

3 February 2013 - Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

Readings: Jeremiah 1:4–10; 1 Corinthians 13:1–13; Luke 4:21–30.

Theme: *Prophecy* – 1 Corinthians 13:2, 9, “If I have the gift of prophecy...”

INTRO: “Look mum, no pictures or movies!”... Prophecy comes up several times in our readings today, but it is also a subject I didn’t grow up hearing much about... At our recent pastors conference a paper was presented on the subject... Came up in my 2 year review...

I. WHAT IS PROPHECY?

Bible Online - *a discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God, whether by reproof and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden; esp. by foretelling future events.*

Graham Cooke, “Prophecy is a gift of the Holy Spirit.”

There is a difference between office of prophet and gift of prophecy.

Jeremiah 1:7, “But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you.”

1 Corinthians 12:7-11, “Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good... to another **prophecy**... All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.”

1 Corinthians 12:29, “Are all apostles? **Are all prophets?** Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?”

NOT ALL are prophets or prophecy publicly, but all potentially can.

Acts 2:17-18, “In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. **Your sons and daughters will prophesy**, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, **both men and women**, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will **prophesy.**”

II. WHY PROPHECY?

Jeremiah 1:10, “I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, **to build and to plant.**”

A. TO BUILD.

1 Corinthians 14:3, “But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their **strengthening, encouraging and comfort.**”

B. TO PLANT.

Jeremiah 1:5, “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as **a prophet to the nations.**”

Luke 4:24, 26-27, “Truly I tell you,” he continued, “no **prophet** is accepted in his hometown... Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath **in the region of Sidon.** And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha **the prophet**, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman **the Syrian.**”

To break new/old ground, open up new possibilities.

Illus. Acts 13:1-3, “Now in the church at Antioch there were **prophets and teachers**: Barnabas, Simeon called Niger, Lucius of Cyrene, Manaen (who had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch) and Saul. While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, **the Holy Spirit said**, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.”

Heidi Baker, *Compelled by Love*, “He laid his hands on me and said, ‘Do you want the nation of Mozambique? The blind will see. The crippled will walk. The deaf will hear. The dead will be raised, and the poor will hear the good news.’... After about a year of praying for the blind – and not getting good results – we were in one of our little mud-hut churches when a lady who was blind approached us. This little beggar lady’s eyes were completely white. I was so happy to see her because I was not going to quit – **I had a word from God!** I was ready to see a nation transformed. As I held this lady in my arms, I felt tremendous compassion for her. God completely transformed her with His glory, and she fell to the ground and began to scream. As I watched her eyes, they began to turn from white to gray to brown. She could see! Everyone around us starting yelling and screaming, ‘Mama Aida can see! Mama Aida can see!’” (p. 2-4).

III.HOW DO I PROPHECY?

A. With love.

1 Corinthians 13:2, “If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, **but do not have love, I am nothing.**”

B. In line with Scripture.

2 Peter 1:19, “We have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.”

1 Corinthians 13:9, “we know in part **and we prophesy in part...**”

C. In accountability/under the authority of His Body.

1 Corinthians 14:32-33, “The spirits of prophets are **subject to the control of prophets**. For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people.”

D. In accordance/proportion to our faith.

Romans 12:6, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then **prophesy in accordance with your faith.**”

E. As the Holy Spirit leads.

2 Peter 1:21, “For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God **as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**”

CONCLUSION: 1 Corinthians 14:1, “Follow the way of love and **eagerly desire** gifts of the Spirit, **especially prophecy.**”

Prophecy is not that out of the ordinary... God is speaking to us all the time... We need to develop ears to hear, and dependency on the Holy Spirit to step out and speak as God leads us, in Jesus name. Amen.

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Pastor Aldi ☺