

True and False Prophets - Part 1

by Art Katz

Art Katz explores the critical differences between true and false prophets, emphasizing the weighty responsibility of the prophetic office and the need for the church to recognize authentic prophetic voices.

Duration: 1:12:36

Scripture: Psalm 119:105, Matthew 6:33, John 1:1, Ephesians 2:20, 2 Timothy 3:16-17, 1 Peter 2:21, 1 Peter 4:12-13

Topics: "False Prophets"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of listening to and meditating on the word of God. They encourage the audience to make use of cassette tapes and technology to revisit and reflect on the message. The speaker also highlights the need for training and preparation in order to be ready for God's work. They stress the significance of seeking God in the quiet place and being obedient to His counsel. Additionally, the speaker discusses the relevance of true propheticness in the current times and the challenges that come with it. They call for a willingness to bear the pain and humiliation that may arise from a life of obedience. The sermon concludes with a plea for the restoration of the Apostles and Prophets in the Church and the importance of communicating God's truth to the world.

Transcript

I'm supposed to speak on false prophets, and I don't know that I've ever done so publicly, but I think the hour has come when that kind of a word is needed. But because of circumstances this morning and various other influences, I think the Lord would have me to begin with something about a true prophet, and then you can have a basis for comparison. One of the fundamental distinctions that needs to be made is the difference between the gift and the office.

We're in such a place of immaturity that we can't even distinguish the one from the other. And so much of what has been said earlier in the dining hall really refers to the gift. Well, I want to speak exclusively about the office.

The gift is very prominent and granted to many, but the office is rare and few. And it behooves us to be able to recognize it when it comes, to anticipate it, and to welcome it. It has everything to do with a man.

It's a permanent thing. It's not an on and off. And the man has got to be groomed and formed for its performance.

It's an office of ultimate and enormous responsibility because prophetic office brings the oracles of God. I don't know the last time I've heard anyone use the word. I use it frequently.

And that's how I distinguish between presumers who purport to be the real thing and those who, in fact, are. If you'll notice, that men who are being celebrated as being the oracles of God or the prophet of the hour have very little to say that is oracular. What do you mean by oracles? I mean the hefty, weighty, zoltan shalom.

Only the Germans can have a word for it. All embracing cosmic view of the purposes of God as they are reflected and to be understood in the particular of this historic moment in the light of scripture. Men who are being celebrated as prophets have biblical things to say, but they're not miraculous things.

So that's one way in which we can distinguish the true from the false. The prophet speaks for God with words from God by the authority of God, and he speaks it to a generation that is troubled and is a final generation and needs to have an expansive and an insightful view of the meaning of its own time and its purpose. He reveals something of God's thought and his purposes to his people and the things that are set in the context of the things that are future and eternal.

That's the cosmic view that the prophet brings. That's the all-embracing thing, and that liberates us from being fixed in time and culture and place, because he shows us the thing that's immediate, but he sets it in the context of what is ultimate and eternal. He brings, in fact, the reality of eternity into the consciousness of his hearers.

He's a man who, so to speak, comes out of eternity. He doesn't come to us out of time. He's not the product of Brooklyn, New York or the Depression generation, although those are factors in his making, but the word that he bears comes out of a counsel, out of a sense of God and his heart that goes beyond time and place and culture, and because it does, it's liberating for the church that hears that.

The church needs, or will be invariably caught in its own generation, its own time, its own temper. It needs the expansive, liberating sense of the things that are eternal, particularly if it's a final generation called to martyrdom, if it's called to great sacrifice and cost. How shall we embrace that and give ourselves to it, except with the joyous anticipation that there is an eternal crown, there's a glory of an eternal kind, an invisible weight of glory, the things that Paul saw that are eternal, we need also to see.

The prophet brings that, and all that he brings, he doesn't bring as categories. He brings it as a kind of reality that makes a requirement of the hearer, because it's a searing thing to opt for the things that are eternal and forsake the things that are rooted in time, where our security is, where our comfort is, where our reputation is, and all the kinds of things that would want to pin us in time and place and keep us from the realm of apostolic and prophetic realities where God's glory is to be found. So, the speaking of a prophetic man is not just an instructive thing, it's a demanding thing, it's a requiring thing, and for that reason you're not likely to hear him, because there are few pastors that are willing to have such a one come, and probably one of the great issues of our generation to last is the issue of the inevitable conflict between pastors and prophets, because the pastoral heart wants to protect, wants to keep, wants to soothe, wants to comfort, wants to shepherd, and the prophetic heart wants to uproot and pluck up and bring down.

