

#5 Levels of Prophetic Calling

We have determined through the first four teachings that Scripture tells us “all can prophesy.” (1 Cor. 14:31) But does that mean that every Christian is called to be a prophet? No! Paul makes this clear in 1 Corinthians 12:27-31. He says

Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

The answer to each of the questions in the quote above is, “No.” We are not all called to be prophets, any more than we are all called to be apostles. Not everyone is given the same gifts, and not everyone has the same anointing and calling on their lives. But St. Paul also tells the Church at Ephesus that Christ’s “gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints, for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...” (4:11-12) Those who are called to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are called “to equip the saints for the work of ministry.” The prophets are called to teach and equip the saints for the work of prophetic ministry.

There are essentially three levels of prophetic calling: prophetic service, prophetic ministry, and the office of prophet. Each level has specific gifting and anointing associated with it. And each level, with its associated gifting and anointing is essential to the healthy ministry of the Church.

The first level is “Prophetic Service.” This is the level and calling that could be described as the “simple prophetic.” This is where most of us will function. All can prophesy, and this type of prophesying is common to the faithful in the Church. It is what we most often experience on Sunday mornings during praise and worship. Prophetic service also includes the occasional personal prophecy. For example, this happens when we are praying over people after the service for healing, or at times when we have special prayers for individuals and someone gives a prophecy over that person. But this gift is also available to us when God wants to give an encouraging word to someone at other times. A prophecy may come when you have a vision over someone, or God gives you a specific impression about them, or simply a single word that when spoken becomes a complete word when you begin to speak. Sometimes this will happen even when they are not present. I will explain more about how we can all move in this gifting in the next few teachings.

The second level is “Prophetic Ministry.” This is the anointing given by God for those who are called to consistently move in the prophetic. Usually this will be someone in the active ministry of the Church, or someone who is specifically called to be an exhorter or encourager for a congregation. If you are currently functioning in “prophetic service,” this is a gifting and anointing you should earnestly desire.

The third level is “Office of the Prophet.” This is the ministry St. Paul was talking about in Ephesians 4, quoted above. One “called to be a prophet” is someone who gets the “big picture,” or as Bishop Jones says, “reveals seasons in the spirit.” A prophet also gives notice of confirming signs in the natural. But a prophet’s greatest gift to the Church may be the calling to reproduce the prophetic in others, as the bishop was doing at the School of Prophets. Most of our bishops in the CEC have a legitimate calling to the office of prophet.

Each of the callings is important to the full functioning of the prophetic in the life of the Church. All can prophesy, and God exhorts us to earnestly desire to prophesy. More next week.