

INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to 1 Corinthians chapter 14. 1 Corinthians 14. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to 1 Corinthians 14.

INTRODUCTION

So, last week I told you about my first experience in a charismatic church, but let me tell you another...and hear me, I'm not trying to step on any toes...but here we go.

So, when I was a worship pastor, I was at a worship conference at a very charismatic church and, y'all, it was weird.

- Like, there were people dancing around,
- and waving flags,
- and wriggling on the floor,
- and speaking in tongues.
- And that wasn't even the weird stuff...

There was a gal on stage who was *painting in the Spirit...*

- and listen...I don't hate art...
- I like art...
- but slapping some paint on a canvas
- to the beat of a Hillsong tune
- is not art.

And there was a break-out session called, *“How to soak your church in the Spirit.”* And I was like,

- “I don't know how many liquid metaphors I can handle...
- like a spirit-sprinkle...
- a spirit wash...
- a spirit soaking...
- a spirit drowning?”
- I'm not too comfortable with that.

And in the back of the room they were selling what they called “prophecy-garments”, I took a picture of one **SLIDE**.

- So, apparently, for a sizeable cost,
- you could wear this weird looking leotard thing.
- and that would somehow enhance the spiritual gift of prophecy.
- So, if anyone wants to make me one of these...
- I'll take it in plaid!

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TRANSITION

Today we're talking about prophecy!

- Last week was tongues.
- This week we're on to prophecy.
- And we're going to walk through the same text
- as we looked at last week,
- but we're going to take the other angle. Prophecy.

Now, same as last week:

- If you have any questions or comments we don't cover
- text them to **SLIDE 720-507-8687**
- and we'll address them in a podcast this week.
- Ok? 720-507-8687. **BLANK SLIDE**

And I know last week was a stretch for some of us, and today will be more of the same. But again, we're Bible people, and this stuff is in here! Ok?

- Our western, post-enlightenment minds
- don't initially resonate with some of this stuff.
- Right?

Add to that...

- at best, misuses,
- or at worse, abuses of these gifts: right?

You've seen them:

- Slaying in the Spirit,
- and Televangelists,
- and health and wealth/prosperity preaching,
- and husband and wife pastoring teams
 - in matching jumpsuits
 - with matching Charis-mullet haircuts.
- Like all that stuff makes this stuff hard to swallow.

But Fathom: **I want us to be open to ALL the Bible tells us the Spirit can do, but I also want us to do it in the WAY the Spirit said He would do it.**

So, I'm hoping we are stretched in some areas. Here we go. 1

Corinthians 14:1

1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-5

[1] Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. [2] For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. [3] On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. [4] The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. [5] Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.

EXPLAIN: DEFINITION

Ok, prophecy. I think where we get hung up pretty early on is in the word: prophecy or prophet.

- We think future predicting,
- fortune telling,
- end of the world madness.

But that's not it. So, let's do a little work...

- and just so you know,
- almost all of what I'm saying today
- comes from theologian Wayne Grudem,
- who I'm using at length on these topics,
- because I think he is measured
- and reasonable in his approach.

So, let's start with this: there is a difference between an Old Testament PROPHET & the New Testament gift of PROPHECY. Ok?

OLD TESTAMENT

In the Old Testament we find the Prophets...

- like with a capital "P"!
- And the office of Prophet
- came with the authority to speak and write words
- that had absolute divine authority.

They could say "*Thus sayeth the Lord*" (I don't know why I always think of Prophets always speaking in Old King James English, but I do). But the Prophets' words were written down as God's words in Scripture.

- These are guys like Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah...ok.
- And to disbelieve or disobey a prophet's words
- was to disbelieve or disobey God.

NEW TESTAMENT

Now, in the New Testament, the office of Prophet got a new title. People who spoke and wrote God's very words were called Apostles.

- The Apostles are the New Testament counterpart
- to the Old Testament Prophets.
- What they wrote and said was authoritative,
- and canonized as scripture.
- And that's different than prophecy today.

So, in the New Testament, most commonly, the words *prophet* or *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.

So, there is a difference between a Prophet and the gift of prophecy.

DEFINITION

So, then, what is prophecy in the New Testament sense of the word?

Well, my favorite working definition of prophecy as I see it in the New Testament, and how I think it works today is this: prophecy is **SLIDE**

- **A SPIRIT-PROMPTED REVELATION,**
- **HUMANLY REPORTED,**
- **INTENDED FOR EDIFICATION.**

Now, let me break that down. **SLIDE A SPIRIT-PROMPTED REVELATION.**

- Paul will use the word *revelation* in verse 30
- when referring to the impression or “word”
- someone received from the Lord.

