

Having Charismatic Gifts: Prophecy

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 11 June 2023

Preacher: Bill Story

[0 : 00] have brought you near to the Lord. Good to see you. Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to Romans chapter 12.

The reason I brought up Bob is I get teased about falling off ladders. Yeah, talk to Betty about that. Yeah. He did me one better.

Or several. So did it happen to you too? So you're up there, and then Betty kicks it out from under you while you're up there?

Because that's what happened to me. Not Betty, but yeah. Okay. Sorry, dear. Don't say that on the anniversary, right? Romans chapter 12.

We are taking time this summer to do something very practical, to look at spiritual gifts. We haven't done that here for a number of years.

[1 : 10] And what strikes me as we look at the first text in Romans 12 is Paul does not treat spiritual gifts as some kind of extra thing, some add-on, some optional, you know, if you get to, it might be good to go to.

He presents it as absolutely fundamental to Christianity. And I say that because this book of Romans is his big development of what the gospel is.

He spends the first 11 chapters talking about what God has done. What God has done. And chapter 12 turns the corner where it says, now because of the mercies of God, therefore this is how we respond to all those mercies.

And just six verses into this chapter, he lists the gifts as part of that response. So let's read the text and then we'll pray and then we'll jump into it.

So if you're able, please stand as I read from Romans chapter 12 verses 1 through 8. I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, which is those first 11 chapters, I appeal to you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your logical worship.

[3 : 06] I know your translations have spiritual, don't they? Cross it out. It's not right. Totally, totally bad translation. The Greek word is *logikos*, logical.

It is logical to sacrifice your whole life because God has done all for you. Verse 2, do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing, you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

For, by the grace given to me, I say to everyone among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

For as in one body, we have many members and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ and individually members one of another, having gifts that differ.

If prophecy in proportion to our faith, if service in our serving, the one who teaches in his teaching, the one who exhorts in his exhortation, the one who contributes in generosity, the one who leads with zeal, and the one who does acts of mercy with cheerfulness.

[4 : 44] So reads the word. Let us pray. Father, guide us today. Help us to put, connect these dots that Paul is connecting for us.

That our life begins and continues and endures by this mentality of surrendering surrendering to you, renewing our mind so that we might serve your people using the gifts that you have assigned to us.

Open our eyes to not only understand the process and priority, but lay it upon our hearts to recognize how we fit in this body.

How the gift you've given us determines where we serve, how we serve. This we pray in Christ's name.

Amen. Please be seated. If you hear the term charismatic, charismatic Christian, what comes to mind?

[6 : 07] Huh? Swinging from chandeliers. Swinging from chandeliers. Well, that's a new one. All right. What else?

Jumping in the pews. Jumping in the pews. Charismatic Christian means you're jumping in the pews. Okay. Not my first thought, but what other thoughts do you have? What comes to mind?

This is free association here. You're living out loud. What? Living out loud. Okay. Expressive. Okay.

Tongues. Tongues. Speaking in tongues. Holy rollers. What's the rolling in the aisle? Is that the... There are people actually recognize that you are a Christian by how you are walking and acting.

Okay. So typically in our culture what comes to mind when you hear the phrase charismatic Christian is someone who has the emphasis of speaking in tongues, doing miracles, right?

[7 : 17] Healings. Those kind of things. Those kind of more elevated, unique kind of expressions. And yet that's not biblical.

That's stealing from the rest of us. And I'm not saying charismatics do this, but that association is stealing from the rest of us the charismata.

You see, the charismata, charismatic, charismata is our word in verse 6 for gifts. Every Christian is a charismatic.

Right? You think of yourself as charismatic? How many charismatics are here? I want to see all the hands. Come on now. Be biblical.

Don't be cultural. Be biblical. Thank you very much. Charismata means gifts. It comes from the word charis, which means grace.

[8 : 24] It's a gift of grace. It's the same word that's used in Romans 6, 23. For the wages of sin is death, but the charisma, the charisma of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ.

The gift, the free gift, the charisma of God is the free gift of life. Charismata means a free gift of God's grace.

It's something unearned, undeserved, freely given. Every Christian, God has given not only a gift of eternal life, but he's also given an enablement, a charismata to enable each believer to serve the body of Christ.

This is what Paul speaks of in Romans 12. He's explaining basic Christianity for which spiritual gifts, this list of seven descriptions in verses 6 through 8 are absolutely fundamental to how we live as Christians.

So, we saw last week, we looked at kind of the introduction. What's the whole context of spiritual gifts? What's the logic from Romans 12, 1 through 5, where he then introduces spiritual gifts?

[9 : 51] How does that come out of that? We saw that in verse 1 and 2, the first commitment, because of God's mercies, our first mindset is a total surrender to serve God by being transformed.

Right? Why do we do that? By the mercies of God. Why do we surrender everything? Because God has given us everything. If you read through the first 11 chapters of Romans, you'll see the gifts of God are incredible.

The first three chapters builds up the case of how undeserving we are of God's grace. Right? We've suppressed the truth, we've exchanged the truth, we've rebelled, we've ignored God, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

But God in His mercy gives us a gift of life. Right? An undeserved gift.

He has delivered us from the authority of darkness which we had lived under. He has freed us from our slavery to our own sins which Jesus says everyone who sins is a slave of sin.

[11 : 05] It is something you're so God has delivered us from that. He has changed us. He's transformed us. We can go on and on. Why should I give everything to God?

