

LISTENING PRAYER

Prayer 101, week 5

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Our Purpose Today:

Most Christians believe that God does not speak to them outside of the Bible. We want you to leave knowing He does. There is a way to grow in hearing from God as a way of life.

Wayne Grudem defines prophecy as “a telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.”

Dr. Larry Smith says “Prophecy is a revelation of God, made known to us that we did not know, or what we could not have known through our own senses.”

Early Church and Scriptural Overview:

Acts 2:1-18

The early church was filled with the Holy Spirit.

However, some doubted. There will always be doubters. Listen for the voice of truth.

Acts 19:1-2, 6-7,

The baptism of Christ brought the Holy Spirit and prophecy

Acts 11:27-30

They acted on the prophecy

Acts 13:1-3

Fasting and worship are natural partners for hearing the voice of God.

Acts 21:4-11

They listened to the Spirit and kept company with those who prophesy.

Romans 12:6

We are commanded to prophesy in accordance to our faith.

1 Cor 14:39

Be eager and orderly in ministry

Eph 4:11-13

Christ gave prophecy to build and unify the body of Christ.

1Thes 5:19-22

Don't quench the Spirit....but test them and hold on to what is good.

The Challenge:

Potential for abuse, and misinterpretation.

Solution? Keep to biblical standards.

Stay humble and submitted to the Holy Spirit.

Always be gracious and patient to those who appoint themselves the HS Sheriff.

Scriptural alignment.

Logos or Rhema?

What is the relationship between the scriptures in our Bible, and prophetic words? Are they both inspired and inerrant? Do they both have the same authority? Are both to be received with the same confidence, and in the same way? Do they serve the same purpose? As a committed Christian, has God commanded me to be involved in both?

In the New Testament there are 2 Greek translations for the English term “word”; Logos and Rhema.

Logos refers to the Scriptures (2 Timothy 2:15). This word, logos, is creative, self-fulfilling, powerful, true, inerrant, infallible, complete, life giving and our final authority in everything. It is the consistent, absolute standard by which all other expressions, concepts, revelatory doctrines, teachings, and prophecies are measured.

Rhema Is not the word OF God, but a word FROM God. It is a timely, Holy Spirit inspired word from the logos that brings life, power, direction, confirmation, and faith to perform and fulfill it. Faith comes by hearing and hearing from the word (Rhema) of God (Romans 10:17). Rhema, or prophetic words, are specific words from the Lord that apply the content and purposes of the logos to an individual. Grudem says “the words prophet and prophecy were used of ordinary Christians who spoke not with absolute divine authority, but simply to report something that God had laid on their hearts or brought to their minds.”

Examples of Rhema:

Mt 4:4 “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word...”
John 3:34 “For he whom God has sent, speaks the words of God,...”
John 6:63 “The words that I speak to you are spirit and life.”
John 6:68 “You have the words of eternal life,...”
John 8:47 “Whoever is of God hears the words of God.”
John 15:7 “If you abide in me and my words abide in you,...”
John 17:8 “For I gave them the words you gave me...”
Rom. 10:17 “So, faith comes by hearing, and hearing the word of Christ.”

It seems clear from this brief word study that God values the Rhema and we, therefore, should as well.

HEARING THE VOICE OF GOD

“Could it be that the Lord is speaking to us in ways that are unfamiliar to us, and in reality He has been speaking all along, but our preconceived ideas about HOW God will speak or not speak to us, limits us from hearing?” – Dr. Larry Smith

Have you ever shared a scripture with someone, and it edified them?

Have you ever shared something about God and with someone and it encouraged them?

Have you ever prayed for someone, and it comforted them?

Have you ever had intense clarity while praying or reading the Word?

Are you 100% sure that it was all sourced from you and none of it from God?

Most Christians actually minister the prophetic regularly but have simply used different verbiage.

Ways God speaks to us:

- A) From God, to me, regarding me.
- B) From God, to me, regarding other people or other things.
- C) To me, from others, where the words are considered a Rhema.

We have a rightful desire to protect the scriptures as our sole authority in all spiritual matters. Therefore, when we minister the prophetic, we do so as an “invitation”. We clearly state that we are not prophets, simply Christians willing to hear from God.

We recognize that God has chosen to give His 100% accurate, inspired, inerrant revelation (the only kind He can give), to be delivered through imperfect people (the only kind of people there are). Thus, we know that there will be imperfections in the receiving, interpreting and delivering of the prophetic. God knows this and yet still commands and us to “not quench the Spirit” (I Thes. 5:19-21) by despising them, but rather to test them, holding on to what is good. Knowing that we are imperfect, we faithfully follow the leading of the Holy Spirit trusting Him for all outcomes. “For we know in part and we prophesy in part,” (1 Corinthians 13:9)

A lifestyle that is conducive to hearing the voice of God:

- A) Develop an expectancy that you will hear God.
- B) Take time to hear God.
- C) Cultivate a prayer life around worship and relationship instead of supplication.
- D) Eliminate distractions.
- E) Learn how to be still and wait on God to speak.
- F) Be obedient to what the Lord is saying
- G) Journal to be able to review your prayers and thereby build your faith.
- H) Ask (James 4:2)

Hinderances to hearing the voice of God:

- A) We have bought into a performance-based, service-oriented Christianity rather than a daily, loving intimate relationship with our Lord. (Mt 22:36-38, Ps 27:4, John 17:3, Phil. 3:7-9)
- B) Busyness. We cannot hear from Him if we are not listening.
- C) Unbelief. Many of us have dealt with limited or wrong teaching that doesn’t teach the fullness of hearing from God or worse, that God’s voice is not important to our lives.
- D) Limited view of spiritual life. Christ lived in close relationship with the Father and therefore had regular revelation from Him. Through the Holy Spirit, we can too.
- E) Limited understanding. Agabus gives us an example in Acts 21:10-14. He correctly saw that Paul would be beaten if he went to Jerusalem, but wrongly assumed that meant he shouldn’t go.
- F) Etc. Cover yourself in the armor of God. Ephesians 6:10-18

Lead with Love:

1 Corinthians 14:1 & 3

“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy... But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort.” NIV

“Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.... On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.” ESV

“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.... But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.” NKJV

Regardless of the translation, throughout scripture there is a clear expectation that we can hear from God, and that we would speak words of life to one another. 1 Corinthians 14 discusses spiritual gifts, which is clearly prefaced by 1 Corinthians 13 the chapter on love. Love is the foundation of any prophetic prayer ministry.

Basics:

- Never bring up sin, or correction (only edification, encouragement and comfort).
- We are not counseling. Avoid beginning a sentence with “You...”
- Never say “God told me”, or “I heard God say”. Rather we lighten it with phrases like, “I sense, “I feel”, I think I saw” and “a verse came to me”.
- Do not add to the interpretation. Keep it simple so as not to add an incorrect inference.
- Scripture is foundational. Share the Logos.

We are fearfully and wonderfully made and each of us is unique. God speaks to each of us differently and in a variety of ways. Some see a word in their minds eye. Some see a symbolic picture, or even get a song. We all seek to share scripture.

The body of Christ is a like a tapestry and each of us offers our own thread. Together the Holy Spirit weaves us together into a magnificent masterpiece. We are better together. (Eph 2:10 NLT)

Put it into action:

S – Scripture

O – Observation

A – Application

P – Prayer

Let’s try it!

- 2 lines
- Groups of 3

“Systemic Theology” by Wayne Grudem; page 1293,1296, 1301,
This teaching is adapted from the teaching, notes, wisdom and experiences of Dr. Larry Smith