So, how do we reconcile? Where is there a pastor who has the courage to allow such a man to have his liberty and feel that he could work with what has been said, and that's it's something that is needful,

however painful, and it's not going to shatter either the man's ministry or his church or his congregation or whatever the vested interest might be. These are some of the tensions of our generation. Well, there's such a man that is likely to be rejected, he's likely to have doors closed in his face.

I asked a brother not long ago, who is reputed to be a prophet, and whom I've known over the years, and I've been an actual influence in his life, I said, how is it that I'm not myself invited to your prophetic conferences? And he said, well, and I said, because I've been in this longer than any of you. He said, well, the fact of the matter is, the reason you're not invited is because you're not an in-house prophet. You're not one of the boys.

You can't be counted on to go along. You're liable to say something that will cross the grain of what our conference is about, and I'm not saying any of this to draw any attention to myself or even make this an object for pity. It's just I'm wanting to say, it's the name of the game.

Rejection is the name of the game, and however effectual men are in rejecting, God has his remarkable way of getting his man in his place, for his purpose, in his time, to bring the oracular statement of God, however much it will inconvenience or obsess men. But he's got to have a flimsy face. He's got to be able to bear rejection, misunderstanding, all the kinds of things that attend the prophetic function and the call, and for that reason, his preparation, the preparation of the man, is more incisive and demanding than, I would say, the preparation of a teacher, or the preparation of a person that God will employ for the operation of the gift of prophecy.

More than anything else, the prophetic office is the man as the thing in itself. It's not only what he says, but it's what he is. He is the thing in himself, as also the apostle, and therefore the preparation has got to be more exacting and intensive than, I think, with other callings.

So to receive a man like that is often an hour or a day of decision, requires a response that is fateful, and will determine and affect all the future, therefore there's a trembling. And most Christians, I think, would be reluctant to open themselves to that kind of an experience, and what makes the prophet foundational, together with the apostle, these are the foundations of the church, is that he communicates not only an understanding about God and about the purposes of God and the things that are eternal, but he communicates the sense of God himself as God. And I don't know that I have words to describe that, words to explain that.

All I know is that there are times, often, hearing other ministers and speakers speak that I'm somewhat chafed in the inner man, because I sense that no matter how serviceable that statement is, and brings a certain information of value, something is happening with it that is deprecating with regard to God himself. You know that even the volume of speaking tends to diminish God. More silence would be more God-honoring than more speaking.

So, when I hear valuable men, often with a gift of gab and profuse words, however instructive, and true, I'm not discarding that, my sense is that there's a loss, however great the gain, there's a loss with regard to God himself. The understanding of God as he is in himself, which so few have, and what we're doctoring and nursing is more often than not a sense of God that is our own subjective picture, but not what he is in himself. You understand how urgent that is, and how rare that is, and how that needs to be contended for, and how our own subjective fancy and the things that we bring in color and affect the way we view God.

Everything that we hear about God will influence that. So, one of the great functions, foundationally, brought by an oracular prophetic man or an apostle, is the sense of God as he is in himself. He may not even have that as his subject, but something about the way in which the man communicates himself, the way in which he bears himself, resonates something of that reality.

That's one way that you'll be able to tell true and false prophets or apostles, because the ones that are false cannot bring that, because it's a quotient and a dimension that you cannot obtain by human endeavor. It's something that is in raw, something given in the places of suffering and sacrifice in the history that such a man has with God that is not afforded to many. If we lose that sense of God, if that sense is not communicated by these foundational men, then what is our foundation? What is our real knowledge of God, and what are we purporting to believe and to communicate and to make known to others if our own sense of God as God is diminished or at fault or one thing? So, this is inseparable from what the man is in himself and the history that he's had with God, the kinds of dealings through which he has passed, and there's no way to communicate that.

The Lord draws the shade. These are things that we cannot peer into. This is not to be communicated.

And I was chuckling this morning hearing these episodes out of the past, and I've almost completely forgotten. That goes back 20 years, and then it came back in a flash as I'm hearing the account and reminding me, did that happen also? On top of this, this, this, and this, that also happened? Yes. So, praise God, one of my great benefits is a very short memory, because if I had to carry the weight of the voluminous things of these last 36 years, I would topple.

