

All About Prophecy

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Instructions to the church at Thessalonica and to us. And so I'm going to go back a little bit, what we've already looked at, verse 19:16. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing. Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Do not quench the spirit.

We looked at that a couple weeks ago, what that means. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything. Hold fast what is good, abstain from evil, every form of evil. Let's pray. Well, Father, we're just grateful for your word, that by your spirit you used men to give these messages to us.

And we acknowledge that it's directly from you and your will for our life. And just pray as we look at some of the more difficult aspects of this word, that you would guide and direct us and open our hearts what is true and good. We thank you for the prayer requests being answered Day for Mundo and God thank you that he's given his life to Jesus and now he's receiving support from friends and acquaintances and ask your blessing on him. We pray for Ann and know that she loves you and the ultimate goal is to be with you. And we just pray that you'd be with her as she goes through this transition time of leaving this earth to enter your kingdom.

And thank you again for answered prayer for Jason and God. I know there's much answered prayer and we're so thankful for that. And thank you for the note from Savannah this morning that God. That she's growing in God and she wants to get baptized. And I pray that you would just set her heart up apart for you.

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So we pray these things in Jesus name who taught us to pray. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses, even as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into evil, but deliver us from evil.

For thine be the glory, the power and the honor. Amen. Okay, you may be seated.

Well, it used to be if I had a brains, a brain freeze, I'd be really embarrassed. But now it just kind of goes along with your age, right? So. All right. Well, in December 31, 1991, I was pastoring over in Montana, and I called Newt Razor that day to tell him, don't send any more support.

I'm resigning from Village Missions. And he said, okay, so I'll get right back to you. The next day, January 1, 1992, he said, we want you to come out here. And Pastor Copelheos Community Church, I said, oh. So I came out and I visited with him and with the board, gave a message, and they offered me the pastorship here, but I wasn't sure what to do.

So I took a long walk on the beach and I prayed. I prayed and I prayed, and I still wasn't sure what to do. And so when I got back to Montana, I was sharing with one of my elders, Terry Eichelberger, who's been here many times, and I shared the situation out here. And all of a sudden he goes, the prophecy, the prophecy. And I go, what?

The prophecy? Don't you remember the prophecy? And no, I don't remember a prophecy. And then he reminded me about six months before that, I'd been in a Bible study, somebody else's church. And the pastor came and prayed for me, and he prayed an Elijah Elisha prayer.

Everyone know who Elijah and Elisha were. They were prophets in the Old Testament. And Elisha was promised that if he would see Elijah die, that he would get a double blessing. And when I heard that, all of a sudden something clicked in my soul. Yes, that's where I'm supposed to be confirming that that call was from God.

And so one of the reasons I came out here 33 years ago now was to bless Pastor Ira Newt Razor. Newt Razor. And he lived another 18 years. He was 79 when I came, so he lived in 97. And it was a joy for me to, even though I was the head pastor, he supported me.

But a joy to be able to honor him. And I share this story because the passage we looked at today deals with prophecy. Prophecy. And to tell you the truth, I'd rather not speak on it. Okay?

It's a divisive topic today, prophecy. But because it's in the word of God, we're going to look at it and see what he says about it. Just after he said, do not quench the spirit, he says, do not despise prophecies, prophecies. And I visa, do not treat them with contempt. And so if we don't want to quench the spirit, then somehow we have to understand that prophecies might be involved in letting the Spirit work in our life.

And this passage raises all sorts of questions. First of all, what is prophecy? What's his purpose? Is it for today, or was it something that quit after the apostles? What about people who claim to be prophets and they're making these proclamations all the time?

Should we listen to them or not. And I've seen that people fall into one or two areas regarding this. On the one hand, and usually the evangelical side, they say, well, prophecies ceased after the apostles and we don't need prophecies anymore. We have the word of God.

So how do they deal with a passage like this? I was listening to one popular preacher who I really respect preached on this passage and the way he treated this passage, he just inserted the word, the Bible, for prophecies. We can't despise the word of God. That's true, but that isn't what it said. Okay, There was a Greek word for Bible and for scriptures, and he didn't use it.

