

Eternity Daily Bible Study

(A ministry of Eternity Christian Fellowship)

Walking In The Spirit - 37

Studies in this series can also be found online at www.globalchristians.org/walkspirit/

Topic: NT Prophecy Part 2

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In the last study we found out that New Testament prophecy involves speaking an anointed word, given by the Holy Spirit, for the edification of the church. The general outpouring of the gift of prophecy is part of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Joel (Acts 2:17,18).

NT prophecy nearly always applies to events that are immediately at hand, and is for the conviction and repentance of unbelievers and for the edification, exhortation and comforting of the saints. It is to be weighed up by mature believers and when so validated is so useful that Paul encouraged everyone to desire to prophesy (1 Corinthians 14: 1,5,31,39).

Prophecy is viewed as part of the normal package of spiritual gifts:

Romans 12:6-8 MKJV *Then having gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, if prophecy, according to the proportion of faith; (7) or ministry, in the ministry; or he who teaches, in the teaching; (8) or he who exhorts, in the encouragement; or he who shares, in simplicity; or he who takes the lead, in diligence; or he who shows mercy, in cheerfulness.*

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 MKJV *(7) But to each one is given the showing forth of the Spirit to our profit. (8) For through the Spirit is given to one a word of wisdom; and to another a word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit; (9) and to another faith by the same Spirit; and to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; (10) and to another workings of powers, to another prophecy; and to another discerning of spirits; and to another kinds of tongues; and to another the interpretation of tongues. (11) But the one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing separately to each one as He desires.*

1 Corinthians 12:28 ISV *(28) God has appointed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then those who perform miracles, those who have gifts of healing, those who help others, administrators, and various kinds of tongues.*

And is given to the Church as a blessing that results from Jesus filling of all things with the Holy Spirit (which in turn flows from the the Ascension):

Ephesians 4:10-12 ISV *The one who went down is the same one who went up above all the heavens so that he might fill everything. (11) And it is he who gifted some to be apostles, others to be prophets, others to be evangelists, and still others to be pastors and teachers,*

NT prophecy is a normal spiritual occurrence that arises when the Church is filled with the Holy Spirit. It is as normal as the gifts of faith, administration and teaching. When the Church is filled with the Holy Spirit and faith then anointing flows more readily giving rise to supernatural words of wisdom, knowledge and prophecy.

The difference between prophecy and teaching is that prophecy reveals hidden things such as the secrets of the heart, while teaching expounds known truth with clarity so it can be understood. Both are very valuable, but prophecy has the added bonus that it can also impart spiritual gifts:

1 Timothy 4:14 ISV *Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy, accompanied by the laying on of the elders' hands.*

Which is why it is involved in sending out God's workers:

Acts 13:1-2 ISV *Now Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius from Cyrene, Manaen who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul were prophets and teachers in the church at Antioch. (2) While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set Barnabas and Saul apart for me to do the work for which I called them."*

And may sometimes be 'life-maps' that God's workers are to follow:

1 Timothy 1:18 ISV *Timothy, my child, I am giving you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies made earlier about you, so that by following them you may continue to fight the good fight*

Indeed many a Christian worker has had a "Macedonian Call" that has directed their entire life and ministry. Prophecy can also be used to encourage believers by exhorting them with words that carry a powerful anointing and which are specific to their particular situation:

Acts 15:32 MKJV *And Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, exhorted the brothers with many words and confirmed them.*

Prophecy adds an extra depth to spiritual ministry within the congregation by bringing words from God to particular life situations. It is complementary to the teaching ministry which lays down general truths and principles to live by. For instance a person hearing a teaching sermon may be convicted about going overseas to serve as a missionary but be perplexed as to how and when and where and with whom. A reliable congregational prophet may be able to fill in some of these details as they pray over the person e.g. by saying that they can see them teaching in a bible college in Thailand.

The New Testament tells us to desire to prophesy (1 Corinthians 14;1,39), and not to despise it or to quench it (1 Thessalonians 5:19,20). We are to encourage the development of the prophetic gift – with the confidence that we will be able to sort out the wheat from the chaff as we go along. Starting people off in small groups is often wise as small groups allow everyone to have a turn at sensing what God is saying, give rapid feedback and are generally gentle in their approach to others.

More on this topic tomorrow...

Blessings,

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