Now, don't get hung up on the word *revelation* here,

- because sometimes we think *revelation*,
- as in God's revealed word in the Scriptures.

That's not the type of revelation we are talking here.

- Paul is simply referring to something
- that God may suddenly bring to mind,
- or something that God
- may reveal to someone
- in such a way that the person has a sense
- that it is from God.

So, it's A SPIRIT-PROMPTED REVELATION.

The next part: it is **SLIDE HUMANLY REPORTED**. So, here's where things get messy.

- Revelation is the message from God.
- Prophecy is the report of the revelation.
- So, it may have elements of the speaker's own
- understanding or interpretation in it...
- and it certainly needs evaluating and testing...
- yet it has a valuable function in the church.

So, Paul says this in 1 Thessalonians 5:19-21:

SLIDE [19] Do not quench the Spirit. [20] Do not despise prophecies, [21] but test everything; hold fast what is good.

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- Now, this is where prophecy differs
- from what the Old Testament Prophets said...
- and the New Testament Apostles said. Ok?

The Apostles and Prophets spoke with absolute authority.

- Prophecies do not.
- They are not equal to the words of Scripture.
- Prophecies today should be considered human words,
- not God's words.

Paul even says so much in verse 37: [37] If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.

- Paul's like, *"Hey, you've got a word of prophecy?"*
- *Don't forget that what I'm saying trumps that.*
- *It's a command of the Lord. It's authoritative.*
- *Why? Because Paul is an Apostle."*

So again, revelation is the message from God. Prophecy is the report of the revelation. It may have elements of the speaker's own understanding or interpretation in it and it certainly needs evaluating and testing.

- So, a word of prophecy will never contradict the scriptures.
- It is subservient to the scriptures.
- In fact, I think one of the things
- that God most often will lay on your heart
- is a scripture for someone else.

So, if someone really does think God is bringing something to mind which should be reported,

- there should be GREAT humility in saying,
- *“I THINK the Lord is putting on my mind that...”*
- or *“It SEEMS to me that the Lord is showing us...”*
- or some similar expression.
- It’s never, *“God said this to me...”* or, *“God said that to me...”*
 - How do you argue with that?
 - “No he didn’t?”
- We lead with humility, because we could be wrong.

So, A SPIRIT-PROMPTED REVELATION...HUMANLY REPORTED...

And the third part: that’s **SLIDE INTENDED FOR EDIFICATION**. Now, this is clear in verse 3: [3] On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

- So, prophecies are given for building others up,
- encouraging them,
- and consoling them.
- It’s for edification.

This is why the idea that prophecies are just predicting the future, is a false premise.

- Certainly God MIGHT reveal something yet to come,
- but it is far more than that!
- Prophecies could include ANY edifying content.

- So, it could be a scripture,
- or a name,
- or a picture,
- or a sense.
- But it's for edification.
- It's not, "*You're going to die next week.*" How does that edify?

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TRANSITION

So, now, let's take a look at the rest of what Paul says about prophecies. Look down to verse 26:

1 CORINTHIANS 14:26-33

[26] What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. [27] If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. [28] But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God. [29] Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. [30] If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent. [31] For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged, [32] and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. [33] For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

EXPLAIN: RESTRICTIONS

So, Paul puts similar restrictions on the gift of prophecy as he does with tongues.

- This is meant to be done with self-control,
- not in chaos,
- but in order.

And, there is a check and balance here, when he says, **let the others weigh what is said**. So, test...weigh the word.

And then he says, **if a revelation is made to another setting there, let the first be silent**. Essentially, if someone is prophesying, and God reveals to you that it's bunk, tell the first one to be silent, and correct them.

And he says, **the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets**. This is all about mutually checking one another. No one gets to say, *thus sayeth the Lord*.

EXPLAIN: ALL

But a really helpful part to point out is that

- this can be done by many in the congregation,
- not just those who are skilled speakers
- or who have gifts of teaching.

Back in verse 5 Paul said he wanted ALL to prophecy.

And then he just said in verse 31, that **you can all prophesy one by one**.

Now again, not everyone will prophesy...

- remember back to chapter 12...
- no one gift is possessed by all.
- But it suggests that this is a gift
- that God will give to many inside the body.

And then Paul not only says that many will prophesy, but more so, he says that we should desire this gift.

Verse 1 again: earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.

And then swing down to verse 39:

1 CORINTHIANS 14:39-40

[39] So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. [40] But all things should be done decently and in order.

Now, if Paul was eager for the gift of prophecy to function at a church as messed up as the church in Corinth...perhaps we should be open to this as well.

