

#15 Recording and Reviewing God's Prophetic Words -- Rewriting

One of the secrets of good writing is rewriting. C.S. Lewis was famous for being able to sit down and write publishable text without any editing. But most of us are not as fluent with words as Lewis. And most writers take time to write, review, edit, and rewrite, sometimes over and over again. There is value in that. We want to set the right tone in our writing. We want to get the "voice" right and be clear, comprehensible, and understandable. It is important for us to get the words right.

Ernest Hemingway was famous for rewriting. He would often drive publishers crazy submitting multiple rewritten texts. A journalist once asked him why he felt the need to rewrite his material over and over again. His simple reply was, "I need to get the words right." For example, after his death, family members found 47 copies of the final chapter of "Farewell to Arms" in his files.

But what does rewriting have to do with journaling? We need to get the words right. When a word is given to you, it is helpful if you will write it down in your journal. Even if you have an audio recording of the word, recording it in writing is important. We do not want to let the word of God fall to the ground, get lost, or let the devil steal it. Writing the word helps solidify it in our memory. There is, also, a secondary benefit to writing down the word; seeing the words on the page gives us a different perspective and that helps us understand God's word for us. It helps us begin to recognize the way He speaks personally to us.

Now, rewrite. After you have recorded a word given to you, let the word sit for a time or a season. Without looking at the word again, rewrite it as you remember it. Go back and compare the two. Sometimes the way we remember the word opens a new insight into the word. At other times we find that we have lost an important aspect of the word as it was originally given. The discipline of rewriting then has helped us hold fast to what God has spoken into our lives. The discipline of rewriting helps us get the word right.

Review the word. Journaling helps us remember. Many of you have read the history that I wrote on the tenth anniversary of our parish. That writing of our history was only possible because we recorded the prophecies and I kept a journal. That history was birthed because on a retreat that I took in 2004 the Lord told me to go back and review the prophecies said over me when we made the move into the CEC. By rereading and rewriting those prophecies and my journal entries I was renewed and refreshed in my calling as a priest and as rector of this parish. As I wrote and rewrote the words that had been received in our worship services, and those given to me personally, I realized that the members of the parish might also be encouraged by rereading, reviewing, and even possibly rewriting those words for themselves.

A prophetic word is given to us for strengthening, encouragement, and comfort. (1 Cor. 14:3) We want to hold fast to such words. Writing, rewriting, and reviewing those words keeps them fresh in our spirits. The Psalmist says, "I hold fast to your word, O Lord." (Psalm 119:31) Rewriting assists us in that discipline. Rewriting helps us "get the words right."