

The Word of Faith

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THUS SAITH THE HOLY GHOST

Romans 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Let's study today about the use of the gift of prophecy along the lines of guidance. Of course, when we come to prophecy, we have two things that are very closely associated: the ministry of the prophet, and the gift of prophecy. Many times folk associate the two; and while they are associated, they are not the same. Just because one prophesies does not make him a prophet.

The Word of God plainly teaches us that all are to seek and desire to prophesy. If prophesying made you a prophet, then it is saying that everyone ought to want to be a prophet; yet Paul plainly made known to the Corinthians that all are not prophets. He said, "Are all apostles? are all prophets?" The answer is no, of course. So everyone couldn't be prophets, but all can prophesy.

Speaking with tongues is a supernatural utterance in an unknown tongue. That is, it is unknown to the speaker, yet it may not be unknown to everybody. If you are witnessing to someone and you become anointed by the Spirit to witness, you say things you never thought of. That is really a minor operation of the gift of prophecy. You were inspired beyond yourself. The Spirit inspired you to say those things.

Sometimes prophecy can be used in prayer. Sometimes when praying, in your own language as well as in tongues, you become inspired to pray. I've been praying in English, and have become so inspired to pray in English with the anointing of God's Spirit moving upon me, until I just listened to myself for an hour there on my knees. I knew it was coming out of me, but my mind didn't have a thing in the world to do with it. That was prophecy; it was inspired utterance. All inspired utterance is prophecy.

Sometimes when you are prophesying it will seem as if there are two of you. Have you ever been there? Well, there are two of you in a way - there's the outward man and the inward man. This prayer is coming out of the inward man, and with the outward man we can listen. Sometimes when I am preaching this anointing comes upon me, and I'll hear myself say things I haven't thought of. It will seem as if I'm standing right beside myself listening.

Actually this is coming out of the inward man, and I'm listening with this outward man - this body, my natural mind and my natural ears. While preaching I've heard myself say things, and suddenly I thought with my mind, "Well, I'm going to listen to that; I'm going to get that. I don't know that myself." That also happens sometimes when I'm praying.

Your mind doesn't have anything to do with it; it comes out of your spirit because of the Holy Spirit within you. That is a lower degree of the operation of prophecy. Then these prophetic utterances take on the ecstatic form that we hear in our midst sometimes.

As ministers, we study and prepare sermons. The Word of God teaches us to study. Paul said, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed." In teaching I follow an outline and study more closely than I do otherwise; but then in preaching the anointing of God's Spirit comes.

Things begin to come to us, and we say things that we've never thought of. It startles me sometimes. Well, that is still a manifestation of prophesy, a manifestation of inspired utterance. It is certainly 'supernatural. It is inspired utterance, and all utterance inspired by the Spirit of God is really prophecy.

Even tongues with interpretation is prophecy in its varied form. Tongues with interpretation equals prophecy. Paul said, "Greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret." He is saying if you speak with tongues and interpret, that is equivalent to prophecy. Of course he is talking about ministering there, not necess-

arily praying with tongues and interpreting in your own life.

Prophecy is more in use than folk have thought. Many times they think of just one part of it, when actually that is only one manifestation. Just because you prophesy doesn't make you a prophet. For a man to be a prophet, he stands in that office and uses that ministry.

There are other things that go along to make it the ministry of a prophet. The simple gift of prophecy in the New Testament is speaking unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort, and it should only be used in that area. You can see readily, in the simple gift of prophecy there is no foretelling.

However, you will find in the ministry of the prophet there is foretelling and prediction because he has some of the revelation gifts operating - word of wisdom, word of knowledge, and/or discerning of spirits.

Another thing we need to realize is that spiritual things can be misused, as well as natural things. Some people say, "How can that be if God is doing it?" Well, it is men doing it by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Anything that man has anything to do with isn't perfect.

The Spirit of God is perfect, and the gifts of the Spirit in themselves are perfect, but they certainly are not always perfect in manifestation because they are manifested through an imperfect vessel. That is the reason why prophecies and tongues with interpretation need to be judged.

Let's look in the scriptures at some things. Acts 13:1 says, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of

Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul." This Saul here was the Apostle Paul. Notice that the names of five men are listed here. He starts with Barnabas and ends with Saul. He said, "Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers." Each of these five individuals was either a prophet or a teacher or both.

We are concerned at the moment just with two of them - Barnabas and Saul. We know Barnabas was a teacher, because the 11th chapter of Acts talks about him teaching. I can't find anywhere where he had any part of a prophet's ministry, so I have come to the conclusion that he was a teacher. Now Paul was a teacher all right, because it tells of him teaching; but he also was a prophet because it speaks about him having visions and revelations, and those are part of a prophet's ministry.

