

Sing/act/play/draw/write quite common (2 Kings 3:15).

Clear voice in head quite common.

Dream and/or vision common, but we often miss it (Job 33:14).

Scripture all the time!

First impressions. All the time! Usually picture, word, 'feeling', 'sense', 'impression'. Often left-field; often out of 'thought-stream'.

Reasons for prophecy:

What is it for? Encouraging, exhorting, comforting, warning, revealing, convicting, instructing, teaching, rebuking.

- 1) **We are told to be eager to** (1 Cor 12:31, 14:1, 12, 39) Notice that we are not commanded to prophesy, but commanded to earnestly desire the gift.
- 2) **It builds the church** (1 Cor 14:4, 12)
- 3) **It builds people** (1 Cor 14:3; 31; 1 Tim 1:18-19, 4:14)

-
- 4) **It convicts sinners** (1 Cor 14:24-25) 'secrets of his heart... laid bare.'
 - 5) **It influences the future** (Isa 44:26) Saul never spoke against David. Zechariah was struck dumb (Luke 1:20).

What is it NOT for?

- Controlling, commanding, or manipulating people (that is witchcraft!) It should never include a revelation that demands obedience... e.g. 'you must..'
- Condemning, judging, criticising people (includes purveying your pet theologies!). If it rebukes, there is ALWAYS an offer of a way out, and a potential blessing.
- Mates, dates and rates! It is NOT to tell people who they will marry, when the Lord is returning, or how much they will win on the lotto!

How to know it's God!

- His sheep know his voice (John 10:4). It's all about relationship.
- Compatible with God's character (loving, righteous, just, holy).
- Compatible with his word (e.g. 2 Tim 4:3-4; Titus 1:12-13; Rev 22:18-19).
- It will come to pass! (Deut 18:22) - but this not very helpful, as it may be from God and NOT come to pass (e.g. Jonah!); or from devil BUT DOES; or yet to be fulfilled.
- It will bring good fruit (Matt 7:15-23). Fruit = fruit of Spirit (love, joy, peace, etc – see Gal 5:22), and fruit of Kingdom (saved, healed, delivered, raised – see Mat 10:8).
- Glorifies/honours God and Jesus (Deut 13:1-5; 1 John 4:1; 2:22; 4:15).
- Encouraging, edifying, comforting, etc (1 Cor 14:3,26,31)
- No manipulation or control. It leaves the results to God.
- You won't - take a punt, it's called 'faith'!

The alternatives are that it's the world (cultural mindset/peer pressure), the flesh = you (your 'soul', i.e. personal desires) or the devil (so tell him to scram!)

If God thought we needed prophecy, we need it! If he didn't he wouldn't have suggested it. It is HIS idea!

Practical

TIPS reminder:

- **Go with your first impressions** – don't try to process it!
- **No need to understand** – it's not meant for you, but for the other person.
- **Say/describe only what you have**, and then stop!
- **If only one word, begin**, and the rest will come.
- If you get a word of knowledge, **ask God for wisdom** to know how to handle it (e.g. John 4:16 '*Go, call your husband and come back,*' was divine wisdom! It gave the lady an out, but also an opportunity to confess.)

Homework: This week ask God to show you one person who you should prophesy over, and do so! Try to record it. Tell us the results next time.

Keep filling your prophecy journal.