

Ministry in the Spirit. 6. Prophecy

by Michael Flowers

The sermon explores the significance of prophecy in the church, emphasizing its accessibility to all believers and its role in encouraging and edifying the community.

Duration: 32:30

Scripture: John 10:27, Acts 13:1-3

Topics: "Prophecy"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the importance of hearing and receiving the word of the Lord. They share testimonies from three individuals who have experienced the prophetic word in their lives. The speaker emphasizes the need for unity and encouragement among believers, citing the example of the day of Pentecost. They also highlight the power of prophetic words in breaking spiritual strongholds and bringing freedom. The sermon concludes with a personal testimony of obeying a strong word from the Lord and witnessing its fulfillment in the speaker's life and ministry.

Transcript

I left a little early out of Wheaton yesterday to get back home in a decent hour, so I skipped one of the services yesterday in order to get home by 7 o'clock last night. So, had a really refreshing time, beginning with my daughter and granddaughter in Chicago for a couple of days, and eating at all the great taco joints there, right? If you're ever there, Antique Taco, okay? You will not be disappointed. And then I went over for Thursday night, and all day Friday, and half day Saturday to what's called Revive.

It's an annual gathering of our diocese, and priests, and deacons, and whatnot. And a lot of people who are checking out Anglicanism were there this time, and it was just a really great time. There was a contingency from Kenya, out of the cathedral in Kenya, as well as Singapore.

Church of the Resurrection in Wheaton, our cathedral where our bishop resides, they sent out some missionaries who have an Anglican church in Cambodia, and that's why the Singaporeans were there, because they're overseeing Cambodia for the Anglican church. So, it was just a beautiful time. An African-American church was there, helping lead worship that's coming alongside Greenhouse, which is one of our deaneries.

And so, it's just a beautiful display of the throne of God, you know, every tribe, kindred, and tongue gathered around, just worshipping the Lord. And we celebrate the fact that Anglicanism, 70% of

Anglicanism, is in the global South. And so, it's just not a bunch of British people, right? It's not.

And so, they're teaching us how to dance, and worship, and rejoice, even with the name Anglican. So, yeah, amen. Last week, I did a really brief introduction on prophecy, the gift of prophecy and the function of prophecy, just sort of opening that up a bit as an introduction out of 1 Corinthians 14.

I shared a little bit of experience in my own life, what I've experienced in prophecy, just a tad, and how I have come to receive prophecy and perceive the word of the Lord in my own life, which is a real important thing. I treasure it. Jesus said, my sheep know my voice, and they will not follow the voice of the stranger.

God wants to continue to speak to his people, right? We firmly believe that. And so, what I've done today is I've asked three people to prepare just brief, like, five-minute testimonies of how they receive the word of the Lord, and prophetic words, and what they've experienced throughout their history in God. I thought that might be practical and helpful for all of us just to hear how other people do that.

I want to set us up this morning and just draw our attention back to the bulletin where the scriptures are written and turn to page four with me just to provide some context out of the scripture. Of course, on the day of Pentecost, the Feast of Harvest, right, the church received that breath of God and the Holy Spirit was poured out not only on just prophets and kings and those who were anointed out of the Old Testament with the spirit, but now through the fulfillment of the prophet Joel, Peter is explaining what has happened. And it says, in the last days, which we're living in the last days, right? But the last days began on the day of Pentecost.

So the church has been living in the last days since Pentecost, right? In the last days, God says, I will pour out my spirit on all everybody say that with me, all all people and your sons and your daughters will prophesy. There's no discrimination now with age, right? It's not just for grownups, it's your sons and your daughters, right, will prophesy. Your young men will see visions and your old men will dream dreams.

And so you've got prophecy, vision, dreams. Those are clusters of the prophetic spirit, right? Those are different ways that God speaks to us in visions and dreams and through receiving prophetic information. And we saw that throughout the book of Acts and some of the readings today, just where it said the Holy Spirit said that's prophecy.