He used the word prophecy. On the other hand, and I've been to meetings and I've watched on tv people just go crazy with prophecies. They're prophesying everything. And I guess people have a short memory because they don't remember that. Wait a second, it didn't come true.

Okay, and so where do we go with this? And well, let's take a look at the scriptures and see what the scriptures has to say about that. So first of all, what is prophecy? And if you want to boil it down to just the message is called a message from God. That's all prophecy is, message from God.

God wanted to speak to you and I, and he used a prophet to do that. One technical definition, it's a word or oracle given or revealed by God through the initiative and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, conveyed by a willing medium or participant designated as a prophet or one who prophesies. And of course, we know that the Bible is full of prophecy. And some have said that one third of the Bible deals with prophecy. In the Old Testament, that's mainly dealing with prophecies about Jesus Christ being our Messiah.

But we also see prophecies about the end times, both in the Old Testament. In the New Testament, when it comes to prophecy, there's two aspects of that. The one we think of is foretelling God is giving us a picture of the future. Okay, again, in the Old Testament, was Jesus Christ the Messiah? Daniel, John, they prophesy about the last days and warning us and preparing us to face the spiritual battles we're going deface and fulfilled.

Prophecy confirms the word of God and it shows it's true. No one else could have predicted those things, but God did. And he shared that message with us. And it gives us confidence in His Word, allowing us to trust Him. So the first thing is foretelling the Second is forth telling, foretelling and foretelling, telling.

And, and fourth telling is when God wanted to share something with his people, for example, quit sinning, he would often use a prophet to share that message with people. And much of the Bible is forth telling God's message that's given through a prophet to the church. And we can thank God for that. Much of the Bible is that if you want to turn over to second Peter chapter one, verse 19 to 21, Peter talks about prophecy. And he says, and we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your heart knowing this.

First of all, this is something we need to know, that no prophecy of scripture come from someone's own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man. But men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit. And that's referring to the prophets in the Bible, that God used them to give us this word. And over back In Ephesians, chapter 2, verse 20, Paul gives us some instructions about prophecy.

Says that talking about the church he says, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being quite the cornerstone. And the fact is, is God used prophets and apostles to give us his word, which I believe is the foundation for our faith. And we'll look at that a little more as far as it relates to prophecy and the purpose of that, he says in verse 21, in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in Him, you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. So whether it's the word of God, whether it's prophecy, whether it's a message, the purpose of that, and it's one of the ways we can judge if it's a true prophecy or not, is we'd be built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit and God living in us, preparing us to spend eternity with him. So that brings up the question, so what do we do if someone proclaims a prophecy?

And there's people out there that do. First of all, we see back in First Thessalonians, we're told not to despise it or treat it with contempt. And what that means is you can't just. I don't believe in prophecy, I don't believe in prophecies. Okay, he said don't despise it.

And, and, and, but second, he says that we're to test it, we're to have discernment whether that was from God or not. It's interesting in the the gifts of the spirit over in First Corinthians 12, one of the gifts is a prophet and someone who is prophetic. But the gift right after that was someone who would discern if prophecies were real or not. And so it shows we have to be careful when we're listening to prophecies. So what test should we use to discern if it's a real prophecy?

Well, first of all, does it agree with the word of God? And if it does not go along with the word of God, it's a false prophecy, a false prophet, and we're told to stay away

from them. And number two, does it build up prophecy? In First Corinthians 14, three tells us that the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. And prophecy is designed to build us up, to console us.

And that means there should be an element of grace in that message. And if there's no grace, then it's probably not from God. Number three, does the prophet have a godly character? Do they have a godly character? Now that's hard for us to discern, isn't it?

If we don't know the person? It takes time. It's interesting that one of the leaders in the prophetic movement, Mike Bickle, started the Kansas City Prophets clear back in the early 90s, and they had around the clock prophecy through music. They sing, they sang. I used to think, wow, what a wonderful thing.

