

## **I. WHAT IS PROPHECY?**

A. In its essence, prophecy in the context of ministry simply means **God speaking to and through us to other people**. Prophecy describes words birthed by God (not by the human mind). We distinguish between personal prophecy, where God speaks to us about us, and prophetic ministry, where God speaks to us about other people. Here I focus on the second aspect: ministering in the prophetic.

B. **Personal Prophecy** – God speaks to us about us. In order to be used by God to speak His words to other people, we first need to understand that God speaks to us on a personal level.

1. God has a desire to communicate. That is why He created us in His image (Gen 1:26). The entire Bible is a testimony of God speaking to and with humans and desiring fellowship with them. He is first and foremost longing for a relationship with us. What kind of relationship would it be if communication was mainly one-sided?

2. As children of God we have the privilege of hearing God's voice and being led by His Spirit. These are two significant characteristics of belonging to Him. Hearing God's voice is not only for a few but for all of His children.

<sup>3</sup> ***... the sheep hear His voice, and He calls His own sheep by name and leads them out. (Jn 10:3)***

<sup>14</sup> ***For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. (Rom 8:14)***

3. Jesus knew that our lives deeply depend on the current word of God. What is God saying to you right now, right in this season, today? Notice that Jesus said “every word that comes” and not “that came”. He uses present tense. Even though the written Word of God is an essential part and the ultimate foundation of God speaking to us, we need God's specific highlights and further information for our lives.

<sup>4</sup> ***Jesus answered, It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'* (Mt 4:4)**

C. **Prophecy for Others** – If God speaks to us personally, He can also speak to us and use us in order to deliver those messages to the people He wants to address. One of the major contents of the Word of God is prophecy, which covers entire books.

1. The Word of God highlights prophecy among the spiritual gifts and exhorts us to “earnestly desire” them. The degree in which we possess and walk in spiritual gifts is dependent on how much we desire and ask for them. Paul encourages us *all* to reach out for the prophetic gifts.

<sup>1</sup> ***... desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. ... <sup>39</sup> Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. (1 Cor 14:1+39)***

2. In Joel 2, God reveals that He will pour out His Spirit in the last days, identified especially through prophetic manifestations in all generations, genders and levels of maturity – “on all mankind”. This verse is crucial to understand that God does not limit His Spirit nor the prophetic to specific people. In Acts 2, Peter uses those words in order to describe the time we are living in since the day of Pentecost. New Testament community, Christianity, is by definition a prophetic community.

<sup>28</sup> ***It will come about after this that I will pour out My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. (Joel 2:28)***

3. For the last 2000 years, a new level of hearing God's voice has been available to the Church and church history witnesses that there was never a time in which believers did not access this ability freely. But in the end-time, God is highlighting this fact anew in order to prepare a Bride for Him that will be able to walk in a level of intimacy with Him that the world has never seen. People who are completely surrendered to Him, who live a lifestyle that comes out of hearing and seeing what He is doing, as Jesus did (John 5:19).
4. In fact, if God can and does speak to us personally, then it is very likely and easy for Him to use this ability in order to minister to other people. For Him, there is no difference. However, there are different levels of ministering in the prophetic and this is often the reason for a lot of confusion in the Body of Christ. Mixing up expectations and the actual reality of the different levels of the prophetic ministry will eventually lead to misunderstandings, frustration, and rejection about what the prophetic is and what it "has to" be like.

**D. Different Levels of Ministering in the Prophetic:**

1. **General Calling** – Joel 2 and Acts 2 clarify that *every* believer has the ability to walk in the prophetic which includes that God speaks to you personally as well as to others through you.
2. **Prophetic Gifting** – However, there are people who are used by God in the prophetic in a stronger and more repetitive way with higher accuracy. For those people, the prophetic can be an essential part of their calling. 1 Cor 12:10 makes clear that not everybody operates in that level, although we are exhorted to desire it (1 Cor 14:1).
3. **Prophetic Office** – High-level prophets usually have a prophetic office. This refers to very high accuracy in their prophecies confirmed by God in a strong way as well as to an increased realm of authority. They are directly called and anointed by God to be "prophets" over churches, organizations, regions and sometimes even nations. The prophetic is the primary calling for those people. They rightfully carry the title "prophet" (1 Cor 12:29). Most of the Old Testament prophets fit into this category. However, if we limit the prophetic to this high-level manifestation, then we will cut down what God wants and can do to us and through us. The prophetic already starts in a much lower level than we often believe.