He's seeking a body to live in, to be embodied, right? We're full of the spirit with the temple of the Holy Spirit. And so we speak prophetically and the Holy Spirit says. And so in verse 18, it says, even on my servants, you know, class distinctions are being broken down, even on my servants, both men and women, gender distinctions are being broken.

Both men and women are being they're going to pour out my spirit in those days and they will prophesy, right? They will prophesy. And so he's putting this in the context of the new covenant. One of the marks of the new covenant is that the fulfillment of Moses that we heard today, would that all God's people were prophets.

Now, in a sense, we don't all carry the office of a prophet, but we all can prophesy. We can all hear the Lord now. All will know the Lord right in the new covenant.

And so that's what's happening throughout the book of Acts. You just see these little vignettes. Then, you know, world mission happened through a prophetic word, the beginning of world mission.

Look at the third cluster there in Acts 13, one through three. Now, in the church at Antioch, there were prophets and teachers, OK, a diversity like in Ephesians four, we looked at which our bishop actually taught that was his last message on the apostolic, prophetic, evangelistic, pastoral and teaching gifts throughout the body. And then they had everyone separate over in different corners of the room where they felt like they were more apostolic or prophetic or evangelistic.

And they got ministry and they got prayed for. And that was on Friday night. It was just beautiful.

And so this is the stream of our whole diocese is that the whole the whole meetings in Wheaton were about the release of the gifts of the spirit. So this is a beautiful time. And so, yeah, look at that.

They were worshiping the Lord and fasting, verse two, and the Holy Spirit said, that's a prophetic word. The Holy Spirit said, set apart for me, Barnabas and Saul, for the work which I've called them to. Wow.

When Paul went through Macedonia and he got into Philippi, all of Europe opened up. And that's why we're standing here today is because of a prophetic word given at the Church of Antioch. So we need this.

And what we read last week, he said, eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. So we're just exploring that. And I just want you to feel like, wow, we're going to explore this in a safe context.

It's going to edify, it's going to console, you know, it's going to encourage. Those are the three aspects of what prophecy does. Encouragement, edification and consolation.

And so that's what we're looking for when we're listening to someone prophesy. Is this encouraging? Is this building up? Is it consoling? Is it bringing consolation? OK, it doesn't have to be predictive at all. We did see an example where Agabus actually prophesied that a famine was coming.

And the church was able to prepare in order to serve the needs of that famine. So that is a good thing. But it doesn't have to be predictive at all.

It can be encouraging and strengthening all of those three areas that Paul is talking about in First Corinthians 14. So without further ado, I'm going to ask Father Les to come first and then Bonnie and then Pat. And if you guys could just come over here and utilize this, even though you have a mic on, we'll get a better audio quality on the recording as well.

Thank you, Father Les. Well, I'm a lifelong Anglican. I was actually born to a couple who had independently gone to be teachers at an Anglican residential school for Native Indians in northern Ontario.

It is a long way from everywhere. And it was Anglican. I was born there and I was first in church when I was three weeks old.

So I've been there a long time. And even so, but but you grow as you go along with the spirit. And for me, how do I receive revelation? Well, it's in a variety of different ways.

Often it's a thought and maybe it's a thought I is kind of not the type of thought I would normally get, or it's like a hunch or a sense or a feeling in a in a particularly if it's in a in a ministry setting, that would be true. Sometimes it's like a picture in my brain, my head. I just get this picture or or it could be a scripture that I sense really applies to someone.

Very rarely do I ever heard like a word, a sentence, a voice from God in my head, although I would say that my call to priesthood was in that category. I was in church on a Christmas morning by myself. Well, literally at that point, nobody else arrived yet.

It's, you know, like church Christmas morning would expect and the early service. And as I was waiting and praying, I really had this visionary sense, real or unreal, I don't really know, of the of the altar actually becoming enlightened. It sort of became light.

