

A Prophetic People – Session 4 RISK and SAFETY notes.

Introduction

Slaves need constant instruction, Sons do not because they share the Father's heart. A father trusts his sons. Although Jesus said and did what He heard Father speaking and saw Him doing, it doesn't mean that Jesus was in a 24 hour a day dialogue with Father. It simply means that His heart was submitted and He had a constantly inclined ear and eye as He went about His Father's business.

When we are gifted by God in a particular area, we have been given a mandate to use it by virtue of the dispensation of the gift! You don't need permission from God to prophesy if you are gifted prophetically although you will need train yourself and have permission to use that gift in an **orderly manner** within the body of Christ! However, since God gave you the gift, He expects you to steward it, use it, practice it, hone it and be fruitful with it. So, keep your ear inclined!

Safety in delivering prophetic utterances

Here are some guidelines for using the prophetic gift that I've picked up over the years. They are questions and thoughts we can ask of ourselves to discern whether we are a safe place for the prophetic.

1. Deal with your ego (the flesh, pride).

The greatest hinderance to the safe use of the prophetic gift is the ego. If you are still in a place of insecurity, of needing validation or affirmation, of needing to be 'seen', then deal with the ego by becoming secure in your identity in Christ first. Otherwise you will inadvertently be led by those needs (in the flesh) and not by the Spirit of God.

Remember, your worth is determined by what God declares about you (you are a child of God, forgiven, secure and accepted in the beloved. You have an inheritance with the saints, and you are not alone etc). Your worth is not determined by your competency in your gift or any aspect of your performance.

2. Check your motives.

God speaks because He loves His creation and wants to draw us deeper into relationship with Him. If we are not motivated by that same love, then we aren't motivated by God (1 Cor 13). If we are motivated by love then even if we are inaccurate we can bless someone with the love in which the word was shared.

Does the word edify comfort or exhort? (1 Cor 14:3)

Does the word point us to or reveal Jesus? (this is what the rightly divided canon of scripture does!)

Never be tempted to utterance by the desire to control or manipulate! God works by

3. Learn patience.

Not everything you receive as an utterance is necessarily for 'right now'. Sometimes God will speak to you about something over the course of time. Also, you may not have the whole of the picture yet, nor have permission for when to deliver it. If it's a prophetic utterance from God, it'll be eternal in nature and it'll keep. If in doubt, share it with a trusted friend or a mature believer who hears from God. They should be able to season your word with some wisdom. In the multitude of counsellors

there is safety. (Note this is different to a word of knowledge/wisdom which normally IS time bound. Learning the difference comes with maturity)

4. Practice humility and be teachable and correctable

When giving a prophetic utterance leave space for it to be weighed, challenged, discerned and witnessed to. Use open language to invite the community of faith to weigh. For example, use “I believe the Lord is saying.....” or “I believe God is showing me.....” instead of “Thus sayeth the Lord”. There is nothing that closes down conversation more quickly than “Thus sayeth the Lord”. If you think about it logically, there are only 2 outcomes here. Either **EVERYTHING** you just uttered is 100% truth, or you are a liar.

Correction is part of how we grow in spiritual maturity. The times of greatest growth for me personally have been when I have been corrected. Don't be a fragile believer that takes offence and falls to pieces when rebuke/correction are offered in love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend.

5. Know the scriptures

It is so important for us to be reading and understanding the scriptures. God will often drop a verse or passage into your spirit for others or for the church. Sometimes it forms the basis of what God wants to elaborate upon with prophetic utterance.

However, be careful here. It is so easy to find a verse to justify your current views or beliefs and totally be of the wrong spirit. Don't ever weaponize the Bible against people! (for an extreme example see Appendix 1). When the disciples wanted to call down fire from heaven (just like Elijah did) upon the Samaritan village that rejected Jesus, Jesus rebuked them and declared “you know not what manner of spirit you are of” Luke 9: 51-56

6. Stay close to God.

It is easy to hear someone's voice, tone and heart when you are close to them. It is more difficult if you are in a different room. Even more so if you are on a different planet!!