So, the Lord is very selective, but I appreciate the reminiscences when they come. A little instance of the kinds of dealings, of events, of challenges, of the operation of the cross, of painful confrontations, of facing things that leave you staggered with your jaw open, you don't know how to answer, are the kinds of things that go into the making of such a one. Don't desire this office if you are cross-resistant, because it's an invitation to an exquisite suffering, suffering of a very particular kind that necessarily is intrinsic to that call.

And if the church is called to be prophetic, to what degree then must we make room for these realities in our corporate life? In fact, the church itself, rightly understood, is a suffering. And if it becomes a place of pleasure before it's a place of suffering, we're probably in error. And the suffering is not from something external, it's something from within.

The very nature of church is church. The friction, what Dale described this morning, these well-meaning men, these zealots, and ripping me up, who was actually a factor in their inspiration and in their growth. Those conflicts are unavoidable, they're painful, and there's no way out around them but through them.

That's what the church is, and that's why we have to love it, in order to bear it. So, the prophetic man is not only subject frequently to rejection, but he's often himself an offense. I've noticed over the years that in some of the most portentous occasions that something would slip in inadvertently into the speaking, or something, I don't know what, to give anyone in the hearing a reason to reject the word by finding fault in the messenger.

I don't like his manner of speech. He's too aggressive, comes on too hard, he's too accusative, he's too out of the what, his style, his accent, his manner. I notice that there's always a prophetic offense, something structured in the man, something that comes out in the course of his communication, that if someone wants to void and negate that which he brings, they could find justification in latching on to that

point of offense.

So, it's not a comely thing to be an object of offense as well as an object of rejection. You become a kind of stink, and strange, odious thing with a strange reputation, fearful, and that's part of it. I'm looking over some notes that you can find on my website called The Prophetic Call, which I'm trusting will be published soon enough in a book it deserves to, and I'm just touching some of the highlights.

If you'd like to look at the entire thing for yourself, www.benisrael.org organization, and you'll see a number of things. There's a whole book on apostolic foundations. There's a prophetic statement on Princess Diana's funeral, which I expected somehow for the church to make, but there was a strange, pervasive, eerie silence even from the church in England, and I thought, this event cannot go without some comment.

This cannot go unattended, where this global event celebrated world over to give this jet-setter, Islamic boyfriend, running lady, a Christian burial as if she somehow is in the faith and represents Christianity by the highest clerics in the land in the Cathedral of Canterbury with a flag at half-mast at Buckingham Palace. That kind of thing that was globally televised, and I vowed not to watch it, but was up at four o'clock in the morning, there was my wife glued to the set because she loves royalty, God bless her, and I could not help but look in when I saw and heard the speeches, the honorific things were being said. Again, something in the inner man.

This is where the prophet has his mode of being. It's in the gut, in the kishkes, as we say in the Jewish vernacular, and I knew that some statement had to be made. And I won't say that the statement that I have made is the finest that could be made, but it's a statement, because to have been silent in a global event like that prophetically is to bring a condemnation upon the church itself and its prophetic responsibility to attend to the things in history and in time for the nations.

We have to interpret to the nations the meaning of their own events, and so long as no one else had attempted it, I have, and you'll find it on the website. So a great deal is said about prediction by people who are on the subject of prophecy or prophets, and in fact I've never in my 36 years and probably more than a quarter of a century, I think, functioning in this goal, seen the subject become more popular than it is today. More and more comment made about it.

More men alluding to be in it or being referred to as being it. So we need to be very jealous then that we don't misunderstand this or attribute to men what is not theirs, or think that their reputation or their calling is relative to the validity or the accuracy of their predictions. So I hear some say something like, if they're hitting 75% or 80%, what do you want, 100%? Don't be unrealistic.

If they're doing that well, that's sufficient to justify them as prophets. I sent out a letter, a circular letter to 50 men who are involved in the prophetic call, and I said, in my opinion, the issue of being prophetic is not the issue of predictive accuracy. It's not the issue of prediction at all.

It's the issue of oracular statements interpreting the present time and the context of scripture in the light of God's eternal purpose. So be careful about the issue of prediction, though it may well be that God may call a prophet and had to make forecasts, it's not the thing in itself as it is now increasingly celebrated to be. The message of the prophet, the true prophet, the way it can be distinguished from the false, is the false will invariably bring an upbeat tone, a positive word, an encouraging word, a flattering word.