There was a glow around it. And I heard the phrase in my head, serve me here. And that was my my direction for ministry.

And ever since then, I've been trying to work that I'm trying to figure out what is my ministry. And I really do find that I'm more alive when I'm serving at the altar than when I'm doing many other things. On one occasion, Vaughn and I were involved in ministry prayer at a conference after the speaker, you have ministry prayer.

And there's a woman that came up and wanted prayer for her asthma condition. And as we prayed for her, I there was a strange sense of smoke that came into my nostrils or exhaust or something like it was very strange. I didn't really understand.

I certainly didn't understand it. And I wasn't sure what it was, but I I took the step of faith to say to the woman, you know, I just I I sensed this. And and then this phrase sort of came up out of me, shall we say.

And I felt compelled to say to her, it really wasn't your fault. And those two things don't in my brain go together. But to her, it made a lot of sense.

And it really helped her because when she was a teenager, she came home from school and after a while she went looking for somebody else and found her father in the garage, in the car full of exhaust. And he had taken his life. I cry a lot, too.

Well, it made no sense to me, but it made an incredible sense to her. And with the words, it wasn't your fault, it just broke off years of condemnation and her asthma disappeared. We're just amazing.

There was a time when we were we lived in Akron, Ohio, and Bon had been trained as a chaplain in Ontario, served in the children's hospital there. And there was a time when we were just wrestling with, well, what should we do? And and Bon really yearned to really get back into chaplaincy. And for some reason, there was there was this we knew of this hospital south of Akron by half an hour.

And there was something that stirred up within me to say, we really need to take you there with your resume. And of course, against all the opposition and whatever, we did that. And it just so happened that the chief chaplain, head chaplain was the director of chaplaincy, was looking for a chaplain to substitute for a chaplain who was going away for six weeks.

So Bon got the position, which then led to part time position, which led to full time position, which led to a period where she actually was director of the department during the director's absence. It all came from something that stirred up within me and an encouragement to do it. And and sometimes that's what happens to me with just at the right time.

But. I usually hear from God by receiving scriptures, hearing phrases and sentences, I really see pictures a lot of the time and I get a lot of I get dreams. I experience a lot of feelings and sensations in my body.

Sometimes just all my heart will just start pounding when I get a phrase or a word or scripture. And it's kind of a sense that I'm on the right track. I visited a church in Ohio one time and they had a guest preacher.

And while the man was preaching, I sensed the Lord told me something about his calling. And afterwards I went to him and I said the sentence to the man and he smiled and said that I was the third person that year that had said that exact sentence to him. And similarly, in the church where we were serving the Episcopal Church at the time when we first immigrated, there was newcomers that came and I was praying over them and I gave each of them words and they said that the exact same word had just been given to them by John Paul Jackson that year.

So a lot of the time it's just a confirmation. When Les and I were leading a healing mission in Guadalupe, which is an island in the Caribbean, we began with prayer with a pastor and his wife and we each had words as a result of the prayers. And the pastor confirmed that the Lord had been showing them and the leaders of the church the same callings and purposes for the church and for themselves.

And they were encouraged and it unified us during the week-long mission that we led. I had a dream one time about Jesus encouraging me to share a particular scripture with everybody, with people. I sensed I should share the contents of the dream with a friend the next day in an email and she responded that she had just returned from a week-long guided retreat and the scripture that Jesus told me was the theme of the last two days of the retreat.

And so she had felt very hopeless and was very encouraged. When I was a chaplain, I was in training as a chaplain and I was visiting in the intensive care unit and came upon this room, a closed room, which was unusual for intensive care. It's usually stalls or whatever you call them, and went in there and there was a sense of many family members and a patient who was asleep.

And I went over to her and put a cross on her forehead and anointed her with oil and prayed and sensed very strongly to break a spirit of death off of her. Just how did that come? It was a sense of doom. I just knew it.