Wayne Grudem says this: *“Might a greater openness to the gift of prophecy perhaps help to correct a dangerous imbalance in church life, an imbalance that comes because we are too exclusively intellectual, objective, and narrowly doctrinal?”*

Now, again, just so you don't mishear me and light me up with emails...

- this is not at the same level of authority as the Scriptures...
- BUT perhaps we're missing something
- if we are unwilling to engage with this gift
- simply because the abuses of it freak us out...
- AND our enlightened sensibilities aren't comfortable with it.

Now, you may have noticed that I skipped a few verses over the last two weeks, but just so you know you're getting what you paid for, look at verses 33-35:

1 CORINTHIANS 14:33b-35

As in all the churches of the saints, [34] the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says. [35] If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.

EXPLAIN

So...ok. Um...yeah. Well, that seems like it kinda came out of left field, right? Now, don't start throwing tomatoes, ok!

What is Paul doing here? Well, there is HUGE debate around these few verses, and there are no less than a dozen-or-so interpretations floating around out there.

- For the sake of time,
- I'm not going to go into them all,
- So, here's what I'll say today,
- and then I can expound upon these verses
- in the podcast this week if you send questions in.

This passage CANNOT mean that women are not permitted to speak EVER in church. This is really one of the only interpretations of this passage that makes no sense to me at all!

Paul has already said in chapter 11 that women can pray and prophesy.

- We find women teaching,
- correcting theology,
- and leading within the early church.
- This cannot mean that!

Therefore, this text must be interpreted in the immediate context.

Now, again, I don't have time to get into all the theology around gender and roles in the church,

- but there seems to be something going on in Corinth
- where some women are causing disunity
- and distraction in the church gatherings.

So, Paul says,

- *"Stop it. If you have a question,*
- *ask your husband when you get home.*
- *Stop interrupting the service."*

This isn't *"All women remain silent always in all the churches."*

- This is *"There's a way to behave in the gathering*
 - *that doesn't buck up against*
 - *the authority God has put in place*
 - *for the ordering of his people."*

But more on that another time.

APPLICATION: LISTENING PRAYER

Ok...let's get practical. How might we practice this as a church? Well,

- I didn't have any good experience in this one,
- So, I just scoured other pastors I know for ideas on this one...

So, remember, prophecy is a SPIRIT-PROPMPTED REVELATION,
HUMANLY REPORTED, INTENDED FOR EDIFICATION.

And one way that guys who I respect theologically, practice this is that when they pray...

- you would say to the Lord,
- *"Lord, will you show me somebody that I might encourage?"*
- And then you slow down and listen.
- Now, maybe somebody will come to mind...maybe not.

And because we're Bible people, this stuff is scary.

- And I'm not saying clear your mind
- In some sort of New Age meditative way.
- You mind shouldn't be clear...
- It should be filled with God's Word,
- and while you pray...

You just you just say,

- *“Lord, who might I encourage?”*
- *Make me aware. Make me mindful.”*
- And then if someone comes to mind as you pray to the Lord,

You ask the next question:

- *“Lord, what would you have me encourage them with?”*
- And then you slow down and listen.
- And if nothing comes...no problem.
- But maybe a scripture will come to mind
- or it might be a word,
- or even a picture or something.

And in that prayer,

- if someone comes to mind
- and you feel an impression to encourage them with something,
- then I'd just urge you to humbly lay it before them.

Remember, lead with, *“I THINK God MIGHT be saying this...”*

- Humility...remember, you could be wrong.

Also, I'd encourage you to do this within the church...ok?

- The gifts are meant for building up the church.
- So, don't go running to your unsaved neighbor
- with a prophecy from the Lord
- about why they need to pick up after their dog, ok!
 - You know, “Hey Bob...
 - thus sayeth the Lord...
 - clean up after Bootsy!”

ILLUSTRATION: PIRATE ERIC

So, I heard Chandler illustrate with a hypothetical, so I'll do that.

Say I'm in the word and praying tomorrow morning and I'm like,

- *"Lord, do you have somebody for me to encourage.*
- *I want to be used by you.*
- *I want to use my mouth to build up your church,"*
- and he puts Eric Shelly in my mind.

I don't go,

- *"Well, is that me?*
- *Gosh, Eric texted me earlier this week.*
- *Maybe I had bad tacos last night?"*

No, I'm just going to go,

- *"Okay. Eric.*
- *Let's do it.*
- *Lord, what would you want me to encourage Eric with?"*
- And then I slow down to listen again.

So, I'm trying to listen...

- and automatically in my head there's a picture of a pirate ship...
- and there are cannons on the pirate ship...
- and there's a shark chasing the pirate ship.

