

# **Spiritual Gifts Series**

Key verse:  
1 Corinthians 12:10

18<sup>th</sup> June 2006

Session 5: The Gift of Prophecy

*Speaker: Adam Voke*

## **1. Prophecy is divinely inspired speech**

**Prophet** = Greek: 'prophetes'. Expresses the formal function of declaring, proclaiming, making known.

*1 Cor 14:30 'if a revelation comes to some who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop'*

1. 1 Cor 14:30 – prophecy is a 'revelation'. Gk: 'apokalupthe' = a verb indicating a sovereign act of divine disclosure.
2. It is given suddenly to one who is sitting in the assembly of the church.
3. It is given in order to be uttered. The person stands to speak out what they have received. It is to be given away to the Church in the context of Christian worship.

In this context it is a Spiritual Gift, something divinely given and not learned or personally created in thought.

**Wayne Grudem: 'Paul is simply referring to something that God may suddenly bring to mind, or something that God may impress on someone's consciousness in such a way that the person has a sense that it is from God'**

## **2. Prophecy has a variety of effects**

- a. Brings glory to God (through thanksgiving and praise)
- b. restores people's dignity (brings encouragement about their identity etc.) strengthens the church (in a variety of encouraging, comforting ways)
- c. brings correction and warning (bring privately to leaders first)
- d. provides direction and enhances vision
- e. sets an agenda for prayer – mfc prayer meeting
- f. opens up teaching from scripture and confirms it
- g. brings evangelistic breakthrough - 1 Cor 14:24-25 – demonstrates that one particular kind of prophesy is that of revealing hidden facts about a person's heart. Particularly in this context, an unbeliever.
- h. provides insight into counseling situations
- i. gives a faith injection to situations
- j. guides in spiritual warfare
- k. Speaks and leads to change in the wider society – not just narrow and personal

## **3. Prophecy should be personally sought after and used**

**Motivated by love and a desire to build others up:**

Context of 1 Cor 13 is in the middle of spiritual gifts teaching

*1 Cor 14:1 'Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophesy'*

*1 Cor 14:3 'The one who prophecies to men speaks edification and exhortation and comfort'*

So prophecy is any divinely inspired words that lead to:  
*Edification. Greek: 'Oikodome' = 'building the house'.*  
*Comfort = consolation in Greek*  
*Exhortation = 'encouragement' in Greek.*

**According to your faith** - *Romans 12:6-8 'If a person's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith'*

-It takes faith in order to speak out in the face of fear, shyness, possible rejection or correction etc.

**Emphasis on all prophesying:** Paul would like everyone to prophesy – 1 Cor 14:5, 'everybody is prophesying' 1 Cor 14:24

#### **4. Prophecy is received in a variety of ways**

Joel 2:28 – Prophecy about dreaming dreams, seeing visions and prophesying – there are many different forms of prophesy. The variety of forms reflects the spirit's creativity.

Prophetic actions often accompany prophecy – Agabus in Acts 21:10-11

Mark Cartledge has written a helpful article on the 'prophetic experience' outlining 3 ways in which prophesy is received and uttered.

1. The message is received before the time it is shared.
2. The message is received in part but the rest comes as it is given out
3. The message comes only when it is being brought. It starts with an impulse.

#### **5. Prophecy is not equal in authority to scripture**

*Graham Cooke 'many more churches have been ruined by false teaching than false prophesy.....many people's lives have been damaged by wrong pastoral advice far more than by the prophetic'*

**Prophecies must be 'weighed'. Showing that they cannot be infallible.**

*1 Thess 5:19-20 'test everything.. hold onto the good',  
'discern' = 'diakrinein' is mentioned in 1 Cor 14:29. 'the others should weigh/discern carefully what is said'*

Also we '*prophesy in part*' 1 Cor 13:9. The authority is in the general content and not in every word, it is expressed in human words.

*Wayne Grudem 'the words prophet and prophecy were used of ordinary Christians who spoke not with absolute divine authority, but simply to report something that God had laid on their hearts or brought to their minds'*

**Differences between authority of scripture and prophecy:**

Paul did not prophesy his lifestyle to the churches but taught them – 1 Cor 4:14, he encouraged them to hold to the traditions taught to them, not prophesied – 2 Thess 2:15.

1. Scripture is universal in application. A prophecy is merely contingent.
2. Scripture does not need to be tested. A prophecy does.
3. Scripture already possesses authority. The authority of a prophesy needs to be established.
4. Scripture is eternal. A prophecy is only temporary.

Authority for the prophecy lies with God, obedient response to it is ultimately response to God and not the giver of the prophecy.

## **6. Prophecy should be practiced with:**

### **a. security**

*-guidelines and oversight*

*Wayne Grudem: 'Contrary to some views it was teachers, not prophets who gave leadership and direction to the early churches'*

Security means that you can have a go without being afraid of the consequences, to be able to get some of the details wrong!

### **b. a sense of humour and reality**

### **c. humility**

### **d. compassion**

*Graham Cooke: 'Prophecy is communicating the heart of God to His people. God the Father is the kindest person I have ever known'*

### **e. a listening ear and sensitivity to God**

*John 13:23-26. John resting against Jesus was told about the betrayer  
-our relationship with God is crucial*

### **f. wisdom**

### **g. control**

*1 Cor 14:32 'the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets'*

**Welcome** the gift of prophecy  
**Be Wise** in how you handle prophets  
**Weigh** every purported prophesy