And then I greeted the family and just left the room, didn't talk to anybody. The next day I went back and the room was empty and I asked the nurse, where is the patient? And she said she's been transferred to the oncology floor. She was actually in here yesterday when you came in.

We had just removed all the life supports and the family was around her waiting for her to die. And something happened and she didn't die. And I went down to oncology and met this beautiful young woman.

She's 26 and she was sitting there eating and just rejoicing in the Lord. And we shared together that the angels will come for her someday, but not the spirit of death. I was just completely, I was a new chaplain, you know, I was, God was my trainer.

Another time when I was a director of pastoral care in a children's hospital in Toronto, a patient was transferred from the kids hospital. She had not walked for nine months and now she was in our hospital. She was 16.

They couldn't find neurology, every modality, everybody had looked at her. She'd spent hours with psychology, social work. There was nothing that they could find wrong with her and she wouldn't talk, but she couldn't walk, she couldn't move, lower waist.

And I went in, I just have to be short here. But I did, I did sense some things about her and prayed one time with her and she began to sort of vibrate. And I thought, so I went in anyway, I went into the hospital on a Saturday and she was in her wheelchair and I prayed with her.

She told me that she would like to walk. I prayed with her, I said, well, let's pray that you can walk. And we, again, I sensed this as I began, I didn't know what I was going to pray, just that she would walk.

And, but I sensed the same thing of the spirit of death over her and I broke it and she got up out of the chair. I did, I did get the physical therapist to agree to take the, the, the securing strap off of her, which took a lot of work, but she did take it off of her. It was kind of against her profession and, but she took it off and I broke the spirit of death and immediately this young 16 year old bounced up out of the chair and walked 10 feet across the floor until the physical therapist said, no, we've got to get her back in the chair.

There's not enough staff in the room. And so they got her back into the chair and I went and charted Miracle and went home. And over the next several months, the story of some of the emotional abuse came out of what was going on, but the enemy power was broken as a result of the Lord and the love of the Lord speaking a word to me, his humble servant, to set this woman free.

And as Father Michael has said, love is at the base of prophetic words. Amen. Thank you so much.

I know there that was, we have multiple gifts functioning there that is prophetic, discerning of spirits and healing. You know, it's just, they all go together. Right.

So it's beautiful. Amen, Patrick, I just want you to know you can be a goofball and still prophesy. Yeah.

Priest to Hallelujah. And I also want, you know, I got born again on an acid trip. True story explains a lot of things, doesn't it, Rod? Oh, praise the Lord.

So sometimes it's I want to demystify the prophetic. Yeah, because Michael said a couple of weeks ago, I'm special. Do you guys remember that? And and if you've been around the prophetic or charismatic church and prophetic, if there's a lot of I'm special going on, you know what I'm saying? And the prophetic is for everybody.

It is for everybody. The prophetic spirit can come on you at any time. If you have the Holy Spirit, the prophetic spirit can come on anybody at any time.

And so to demystify it and make it safe so that you're not afraid, because there's always risk with the prophetic. There's always a little dying to self. If the prophetic spirit comes on you, there'll always be a little dying to self before you go give that word.

And so sometimes I get prophetic words quietly. Most of the time I get it quietly. It's just impressions upon my heart.

The scripture, a deep knowing about something, about somebody that I just can't know in the natural, or I've never met that person before. I don't even know their name. And so it's a deep knowing.

Sometimes it comes strong. I notice sometimes prophetic words in church or at a conference or something. You'll get all that palpitations and, you know, the, you know, whatever.

And because I think part of that's just the fear of man, because, you know, you have to speak out loud. And but you also know that it's in the moment. So God's pushing you.

This isn't the kind of thing you can go home and really process or run through your pastors or whatever. It's just like, oh, boy, here we go. You know, and and then the church and everybody else judges.

And sometimes that's good. And a lot of times not so much. It always comes with risk.

And then it should come with 10 tons of humility. And this is where the tears come and they're not your tears, but a lot of times people will receive your word just because of the spirit of the prophet. You can be completely wrong, and if you're really doing it in love and humility, people pick that up.