Until I found out they're being paid to do that. But just recently, Mike Bickle was accused of molesting 17 women in that ministry. Had to resign. He was leading this prophetic movement. So.

And then second or fourth, what are the results? What are the results? Now I can look back at that prophecy for me coming here and I can see the results. There were times that I thought, this is too much, I can't handle this, it's not working out, I'd like to quit. None of you have ever felt that way, right?

And times I had the option to do that. But I would remember the prophecy that God promised a double blessing if I would persevere in this ministry, in this church. And I can honestly say the results are a double blessing. I haven't experienced such joined my life as the last 10 years as I have. And I would have missed that if I hadn't held on to the word of God.

And the prophecy helped me that. So after we have tested everything and we're told to test it, which means there's something to test. We have two options. He says, first of all, hold fast what is good. And Jeremy preached on holding fast a couple last week.

And there's times that we are holding on. Remember that cat hanging in the bar above the toilet? Yeah. Okay, I don't see that picture much anymore, but I remember it. And you were just barely hanging on.

You know, it's taking all of our strength, but we hold fast, believing that God is at work in our life. Second, it says abstain from every form of evil. And that's telling us there are some prophecies. They're not good and they lead people astray. They're evil in that sense.

So there's two kinds of prophecies, a good one and an evil one. The good one always builds you up and the evil one tears you down. When I first came here in 92, they had a prophecy conference up in Tacoma at the Tacoma Dome. And I went and there were 4,000 people in the Coma dome to learn about prophecy. And it was put on by John Wimber, who had started the Vineyard denomination.

He had also sang with the Righteous Brothers at one time before he was a Christian and a real interesting guy. And so they had guys there that were so called prophets. And it was like they were just looking through you. Like, I got, I know a secret about you and I'm going to tell it in a minute. And people were just anticipating these messages from God.

I have no idea if any of them come true. But the majority of that conference was warning people and they were into prophecy, warning them how to discern if a prophecy was from God or not, because it can bring great damage into a church. And that's exactly what happened to the Vineyard movement. They got wholehearted into prophecy and people would come to churches, am I going to get a prophecy? Am I going to get a prophecy?

And they were no longer preaching the word of God. And that the denomination took a nosedive, like you can't believe. And it was replacing listening to the word of God and we're not told. Peter told Timothy to preach the word, preach the word. Don't get caught up in all of these things.

Not saying that God might not give you a promise, but don't get caught up in it. It's destroyed many of their churches. So what do we do if someone claims to have given us a prophecy? And again, I mentioned the prophecy I received coming here, and it was a great encouragement to me over the years. To be able to hold on to that.

And. And I'm glad for it. And I believe it was true, even though I didn't recognize at the time. And I want to mention a guy in our church. He's been gone for quite a few years, Ed Brooks.

And some of you have been here a while, remember him. And he came to the church just after I did in 1992, and he drove me crazy. He came to everything. And he was always saying, how do you know that? How do you know that?

How do you know it's true? And I'm going, ah, the word of God. But it was never enough. Well, that summer we had an evangelist from Cameroon, Africa, come. Guy named Guy pei, and about six, six and of course, black and about 275 pounds.

And so we had some meetings during the week. The first meeting was on a Wednesday night. The church was that way. And he's standing up on the pulmon, and he just. All of a sudden he looks out and he points you and, yeah, you stand up.

It was Ed Brooks, and he looked like a deer caught in the headlights. And Guy says, come up here, come up here. And I thought, he's going to be out of here. But he came up and he's standing in front of Gipe, And Gipe says, the Lord has shown me that you have no faith. And I wanted to say amen to that.

Driving me crazy. But the Lord wants you to know you're going to be a man of faith. And Ed shrugged his shoulders, went back and sat down. That Sunday after church, we were going to take the kids a hike across the Olympics back in the day when I could still walk. And we filled up the van so there was no room for our pack.

