

20160207 DISCOVER series #5 PROPHECY

Romans 12:3-8

In our text today the apostle Paul is telling us that we are a BODY of believers.

“Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

We are ONE BODY. We belong to each other. Even if this building ceased to exist, we would be the church – one body of believers.

We as a church body are called to be ALL that it can be.

Prophecy has been surrounded by misunderstanding, confusion, and fear. Yet, from the standpoint of the Scriptures, the gift of prophecy is the most important spiritual gift. Paul considers it vital to the upbuilding of the church. He considers it so vital that he writes about prophecy both in Romans 12 and in 1 Corinthians.

The New Testament Scriptures make it clear that the Spirit is a universal gift to the church, and that prophecy is the characteristic gift of the Spirit. The Apostle Paul indicated that the gift of prophecy was for every believer: "For you can all prophesy one by one..." (1 Corinthians 14:31). If we take Paul's letter to the Corinthians seriously, we must come to the conclusion that the gift of prophecy is indispensable to the church. The importance of the gift of prophecy is seen from Paul's urgency for it. He commands the Corinthians to "earnestly desire to prophesy" (1 Corinthians 14:39).

In Acts 2:17 Peter explains the event of Pentecost by quoting the prophet Joel:

So here is a statement of what the last days (our days!) will be like. It appears that prophecy will not be so much an office, but a widespread experience of men and women.

In 1 Corinthians 14:1–4 Paul speaks to the whole church:

This text certainly sounds like prophecy is not only for a fixed group of authoritative founders of the church, but of the church body in general. And the ministry of prophecy is simply described like this: It upbuilds, encourages, and consoles.

1 Corinthians 14:29–32

Notice two crucial points: One is that a prophecy is based on a “revelation.” Verse 30

The gift of prophecy is based on something God brings to mind. It is not exactly the same as teaching, which is based on the exposition of a text. It is based on God bringing something more immediately to mind.

But then verse 29 says, “Let the others weigh carefully what is said.” That point is very interesting! It does not focus attention on whether the person speaking is a “true prophet” or not. It focuses on “what is said.” And the idea is: View it with some mild skepticism.

Which means that the gift of prophecy the way Paul encouraged its wide use did not have final, decisive authority. The Scriptures, the Bible did.

1 Thessalonians 5:20–21 In other words, the gift of prophecy is not in the same category with Scripture. It is under Scripture and tested by Scripture, and it is spiritual wisdom informed by Scripture.

1 Corinthians 14:1 So all of us are told to earnestly desire especially to prophesy. It makes really good sense if prophecy were a gift that any believer could use to offer Spirit-timed insights that God brings to mind for each other's good.

So for these reasons I am persuaded that the gift of prophecy is valid for today and is not equal with Scripture in authority but is valuable as a Spirit-guided expression of something we otherwise would not know or say, which is powerful for that particular moment and brings conviction or exhortation or consolation for the awakening or upbuilding of faith. It is fallible. It may prove true and it may not because the human channel is sinful and fallible and finite.

Common Aims

1. The Exaltation of Christ

2. Humility and Boldness

That is, we will not speak the prophetic word with any claim to divine authority, but with a humble claim to divine insight which we offer to be tested.

3. Love as the Measure of What We Say

How to Activate Your Prophetic Gift

1. Make a Decision

Activating your gift of prophecy starts when you acknowledge before God that you are willing to move ahead in this area, and choose to take your first steps forward.

You do not need to know for certain that you have a gift of prophecy—in the early stages you may be unsure. This is about being a good steward of:

- The desires Father has placed in your heart
- A sense of God's call on your life
- Signs that you have an emerging prophetic gift
- You may also have had affirmation by church leaders that you have a God-given prophetic ability.

2. Be involved in a Church Community

The New Testament context for activating the gift of prophecy is a local church where there is leadership and accountability.

3. Talk to a Pastor or an appropriate Leader within the Church

It is important to make your desire to grow in the gift known, in order that you can follow the next steps:

4. Find Someone to be Accountable to

Find a leader or mentor to whom you can be personally accountable with regard to activating your prophetic gift. A person who will be able to help you weigh up the prophetic insights and will not hold back when you need to be redirected.

5. Begin in your Personal Devotional Life

The first place you can start to activate your prophetic gift is in your devotional life, learning to receive insights from the Holy Spirit.

Record any insights that you receive from the Holy Spirit—diary.

6. Develop a Lifestyle of Encouragement

Prophetic ministry requires us to see others and ourselves as the Father sees us.

7. Tune in to the Holy Spirit

Develop an intimate relationship with God and be open to receiving insights from the Holy Spirit throughout your day.

Learn about the different ways He can speak to you, including through scripture, pictures, thoughts and impressions, dreams, prompts, inner urges and Divine appointments.

8. Begin Simply

The best way to begin activating your prophetic gift is to start in a very simple way. This may be through words of encouragement, or exhortation, or sharing scriptures that God puts on your heart.

Be natural in the manner you share an insight that you believe is from God.

9. Find an Appropriate Environment to Practice

Some areas in church life where a prophetic gift can be activated include:

Prayer meetings, home-group and so on

Find out the appropriate guidelines for each area. Then—step out of the boat and have a go.

10. Stay in the place of Learning

Ongoing learning about the prophetic gift will encourage you to continue activating your gift of prophecy.

“If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing” (1 Corinthians 13:1–2).