

The Gift of Prophecy In the Local Church

July 7, 2013

Scripture: 1 Cor 14:1-5, 26-33, 39-40

Definition:

Prophecy, in simple terms, is the verbalized expression of God's thoughts to a Spirit – inspired person "to a particular person or group of persons, at a particular moment for a particular purpose." (Ernest Gentile; "Your Sons and Daughters Shall Prophecy" pg. 20)

A. Desire the gift; (1 Cor. 14:1,39) Desire = *zeeloo*;

to have a zeal for, zealous towards (Vine's Expository Dictionary).

to be hot, while older, to have warmed a feeling for or against (Strong's Concordance).

B. The gift prophecy is for **encouragement** (1 Cor. 14:3).

Three Greek words to find the use of prophecy.

Edification = *oikodome*; to build a house or build up

Building up and strengthening people; Building up (Ellicatt's Vivid Words).

Mat 16:18 "I will build my church."

1 Cor 8:1 "love edifies"

1 Pet 2:5 "you as living stones are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood."

Exhortation = *paraklesis*; a calling to one side and to one's aid, encouragement, it is a calling to a person which is meant to produce a particular affect.

Exhorting and encouraging certain actions; Stirring up (Ellicatt's Vivid Words).

Acts 9:31 "they went on in the fear of the Lord and the comfort of the Holy Spirit."

Rom 15:4-5 "for whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. Now may the God who gives perseverance and encouragement grant you to be of the same mind with one another according to Christ Jesus."

2 Cor 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are ours in abundance, so also our comfort is abundant through Christ.

Consolation = *paramuthia*; speaking closely to any one; denotes comfort, consolation; has a greater degree of tenderness than *paraklesis*.

Consolation and comfort; Cheering up (Ellicatt's Vivid Words).

1 Thes 2:11 "just as you know how we were exhorting and encouraging and imploring each one of you as a Father would his own children."

1 Thes 5:14 "encourage the fainthearted."

C. We use the Scripture for bringing correction and not the prophetic gift.

Many misunderstand the difference between Old Testament and New Testament use of prophecy. In the Old Testament, prophets brought correction. We believe that we have the written word as our sword.

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. (2 Tim 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:3)

D. All things are to be done properly and in an orderly manner (verse 40).

We believe that all of God's people can hear the voice of God and that in every worship service people are hearing the Holy Spirit speak to them. It is our ambition to give room for spontaneous prophetic and revelatory expression in every service. We believe that all can prophesy one by one (1 Cor 14:3, 5, 26). The following are a few biblical and practical guidelines:

Biblical Guidelines: (from 1 Cor. 14)

1. Seek to edify the body (verses 3, 5, 26).
2. Be in the learning process (verse 31).
3. Speak under control (verse 32).
4. Your words should bring peace to those who hear (verse 33).
5. Your words should not bring confusion (verse 33).

Practical Guidelines:

1. Speak loudly or use the microphone so that everyone can hear clearly.
2. Do not use this as an opportunity to share a testimony or a teaching.
3. Speak as clearly as possible what it is that you feel the Lord is wanting to say.
4. It is not necessarily to use the words, "the Lord says".

"Lowest level of prophetic revelation", by Rick Joyner

Most of what is called prophecy today is on the lowest level of prophetic revelation, which is the impression level. These are general revelations that we have to put words to. Personally, I do not add the addendum "thus says the Lord" to what is in fact an impression that I have expressed in my own words. The word of the Lord is precious, the last thing I want to do is put my words in His mouth In fact, it is debatable whether we ever need to include such a statement in our prophecies today ... We might be trusted with far more authority and higher levels of revelation if we start calling impressions just what they are, and do not so freely misuse those precious words "thus says the Lord."