Because He has done so much for me. How can I ever, ever repay Him? It's logical. It's rational. It's reasonable.

And Paul is a very logical person. And then in verses 3 to 8 He kind of explains that.

It begins in verses 1 and 2 with this surrender to God, this sacrifice, right, which involves not conforming to this world but being transformed. But the whole transforming of our mind has to do with verses 3 through 8, how we function in the body because then He goes on to explain what is it about the will of God?

Verse 3, for by the grace given to me, it's about how we ought to think, not think more highly of ourselves or not think really about just me, and think more soberly, right?

[12 : 13] What's sober judgment? According, in verse 3, it's according to the faith that God has given us. God's shown you how to think rightly. He's shown you who you really are.

And then He's beginning to transform you. And so does He transform me and save me and set me free so that I can just do whatever I want? Is that the purpose of the gospel?

No. Paul says no. He's put us into a body. And in this body, we recognize this body is designed by God in a particular way. And so Paul uses this picture of a body.

A body, it's all one body, but it has what? Many members. It has hands and feet and ankles and hair sometimes and eyes and ears and all kinds of different members, but they're all connected to one body.

And so that's the picture. And He says that relates to the church. That's exactly how God has designed the church. The church is a body with many members, which means we're all part of the same body, but we have different roles, we have different functions, we have different gifts.

[13 : 25] And so He's relating the hands and the feet and the ears and the eyes and the heart and other parts of the body to these gifts. And the body can't function without all the members working together.

And this is how God has designed the church. Our motivation is because we've been transformed from self-serving to serving Christ.

And our thought is always what He has done for me, what else can I do for Him?

Not what does He want me to do now? It's what can I do? What can I do? He deserves everything. Okay, so that's where we have come to.

So we come now to verse 6. And surprise, surprise, we're only going to do verse 6 today. Okay. I was thinking in my study this week, well, we could probably knock out a couple of these gifts, you know, we could probably, you know, kind of break it out and get this series moving.

[14 : 38] And then as I studied verse 6, which gives us a general introduction to the gifts, and then introduces the first gift that He lists, lists, lists, prophecy.

They start tracing that puppy, this word prophecy. Oh, that's what we're going to do today. I'm just going to take you through how the Scriptures in the New Testament describe prophecy.

So it's not me just saying this is what the gift is, this is how I define it, this is how it applies. Because there's a lot of debate in the Christian world among really good, good, good people about what this gift is.

So I want you to judge for yourselves with my help. I'll tell you how to see it. No, so you can read the verse that I'm reading and see, it are we getting the right thing out of this or are we twisting something here?

Are we leaving something out? Okay, I want to take an honest look. So our focus today will be to teach about this gift so that we can be aware of the gifts.

[15 : 52] This message today is very practical. It seeks to encourage you, well, the messages in the weeks to follow are about encouraging you to engage more confidently because you know the gift that God has assigned to you and therefore you know where to place your energy, where to focus your attention, how God has put you in this particular congregation so you might know where you fit.

And recognize, oh, no, that's not my thing. I'll let someone else do that. This is my thing. Okay? Because this is how God has decided. Okay, so today we'll look at verse 6.

In verse 6, there's a whole bunch of stuff just in verse 6. Can you believe it? Look at verse 6. Having gifts that differ according to grace given to us, let us use them if prophecy in proportion to our faith. There's a whole bunch of words right there.

You see that? We could take weeks. No. So first he mentions generally about what is the gift. You know, the gifts are different, they're given according to grace, and then we'll look at the first gift, prophecy.

And that will take probably more than the time we have. But we don't have a limit, do we? Good. That's good. Like the Puritans, the hourglass when it empties, you just turn it over and keep going.

[17 : 19] Paul, Paul doesn't end preaching until someone falls out of an upper window or something, right? So if you look in the Bible for how long you should preach, it's, whoo.

All right, so, I'm teasing, right? Sort of. Sort of, kind of. Kind of. All right, so first thing we want to look at generally in verse six, the gifts that are distributed.

Every Christian is given a gift or gifts to serve the body of Christ. That's the basic fundamental statement there. So we're going to look at what they are, where do we get them, and how do we use them.

It's all in verse six. First of all, the character of the gift, they're called charismata, as I mentioned. It's a gift of grace. It's unmerited, unearned.

It is a God enablement. It is a God enablement. Okay? It's a sign by God. He determines which gift we get.

[18 : 21] And that determines where we serve, how we serve. It doesn't mean we don't help in other things, like, well, I'm a teacher, so I don't set up chairs. I'm a teacher.

It just means, where do I put my energy? Okay? And they're varied. They're different. Okay? So then we see, where do we get it?

Well, it's a gift. It's given by God. God gives it. So in other words, these are not natural talents. I do not believe. They may relate to a natural talent, but they are not natural abilities, and they are not initiated by some process.

How do I attain this gift? Okay, I won't tell the story of my brother. It is a gift. You either have it or you don't. Okay? It's a gift.

So 1 Corinthians 12, which also talks about the gifts, introduces it this way. 1 Corinthians 12 says, Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are varieties of service, or ministry, but the same Lord.

[19 : 32] There are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

So once we finish Romans 12, we will go over to 1 Corinthians 12, because there's nine different gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12. But that's how he introduces them again in 1 Corinthians 12.

They're gifts, they're service, they're activities. But the point is that these gifts are empowered by God, and they are manifestations of the Spirit. Okay?

