



Sermon Notes, 30 May 2021

Term Summer 2021

Series Preparing for ... the Holy Spirit

Gatherings: the 11, the 5

Title Prophecy

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Reading – 1 Corinthians 12:1-11, 27-31 & 14:1-6

Introduction: our attitude to gift is dependent on our understanding of the giver ...

What are spiritual gifts? supernatural abilities given by God to Christians for service in the body of Christ

Who receives them? Simple answer – every Christian (but not every Christian gets every gift)

Why are they given?

- for the common good (1 Corinthians 12:7)
- strengthening, encouraging and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3)
- so that the church may be edified (1 Corinthians 14:5)
- to serve others (1 Peter 4:10)
- to glorify God (1 Peter 4:11)
- to build up the **body** (Ephesians 4:12)
- to mature the **body** (Ephesians 4:13,14)
- so that the **body** grows (Ephesians 4:16)

i.e. Spiritual gifts are tools, not jewels ... to serve others, not adorn ourselves

Prophecy Linked with ...

- a message of wisdom
- a message of knowledge (both 1 Corinthians 12:8)
 - Stephen ... they could not stand up against the wisdom the Spirit gave him as he spoke (Acts 6:10)
 - Jesus / woman of Samaria, John 4)
- Discernment (1 Corinthians 12:10) (Paul / female slave, Acts 16:16-18)

Paul tells us to *Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy (14:1)*

Why? ... because of its positive effects upon the Body in general and individual members in particular ...

Prophecy effects a change of direction (e.g. Timothy's ministry the result of prophecy, 1 Timothy 4:13,14)

False prophecy? Yes, of course (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3), but there are also false teachers and abusive pastors, but we don't remove the ministry of teaching and pastoring from the church. The answer to misuse or abuse is not disuse but correct use ...

Basic Principles

- God is a good Father who loves us unconditionally – like any loving Father, he loves to speak to his children
- God wants us to thrive and his speaking is **ALWAYS** designed to that end – even if he speaks to correct us, his voice will not leave us condemned under the weight of sin and shame (if we experience that, it's almost certainly the voice of our Enemy), but free to step out from under the shadow of sin and shame

the 5 CS's

1. Commanding scripture

God's primary and infallible means of communication is Scripture. Scripture is like a bed. Its dimensions are given,

fixed. Any bedding must fit it and not the other way round. We may all recall times when a verse came to mind without bidding; or when, reading a passage, finding the text speaks precisely to your situation, as though God has highlighted the verse with a marker pen

The bible is our infallible guide to hearing God speak – all the other ways by which people hear the voice of God must always be checked against his written word: God's NOW word can never contradict his ALWAYS Word.

2. Compelling spirit Acts 16:7 Acts 20:22
3. Common sense
4. Counsel of the saints
5. Circumstantial signs

Final thoughts

- We should be expectant to hear God speaking to us, and open to him doing so in many different ways
- Be patient
- We all make mistakes
- A wise friend once said: "I'm trying never to be offended by God however he chooses to speak!" – that's good advice
- It is likely that we will have one or two ways in which we most commonly hear him speak
- And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28
- Remember that any gift of the Spirit is a tool not a jewel: they are for the service of others, not for our own adornment – prophecy in particular is a gift given to strengthen, encourage and comfort. This is why we *offer* what we sense the Lord *might* be saying, rather than *pronounce* what we have decided he *is* saying, because ...

everyone who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort (1 Corinthians 14:3)