

PRESENT TRUTH

A Teaching Letter of Lifestream Teaching Ministries

For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. (2 Peter 1:12 NKJV)

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Prophetically Gifted

Introduction

Under the old Covenant, the prophets represented God in the earth. They spoke His Word and did His Work. At any given time there were only a few that walked with God in this manner. If you needed something from God, you had to find the prophet of God.

The way God speaks to us changed dramatically under the New Covenant.

Hebrews 1:1-2 NASB

- (1) God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,
- (2) in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

Now, God has spoken to us through the Son. He has become our source of supply of all that we need from God. Prophecy is even defined as it relates to Jesus.

Revelation 19:10 NASB

- (10) Then I fell at his feet to worship him. But he *said to me, "Do not do that; I am a fellow servant of yours and your brethren who hold the testimony of Jesus; worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Under the new covenant prophecy can be divided into three categories all of which relate to Jesus:

- What Jesus *has done*;
- What Jesus *is doing*, and
- What Jesus *will do*.

The Timeline of God

A “prophetic people” have to be able to express the heart and intention of God to the world in order to be classified “prophetic”. Which means that we first must understand His heart and

intention or we won't be able to express Him properly to others.

We also need to understand that God has a timeline for completing His purpose and that the times and seasons are expressions of the Father's will. An example of this is the promise to Abraham about his descendants when the Lord "cut covenant" with him.

Genesis 15:13-14 NASB

(13) *God* said to Abram, "Know for certain that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, where they will be enslaved and oppressed four hundred years.

(14) "But I will also judge the nation whom they will serve, and afterward they will come out with many possessions.

It was in God's timeline that Abraham's descendants would be in bondage for 400 years and then He would bring them out by sending Moses as a deliverer. We see from this that the stream of God's purpose flows through history and as God raises up prophets or prophetic people, they must stand in the stream of His purpose just as others did before them.

As the Lord uses people to reveal or accomplish His purpose, each one He uses stands directly in the stream of those used previously by the Lord. This gives us a continuity of the fulfillment of the purpose of God. Any prophetic person should understand the stream of God and how their work fits with those who went before. Those who don't understand this become "prophetic loose cannons" and hinder or even divert the purpose of God.

To understand our place in the stream of God, we must understand the purpose of the Father and the timeline of God. All work of the Lord, which has been assigned to us, is woven into the fabric of God's eternal purpose.

The Prophetic Person

The personality characteristics that are inherent in one called prophetically are challenging to others. Those called as prophets usually have a "hardcore" personality—they are usually abrasive to others. They tend to speak in absolutes without any apparent mercy or compromise. As a consequence, there is a measure of conflict expressed in their relationships. Because of this, others begin to distance themselves from them, which results in the prophetically called becoming loners with feelings of alienation, being on the outside looking in, feeling like a "fifth" wheel when around other people. This causes the prophetically called to withdraw into themselves, which is a great mistake.

Deep within all of those who are prophetically called (at least all that I have known, including myself) is a core identity problem that is expressed as insecurity and/or a need for approval. There is a danger in one becoming a false prophet when the need for the approval and acceptance of men override the acceptance and approval of the Lord. A prophetically gifted person must learn to be absolutely unshakable in who he is in the Lord. He must learn to separate people's response to any prophetic word that he might give from his own identity. We must allow people to reject a word without accepting it as a rejection of ourselves.

God did not design any of us to be loners, including prophetic people. While we may be alone for a season, we are not to isolate ourselves on a long-term basis. The Holy Spirit works in us to cause us to desire to be with other believers in order to give and receive of the life of the Lord and the fellowship of the Spirit. However, many prophetic people do seem to live their lives as

loners. This is because others, through not understanding the working and gifting of the Spirit, have hurt them deeply and they have withdrawn themselves from close fellowship.

We receive our prophetic gifting in seed form. Seeds have very little resemblance to the full grown plant. Anyone looking at a two-week-old fetus would never be able to describe what the full-grown person would look like. Likewise, we can't take a tadpole out of the water, place it on land and say to it, "you're a frog, so jump". There must be a growth process that causes the tadpole to grow legs and be able to breathe air.

So it is with the prophetic—there must be a growth process, which takes time. There is no such thing as “instant spirituality”, even for one who is gifted by the Holy Spirit and who has a call upon his life for prophetic ministry.

Most of the clearly seen functions of the Old Testament Prophet have been *divided and diffused, dispersed and distributed* among the people of God by the Holy Spirit under the New Covenant. What, then, does a New Testament Prophet do?

What a Prophet Does

I believe that most of the New Testament Prophet's work relates to the corporate expression of Christ and to the fulfilling of God's purpose according to His timeline. Usually, instead of individually focused words of the nature of the general or basic prophetic functions of the Holy Spirit which are received as part of the gift of prophecy given by the Spirit, New Testament Prophets are more concerned with

- 1) the overall plan of God,
- 2) the key events of His timeline, and
- 3) calling of His workers.

To function in these areas requires that the prophet matures in his understanding of the timeline of God and the intention of the Father's heart.

Giving and Receiving Prophecy

When giving or receiving prophecy there are three areas that need to be considered by both the one giving the word and the one receiving it:

- Revelation, (raw data)
- Interpretation, and
- Application.

The one who is prophesying may have a correct revelation but while giving it may interpret it in an incorrect manner or the one receiving the word may also interpret it incorrectly. If you do this it will cause a correct word to be perceived as an incorrect word.

Even if the first two steps occur correctly, many times the word will be applied to our life circumstances incorrectly. Usually, this happens in the area of timing. Many words may not be applicable to your situation until a future time or set of circumstances.

Timing is the hardest area for one who is prophetically called to deal with because our tendency

is to think that everything is for “right now”. For a prophetic word to have impact it must be a *revelation* from the Holy Spirit which is *correctly interpreted* and *expressed at the correct time* according to the plan and purpose of the Lord.

Tests of Prophetic Relationship to the Lord

There are six character areas in the prophet that must be purified and consecrated to the Lord before the Lord can fully release the prophet into the fullness of his ministry. The Lord will put these areas to the test until they acceptable to Him. (I have grouped these in pairs that go together in the way the Lord works on us).

- **Surrender and consecration:** willingness to speak the hard word and accept the persecution and reproach that results from its delivery.
- **Honesty and integrity:** ability to remain silent when God has not spoken regardless of the apparent need of the moment.
- **Maturity and security:** willingness to be silent when God has spoken or given revelation but requires you to keep quiet about it.

Before maturing a prophet has to pass all of these tests. Many times prophetic people act like a child who has a secret and can't wait to tell it to someone. Another problem area is the tendency to always want to get the credit for God speaking—almost, a “I told you so” syndrome.

As you begin to move in the prophetic, there are three areas that must be addressed quickly.

- **Timing**—not only must the word be a correct word from the Lord, it must be delivered at the correct time and in the appropriate place. Timing is difficult because prophets tend to be task-oriented people. They want to accomplish the goal. They put agendas before relationships. Rather than wait on the proper time, they want to give the word and move on.
- **Harshness**—there is a tendency for those newly moving in the prophetic to give harsh words, full of doom and gloom. Consider the heart of the Lord and deliver the prophetic word with the proper emotions. Don't make the mistake of Moses when he was angry with the people and God wasn't.
- **Pride**—we puff up very quickly. Just remember, God can speak through any Ass—just like He did to Balaam!

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