They're not just, they're not me, they're the Spirit working through me. And you. They're God empowering you to serve, whether by prophecy, or by serving, or by teaching, or exhorting, or leading, or contributing, or mercy, etc.

Okay? The other thing I want you to notice here is there's challenges. So notice in verses 6, 7, and 8, he lists these seven ones, and then he adds something after each one.

[20 : 49] In other words, each one has a challenge. Each one has a limit. Each one has an incentive, a priority, a limit. Okay?

So in other words, verse 6, if prophecy, how? How do I use that gift? Well, he says, in proportion to our faith. Again, bad translation, in proportion to the faith.

There's no our in Greek. There is a the. It's a specific kind of faith. So if your gift is prophecy, use it in proportion to the faith, not your faith.

That would be subjective. Well, I use it however I want to use it. I use it how I believe. Well, what kind of objective, what kind of, that's very subjective.

That's kind of dangerous, I think. Besides, let's go with what the text says. What Paul wrote was according to the faith, a specific kind of faith, a particular faith.

[21 : 53] In other words, that set of beliefs that we have, the faith, the beliefs. We call, we write as members a statement of our faith, right?

And here are the truths that we hold most evident to steal somebody else's language. right? So those are the truths.

Who is Christ? Who is God? Who is the Holy Spirit? Et cetera. What's the church? Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. What's salvation? That's the truth. It's what you read from Matthew through Revelation.

This is the truth. This is what Jesus preached. This is what is taught. The truth. Okay? So if in prophecy according to the faith, then he goes on. If service in our serving.

What's that mean? If your gift is serving, how do you do it? In serving. What's that mean? That means that should be the focus of what you do in this body.

[22 : 59] If your gift is serving, then focus on serving. Look for opportunities to serve. If it's teaching, in his teaching.

So if your gift is teaching, then I should look for every, you know, teach maybe once a year. You know, right?

Just, you know, kind of keep it in reserve. I know some Christians who as they get older they retire. I'm not teaching anymore. How do you apply Romans 12?

If your gift is teaching, then teach until you retire. That's not what it says. And you're teaching. Focus on teaching. Concentration on teaching. Teach every opportunity you've got.

No, not every opportunity. Right? Look for those opportunities. If I have a choice between teaching this and doing something else, if my gift's teaching, what should I do?

[24 : 00] Teach. Teach. If I have an opportunity between serving and teaching and my gift is serving, what should I do? Serve. What about exhortation?

If your gift is exhortation, what should you do? Look for opportunities to exhort and encourage other people. When you come into this body, when you gather with people, what are you going to do?

I'm going to look for ways I can encourage people. I'm going to look for ways I can comfort people. I'm going to look for somebody that needs a... No. All right?

And then they get a little different. Now, if your gift is contributing or giving in some way, do it in generosity. So if your gift is giving or contributing, it's not like, okay, you know, a little bit here, a little bit there.

No. Get with it. If it's leading, do it with zeal. So if you're leading and you're just kind of going through the motions, mm-mm.

[25 : 05] The gift is pour everything into it. And I love this one. If it's mercy, you know people with mercy? You know people with this gift that they just, they got huge hearts.

Right? Right? They want to help everybody. What happens when they help everybody? What happens to their joy?

It turns out. So he says, here's your challenge. If you have the gift of mercy, make sure you can do it with joy. Because if you lose your joy, you need to pull back a little bit.

Big heart. Times to say no. Even Jesus withdrew from the crowds, even though they were really, really needy. See it?

So each one of these has a challenge. Each one of them has a focus. See what he's saying? Okay. So Peter. Peter's helpful. Paul's not the only one that talks about gifts.

[26 : 09] Peter also does it in 1 Peter 4. And he talks about them as a priority. And really interesting, you know, when Paul talks about them, he says, it's basic to Christianity.

Right? It's kind of step one is serving God. Step two is serving the body. And I do that with my gifts. Okay? So Peter, he's got a different perspective on it. Listen to how he puts it.

1 Peter 4. He says, the end of all things is at hand. End of the world. Okay? What are we going to do? The end of everything is at hand.

So what do I do? What's the priority? What should, how should I spend my time? If everything's, if this, if this is the end, and we are in the end times, right? And how should I spend my time?

What would be most essential? What would be, what would be really important? Okay? The end of all things is at hand. Therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of prayer.

[27 : 10] Prayer. Shouldn't I be out there, you know, evangelizing? Prayer. Really? Okay, Peter. Prayer. Prayer's first. Okay?

And above all, oh, keep loving one another earnestly since love covers a multitude of sins. How do you do that? You always show hospitality to one another without grumbling. Oh, sorry.

So, Peter says, the end of all things is at hand. What do I do first? Pray. What do I do second? Love. Love. Love. Earnestly. Hospitality.

And then he adds a third thing. As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another. Wow. Really, he went, just like Paul, he went right to gifts. The end of all things is at hand.

What's most essential for my time? What should I be doing in these days? Well, it's the same thing that Paul says. Right? God first. Pray. Love the people.

[28 : 14] And how do I love the people? Well, show in hospitality, love it also. As I've received a gift, I use it. I use it. I use it. And then what he says is, how do I use it? Use it to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace.

So, it's a stewardship. God has given you a gift. He's given you a talent. Right? He went away. He gave talents. Not, you know, talent like, you know, how are you using it?