You know what I mean? And they'll forgive you if you're completely wrong. They'll come to you later and say, you know, wow, you were so wrong. And if you're walking in the spirit, you'll go, wow, you're so right.

You won't defend yourself. You won't go, man, but, you know, dude, this is what I heard, you know, it'll be like you'll just well, if it's the Holy Spirit, you'll you might just cry and say you're sorry. I prophesied over a woman once has gone to L.A. and you shouldn't do this anyway, but I knew her pretty good.

And it was about a guy. So don't go there. All right.

Just don't go there. There's risk and then there's just stupid. OK, and so she was going to L.A. and I gave her this word and I knew her pretty good.

And she I saw about a week later. So how's your trip? She goes, oh, everything is good. Business is good.

And then she said, but your word was completely off. I went down there and this guy actually like was a complete jerk, broke her heart, blah, blah, blah. And at first I was like, because, you know, I was young and I felt a strong urge and I want to say, well, but I heard and the Holy Spirit came on me and I just broke.

I just broke and I just got I'm so sorry, I was so wrong. And you know what? To this day, at least Facebook friends, it's been 20 years. I hear from her all the time.

Get more likes from her than anybody on the planet. OK, and so so it was that humility that brought that to pass. In 1994, Joey and the family and I had real jobs one time.

Yeah, I had a real job. I'm not kidding. And it was it was before in the early 90s and all the rest of my life until I got this word.

And the Lord told me, take my wife and my two small children. We were doing worship for the church in San Francisco at the time. And he said, I want you to take this now and just go give it away.

And I said, well, what am I going to do for a living? And the Lord said, I'll take care of you as you go. And so it was a strong prophetic word. If you're a father of two small children and you've got a real job in San Francisco and the Lord tells you to go and I'll take care of you as you go, it better be a strong word.

And so that word came strong and powerful. And I let him confirm it in me a dozen different ways. And then I ran it for Michael B. and Paul and and our pastors at the time in San Francisco.

And I gave him the five year, the four year, the three year, the six month, the six week, the six minute. You know, I mean, I ran that thing through them for months and they all felt it was God right from the beginning. And then at the end, it all came to pass.

We started itinerate in the Bay Area. I took my family for almost 10 years. We travel.

We've been on four different continents. We've been through all through Asia. We've been through Europe.

We've been here. We've been there. We've been everywhere.

It all came to pass. It was that same prophetic word that brought us here almost eight years ago. Michael and I were sitting in the we came here and visit Michael and we were having coffee in the crossroads and the Holy Spirit fell on us in the car that day.

I tell people if you stand across the sea, you probably could have seen the car shake. I mean, if we'd open the doors, we would both fall out drunk onto the concrete. Right.

And the Lord said, I want you to come to Kansas City and I want you to work in the arts. I was just starting to do professional art at that time. And and so we went back and it took two years to get here.

That's it's OK to process this stuff. All right. It took two years to get here after that word.

And that was one of the strongest words I've ever got in my life. We ended up here. I sold almost all my art on that block where the Holy Spirit landed on us for the next four years.

My very best artist friends own the lot of the parking lot. If we had crossed the sidewalk, we'd have been in his parking lot. But I actually got my art space at 18th and Oak and we were a block away.

Within two weeks of coming here, I had art space. Personal words are awesome. Hey, let's encourage each other.

We should be encouraging each other daily. Right. And so bring it on.

If you guys got something for me, good, bad or otherwise, let me know. And likewise, give me permission to love on you. This is how we love people.

This is how I love people. I'd love to just go up to people and give them this stuff. It's how I love people.

And but real quick, the story in Ireland, as we were traveling, a lot of times we would just travel prophetically. We would go out with like half a mission and then let God fill in the blanks because that's how the spirit in which we started out anyway. And we were always sent out by churches and supported by churches and on and on that goes.