## II. HOW DOES GOD SPEAK TO US?

- A. If we want to hear God's voice, we need to know the ways in which He speaks in order to become sensitive and not miss it. You can compare it with a radio. There are always radio waves around us, but we will not hear anything, till we tune in and have the same frequency.
- B. **5 Primary Ways Relevant for Ministering in the Prophetic:**
  1. **The Word of God** – Refers to the Holy Spirit bringing Scriptures to our minds (John 14:26). The written Word of God is to be the foundation and plumbline for all further prophecy.
  2. **Impressions** – Also referred to as "word of knowledge" (Rom 12:8), describe a sudden sense of knowing something about a person that you could not have obtained through natural ways.
  3. **Images** – These are inner pictures that we see internally with the eyes of our heart, for example when we close our eyes.
  4. **Inner Voice** – Since the Holy Spirit lives within you, this is the place where He speaks from. This refers to words that you hear, not audibly but that resound in your mind.

5. **Emotions / Physical Sensations** – God also speaks to us by letting us feel His emotions towards a person or by letting us feel the emotions of others. The same can occur with physical sensations. We might feel a heaviness in our arm, a tingling in our feet, like a touch on our head, etc.
- C. Further ways through which God speaks are dreams, fleeces, trances, open visions, angelic visitations, audible voices, experiences, nature, music and many more in His creativity.
  - D. Usually you will hear God's voice more in 2-3 specific ways. However, beware of phrases like "God only speaks to me through xyz." This is a major pitfall in the prophetic because it limits your sensitivity to the voice of God. We must not limit Him to those ways or we will miss out on many words He wants to give us. He is the creator of the universe and very creative. He likes to speak in various ways to us, often for the purpose of surprising and fascinating us.

### III. WHAT ARE WE SUPPOSED TO DO WITH THAT WHICH WE RECEIVE?

- A. **Three Steps of Interpretation of Revelation:**
  1. **Revelation** – This refers to a simple description of what you saw, heard or sensed without further interpretation of what it means. Example: "I saw your heart being like a diamond."
  2. **Interpretation** – This is about gaining meaning to what you received. Example: "I feel like God wants to reveal to you more that your heart is very precious to Him."
  3. **Application** – Practical implications. Example: "I feel like God just wants you to trust His passion for you and just to thank Him for His unconditional love whenever you feel condemned or worthless in order to brush off the dust from the diamond and to let it shine again."
- B. Do not just deliver the revelation as soon as you received something. Rather, ask God for an interpretation and for specific application. If we speak too quickly, the prophetic word might not mean anything to the other person and fall to the ground.
- C. We obtain each of these three steps by asking God for more. We ask for revelation, for the interpretation and also for an application of what He shows us. We do not try to figure it out with our own reason, but receive it through prayer and the guidance of His spirit.
- D. God does not always show us everything. Sometimes, a revelation is everything we get even though we do not know what it means. Sometimes, we also get the interpretation but no application. Even though you do not understand it, a simple word or picture can mean a lot to the person who receives. In addition, not every prophetic word needs a specific application. From my own experience, God gives an interpretation to the majority of prophetic words, and sometimes an application too. Pure revelations without interpretation are rare.

### IV. OUR ATTITUDE AND THE CHARACTER OF PROPHECY

- A. We prophesy in and out of love as our primary attitude. Every prophecy that is not motivated by love towards God and towards the other person we are ministering to is vain. Our attitude while ministering has to be in alignment with Paul's definition of love in 1 Cor 13:4-7.
 

***<sup>2</sup> If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. (1 Cor 13:2)***
- B. The primary purpose for prophecy is best described in 1 Cor 14:3 – to edify, exhort and to console. Many think that the prophetic is a Godly tool to bring judgment, to condemn or to accuse. These thoughts are fueled by many Old Testament examples. However, they spoke to a rebellious, idolatrous

people. New Testament prophecy is addressed to the Church, people with a willing spirit and weak flesh (Mt 26:41). The prophetic gifts, first and foremost, reveal the jewels of a person and God's intentions for a life as broken as ours. No one needs a prophetic gift in order to see the trash in other peoples' lives, but it needs a gift to see the treasure among the garbage.