How are you using that gift? Right? And so, he said, he adds a little bit. He puts these gifts into two categories. Whoever speaks, so they're speaking gifts. Whoever speaks, if your gift is a speaking gift, as one who speaks the oracles of God.

Wow, that kind of sounds weighty, doesn't it? If your gift is prophecy, if your gift is teaching, if your gift is exhorting, right? If your gift is one of these spoken kind of gifts, speak as one who speaks the oracles of God.

In other words, God's words, not your words. Because your words, God's words, right?

[29 : 31] And serve. So, if you're serving, so if you're serving by leading or, you know, mercy or one of these other kind of serving category, how do you serve?

Well, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies. So, if I have a gift of serving, which is leading people or giving or simply hands-on ministry to people, I could do that two ways, right?

I could just kind of show up and do it. I'm just serving. I can set up chairs and, you know, I don't need God's strength to do that, do I? Well, if it's a spiritual gift, apparently you do.

Do it, but because otherwise what happens, I start serving and I'm always serving and nobody else is showing up and I'm the one serving all the time. What happens? Burnout.

Other stuff, grumbling, right? So, I'm doing it. That's because I'm doing it in my strength. So, when it gets hard to serve, sometimes because he's going to call us to serve or speak at times when, you know, maybe not so convenient or comfortable.

[30 : 44] I need the strength of God to do that. See what he's saying? And the whole purpose is in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

God gets glorified, not you, because it's his words and his strength, not your words and your strength. To him be the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. There's Peter's, there's Peter's in-time priorities.

Sober for prayer, love fervently and use your gift. Would that be how you would kind of, if somebody asked you, you know, if you're, if you're, if you're child or your grandson, say, hey, if we're living in the last days, how, what should we do?

What would you come up with? Would you come up with a list like that? We got to get out there. Get out there. Peter's like, no, pray, love, gift.

That mean I never go out there? Oh, no, you'll be out there. If you're praying and you're loving and yeah, yeah. Let God take care of that. So let me ask a quick question before we get into this prophecy thing.

[31 : 57] How do we discover a gift? So you read through Romans 12 or you read through 1 Corinthians 12, you read through 1 Peter 4, you see these gifts and then you keep reading and then you come to a section, right, eventually where, where Paul or Peter says, okay, this is how you know your gift.

Take this test. So here's the test. Okay, when you're in this situation, no. Paul and Peter don't give us a way to figure out what our gift is.

If you keep reading Romans 12, it's not there. How do I know which one is my gift? Well, Paul and Peter figure, well, we expect you to just know that.

You just, you know that. How do I know that? How do I know that? If I don't take a test? If I don't mail in to somebody who's decided what, you know, how your gift works in their mind.

Did I tell you the story? When I first came to church here and the elders, bless their heart, gave me a spiritual inventory and a spiritual gifts test and I flunked.

[33 : 14] Because I didn't accept how the person categorized it. And one particular gift that they had defined in a certain way is the gift, we'll see it in 1 Corinthians 12, the gift of faith.

And I said, no, I don't have that. And the elder said, how can you be a pastor and not have the gift of faith? I said, well, how do they define the gift in this test? What's a test?

Well, you know, trusting God, believing God. Yeah. Isn't that what every Christian does? He defined it so low, so, you know, it's like, I don't accept other people's definitions of what, let's just see what the scripture says.

And so how do I know what my gift is? So what am I called to do? I'm called to love God. I'm called to serve the body. How will I know what my gift is if I'm serving the body?

Will I be using my gift if I serve the body even if I don't know what it is? Yes. The answer is yes. Pour yourself into the body. You will use your gift.

[34 : 25] But I don't know what it is. You'll probably know if it's a speaking or a serving thing. You'll probably at least know that. And then after you go through this course in the next five weeks, you will know.

Sorry. Cut that out. No. Part of the purpose is I think once you see what this prophecy is, it might change your mind about whether or not you have that gift.

Because we tend to kind of read into these words and think, well, that's what I think it is. And then if we see how it works in scriptures, like, that's not anything like that.

That's not what I thought. I might have that gift. So we're going to look at prophecy. Any prophets here today? Okay.

Wait. Okay. Let me warm you up. Any charismatics here today? All right. Got it. Got it. Got it. Okay. Prophets. Oh, we got a couple. Okay, good. And if you didn't put your hand up, not that everybody would, obviously.

[35 : 34] If you didn't put your hand up because you're absolutely sure you don't have it, are you sure you don't have it? Do you really know what it is? Or are you just assuming you know what it is?

All right. So let's get into this. Gift of prophecy. Let's just kind of say it in general. Gift of prophecy is a spirit-enabled ability to speak forth, quote unquote, speak forth.

That's the translation of the word prophecy. Speak forth a message from God. That's very basic and simple. Now let me give you the accurate definition according to William L.

story. In fact, I wrote it out for you so you don't have to, you know, you can get it, right? It's on your notes, right? Got it? Is it, you see it?

Okay, good. Good. You don't see it? Can't help you. So define. Let's define it this way. Well, I define it this way. The ability to report or speak, tell a message from God occasionally.

[36 : 33] And I would add to that the ability to report a practical message from God occasionally. In other words, it's a temporary kind of thing. It's as the spirit leads, as he speaks through you.

It's not a all the time. You're not a prophet, you know, 24-7. When does that happen? It is spontaneously brought to mind by the Holy Spirit.