You know, we are always in a local church and covered well. And the prophetic just doesn't work well if it's not covered. Well, it needs to be covered very well.

Highly advised if you're prophetic at all, get a church and a pastor to cover you. So we were in Ireland and I felt like going to the West Coast. Never been to Galway before.

Didn't know anybody there, but we really felt led of the Holy Spirit to go there. So we went there, got a hotel and I just got out the phone book and I picked a church. And the next morning we went there to this church and I was sitting in the back.

And as the pastor was speaking, I felt the Lord impressing upon my heart about a pastor's conference. And I started getting all this stuff about a pastor's conference. And once again, to demystify it, it's I knew it just wasn't my thoughts.

These weren't just like mind wanderings. I just really felt impressed upon my heart. And so after the service, I walked up and very humbly introduced myself to the pastor with my wife and my kids.

Nothing safer than that. Right. And, you know, I I went up and he I started to share what I asked if it's OK if I could share what I had for him.

And I shared that. And he said, wow, he just lit up. I could tell immediately lit up and he called his wife over because he wanted his wife to hear the rest of it.

I shared all about this pastor's conference. He's gone. Oh, my God.

We were just at a pastor's conference a few days ago. This stuff all happened, the stuff I was telling him, and they invited us to their house. We went over to their house that day.

They said, you guys have to come over and share a meal with us. And we went over, had a meal with them, and it opened up the ministry to to Galway. And when I was saying the three things, it consoled him, it comforted him because it helped him with some of the things he was wrestling with.

It exhorted him towards the pastor's group, which had just newly been formed. And then I really felt like it edified because it released Joey and I and our ministry into their church. And so we got to release what was in us and what we had brought to Ireland, which was worship and prayer and prophetic word and all the rest of it.

It definitely had all those three items in it. I highly recommend for us, you know, this is just personal, but try it on one another. Yeah, just the people you love, man, when you get those impressions.

All right. Thanks, you guys. Blessings.

Is that fun? It's awesome. Before we close this part of the sharing, I just want to recommend a book and this is funny because as I got into this topic of prophecy, I, you know, I have a big library in my office and Liz actually lets me keep some books at home. She does.

And so I happen to look and I've got this section over there, over by the fireplace where I have all of these old books from charismatic days, you know, I mean, just prophecy, the gifts of the spirit. And and I went over to look to see what I had on prophecy because I usually pull the stuff out that I thought was like really, really good. I already had that in my office and I overlooked this book.

It's a book that I read when I was 19 years old. OK, and it's written by a Roman Catholic. He's got a philosophy degree.

Bruce Yoakum is his name. The book is called Prophecy. And I got on Amazon just to try to find see if there are other copies.

You can buy this for like a penny on Amazon now. And so I started reading it again and I realized this is a goldmine. This is not dated material at all.

This is amazing. He his first chapter goes through the first three centuries of Christian history, quoting the patristic fathers about words of prophecy and healing and the gifts of the spirit. He's speaking to the church and he is a prophetic guy in the midst of the word of God community, which was a Catholic charismatic community that I was influenced by as a teenager.

The cool thing about the charismatic renewal in the 70s, you guys, is that I never was trained to to dislike Catholics. You know what I'm saying? I mean, that's the way some people view Catholics. Like, well, maybe, you know, there's just this plethora.

But man, the Holy Spirit hit the Catholic Church and the charismatic renewal in the Catholic Church is one of the largest movements still going. And Pope Francis is all about it. You know, Pope Francis moves in that and he moves in the charismatic renewal in the Catholic Church and he blesses it.

So, I mean, this is happening not just in Pentecostal churches. This is happening everywhere. And so but I just recommend this book to you, Prophecy, and get it for a penny, four dollars for shipping, three ninety nine.

So it just gives such practical advice on how to operate in prophecy and how to just think about prophecy. It's really biblical as well. So let's stand together.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/28/SID28673.mp3>

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