

St Martins C3 – April 30, 2023

Good Prophecy – Prophecy

Sermon Notes:

In this series, we are encouraging you to ask God for insight and courage to step out and prophesy. When you hear someone saying exactly what you need when you need it, you know that God wants to do something in you and through you.

To prophesy in a New Testament sense is to hear from God and speak what you hear.

Today we are going to look at the how. How do we do good prophecy? Here are five short practical nuggets for you. This

1 - Good Prophecy is done in love

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

Love is more than background noise. The overt motivation of every act for a Christian is love. To give good prophecy it should be done in love.

2 - Good prophecy recognises its limitations

We need to acknowledge that God chooses to speak through human vessels and we sometimes get in the way. We don't always have a complete revelation of what God is saying.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:8-9, 12

3 - Good Prophecy Passes the Test

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

In verse 21 Paul tells the people to test prophecies. We need to ensure that we hold on to what is good and stay away from every kind of evil.

The other things to consider when testing prophecy are:

- It will never contradict Scripture
- It will be a gift, not a demand
- It will be consistent with what God has already said
- God will make it clear that it is for you

4 - Good prophecy is Orderly

Read 1 Corinthians 14:29-33

What that looks like in our services is that we ask anyone who has a word then they come and talk to the service leader and if we feel it is appropriate to bring that word during the service we will either bring it ourselves or ask you to share it and we will all pray as we consider it.

4 - Good prophecy is something we grow in

Read 1 Corinthians 14:3-4

As we seek to bring God to others we can grow in this area. Look for spaces and places to grow. Ask for feedback and continue to refine the ways you hear God's voice

Thoughts and Questions for Connect Groups:

Have you ever tried to prophesy? How did it go?

Have you ever seen prophecy done badly? What went wrong?

What does it look like to prophesy in love?

How should our uncertainty if something is from God change the way we give words of prophecy to others?

What things do you look for to test prophecy?

Which of the points listed above are most important for you in testing prophecy?

How would you feel about giving a word to the church?

How can you grow in the gift of prophecy?

Spend some time praying for each other and ask God to speak through you.

For adventurous groups: Put a mask over someone's face and then put someone else in front of them to pray over. Have them sense what God is saying and deliver the word.

Monday Devotion: God Speaks!

Read Psalm 8

God wants to speak to you today.

He desires to bring His words of love to your soul. He longs to see you living in peace. He wants to give you a secure heart that is calm through all of life's difficulties. God also wants to motivate you to step out from your place of comfort to see you take ground for His Kingdom.

If this is what God wants for us, we know it is something He wants to bring to others. So, God uses us. That is a beautiful thought: the majestic God of the Universe deigns to teach humans His ways and to give them authority to bring His rule and strength to others.

As we rule under the authority of God, we aim to bring to others the things that have transformed us. God wants to put words in your heart that when shared with others bring them the same sense of love, peace, security, calm and motivation.

As you spend time in God's presence every day ask Him to fill you with all you need and seek Him to bring life to others as well. God wants to speak to you today, this week we will discover how he speaks.

Spend some time today asking God to speak to you and what He might ask you to say to others.

Tuesday Devotion: God Speaks Through Scripture

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17

Put simply prophesy is hearing something from God that we pass on to others. It is for strengthening, encouraging, and comforting others.

At times prophesy might be a word of knowledge, where you have insight into another person's situation. Other times it will be a word of wisdom where God gives a strategy or idea that becomes a guiding principle to make decisions.

Where do these words come from? The primary place is from Scripture. Every word we give should be put through the filter of Scripture. God does not contradict Himself and so whatever word we bring will not conflict with what He has already revealed through Scripture.

As you pray for others, ask God to draw you to a scripture or Biblical theme to pray for them. As you do God may draw you to a story or teaching that could be instructive or illuminating for them. At times you might pray those verses over them, at other times you may feel to pass the verses on to them as an encouragement.

Try this exercise. Right now, pray for someone you know. Ask God to give you a scripture and pray that scripture for them throughout the day.

Wednesday Devotion: God Speaks Through Thoughts and Impressions

Read 1 Kings 19:11-13; Acts 27:9-10; John 10:1-5; 16:5-15

When Elijah was on the mountain He saw many dramatic things happen, but God wasn't in the dramatic things, instead, He spoke in a gentle whisper. We might want God to move in our lives in dramatic ways yet He usually speaks in our minds in a way we miss if we are not listening.

In Acts 27, Paul perceives that the ship is going to sink. That word *perceived* is *theōreō* in Greek. According to the Strong Concordance, its first meaning is to discern. What Paul perceived was an impression he saw spiritually or a deep intense knowing that the ship was going down.

I have only met a handful of people who have claimed to hear God speak to them audibly, and I am not one of them. God doesn't often speak to us in that way – that's the nature of faith. He speaks through gentle promptings and leadings. Often, He is speaking but we need to tune in to hear Him.

The more we listen to God's voice the easier it gets to determine when something is our thought, and something is the voice of God. I recognize it is God speaking when I have thoughts and make connections that go beyond my normal processes.

Take the time today to listen to God's voice in stillness.

Thursday Devotion: God Speaks through Dreams and Visions

Read Acts 2:17; Acts 9:1-23

Sometimes you will be praying for someone and you will get a picture come into your mind. We see this happen in Acts 9 for both Cornelius and Peter. Cornelius saw an angel in a vision and Peter had a vision that opened the gospel to all people.

One time I did an exercise with a group of young people, encouraging them to hear the voice of God. One of the young people (who was a handful) went off to hear the voice of God. He got a picture of a bird and shared it with us. He had no idea what it meant. We encouraged him to pray about it because we had no idea either.

He came back a week later and said he went for a walk the afternoon after he got the picture. While he was walking he saw the same bird. The exact same bird. And it came unnaturally close to him and flew close to him like it was familiar with him. He sensed through it that God was saying that he was with him and always would be.

It was powerful for Him and as He shared it, it was powerful for us too. If you get a picture, vision or dream you may not understand it at first. However, as you consider it and test it with other people you could sense God is using it to bring His heart and encouragement to you. Ask God to give your that kind of revelation today.

Friday Devotion: God Speaks so Practice

Listening

As we conclude this week on hearing God's voice for others why not try this exercise to still all other voices and listen for His whisper?

Take a couple of minutes on each of these steps and see what God says to you.

1) Confess sins to Him and be forgiven - 1 John 1:9

2) Silence the voice of the devil - James 4:7

3) Silence your thoughts - Habakkuk 2:20

4) Ask the Holy Spirit to speak to you and give you a word of prophecy for someone - John 16:13

5) Wait in silent expectation - Acts 2:17

6) Pray/act in faith on what God shows you.

Sometimes you will get pictures and words you don't understand. Write these down or draw them anyway and ask God to show you what it means.

If God gives you a word for someone find an appropriate way to pass it on to them.