In other words, it is in the moment brought to mind. It is revealed to you something that was unknown before. So in other words, it's not something, I've been thinking about this for weeks and this is what I, no.

It's something brought spontaneously to mind by the spirit. Okay? How? It's done accountable to the scriptures and others.

In other words, that's taking what the end of verse six says, if prophecy in proportion to the faith. So it's limited. It's a prophecy that is limited by, according to the proportion of the faith.

[37 : 38] It's measured by the faith. So I don't go out of bounds. Right? So it's judged. It's measured. And then why?

It is in order to edify, exhort, convict, and console. That's taken right from 1 Corinthians 14. In order to edify, exhort, convict, and console.

In other words, the purpose of this gift of prophecy is practical. Not new revelation. It's practical application.

It's not given some new. Because remember, it's going to be measured by the faith. So I can't add anything new.

It's got to be in line with the faith. So there is no new. It's according to the faith. So it's got to stay within what Jesus has said, what the apostles have said.

[38 : 33] I'm not adding anything to what they've said. Okay? Because if I do, then I just broke the measure. Okay? All right.

So there's your definition. That's all you need to know, right? You believe it? What's that mean? So let's see if this definition tracks with how it's used in Scripture.

Okay? How is it described in the New Testament Scripture? By the way, there's a debate. Oh, gosh. Really? There's a debate about whether or not this gift is still functioning or it has ceased.

And there are very, very good and respectable Christian scholars on both sides. Okay? Good men.

With good reasons. Okay? I'll show you why the ones I like are... No, no. So the debate is some say it's ceased.

[39 : 32] There's no more prophecy. Then I say very simply, just practically, why is it listed? Why is it listed? And those who say it ceased cite Ephesians 2, which says the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets.

So if it's foundational, there's no more. Right? Well, the book of Ephesians was written around 60 A.D. The book of Romans, which says this is an active gift today, was only written a few years before that.

So are you telling me that when Paul listed this in 56 A.D. as an active gift in the church, that by the time he wrote Ephesians four years later, now it's ceased?

Is that what you're telling me? I'm not buying it. I'm not buying it. Here's another way to say I'm not buying it, that it ceased. Because in the 80s, John wrote his letter.

Remember, we went through 1 John. And do you remember what John said in 1 John chapter 4? He talked about we have the Spirit. We know that we're with God because we have the Spirit. And then in chapter 4, 1, he says, speaking of spirits, don't believe every spirit.

[40 : 47] Remember that? But test the spirits to see whether they're from God. So you got a spirit to say, okay, you know, how do you know that's the God spirit? How do you know it's not another spirit?

Well, you test it. How do you test it? Remember, John gave us a test. Here's how you test to see whether they're from God. And he says it's important to test because there are many false, what?

Prophets. Which implies there might be still true prophets. 20 years after Ephesians was written, which says the church was built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets.

So if prophecy has ceased, how come 20 years later, John's saying we still got to test these things. Why didn't he just say, hey, throw it all out? Are you with me?

Tracking with me? Okay. Why are you getting old? I don't know. Yeah, quit yelling. I'm sorry. I'm just supposed to just teach.

[41 : 54] Because I'm right. No, no. Okay. So here's, we're going to trace it. Let's see how this word is used. It's prophecy. And it's cousin prophet. Right?

You know prophets had cousins? Sorry. How this word prophecy and prophet are described in the New Testament. Apart from the apostles. So the word is used early in the gospels where Jesus talks about the prophets.

He's talking about the Old Testament prophets. Okay. Not interested in that. I'm interested in the New Testament. Right? And I'm not interested in the early, early church where the apostles are setting the foundation.

Okay. Where Paul is actually revealing some new stuff. Right? Because the whole concept of Gentiles in the church, that's brand new. Okay. So how's it, how's it used?

Here's what I will tell you. It's not about new doctrine. It's not about new revelation. This word prophecy doesn't have anything to do in its use. We'll see about something new, but only something practical.

[43 : 02] So let's look. Okay. So go to Acts. Bible sword drill today. Acts 11. This will be different. I told you, we're going to do this actual, see how we go through the test the word.

So it's in Acts 11, 27, there is a prophet by the name of Agabus. Acts 11, 27. In these days, prophets, plural, came down from Jerusalem, the Antioch.

And one of them named Agabus. Remember this guy. He's cool. Agabus stood up and foretold by the spirit that there would be a great famine all over the world. And by the way, Luke adds, who's the writer of Acts, adds, by the way, this was true.

It was true. It was fulfilled. This took place in the reign of Claudius. So he's saying he made this prophecy and it did come true. So here's the prophet.

The prophet says there's going to be a famine over all the world. Okay. That's all he said. He didn't say anything about what to do about it. Verse 28, 29.

[44 : 03] So the disciples determined everyone according to his ability to send relief to the brothers living in Judea. And they did so sending it to the elders by the hand of Barnabas and Saul.

So the prophecy is simply a prophecy. He reveals a famine. He reveals an event. He's not revealing anything new doctrinally. He's simply saying there is going to be this event and the Lord wants you to know that.

He doesn't tell them what to do about it. They take that information and say, oh, there's a famine. Let's start preparing to help those brothers. Because the majority of the church is down there in Judea.

We're not going to help the whole world in this famine, but we are going to help our brothers. We can do something about that. That's so. So what's this prophecy mean here? Just simply reveals an event.

Acts 13. See it again. Another more prophets. Acts 13, 1. Now there were in the church in Antioch prophets and teachers. Barnabas, Simeon, who was called Niger.

