



Part 2: PROPHECY:

“I knew you were going to preach on that!”

INTRODUCTION — Finding our Prophetic Voice

1 Corinthians 14

DINE IN – A Primer on the Gift of Prophecy

1. The gift of “prophecy” in the New Testament seems to be a broad term that applies to a number of ways that individuals deliver “Spirit-inspired” messages for the purpose of encouraging, comforting and strengthening others. Some of these ways may include:
 - a. Preaching or teaching (opening scripture) with a sense of power, timeliness and conviction for individuals or a community that helps them take a “next step” in their walk with Jesus. (Luke 24:32; 1 Cor 14:31)
 - b. Delivering words of encouragement or comfort in such a way that fellow Christ Followers or spiritual seekers sense God moving in their life in a deep and meaningful way – sometimes through providing details of their lives or circumstances that the speaker did not previously know. (1 Cor 14:24-25)
 - c. Sharing insight into future events that allows individuals or a community to prepare/mobilize themselves for God-honouring purposes. (Acts 11:27-29; 21:9-11)
2. Prophetic words should be tested or “weighed” in community (1 Cor 14:29; 1 Thes 5:20-21; 1 John 4:1). Some of the following questions may be useful in this process:
 - a. Is it in line with the message of Jesus and the teaching of scripture? (1 Tim 3:3-4; 2 Tim 3:14-17; 1 Cor 15:1-3)
 - b. Does the speaker and their message affirm the Lordship of Jesus? (1 Cor 12:3; 1 John 4:1-3)
 - c. Does the person who shares the prophetic message reflect love and other fruits of the Spirit? (Mat 7:15-16; 1 Cor 13; Gal 5:22)
 - d. Does the message strengthen people, and encourage them into greater love and obedience to Jesus? (1 Cor 14:3-5)
 - e. Does the speaker humbly submit their prophetic “word” for evaluation by the broader community? (1 Cor 14:29)
 - f. Is the speaker using wisdom and self-control and delivering their word in an appropriate context? (1 Cor 14:32)

Suggested reading list on **prophecy** and **tongues**: *Showing the Spirit* by D.A. Carson; *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* by Jack Deere

TAKE OUT #1 – Making Space for Seekers

In providing the proper context for how the gifts of tongues and prophecy are to be used in church gatherings, Paul encourages the Corinthians to understand how their actions would impact the ‘spiritual seekers’ in their midst. The assumption was that seekers would be with them in their meetings. This must beg the question in our own context: **To what extent are we as individuals and as a community making The Meeting House accessible for people who are investigating Jesus and his message – both on Sundays and in our Home Church meetings?** This may challenge us to constantly consider our language, our approach and whether or not we are connecting with ‘seekers’ in our personal lives.

Matthew 28:18-20; 1 Corinthians 14:23-25

TAKE OUT #2 – Gathered to Serve

The Corinthian church missed the mark in their approach to public gatherings by elevating their own personal spiritual experiences above the needs of others. To counteract this, the Apostle Paul emphasizes the gift of prophecy as a reminder that our primary goal in meeting together is not personal growth, but rather, it is honouring God with a whole-hearted focus on building others up. **“Going deep” and growing in Christ comes when we value the progress of others above ourselves!**

Philippians 2:3-4; 1 Corinthians 14:3-5

TAKE OUT #3 – Spirit-Inspired Speech

The Apostle Paul was a champion of the gift of prophecy because of its role in strengthening and comforting others in community. While we should always exercise wisdom before speaking, we don’t need to wait for a sign, emotional cue or ‘spiritual nudge’ before we encourage others. **The example of Jesus and the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives is all of the ‘Divine Inspiration’ that we need to build one another up with life-giving words.**

Proverbs 12:18; Ephesians 4:29; 1 Corinthians 14:26

CONCLUSION – Don’t Quench the Spirit!

1 Thessalonians 5:19-21; 1 Corinthians 14:39-40

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HOME CHURCH QUESTIONS

Warming Up...

1. What do you think of when you hear the word ‘prophecy’? Has anyone in the group had a meaningful personal experience related to the gift of prophecy?

Look to the Book...

2. Read **1 Corinthians 14:26-40**. A) Looking at verse **26**, who is to contribute to the strengthening of the community when Christ Followers gather together in the context of church? B) When we think about our Home Church, in what ways can we better facilitate and encourage this to happen as we think through all of the elements of our meeting? C) How does **14:26-40** counteract the notion that – the more spontaneous and unrestrained a meeting is – the more ‘spiritual value’ it has?
3. Read **1 Thessalonians 5:19-21**. In what ways can we, as a Home Church community, be mindful of peace and order in our meetings, and yet also be open to the moving of the Holy Spirit in our midst?

So What?...

4. Read Take Out #1 and discuss its implications. As a practical application, is there anyone in the group who would like to take up the challenge to invite a friend or family member for our upcoming series *“Inglorious Pastors”*?
5. Read Take Out #3. Take time and go around to each person and provide space for anyone in the group to offer a word of encouragement, appreciation or prayer for that individual. Make sure that you don’t put any newcomers on the spot! ☺

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Notes are available online at themeetinghouse.ca/teaching