

DELIVERING PROPHECY
2010 Prophecy Class, Session 3
April 25, 2010

I. DELIVERING PROPHECY: GENERAL GUIDELINES¹

- a. Remember what prophecy is: “telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.” – Wayne Grudem. It is “a report of a revelation.”
- b. Be open to the various forms prophecy may take: It may be a paragraph, a sentence, a word, a picture, a verse from Scripture, a dream, a tongue with interpretation, a poem, or a song.
- c. Remember that the purpose of prophecy is to edify:

“The principal content of most prophetic utterances is defined by the effects they produce. Prophetic utterances may edify, exhort, and console (1 Cor. 14:3). They may bring conviction as the secrets of the sinner’s heart are exposed (14:24-25). They may teach (14:31). They may on occasion give direction for ministry (Acts 13:1-3), contain warnings (21:4, 10-14), or present opportunities. They may even identify and impart spiritual gifts (1 Tim. 4:14).”²
- d. Ask God if he has something for you to share.

Speak, Lord, for your servant hears. (1 Samuel 3:9 ESV)
- e. Don’t presume to know the interpretation and application
 - i. Be content to share your prophecy and then leave it to the person to pray, seek godly counsel, discern its validity, its interpretation, and application
 - ii. The most important thing you can do is to connect the person to God.
- f. Share any prophetic word with humility
 - i. Hold it loosely. It’s ok to be wrong.
 - ii. Embrace the opportunity to grow in humility.
- g. Be very cautious with words that seem “corrective” in nature
 - i. Share with extreme care and gentleness
 - ii. It’s not wise to prophesy to someone you are angry at, jealous of, is sinning against you, etc.

¹ I am indebted to Mark Prater of Covenant Fellowship Church for some of what follows.

² Sam Storms, *The Beginner’s Guide to Spiritual Gifts*, p. 204.

- h. Avoid first person, “thus says the Lord,” or anything else that would give a prophecy a sense of authority that it doesn’t actually have. Try: “I believe the Lord would say...” “I think the Lord wants to encourage you with...”
- i. Speak normally.

II. CONTEXTS FOR PROPHECY: PERSONAL

- a. Many opportunities for personal ministry like this: family, youth/singles meetings, ministry times after church, at caregroup, etc.
- b. Be alert to opportunities that we might not expect.
- c. All prophecy, including personal prophecy, must be evaluated by Scripture. Remember that we know in part and prophesy in part, so we *should expect prophecy to be of mixed quality.*

Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. (1 Thessalonians 5:19-22 ESV)

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. (1 Corinthians 14:29 ESV)

- d. Like prophecy for larger groups, the purpose of personal prophecy is edification and encouragement. It may strengthen a conviction or confirm a decision, but we must be very careful about “directional” prophecy. Evaluate and “put it on the shelf.” Time will tell.
- e. A prophecy that seems directional in nature should be evaluated on the basis of Scripture and wise, trusted counsel. It would not be wise to make decisions on the basis of prophecy alone.

III. CONTEXTS FOR PROPHECY: CAREGROUP

- a. Caregroups are the ideal place for discovering and testing any spiritual gifts, including prophecy.
 - i. The risk is a lot lower.
 - ii. The smaller the group, the less oversight is required.
 - iii. There is more flexibility for ministry to groups or individuals.
- b. If your caregroup doesn’t have worship or opportunities for ministry on a regular basis...

IV. CONTEXTS FOR PROPHECY: FOR THE GATHERED CHURCH

- a. Why do we have a prophecy mic?
- b. Why do we have a pastor who supervises the prophecy mic?
- c. What is the pastor looking for in a prophecy?
 - i. Clarity. Is it clear what this prophecy is about? What is the one thing this prophecy communicates to the church?
 - ii. Brevity. Can this prophecy be communicated in a concise and efficient manner?
 - iii. Specificity. Is this prophecy for a broad group in a general way or does it focus on a particular issue for a smaller segment of the church?
 - iv. Continuity. How does this prophecy fit in with what else is happening in this meeting?
 - v. Credibility. Does this person have the grace to prophesy in this context? Does this person's character support the message?
- d. For Sunday mornings:
 - i. Prepare
 - ii. Come early
 - iii. Come often
 - iv. Trust God