

GIFT OF PROPHECY:

Biblical Examples:

- Matt 16:18-19: Jesus prophecies about his church
- John 16:32-33: Jesus prophecies to His disciples
- 1 Timothy 1:18: Timothy's ministry calling through prophecy
- 1 Thess. 5:20-21: Do not despise prophecy
- 1 John 4:1-3: Test prophecy and spiritual gifts

What is it?

- The Greek word for prophecy is *prophēteia* it means to predict. The gift of prophecy is the supernatural ability to give a right-now word from the Lord. It must edify, exhort, and comfort the body of Christ in a way that draws us nearer to or turns us back to the Lord and His heart / will. But should never be confused with foretelling the future, this would be something that pertains more to the ministry office of a prophet.
- When Paul speaks about prophecy he is referring to the giving of Spirit-inspired, spontaneous words / messages.
- True prophecy will always draw us nearer or to or return us to the Lord and His will. It does this in 3 different ways:
 1. Edifying - builds up, strengthens, makes more effective
 2. Exhorts - Stimulates (stirs up), encourages, to admonishes
 3. Comforts – brings consolation, rejoicing and cheer

What is it not?

- It is not fortune telling or divination. Divination is strictly forbidden in scripture. Any form of it from contacting spirits, necromancy, soothsaying, fortune-telling, praying to angels, angel numbers, witchcraft, palm reading, tarot cards....and the list goes on. We should have no part in any of that!
 - o Those things are NOT the gift of prophecy. A great example is the is when Paul discerns a spirit of divination on a girl in Acts 16:16-18...
 - o The girl under the influence of that spirit was correct in her statement about Paul and Silas. But it was under an evil spirit. It was Paul's gift of discernment that was able to see right through her "true" words.
- It is not the ability to preach. Many people will classify it to mean the ability to preach or speak. This is not the case as the word preach means to proclaim and to announce. Being a skilled orator does not mean you are prophetic. Prophetic utterance and revelation (dreams, visions, angelic visitation) are much more different than preparing a sermon and delivering it.
- The gift of prophecy is not the same as the Ministry calling / office of a Prophet. In Ephesians 4:11-12 we see the five fold ministry and prophet is listed as one of the offices. You may have a

powerful gift of prophecy and not be a prophet, even if you prophecy frequently. These are two different functions in the body of Christ. But a prophet is definitely someone who ministers the gift of prophecy frequently. Notice the difference between the daughters of Phillip who prophesied or had the gift of prophecy (Acts 21:9) compared to Agabus who is called a prophet (Acts 11:27-28).

- Although Prophecy is inspired by the Holy Spirit and contains a level of revelation, it can never be regarded as authoritative as inspired scripture. Prophecy is actually intended to point us back to inspired scripture and gives clarity as to how we should be applying inspired scripture in our lives.

Purpose:

- Out of the 9 gifts that Paul speaks of he encourages us to especially desire to prophesy. And there is a big reason for that. This gift has an incredible supernatural ability to strengthen individuals and churches and draw them even nearer to the Lord and His heart / will.
- There are other purposes also for the prophetic gift, like instruction and learning (1 Corinthians 14:31) and to convict the lost (1 Corinthians 14:24-25)
- It gives us insight into God's calling for our lives and helps us to move forward when things get tough. It brings HOPE! This is why Paul was such a huge advocate for the prophetic gift to be used in the Church. To the point he encourages us to desire it!

Important Closing notes:

- The gift of prophecy should never reject, shame, alienate, hurt, condemn, or cause division, even if the person is an unbeliever. Many so-called prophetic voices create such pain and issues in the church. With all gifts and especially the prophetic we must PURSUE LOVE (1 Cor 13:1-7 & 1 Cor 14:1). Without it, we will make a big mess, hurt people, and make everything about us.
- Like the gift of discernment and other spiritual gifts, biblical guidance and wisdom must be used. We must have accountability, and a willingness to be grounded in the Word of God. These gifts open us up to the spirit realm. We start to hear and see things and we must be able to rightly discern and have our words be judged by the church. Why you may ask? Because the Word is clear, that Satan himself poses as an angel of light. (2 Corinthians 11:14)
- God will never go against His word. Never! Therefore we must endure that what we are feeling, hearing, or seeing is truly from God. A prophetic word MUST line up with the word of God, it MUST be judged if it is the word of the Lord, and it MUST edify, exhort, and/or comfort.