At that point you're like,

- *"Nope. No. Not gonna happen."*
- Right?

But here's what I want us to do. I want us to just step out.

- Admit to yourself that you might be wrong, right?
- Remember, this is humanly reported,
- so, it might be incorrect and certainly needs testing.

So, I'm just going to go to Eric and be like,

- *"Hey, man.*
- *I was praying.*
- *You heard my sermon...*
- *And Eric...*
- *there was a pirate ship.*
- *There was a shark chasing it.*
- *And there were cannons."*

Now, I'm not going to interpret that for him! Ok?

I'm not going to be like,

- *"What I think that means is*
- *that maybe you're stealing some stuff,*
- *and Jesus is the shark,*
- *and you need to repent."*

No, I'm not going to interpret that for him.

- But, in a great deal of humility,
- I'm going to be like,
- *"Does that make any sense to you?"*

And then it's perfectly okay for Eric to go,

- *"No, that don't make any sense at all,"*

but then to add,

- *"But thank you for being so bold as to step into this.*
- *I'm proud of you for even having the courage to do that."*

Like, what's the worst thing that is going to happen if I'm wrong?

Oh no...someone was encouraged!

ILLUSTRATION: ME

Seriously, this happened to me about a month ago.

- I was praying while driving,
- and another pastor friend of mine came to mind,
- and I just felt like he might be struggling.

So, I just called him up as I was driving, and was like,

- *"Bro, I was praying,*
- *and God brought you to my mind,*
- *and I don't know if you're struggling,*
- *but I think God wants me to encourage you."*

And listen to me, he was like, *"No, I'm not struggling right now."*

So, I'm like, "Great...I guess I'm just being weird....sorry!"

But then he went on to say, *"But Chris, it is so encouraging that you would even call me..."*

And we just talked and caught up, and we ended up mutually encouraging one another.

APPLICATION

What if the dozens and dozens of times each week

- somebody flashes across your mind
- or you get some impulse to say this
- or to encourage this person
- or reach out
- there's actually something divine there going on,
- and we chalk it up to just stuff flowing through our head?

What if it's an invitation to play?

- What if we took that risk?
- To pray and listen and step out to encourage...
- Imagine all the uplifting that God might do
- in the hundreds of us this week.

CONCLUSION

Now, one more time. Verse 39. [39] So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. [40] But all things should be done decently and in order.

Fathom, I don't think verse 40 is going to be our issue.

- I LOVE order.
- My books in my office are alphabetized.
- My Bible reading plan has check boxes,
- and my prayer journal is structured,
- and my world looks neat and tidy and clean.
- Goodness, I color coordinate my plaid shirts in the closet.

I am an order freak, and listen, even if you are a bit more messy,

- we in the western,
- post-enlightened
- Christian bubble,
- especially if we don't run in a more charismatic stream...
- man, our issue is more what Paul said in Thessalonians:
- [19] Do not quench the Spirit. [20] Do not despise prophecies.
- That's my,
- and likely your, problem.

But what if God wants to move this way? What if he wants to speak to you and through you to build others up?

These last couple weeks may have freaked you out a bit.

- You may hear words like prophecy,
- revelation,
- words of knowledge,
- words of wisdom,
- tongues...
- and that may all sound like,
- *"What? Dang it! I was just starting to like this place,*
- *and the seriousness with which they take the Bible and teaching."*

Listen, we do! And we will continue to! And this stuff freaks my type-A personality to the max!

But let's just change the wording. Let me reframe it: what if I said:

- Do you believe God speaks?
 - What would you say?
- Do you believe God sometimes puts stuff into your mind?
 - What would you say?
- Do you believe that, at times, God wants you to step out
 - and talk with someone else
 - about the things he brings to your mind...
 - not like a *"thus sayeth the Lord"* type of thing...
 - but just to humbly say
 - *"I think God has something for you"...*
 - do you believe that happens?

You see, most of us believe these things.

- And that is what the New Testament calls prophecy.
- Don't let it freak you out.
- Behind a term loaded and abused
- is a reality that is beautiful!
- We worship a God who speaks.
- Do you believe that?

If the answer is yes, then are you listening?

Pray with me. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Chandler, Matt. *A Supernatural Community and A Personal Word*.
- Comer, John Mark. *Tongues + Prophecy (Part 2)*.
- Garland, David. 1 Corinthians.
- Greear, J.D. *Gifted 2, Tongues and Prophecy*.
- Grudem, Wayne. Are Miraculous Gifts For Today?
- Grudem, Wayne. Systematic Theology.
- Keller, Tim. *Gender Roles*.
- Storms, Sam. Practicing the Power.