Safety in Weighing Prophetic Utterances

Here are some questions you can ask to discern whether a word is from God. It is not an exhaustive list!!

1. Does it witness with scripture, with your spirit, and with other mature believers?

When God speaks it should make sense to you and witness with something that God is already speaking to you in your spirit. God is not cryptic, even though we know and prophecy in part, He is the master communicator and can get His message across!

Does the word resonate with what you know of the scriptures? Does the word misappropriate scripture (as per point 5 above). Is the word infused with the spirit of Christ? Do trusted friends and mature believers witness with that word given to you?

When God speaks to the church, the body should witness to it (not just 1 person). Is it in keeping with what God is already saying? Does it edify, exhort or comfort? Does it seek to manipulate, control, coerce? Is the word “emotionally charged”? Does the word encourage us to deeper intimacy with God?

2. Do you have supernatural peace?

The peace God gives is a useful barometer. Does the word make you feel afraid (as in terrified!)? Remember, there is no fear in love but perfect Love (God is love) casts out fear. Where God is.....fear is not!

3. Is it in line with the gift and call of God on your life?

The gifts and call of God are without repentance (irrevocable!). A word from God is going to move you closer to your gift and primary call not away from it.

Appendix 1: Safety in the Word of God

Example of bad use of scripture to justify atrocities

This is a somewhat extreme example but illustrates the point of using God's Word inappropriately.

In 1637 the English colonial leadership in Connecticut sought to launch a war of aggression against the Pequot tribe for the sole purpose of acquiring their cultivated land. A war party of ninety settlers was raised and placed under the command of John Mason. When some of the colonists expressed moral qualms about launching an unprovoked attack on their peaceful neighbours, the matter was referred to their chaplain, the Reverend John Stone. After spending the night in prayer, Reverend Stone "was 'fully satisfied' with Mason's proposal."

At dawn on May 26, 1637, the armed colonists attacked "the main Pequot village at Mystic Lake on the central Connecticut River, killing an estimated 400 to 700 Indians. Most of the dead were women and children—often historically the victims of ethnic cleansing—burned to death in their wigwams as the English slaughtered those who ran." Captain Mason describes the slaughter in these words:

"Thus was God seen in the Mount, Crushing his proud Enemies and the Enemies of his People...burning them up in the Fire of his Wrath, and dunging the Ground with their Flesh: It was the LORD's Doings, and it is marvellous in our Eyes!"

*Notice how John Mason attributes the massacre of Pequot Indians to the actions of God. What followed over the next few months was the virtual extinction of the Pequot tribe. But apparently not all the colonists were comfortable with a Christian-led genocide. In his critically acclaimed history of Native America, *The Earth Shall Weep*, James Wilson writes,*

There also seem to have been colonists with misgivings about what had happened. Captain Underhill was clearly replying to criticism when he wrote: "It may be demanded, Why should you be so furious? (as some have said). Should not Christians have more mercy and compassion?" He echoes Mason by taking his defence from the Old Testament, presenting the English—typically—as the put-upon underdog in a crusade against Evil:

"...I would refer you to David's war. When a people is grown to such a height of blood and sin against God and man... Sometimes the Scripture declareth women and children must perish with their parents... We had sufficient light from the Word of God for our proceedings."

There you have it. The Bible weaponized to bless barbarism. Genocide justified in the name of God. This kind of biblical justification of genocidal violence against the native peoples of North America continued throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. More recently it has also been used in the ethnic cleansing of the Tutsi's by the Hutu's in Rwanda. They saw the Tutsi's as modern-day Canaanites and themselves as God's people Israel!

In the light of Christ's call to love our enemies, there is a sad and twisted logic to evoking God's will as the rationale for ethnic cleansing.

BE CAREFUL HOW YOU HANDLE GOD'S WORD!