

SERMON NOTES - New testament Prophecy

These notes are designed to be read along with the associated audio / video message

INTRO

1 Thess 5:19-21 NKJV — Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good.

Prophecy is a big and very important topic because:

- All Christians are supposed to be able to hear and be led by God's voice, and to prophesy, ...and...
- There is so much misunderstanding of, and overreaction to, this topic.

OLD TESTAMENT VS NEW TESTAMENT PROPHECY:

Lone Rangers vs All of us

In the Old Testament, prophets were "lone rangers", while in the New Testament, all can and should prophesy. John the Baptist was the last and greatest Old Testament (part of the Old Covenant) prophet. He was a lone voice in the wilderness to the nation. Luk 7:28 NKJV - "28 'For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.'"

In the New Testament all can prophesy and hear from God directly:

Rom 8:14 NKJV - "14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God."

Act 2:16-18 NKJV - "16 'But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 *'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.'*"

Jhn 10:3-4, 27 NKJV - "3 'To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 'And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. ... 27 'My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.'"

Old Testament prophecy could not be wrong. In the New Testament it is a partial revelation that must be tested:

Old Testament prophets were punished for just one wrong message.

- Deut 13:5 & Deut 18:20-22 - In the Old Testament, false prophets were put to death.

New Testament prophecies need to be tested because they can be wrong or misinterpreted and that's OK. In the New Testament it is more prone to misinterpretation and that's a normal part of Church life:

1Co 13:9, 12 NKJV - "9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ... 12 For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known."

1Co 14:29 NKJV - "29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge."

Acts 16:6-13 - Paul's struggles to hear God's will and voice clearly and yet that was absolutely OK.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF UNCLEAR REVELATION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT - Paul's friends (who were very mature and gifted Christians), got the application of a prophetic word wrong):

Act 21:11-13 - "11 When he had come to us, he took Paul's belt, bound his own hands and feet, and said, 'Thus says the Holy Spirit, 'So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man who owns this belt, and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.' " Now when we heard these things, both we and those from that place pleaded with him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, 'What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.'"

TYPES OF PROPHECY:

Bible Writers

The Bible is perfect, and cannot be changed or altered. It is in a different category of prophecy. 2 Peter 1:20-21 NKJV — knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.

Jhn 10:35 NKJV - "35 "...and the Scripture cannot be broken"

Rev 22:18-19 NKJV - "18 For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Jde 1:3 NKJV - "3 Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints."

Psa 18:30 NKJV - "30 As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him."

Prophets

Some people have the "title" or position of Prophet. It is really a recognition of their gifting, rather than an official title or position.

Eph 4:11-12 NKJV - "11 And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,"

Act 13:1 NKJV - "1 Now in the church that was at Antioch there were certain prophets and teachers: Barnabas, Simeon who was called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul."

Those who prophesy

Some prophesy a lot, but don't have the title "Prophet"

Act 21:9 NKJV - "9 Now this man had four virgin daughters who prophesied."

Prophecy in public meetings

Some use prophecy in public meetings from time to time. Not everyone does this, although everyone could (see below).

1Co 12:4, 7-10, 28-30 NKJV - "4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. ... 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: 8 for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, 9 to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, 10 to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. ... 28 And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. 29 Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? 30 Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?"

1Co 14:26-33 NKJV - "26 How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. 27 If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. 28 But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. 29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. 30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. 31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. 32 And the spirits of

the prophets are subject to the prophets. 33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."

1Co 14:3 - "3 But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men

Everyone can Prophecy

1Co 14:31 NKJV - "31 For you can all prophecy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged."

Act 2:16-18 NKJV - "16 "But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 17 '*And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. 18 And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy.*"

CONCLUSION

There are 2 "ditches" that we can end up in. EITHER despising prophecy OR taking it in without discernment or testing. Let's stay in the middle with the correct attitude and use of prophecy.

- 1 Thess 5:19-21 NKJV — Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good.
- 1 Corinthians 14:1 NKJV — Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.
- 1 Corinthians 14:39 NKJV — Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.
- 2Ti 1:6 NKJV - "6 Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands."

1Ti 4:14 NKJV - "14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership."

Small group discussion guidelines

Remember that the aim of the small group is to foster discussion and community, rather than for the leader or one individual to preach to everyone.

1 - Often an **Icebreaker question** is a great way to start discussion. You could ask a question like:

- What were the highs or lows of your week?
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you had to describe yourself as one animal, what would it be and why?
- What is your favourite type of holiday destination?

2 - Next, **read the passage**. You can ask various people in the group to help by each reading a portion of the passage.

3 - These are the **main questions** to ask to understand the passage:

- What is the main message of this talk / passage?
Allow discussion and even diverging from the main topic if it is helpful.
- What did you find particularly helpful or challenging?
- What did you not fully understand?
- What can we do PRACTICALLY in response to this teaching?

4 - Close by offering **prayer** for each person.

- Ask, "how can we pray for you / each other now?"
- Ask each person to pray or you, as leader, pray for each person's need

The blessing and opportunity in Small Groups is the possibility for...

- Each person to contribute and/or ask questions,
- People to pray for each other and to ask for prayer,
- People to learn to use and grow in their gifts,
- Community, friendship and intimacy in relationships.

God Bless you in this very important ministry.