[45 : 07] Lucius of Cyrene. Menaeon, a member of the court of Herod the Tetrarch. And Saul. And Saul. While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, apparently through these prophets, set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

Then after fasting and praying, they laid their hands on them and sent them off. So what do the prophets do here? Are they giving any new doctrine, new revelation?

Changing the gospel in any way. What are they doing? They're saying the Spirit says, time to get to work. And I want you to send these two guys out first. So prophecy is giving a practical direction for the ministry.

Go over to chapter 15. Acts 15, verse 32. Says that Judas and Silas, who, not the other Judas.

This is a different Judas than the, you know. Judas and Silas, who were themselves prophets. What did they do as prophets? They encouraged and strengthened the brothers by many words.

[46 : 18] That's the purpose of prophecy. It's not to foretell something you never heard of before. It's to encourage and strengthen you. Interesting. Okay. Now, let's go over to Acts 21.

We're going to get through this. We're going to get through this. It's kind of fun, isn't it? Yeah? Yeah? Acts 21.10. Here's our guy.

Here's our favorite prophet again, Agabus. Okay? This guy keeps showing up. I love this guy. This guy's kind of, reminds me a little bit of John the Baptist. I picture him with long hair and, you know, and kind of wild.

Probably not at all. Probably was clean cut. And I don't know. Doesn't tell us how he looked. So, 21.10. Acts 21.10. While we were staying for many days, a prophet named Agabus.

Remember him? Back in chapter 11, you know, said about the famine. Prophet named Agabus came down from Judea and coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands and said, Thus says the Holy Spirit, This is how the Jews of Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.

[47 : 33] When we heard this, because this is a prophet whose prophecies have come true before, so we're going to weigh this man's prophecy, his prediction as very likely.

Okay? In other words, everyone believed what he said. Verse 12. When we heard this, we and the people there urged him, Paul, not to go up to Jerusalem.

If you go to Jerusalem, you're going to get bound and arrested and in prison. So don't go. We love you, Paul. We don't want, Paul, don't go. What's Paul do? Verse 13. Then Paul said, what are you doing?

Weeping and breaking my heart. For, whew.

Why do you think people are saying don't go? Do they want Paul directly to disobey this prophecy? No. Why are they saying don't go? Because, by the way, Luke concludes himself, we and all the people said don't go because they love Paul.

[48 : 56] So, Paul, thanks, guys, making it harder for me. Right? What are you doing? You're breaking my heart. Okay, stay with you.

Go get persecuted. Okay, what should I do? Well, when Jesus converted me, he said, you're going to suffer for my namesake. Okay, there we go. And Paul says, I expect this.

I'm not only ready to be in prison, but even to die in Jerusalem for the name of Jesus.

And since he would not be persuaded. And since he would not be persuaded. All right, let the Lord be done. Okay, Lord's will be done. We tried.

So, you see what's happening. So, what is Agabus doing? What's his prediction? What's his prophecy? He predicts that Paul will be imprisoned, which you keep reading chapter 21 of Acts.

[50 : 03] You'll see that by verse 27, he gets arrested. The problem is, Agabus said, who's going to bind him in verse 11 there?

Thus says the Holy Spirit, this is how the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns his belt and deliver men to the hands of the Gentiles. So, you get to verse 27 of the same chapter, and the Jews don't bind him.

The Romans do. So, some say, see, Agabus is a false prophet. Oh, sure, he got arrested and imprisoned. But technically, the Jews didn't bind him.

So, they're saying, see, it's... So, how do you weigh that? What do you think? Is Agabus a false... Is prophecy false here?

Did Paul get in prison? Yes. Did the Jews do the binding? No. But if you read, the Jews incited everyone to bind them. So, let's pick on words, right?

[51 : 11] Did the symbolic action happen? Did they take a belt and bind him? No. It was a symbolic act. They will restrain him.

And the Jews will lead the charge for this. Oh, they won't put their hands on him. But it... Okay. Are you with me? So, some would say, see, here maybe is the difference between an Old Testament prophet and New Testament prophecy.

Old Testament prophet. If his prophecy, if his prediction does not come out as he said, what is he considered? A false prophet.

In the New Testament, Agabus says this, and there's a technicality. Is he a false prophet? Is he a false prophet? No. Wait a little different. Okay?

Wait a little different. Okay. So, let's go over it now to 1 Thessalonians 5. This is helpful. 1 Thessalonians 5.

[52 : 25] It's right before 2 Thessalonians, if you have trouble finding. 1 Thessalonians 5, 19 to 21. So, this is kind of his summary section here in 1 Thessalonians 5.

In verse 16, it says, rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and everything give thanks, for this is the will in Christ Jesus for yourself. Okay? So, quick, you know, rejoice, give thanks, right?

Pray always. And then verse 19. Oh, got to add some more. Do not quench the spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything. Hold fast to what is good. Abstain from every form of evil. Did you see prophecies in there?

Did we go too fast? Verse 19, do not quench the spirit. 20, do not despise prophecies. Well, if they're going to cease, right?

I mean, this would be Paul's opportunity to say, yeah, forget, you know, prophecies, just despise them. Forget them. I mean, it's over. There's no more prophecy. No, what he says is, do not quench the spirit.

[53 : 29] What does that mean? Don't put water on the fire of the spirit. The spirit is working. What is, how does the spirit work? Well, sometimes the spirit works through prophecies.