So I asked Ed, would you mind driving your pickup with our packs in the back up to where we're taking off? And then would you mind on Friday meeting us over at Grades Creek to do the same thing as home? He said, yeah, I will. So we went up and we hike

across the Olympics. And when we get to the other side on a Friday, Ed's there to pick up our packs.

And I thought I should ride with him. You know, he's gone out of his way, so we're riding together. And he says, you know, last Sunday night, I was probably the man in your church with the least amount of faith. I thought, yeah, he said, I woke up Monday morning just full of faith, just full of faith. And he was a man of faith.

The food bank over there, he pretty much paid for it. I mean, just on and on, I could mention the things that he did by faith. Now, did he do that because somebody prophesied over him? No, he did not. But did God give him a confirming message so that he would know it was God?

Towards the end of his life, he had a disease that was affecting his immune system. He's getting weaker and weaker. And he felt like the Satan said to him, you're going to die, you're going to die. And it was a fatal disease. But he felt God say, no, you're not.

You've got another 15 years to serve me. And he did. And so I bring that up because there may be, and I know I've a few times in my life and not many, it felt like I had a message from the Lord. That's all it is, a message from the Lord. And I believe that he can use any consecrated Christian to share that message with somebody.

It's probably not going to be foretelling like the end of the world, but it may be forth telling. This is what I believe God may have you do. And so we don't want to despise that, we don't want to quench the Spirit. It may be that God would work in our lives to do that now. So I believe this passage is pertinent for today.

We'll finish with second Peter, chapter two, verse one to three. And this is why the teaching is so important, says but regarding prophecy. But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who brought them, who bought them, bringing upon themselves Swiss destruction. And many will follow their sensuality. And because of them the way of truth will be blasphemed.

And in your greed they will exploit you with false words. Their condemnation from long ago is not idle and their structure is not asleep. And one of my fears today, and if you go on TV to watch some of the popular preachers and they're making prophecies, I just saw one the other day. The guy prophesied that five liberal states are going to be conservative and that people are going to be turning to the Lord and well, I hope so, but I don't think we're going to see that. And the key, we were listening to a podcast about the new apostolic Reformation.

There are people out there claiming to be apostles today and claim to be prophets, but it says here, even denying the Master. And they don't do that, do they? They acknowledge Jesus, but in the Greek it's Even denying the sovereign Lord, they don't like the sovereignty of God. They really focus on the freedom of man.

And many will follow them and the way of truth will be blasphemed. And people see some of that and they go, this is crazy. You know what they're doing. And then in their greed, they will exploit you with false words. I watched one of these so called prophets and he was bragging about his super expensive watch in a service.

And of course, where'd that money come from? Just like the government today, it came from your taxes, not us specifically. And then he lifted up his pant leg and he had a diamond thing around his ankle and was bragging about that. Well, he has exploited people and it says their condemnation from long ago is not idle and their destruction is not asleep. And the truth is, if we're preaching the word, it needs to focus on Jesus Christ and not man.

Okay? We are here to exalt him. And I say that not. Don't throw it all out. He said, don't despise it, but test it.

Test it. And in my case, there was the confirmation. And my spirit understood that, yes, this is what God wants me to do. And I can look back at the results and say, yes, that was the Lord and I can thank him for that prophecy. But I've had a ton of other prophecies that I just go, whoa, you know, just over the head.

That didn't. No confirmation in that one. I'm not going to hold on to it. And so again, I hesitate to preach on this. This may be something you're not interested in, or it's controversial, but something the word of God shares with us.

And we need to take it to heart. So let's pray.

Father, we know that you're the Almighty. You're not limited or hindered in any way. God, I believe that you've given us your word through the apostles and prophets, just as it said in second Peter. And it's for us. It's our foundation.

The foundation cannot be changed. It's the word of God, Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone. And yet, Lord, I believe that you still speak today not to give us anything new or exciting, but to lift us up, to encourage us, to help us to stay strong in the battle. And so, Lord, we may or may not be involved in prophecy, receiving one, giving one, but at the same time, just help us to be aware and alert that you can. And if you do, we want to hear that message in Christ's name, Amen.