The Ministry Week 4

The Ministry

We believe in the ministries that Christ has set in His Church, namely, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers and in the present operation of the manifold Gifts of the Holy Spirit according to the New Testament.

The gift of prophecy is mentioned more than any other Spiritual Gift.

> *Paul tells us to eagerly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you might prophecy. 1 CORINTHIANS 14:1*

Prophecy is a key gift to build the church.

Prophecy Defined.

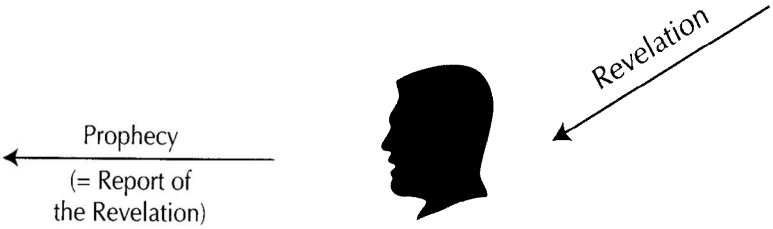
> *The gift of prophecy is the special ability that God gives to the members of the Boyd of Christ to receive and communicate an immediate message of God to his gathered people, a group among them or any one of his people individually, through a divinely anointed utterance. PETER WAGNER.*

> *Prophecy is the bringing forth of an anointed word under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit – or – a prophetic declaration while under divine influence. It is a revelation of the mind of God TO an individual*

Christian FOR the assembled believers. RODNEY FRANCIS

It's a revelation from God to a person and then spoken out.

For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. 2 PETER 1:21



New Testament prophecy should not be defined as "predicting the future" nor as "proclaiming a word from the Lord," nor as "powerful preaching" – but rather as ***"telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind".*** *WAYNE GRUDEM*

The main purpose for prophecy under the anointing of the Holy Spirit today is not to foretell future events, but to edify, exhort and comfort believers. DAVID YONG CHO

There is a distinction that theologians like to make. Prophecy can either be foretelling or forthtelling. Foretelling future events is the predominant character of Old Testament prophecy. Forthtelling and proclaiming God's word is the predominant (but not exclusive) character of New Testament prophecy.

But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. 1 CORINTHIANS 14:3

EDIFICATION:

"to build up, the promotion of spiritual growth" It is spiritual strength.

EXHORTATION:

"encouragement, a calling near or for, to stir up"; Rise up, shake off the cobwebs and draw close.

COMFORT:

"a consolation, a solace ministered with tenderness".

"Consolation" is "to alleviate grief or disappointment"

"solace" *is "comfort in distress or disappointment, to find relief, cheer up"*

New Testament Prophecy often is…

> *A very human – and sometimes partially mistaken – report of something the Holy Spirit brought to someone's mind. WAYNE GRUDEM*

> *"Prophecy can be impure – our own thoughts and ideas can get mixed into the message we receive – whether we receive the words directly or only receive a sense of a message." BRUCE YOCUM*

And for these reasons a prophecy needs to be weighed.

> *Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. 1 CORINTHIANS 14:29*

The basic meaning of the word is to judge, to give a decision, to make a distinction, discriminate, to separate, to evaluate.

> *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 1 JOHN 4:1*

> *Prophecy that is "inspired" by the spirit of man does not edify, exhort or comfort. It is negative and critical, often presented with an Old Testament style threat of judgement if the hearers don't obey. RODNEY FRANCIS*

> *Satanically-inspired prophecy is subtle, deceptive, manipulative, domineering and the opposite to the character and nature of God. It does not edify, exhort or comfort the believer to get closer to Jesus Christ, but can manipulate people to make major decisions hastily, thus causing wrong decisions that take us out of the will of God. RODNEY FRANCIS*
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> *Prophecies which tell other people what they are to do - are to be regarded with great suspicion. MICHAEL HARPER*

Is it a word of encouragement, is it a word that encourages you to draw near and trust God, is it a word that builds you up spiritually, is it a word that witnesses to your heart. Does it mean anything to you?

Does the content of the prophecy agree with Scripture?

Does the prophecy glorify Jesus?

Does the prophecy draw someone closer to God, or push them away?

Is it full of love, or is it full of fear?

> Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. *1 Thessalonians 5:20-21*

Let's talk through some points that will help us in how we manage prophecy within the church.

1. Be prepared not to get it right first time. Don't worry if you don't hear clearly, the 20% or the 10% you do hear will be worth it.
2. How is God going to speak to you?
    a) Sometimes he will give you a phrase. Sometimes it might be a bible verse. Don't worry if it's only a phrase or it's only a word. Sometimes when you open your mouth to share one phrase, the Lord will give you the next. Someone once described it's like pulling a paper tissue out of a box, you pull one and the next one comes.
    b) Sometimes the Lord will give you a picture. He might give you an image of a sunset or a country scene. You might not know what it means. But it is an image. And you might not know what it means, but God may give the next part of the prophecy to someone else. So there's not harm in sharing what you have.

So, for example God may give you picture of a cherry tree loaded with ripe cherries. And you say *"I haven't got a clue what that is all about. That would be stupid for me to share."* Don't worry, because someone else may be given the understanding. *"I believe the Lord is encouraging us not to be afraid to witness, because there is ripe fruit ready to be harvested."*

3. Don't be tempted to add your own bits.

    a) *I see a cherry tree loaded with ripe cherries and I believe the Lord is encouraging us not to be afraid to witness, because the fruit is ready to be harvested.* But don't add what you don't hear. *The cherries are on special offer at Tesco's this week, they are full price again at the weekend do some witnessing before it's too late.*

4. Let's to everything in an orderly manner.

For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace. 1 CORINTHIANS 14:30

Remember that people who prophesy are in control of their spirit and can take turns. 1 CORINTHIANS 14:32

a) If you feel God is impressing something upon you something to be shared, wait for an appropriate time. Don't interrupt a song, wait until it is finished.
b) Don't interrupt someone who is praying wait until they have finished.
c) Don't interrupt the preacher, wait until he has finished.

Now we are still learning, and I found when I was the pastor over at Honley that there would be a sense of God's presence in our worship and I would tell whoever was leading the worship just to wait before they started the next song, and I would then say "*I believe the Lord is wanting to speak to us, if you feel God is impressing something on your heart, don't be afraid to share it now".*

5. Avoid saying and "*God says"* to you this morning. Paul says we don't always hear clearly, so it is better to *"I believe this is what God would want to say this morning."* In this way you are showing that you are sharing in humility, and you are open for it to be weighed and discerned. When you say saying *God is saying* you are implying it is not open to question.

6. There is no need to speak in King James English. Although, inevitatbly, some who love the King James bible may quote a bible verse with thees and thous, God speaks in common English.

7. There is no need to put on a special voice, and sound like a Church of England vicar, speak normally.

8. Although sometimes when the anointing of God comes upon us ,we may shake or tremor, this should not be seen as authentication of what it being said. It is the word that is judged, not the shake.

9. Be prepared for what you say to be weighed.

   Let two or three people prophesy, and let the others evaluate what is said. 1 Thessalonians 14:29

Now can I say that those weighing will never humiliate you, they will never say, "you've got that wrong, sit down and shut up!" My attitidue is *well done for stepping out*. Peter when he

got out of the boat began to sink – and had to get his eyes back on Jesus. But at least he got out of the boat and went further than any of the other disciples.

Sometimes someone has said something and I couldn't make head nor tail about it. And I have just said *if that speaks to someone this morning, take it on aboard, if it doesn't, don't worry about it.*

Then if you are convinced God has spoken through you, and it looks like those who are doing the weighing have ignored you, don't get mad. If those who have done the weighing have got it wrong they answer to God, not you. You have done your part.

10.

What if I am embarrassed or I am not sure whether to share or not. Well, come and whisper in my ear, and I will either share it for you, or encourage you to share it. Or I might say thank you *I will hold that thought and see if as the service progresses it is something that needs to be shared.*

11.

Now in some churches they like you to filter a prophetic word through the pastor before it's shared. I understand why some churches that are large might want to do that, but we are a small congregation and I actually, if I am honest there is no biblical precedent for such a practice.

We do not want to quench the Spirit, we want to be people who say we are ready to respond to your voice, be edified, be encouraged and be comforted. Come to church ready and willing for the gift of prophecy to flow through you as God determines.