So, don't quench the spirit by despising prophecies. Oh, it's a prophecy. Well, we don't believe in those anymore. Don't quench the spirit. Don't despise prophecies.

So, what do we do when the prophecy comes? What if it's a bad prophecy? Well, verse 21, test. There it is again. Test it. If prophecy according to the proportion of the faith.

How do we test it? 1 John chapter 4, how do we test the spirits? Don't believe every spirit because there's lying spirits. There are false prophets. How do I test it? 1 John 4, what do I test?

I don't, how do I test the spirits? Do you remember what John said? 1 John 4? How do I objectively test it? I don't test it by, well, I got a bad feeling.

[54 : 34] Yeah, well, good for you. The people had a bad feeling about the Agabus, right? So, that ain't how you judge it. How do you judge? So, John says, don't believe every spirit, right?

Test the spirits to see whether they are from God. Why? Because there's many false prophets in the world today. So, what do I do? Here. Here is the spirit of God says this. Every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ come in the flesh is from God.

That's test one. Do they confess Jesus has come in the flesh? Do they confess Jesus as the gospels present him as coming in the flesh? God taking flesh, living this life and dying and et cetera, right?

That's 1 John's message about who Jesus is. Okay? That's number one. Do they get Jesus right? Do they get the gospel right? Okay? So, if their gospel's not, if their teaching of Jesus is off, if their gospel's off, then they're false.

Period. That's objective. And then he gives a second one. He talks about it. That these, talking about the false prophet, these are from the world and they speak from the world and the world listens to them.

[55 : 45] That's the second test. How do you know a false prophet? One, do they get the gospel right? Two, is their message worldly?

Is their message what the world would listen to? So, can I pick on J.O.? Can I pick on Joel? Just to make this practical.

Joel, does he get Jesus right? Pretty much. He believes in the same Jesus. Okay, so then Joel's okay, right?

Does his message come across worldly? Yes. Yes. Yes. It's about you.

We come into my house on my day, right? Because it's about me. Now, he won't say it that bluntly, but that's his message.

[56 : 47] Your best life now. That's his book. Your best, because it's about you. And your best life now, because it's all about you now.

You should be happy and wealthy and you should be healthy and all those kind of things. That's Joel. The most popular pastor in America. Probably the most downloaded.

He probably gets 30 million. What do we get? We get like 30. So, I don't know. We got to work on that. That's how we know.

It's not about new truth, because he's saying we test it. We don't despise prophetic utterances, but we test them, which means it can't be about something that's a new revelation or an addition to the faith.

It has to be about something practical. So, the question is, so when Agabus says there's going to be a famine, how do you test that? Yeah.

[57 : 55] That's how you tested the Old Testament prophets. If they make a prophecy, you can wait and see. And if it doesn't come true, then he's false. If it comes true, then he's true. So, Agabus was right. As Luke says, oh, yeah, that's happened.

And then he says, oh, Paul's going to be bound. How do I test that? Well, let's wait and see. And by the way, by that time, Agabus' reputation was pretty good.

So, everybody's like, oh, this is going to happen. Remember, he already said that. Agabus, he really hears from God. We confirm he has that gift.

Okay. But I can test the practical stuff. So, let's go now to 1 Corinthians 14. How much time have I got? Who knows? Five minutes?

Got it. No problem. 1 Corinthians 14. Here's where it gets real practical because Paul devotes the whole chapter of 1 Corinthians 14 to the comparison of two gifts, the gift of prophecy and the gift of tongues.

[58 : 56] Okay? He's going to compare the two. What's the difference between them? What's their purpose? What's their effect? How do they work? Okay? He's going to compare the two. So, 1 Corinthians 14 verses 1 through 4.

He says, pursue love. He earnestly desired the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. Wow. If you're going to desire the spiritual gifts, especially prophecy, it's his favorite.

Apparently. Apparently. It's a really, really good gift. It's really helpful in the congregation. Verse 2. For one who speaks in a tongue. Now, here's this comparison.

The 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. On the other hand. So, tongues isn't helpful to the body.

It's not helping anybody. It's just for their own thing. So, verse 3. On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to the people. For what purpose? For their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

[60 : 01] Huh. It's very practical. The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. And so, that's why Paul's saying, yeah, go prophecy.

Because it's not just self-help. It's people help. Let's do that one. Okay. Go down to verse 22. 14, 22. Find it here.

Comes after 21. Verse 22. Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers. While prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers.

If they're fair. Now, watch how he describes the use of this gift. If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues and outsiders or unbelievers enter, what are they going to say?

Well, he's going to tell you. Won't they say? You people are out of your minds. What's going on? You're nuts. What's going on? No one knows. It's all confusing. No one knows what's going on. Right? Just making an observation.

[61 : 07] But, verse 21. If I'll prophesy. Here's the difference. If I'll prophesy. Which he's saying a lot of people have this gift. Okay?

Not just a few. If I'll prophesy. All kinds of people prophesy. And an unbeliever outsider enters. What happens when he hears prophecy?

He's convicted. He's convicted. By each one of them. And he is called to account. By all.

Watch this. 25. What else happens? The secrets of his heart are disclosed. How did those people know what I was thinking? How did those people know what I was hiding inside?

Prophecy reveals that. And so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you. Because he's just experienced the power of God through your words.

[62 : 10] Because he's never heard that before. It pierces. Now, that can happen by preaching. That can happen by teaching.

