

#2 What is Prophecy?

Prophecy is the voice of the Holy Spirit. It is our Lord speaking into the life of the Church, into the lives of individuals, and into the community at large. God wants His will to be known. He has given us the revelation of that will in Holy Scripture and He continues to unfold that revelation through the ministry of the Church. He sent His Holy Spirit upon the Church and pours out gifts upon His people to build up His Church. Prophecy, one of the many gifts of the Holy Spirit, is a means our Lord uses to give light and understanding to His revelation. Prophecy is the voice of the Holy Spirit revealing and illuminating the Mind of Christ.

A quick word about what prophecy is **NOT**. It is not fortune telling. It is not new revelation. A true prophetic word will not contradict Scripture, nor will it detract from or add to the revealed Word of God in the Bible. Prophecy is not a substitute for the reading and study of Holy Scripture. People who flit from one prophetic conference to another hoping for a word from the Lord, but who seldom spend time in Bible study and prayerful reading of the Word miss the whole point. Prophetic words are given to illuminate what God has already spoken through the Scriptures. Prophetic words are also not given to induce guilt in the hearer. They are not words of condemnation nor damnation. The gift of prophecy emanates from the heart of God. Prophecy is born in His love. God is love and His Word conveys His being. A true prophetic word will be given in love and be confirmed by the Church. Both Old and New Testament teaching declares that every word must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. (Deut. 19:15; 2 Cor. 13:1)

God's Word will encourage, exhort, and comfort the hearers. It's about relationship. God is continually reaching out to convey His love to this broken world. He is always more anxious to speak to us than we are to hear. If we are honest, we will admit that we spend less time in the Word than we do listening to other voices in our lives. Our lives are filled with noise. TV, the internet, radio, games, texting and telephones, etc. all compete for our attention. We are tempted to substitute what we hear or read *about* God for listening to God. So, God uses the gift of prophetic ministry in the Church to project His voice into the midst of the din of modern living. In ministering His Word through the prophetic He shows His love for all mankind. It is one way that our Lord proclaims, "I have not given up on you. I love you. Listen to me."

God wants an individual, personal, intimate relationship with each one of us. He reaches out to us through the prophetic ministry in order to declare His love and His desire for that intimacy. He speaks through the prophetic so that we may hear His voice more clearly and better understand His will for our lives. We may have previously heard the Word that is being spoken but were unable to receive or accept it. Or maybe we have not been able to understand the word we have heard from God or have been unable to understand how to apply it to our lives. The prophetic word gives further illumination of the Word and helps us hear and understand by giving it to us through the human being proclaiming it to us. It gives substance and a human quality to the Word.

We know and believe that Holy Scripture contains all things necessary to salvation. The prophetic word helps us apply that Biblical Word to our lives and to assist us in living out our salvation. This in turn then helps others, through our ministry, know the joy of life in Christ's Kingdom. Prophecy is the voice of the Holy Spirit speaking God's love to a broken world.