<sup>3</sup> ***But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. (1 Cor 14:3)***

- C. "We prophesy in part." (1 Cor 13:9) We do not know everything, our prophetic words are not necessarily complete, fully true or cover all perspectives of what God wants to say. At times we make mistakes, too. All those things put us into a place where humility is required. We are not God, but imperfect vessels used by Him that will serve Him in an imperfect way. Thus, we are not to force a word upon anyone else, but to operate in the spirit of servanthood and meekness.
- D. Paul exhorts us to test every prophecy. In our imperfection and process of growth, we all make mistakes once in a while. In prophetic ministry, the person who receives is the ultimate judge of the words and should feel free to discard what is strange, does not feel right or remains unconfirmed by God. As ministering people, we can trust that God will grant the receiving person the ability to recognize things that might not have been of Him. As people who are receiving, we have to grant the people ministering to us the freedom to make mistakes because they are as imperfect as we are, and should examine the words in humility and forgiveness.

<sup>20</sup> ***Do not despise prophetic utterances. <sup>21</sup> But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good. (1 Thess 5:20-21)***

- E. **There are several ways for testing whether a prophetic word is right:**
  1. Does it align with God's written Word? He will never contradict Himself (1 Sam 15:29).
  2. Does it bring you closer to God and deepen your relationship with Him?
  3. Does it cause hope, love and/or peace in you instead of condemnation, anxiety and fear (which is the voice of the enemy)?
  4. Is it something that God has already told you before, is He confirming it to you personally now? You should never obey a prophetic word with strong practical applications without a personal confirmation of God. Another more indirect way of testing, but still very helpful, is to look if the foreseen things really become true or whether things at least develop towards them.
- F. For the sake of honoring the other person, we do not expose the sin of others. When God reveals certain sins, He does not do that to condemn but to bring freedom. Thus, instead of mentioning the sin, we speak forth an increase of the good counterpart (Rom 12:21). Mostly the person will initially understand and know what is meant. For instance: God reveals that a person has problems with lying. Instead of saying it directly, we say: "I feel like God wants to make you one who speaks truth."
- G. Do not say "The Lord says". This puts unnecessary pressure on the person receiving and does not provide the freedom to test the word. This was a formula used at biblical times in a context of many cults and gods where it was necessary to define which god was actually talking through the prophet. Rather say "I feel like..." or "I feel like the Lord wants to tell you..."
- H. Be patient with yourself and do not despise the day of small beginnings! Learn from your mistakes. Enjoy how God uses you. Growth is a process for everyone. Go for the fullness and never give up!

## V. WHY PROPHETIC ACTIVATIONS?

- A. Prophetic activations are small groups with the primary purpose of practicing to hear God's voice and to grow in the prophetic by ministering prophetically to others. They focus on equipping through practice, even though short teachings and responses to questions will definitely be an irreplaceable part of it, too. Since no or only basic background knowledge is necessary, they are suitable for beginners as well as the advanced in the prophetic.
- B. Practice sharpens our senses to hear and recognize God's voice and increases our ability to discern it from all other voices. We truly need to "learn" how to tune in to God anew.

<sup>14</sup> ... ***who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil.*** (Hebr 5:14)

- C. Positive experiences in a safe environment cause growth to our faith and equip us to walk out our gifts in other places with the expectancy that God is going to do something through us.
- D. Practice in small groups creates a place where things become normal to us that were normal to the Church in biblical times. We can grow in confidence and experience aspects of God's kingdom that are not always a reality in our home church.
- E. Most importantly, prophetic activation groups provide a place where you can hear the voice of a loving God who so desires to share His love with us. In those places, we experience how much He loves us while we minister to others and others minister to us. This will tremendously refresh and deepen our personal relationship with God. Becoming a friend of God, being able to hear His voice and having real conversations with Him – that is what it is all about.