**SESSION 18: THE GIFT OF PROPHECY**

**The Big Idea:** Operating in the gift of prophecy is normal and should occur with frequency in the life of a disciple. It is something we should earnestly seek. **1 Corinthians 14:1** says, “Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.” God wants the church to operate in this gift so much that He is willing to give prophecy to anyone who desires it.

Prophecy is a GIFT of the Spirit, NOT a reward The ability to hear God speak to us for another person is not based on our behavior. It is His gift to us because of His goodness, not ours.

1. **WHY GOD TALKS-THE PURPOSES OF PROPHECY**

**1 Corinthians 14:3** (NKJV) “He who prophesies speaks **edification** and **exhortation** and **comfort** to men.”

**1 Corinthians 14:3** (NIRV) **3**But the person who prophesies speaks to people. That person prophesies to make people stronger, to give them hope, and to comfort them.

**ABCD’s of Prophecy**: **A**lways **B**uild up **C**heer up **D**raw near

1. **Build Up: Edification: To make stronger**
* If it doesn’t build up, don’t say it
* If someone’s life has been damaged or torn down in some way, God’s heart is to build them back up in faith, in love, in strength
* God is the master builder; He is in the business of building up people, building His church

**Ephesians 4:11-13** **11**So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, **12**to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up**13**until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of Godand become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

**1 Corinthians 14:4-5** **4**Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. **5**I would like every one of you to speak in tongues,[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+14&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-28684b" \o "See footnote b)] but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+corinthians+14&version=NIV" \l "fen-NIV-28684c" \o "See footnote c)] unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified.

**1 Corinthians 14:12**  **12**So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.

i.e. God gave you a great mind=BUILDS UP

You could be a lot smarter=TEARS DOWN

1. **Cheer Up: Exhortation: To encourage; to spur on toward action**
* Direct or re-direct someone’s perspective toward the Lord, which does 2 things:

 -Creates HOPE; fills them with hopefulness

-EN-courages them-puts courage IN them

**Psalm 121**

-Out of hope & courage, they are able to do, to respond to what God wants them to do

-Hope is the incubator for faith—it keeps faith alive and allows it to grow

* Not necessarily and in fact, not usually telling them WHAT to do, but telling them WHERE to look

i.e The coach calls the plays, the cheerleader cheers the players on

1. **Draw Near: Comfort: To offer consolation**
* Administer the message of God in gentleness; with mercy; kindness…
* The result of comfort is a sense of peace, or calm that will overtake the person’s soul
* It draws them near to God that they may receive the love & care of the Good Shepherd

**Psalm 23**

**Psalm 34:18** **8**The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit.

1. **HOW GOD TALKS**

Words, Pictures, Movies, Feelings, Smells, Sounds, Tastes, Scripture, Thoughts, Numbers, Colors, Dreams, and Angels, Visions….Let’s look at three of those:

1. **Seeing Pictures**
* God will give you an image of a single thing, setting, scenario, a phrase or a word, people, etc.
* Similar to how you might “see” something in your imagination
* May be an image of something actually from or in that person’s life or could be like an “object lesson” or analogy, a word picture that describes something or from which you can make parallels
1. **Hearing Words**
* God will impress upon your heart or mind, or you may actually hear Him speak what He wants you to say
* You may “hear” the word(s) similar to how you “hear” conversations internally
* It could be and often is scripture(s) or words coupled with scripture(s) that apply directly, specifically to that person (rhema)
1. **Feeling What God Feels**
* God will move your heart for what moves His

i.e Jeremiah felt the burden of the LORD for His people; moved to tears by it, called the “weeping prophet”

1. **EXERCISE: ACTIVATING THE GIFT OF PROPHESY**

The power of prophecy is NOT contained in length, volume, vocabulary, force, etc…

The power of prophecy IS IN proclaiming truth, the Word, Jesus; it IS IN the Holy Spirit

**Revelation 19:10** …the Spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus

**1 Corinthians 2:4-5**  **4**My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit’s power, **5**so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God’s power.

 **Acts 2:4** tells us that the Holy Spirit enables us to speak

Many times, you will only have a starting point, not the “full” message or picture, etc. DON’T WAIT to speak! As long as it follows the ABCD’s (Always Build up, Cheer up or Comfort)—go for it!

As you begin to speak, more will be revealed (i.e. Kleenex effect).

Often, if we wait, we then engage our mind and our own reasoning, which can, and usually is, a hindrance in God delivering His message through you.

This is not an “IF” Jesus is speaking something to you….He is always speaking. This is a “WHAT” is He saying?

1. Stir your spirt: Pray in the spirit and with your mind. Ask God to speak to you, show you a picture, allow you to feel what He feels for the person
2. Wait! to hear or see what the LORD reveals
3. Don’t wait, SPEAK the message to the person (sometimes this happens through your prayer for that person). Phrases you can use as starters:

I see a picture of…. I sense….. I feel…

I believe the Lord is showing you… I’m hearing the word(s)…..

The Lord wants you to know… The Lord is saying…

1. Pray into and over the message

Exercise:

Pick a folded paper

Pray and ask the Lord what He would say to that person

Wait and listen/look

Open the paper

Prophesy to that person

My personal examples:

Pictures/illustrations/object lessons

Writing

Aligns with the type of message God is delivering-sometimes emphatic, full of charge, sometimes gentle and soothing

Always seek some confirmation from the Word

Often have gotten words during prayer times that are to be shared later or are for someone not present—write them down and speak to the person later (I’ve left voice messages, emails, etc.)…to proclaim the message I believe the Lord has given.

Prayed up—not just praying in that moment, but always praying for it, so it’s a constant flow; my prophetic awareness is on alert all the time, to be able to sense, see, hear the word of the Lord and be able to administer it.

Part of my prayer is for discernment—in how to share the message; when; to know when to “stop” and not add detail that may be my details not His (keep speaking and don’t necessarily need to)

God is so good to use us as “ourselves,” meaning, He doesn’t expect me to use “thus saith the Lord” if that’s not how I normally talk or how a person could understand it.

There is no greater joy, no greater sense of releasing God’s power in the earth, than prophesying into someone’s life; than uttering a message a truth from the Lord to someone. Even if they can’t or don’t fully receive it or can’t fully comprehend it in the moment—you know when the power of the Lord has been issued out from you. Like when He felt His power go out when the woman w/the issue of blood tugged at His garment. Same sense. Such great joy! Such power! And you know you’re releasing His power on earth AS IT IS in heaven in those moments. Nothing greater!