Verse 2 goes on to say, "As they..." I used to think this "they" referred to the church at Antioch, but it doesn't. It refers to these five men. "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." It is my opinion that while these five men were praying, one of the others who was a prophet (not Paul of course) said this. That is the reason it says the Holy Ghost said it.

It doesn't say the Holy Ghost said it to one of the individuals, but the Holy Ghost said something to the whole group. So it is my opinion that He ministered here by one of the prophets. One of the prophets spoke out, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost...", just like Agabus did in Acts 21:10. What did the Holy Ghost say? "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."

There is something to notice here. Barnabas and Saul weren't called by this, but they were confirmed by it. They already had the calling. They were already in the calling. They were already in the ministry, but God was separating them to another ministry - to be apostles to the Gentiles. You see, the way that God puts a man into an office is by giving him a gift for the task. It might be confirmed by prophecy sometimes, but he's not called that way.

All the prophesying in the world is not going to give a man the gift for that task. I've seen people go into the ministry just because someone laid hands on them and prophesied that they were to preach or be an evangelist or be in the ministry. These folk couldn't give even a decent testimony, much less preach. Who would listen to them? Sometimes they don't have enough sense to stop and listen to reason. Someone said, "Well, we aren't led by reason." Well, sometimes you have to have enough reason to get in out of the rain at least.

If God has called a person to the ministry, and has separated him, He will give that person the gift for the task. Paul and Barnabas weren't called to the ministry by prophecy, they were already in the ministry. It was just confirmed that God wanted them to be apostles to the Gentiles.

So you see that there is a very fine line actually between the real and the false - between reality and fanaticism. It is mighty easy to step across that fine line, and do a lot of damage. So here we are in Full Gospel circles, where we believe in gifts of the Spirit and so on; yet because of the misuse and abuse and excess along some lines, some people have become scared and just leave

all of it alone. They become dead and dry and leave the miraculous.

Then there are those on the other side that are ready to accept just anything that goes forth. They go off and follow what they call "the Spirit," and "leave the world." Then they get in the ditch on the other side of the road. God doesn't want us to get in a ditch on either side of the road; He wants us to go right down the middle of the road.

Because of so many things that go on today, I would be very careful about personal prophecies if I were you. As long as it stays in the realm of speaking to men to edification, exhortation, and comfort, that is wonderful. But I think what happens many times is that someone who prophesies sees a prophet minister. He might sometimes have a word of foreknowledge, and they think, "Well, I prophesy, so I can do that." Then they move out of the place where they should be into this other realm, and are misled and misguided.

In giving direction to the church at Corinth, Paul said, "Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge." It is supposed to be judged the Bible says. Prophecy is not to be accepted without judging it.

THE WORD OF FAITH

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Rev. Buddy Harrison, editor
Donald Smith, associate editor

MONTHLY LESSON

Our lesson this month is The Gift of Faith. Send for your free copy today and continue the study on the nine gifts of the Spirit.

Testimonies In Brief

I have enjoyed your monthly lessons so very much and used your complete lessons on prayer in Sunday School last Fall. This morning a young married lady in our church called me to say that her husband had received the baptism of the Holy Spirit last night as the result of reading your lesson on the Prayer of Faith. Thank you so much for all you have sent our way, R.B.

We have been listening to your radio program and enjoy it very much. Since we have been listening, our faith has been built up and I have received healing for migraine headaches from which I have suffered for more than eighteen years. I was taking as high as six pain tablets a day and still no relief. Praise God! G.M.

It was October 1970 when I first heard your tape on healing. My wife was listening to one of your tapes and since I was a diabetic at that time, I soon became very interested. Suddenly something you said stirred my spirit and I became "glued" to that tape. I felt the word of truth penetrate my very being. I know now it was the Holy Spirit telling me that it was true. Since that time many wonderful things have happened. Your ministry through tape is reaching many people. We pass them around and hold meetings in homes to play them. Praise God! J.R.

Some twenty-six months ago I had a heart attack and was in and out of the hospital about seventeen times. I was given only a 10% chance to live. I wrote to you and requested prayer for healing and the Lord healed me. Since that time I have moved to another city and the Lord healed me so well that the doctors here don't believe that I had a heart attack. I have one doctor now and that is Jesus, J.M.

Thanks a million for the letters and free literature that you send regularly. You'll never know how valuable they are to me and others. Please don't ever take me off your mailing list! B. S.

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We are happy to announce that our Faith Seminar of the Air can now be heard on Radio Station KGMR, Jacksonville, Arkansas. The broadcast can be heard Monday thru Friday at 11:45 A.M. and may be found at 1500 on the dial. Be sure to tune in and tell your friends to listen.

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