E. There are degrees or levels of prophecy:

1. Prophecy of Scripture
"Law and the Prophets," is used 27 times in the Bible (Mat 22:40; Rom 3:21)
2. Office of the ministry of a prophet (1 Cor 12:28; Eph 4:11).
3. The gift of prophecy (1 Cor 14:31).
4. The spirit of prophecy
Rev 19:10 ...For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Personal attitudes towards prophecy

A perfectly good word from the Lord can be canceled, misunderstood or misinterpreted if the hearts and minds of the people are not in a positive, receptive mode. Eight suggestions can assist everyone's cooperation:

1. Desire to hear and understand (1 Cor 14:1).
Many can be dull of hearing or have no ears to hear (Jer 6:10; Ezk 12:2; Mat 13:9-17).
2. Be neither skeptical nor gullible (1 Thes 5:19-21).
Neither despise prophecy nor swallow it without "proving" it (1 Thes 5:20-21).
3. Listen with a willing heart.
Be ready to respond to God's direction (Zec 7:11-14).
4. Pay attention (1 Thes 5:19-21).
Carelessness or lack of interest can cancel God's best for you (Ezk 33:30-33; Mk 4:23-25; Heb 2:1-4).
5. Seek further confirmation (1 Thes 5:19-21).
Even when you believe the word is from the Lord, wait on Him for further confirmation (2 Cor 13:1-3).
6. Hear in faith.
Do not let opportunity be lost by an attitude of unbelief (Heb 4:1-3).
7. Face strong words with confidence.
Excuses are easy to find when a challenging word comes (Amos 7:10; John 16:12; 1 Cor 3:2; 2 Tim 4:4; Heb 12:19-20).
8. Hear, then do, the word.
The hearer of the word is obligated to respond to it (Mat 7:26; James 1:23-24).

How to judge prophecy:

1 Cor. 14:29 It needs to be judged.

Gal. 1:6-9, Acts 17:10-11 so does teaching.

Two Extremes: 1 Thess. 5:19-21

- A. Reject or despise prophecy altogether.
Don't despise prophetic utterances.

despise = to make of no account, regard as nothing.

- B. To accept all prophecy unreservedly.
Examine everything - hold fast to what is good.

David Pytches, in his excellent book *Prophecy in the Local Church*, has a section on "beware of Theopaths" -- a word coined to describe certain good Christians who seem to have abandoned their God-given commonsense, seeing significance in everything that happens.

Seven Tests: Seven questions to ask yourself:

1. Does it edify, admonish or exhort (1 Corinthians 14:3)?
2. What are the fruits? Five test:

1. Does the prophet have control (1 Corinthians 14:32)?
 2. Does the word bring confusion (1 Corinthians 14:33)?
 3. Does the word bring peace to you (1 Corinthians 14:33)?
 4. Does the word bring freedom or fear (Romans 8:15)?
 5. Does the word bring life or minister death (2 Corinthian 3:6)?
3. Does the word glorify Christ (Revelation 19:10; John 15:26; 16:14)?
 4. Does the word agree with the Scriptures (2 Ti 3:16-17; Gal 1:6-9)?
 5. Are the predictive prophecies fulfilled (Dt 18:20-22)?
 6. Does the fulfilled word John you away from Jesus (Dt 13:1-5)?
 7. Does the word bear witness with your spirit (1 John 2:20, 27)?

Seven signs of manipulative and controlling prophecies:

(Developing Your Prophetic Gifting; By Graham Cooke)

1. Usurping the will of others (acting as an infallible oracle).
2. Pulling rank (pushing a superior attitude).
3. Flattering (taking advantage of someone's vulnerability).
4. Giving dire warnings (employing implied threat).
5. Allowing no outside perspective (locking others into one's own view).
6. Using the phrase "the Lord told me so" (eliminating the need for feedback).
7. Promoting super-spirituality (boasting of personal accomplishment).

God has restored the prophetic ministry.

Amos 3:7 God will do nothing unless you first reveals it to His prophets.

Hag 2:9 the latter glory of this house will be greater than the former.

Eph 2:19-22 prophets help build us into God's Temple.

Heb 3:6 we are Christ's house

The prophetic ministry encourages the completion of the Building;

Ezra 4:24 the work ceases.

Ezra 5:1-2 Haggai and Zechariah's ministry supports Zerubbabel and Joshua.

Ezra 6:14 the temple is rebuilt through the prophetic ministry of Haggai and Zechariah.

Eph 2:20 prophets help established the local church.

Purpose of the prophetic ministry (Eph 4:11-16).

- a. To equip the saints.
- b. To build up the body of Christ.
- c. To give knowledge and understanding about God.
- d. To help established the unity of faith.
- e. To help the body mature.
- f. To point out errors of doctrine.
- g. To help the saints in their personal relationships.