But we're talking about prophecy, which is a spontaneous bringing to mind of something. So, how does this look?

Go down to verse 29. Okay? Verse 29 in 1 Corinthians 14. So, he's talking about the order of worship. So, how do we do this? So, how does prophecy work within the gathering of the church?

Verse 29. Let two or three prophets speak. And let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent.

For you can all prophesy one by one so that all may learn and all be encouraged. The spirits of the prophets are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

[63 : 09] So, how does this work? Orderly, one by one. So, say a service is happening and say we're doing prayer and share. Say we're just, you know, different part of our service.

And somebody says, Pastor or Mark or Rick, could I say something? Okay. Okay, Brother Mark. Go ahead and tell us what you got. God's put something on my heart.

I really need to say it. Why am I emotional?

It's because no one is an organ. That's it. That's it. You ever seen that happen? You ever been in the body where somebody says something?

They're just speaking. And they just felt led by God. And they say something. And it's piercing. You ever seen that? Experienced that?

[64 : 14] Experienced it here? Sometimes we're discussing something and somebody will just, you know, where'd you get that?

Just felt I needed to say it. What is that? Had they been studying all week and thinking, no, it's not. It was spontaneous. It's a revelation.

It's a revelation. It's a revelation. Not of some weird thing. It's simply, it's like the prophets in Acts 13 that said, we need to send some people out.

And I think it's supposed to be Paul and Barnabas. Well, they didn't say that. They said the Spirit's saying, and everybody's going, yeah, I think that's absolutely right.

So, it's practical in a way that the church is applying. It's something that's revealed by God. I don't know how to explain this. That has a practical application.

[65 : 19] Okay? It's not some big heavy thing. It's just simply, hey, I think God's moving in our body this way. And I think we should look at doing this. It may not even be phrased that tentative.

It might simply be, God's saying we need to do this. How do you know? I feel really strongly. You've been praying about that?

Nope. Just came up. Just as our discussion came. I think that's how it looks. Okay? I think that's how it looks. Did anybody have a message from God in 2019 about 2020?

Something happened in 2020? Anybody? Because you didn't say it. I'm just saying, did anybody have something that they should have said to the body? Say, hey, next year, government's going to be doing something, and it's going to mess up everybody's lives?

Well, you might not have said government's going to. You didn't know it was called COVID, but you would have said, something's happening next year. Nobody? I bet that happened in some church.

[66 : 25] Okay. Okay. So, we notice it's spontaneous revelation, and notice that they're in subjection to one another.

It's no, it's no, oh, the prophets sit up here, you know, in the big three. We need to get our throne out. We got, in our storage, we got an old throne that used to be sit up in the front of the church.

We put those up here. We have our prophets sitting up here. That'd be cool. It's not like that. They're not like they're special. It's just, you know, they're all accountable to each other. It's not like, prophet, hey, okay, we got to listen to, you know, Agabus.

No, Agabus has got to listen to Barnabas. Barnabas gets to weigh in on Agabus, and Agabus gets to weigh in on Barnabas and Silas. What about Paul? Well, Paul's pretty weighty.

Well, no, but he's accountable to Agabus. Agabus, and he don't like Agabus because Agabus takes his belt up and, you know, Agabus gets kind of rough with Paul. See what I'm saying?

[67 : 24] It's not some untouchable person. It's not kind of this mysterious, well, I'm a prophet. You can't touch me. Okay, if you hear that, Paul's prophet right there. Okay?

You have to listen to me because God's speaking to me. Okay, but we're going to evaluate that. If God is speaking to you, then absolutely we need to listen to you. But I don't know just because you said it that God's speaking to you.

Tell us what you got to say. Then we'll evaluate it. Okay, so there's the gift. Got it? Any prophets here today?

Thinking maybe, huh? Maybe you don't know for sure, but you know what? I think I've experienced that. I think God's used me like that. I haven't predicted any famines lately, but, you know.

I didn't know about the COVID thing, but practical applications within the body, yeah. I think I've been there. Don't despise prophetic utterances.

[68 : 28] So what difference does it all make? How do we recognize our gift? As I said, as you pour yourself into the lives of others, as you get involved in the church, as you spend time with people, as you're engaged in service with one another, as you do ministry with one another, you will be using your gift, even if you don't know what it's called.

And as we study these, and you become aware of what they are, how they kind of look, then as you are praying through this and serving, you or others will say, I think you got that gift.

Jimmy? We're coming to Jimmy's gift in a few weeks, I think. Okay? We can help each other by saying, sister, you got that mercy one, so I better be seeing a smile on your face all the time.

No, no, no, no. So I'll be praying for you because I know, you know, yeah. Okay? We can help each other that way too. Okay. Instead of matter notes, and we ended before 12.

Yes. Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. We thank you for how you design the body. You do it like we wouldn't do it.

[69 : 51] And you give gifts to each of us, probably not what we would choose for ourselves. I wouldn't choose an upfront gift for myself.

So we thank you for the way you do it according to your wisdom. And so, Father, help us as a body. This helps us to have confidence in ministering to one another.

It also helps us to see you active among us. Because you empower those gifts. And you know what this body needs.

It needs these different gifts done by the very people of this church who you've given it to. And as Peter said, Lord, help us to do these gifts, to serve one another, to speak as if it's the very word of God and to serve by the very power of God.

So that Jesus gets all the credit. This is what we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.