The true prophet is more likely to bring a word of judgment and devastation, a word of impending doom. This is what has separated, historically, the prophets of Israel, the true from the false, those who spoke of an impending judgment that was unavoidable, that must come, and others who said no, peace, peace, when there is no peace. The first call of Samuel, who was a child under the tutelage of the high priest Eli, came with a word of judgment, and when he spoke that to Eli, that set in motion the process by which it was fulfilled, and in time Israel came to know that God had brought a prophet to Israel, because God did not allow his word to fall to the ground, because he did not allow God's word of judgment to fall to the ground, bore it and spoke it.

So the word of judgment, the word of devastation, is uncomely, it's not pleasant to bring, people don't want to hear it, the flesh shrinks from its consideration, and I'm presently engaged in exactly that thing right now, speaking of a coming calamity and judgment for the present state of Israel and Jews worldwide, and speaking it in places where people have a sympathy for that present state and wanted to see it humanly to succeed, and having to tell them no, it's slated for devastation, it was not meant or intended to succeed, but to reveal to Israel its own implacable inability in its humanity to become the thing that God intends, that only he can perform it when it is raised up out of death in resurrection. That's an unpopular word, it's a resisted word, and when we've spoken in Israel, had a conference on the coming calamity of Israel, how'd you like to have a conference with that as a title, where no messianic fellowship or church that has known me for a quarter of a century would open its doors to that, we had to conduct it at our own hotel, and not one soul came whom I've known for a quarter of a century, but one lady who came to harass me while I was speaking. And when I came home from that conference, there was a letter waiting for me signed by 13 of the most eminent leaders in Israel, condemning me as false prophet and a man harassing the church and giving aid to the enemy, because I spoke of a necessary coming calamity for that nation.

And here's what I want to say, Saints, and I just came back from South Africa, and I've been saying it everywhere. I've never seen an hour or a moment when the issue of true or false prophets is not more significant than now. Because if I'm false and speaking of an unnecessary calamity and bringing alarm and confusion where it need not be sounded, then that is a serious offense.

But if the true prophetic word is coming calamity, for which there's no expectation and no preparation, and it comes suddenly, as it will come, upon an unprepared body of Christ, let alone the people of Israel, then it would be a drastic error not to have sounded the word in advance of the event. So who's right then? The ones who are saying, no, peace, peace, that Israel will work its way out of this, and there'll be the differences where the Palestinian-Arab neighbors will be reconciled, or this lonely voice that says, no, that's the stage that God himself has set. This is what Israel has set by its own grasping Jacob nature, to seek to establish out of its own Jewish prowess that which can only be given by God.

And it must have a fateful devastation, and out of that and an expulsion again into the nations will come a return by the same God who judged, so also will he restore, that he might be glorified, not only in Israel, but before the face of all nations. One of us is right, and one of us is wrong. So we've come to an hour where it's no longer a matter of opinion, and where our propensity is, and what opinion we would favor.

The critical question is, who is the prophet of God, and who is not, and yet saying, peace, peace, and healing the of his daughter, Lifelink. So the issue of prophetic credibility and of identification has never been more urgent than it is now in this hour, and for that reason I believe God is wanting me to share on this subject so well as I know anything about it. So the prophet is called to pluck up and break down the things that are dear to men, their religious tradition, the false things that they have celebrated for

generations, the things they want to cling to because it has to do with their identity, their dignity, the way in which they even see themselves, the way in which they will even see God.

The most devastating thing about this book on the Holocaust is not the issue of the Holocaust past of the Nazi time, or the Holocaust future of the time of Jacob's trouble, the most devastating thing about that book is the issue that it raises about God himself as God. Where was God? Where is a God whom we know to be kind and loving, benevolent, when six million of his covenantal people are being systematically annihilated, a million and a half of which are innocent children? Where is God? It brings God into review, it brings the whole our understanding into a searching examination that is painful. We might be willing to give up other ground, we might be willing to consider other things, but when our view of God is assaulted, when that apple cart is turned over, and we have to see God in the sense of God in his judgment, and ruthless judgment, in his wrath, in his anger, and we don't know how to reconcile that with what we understand of him in his patience and his kindness and his love, we're in for a remarkable shaking in the deeps of our inner man, which in my own opinion is long overdue.

Because the shallowness of the church, and the lack of the fear of God that marks its conferences, the absence of this one, and generally characterizes our modern day Christendom at its best, has everything to do with an inadequate knowledge of God as God. Because we have omitted God in his judgment, and wanted to measure only in those aspects of his personality that we find accommodating and warm. But if we omit judgment, we omit righteousness, we omit the heart of God, the seamless garment of God, where you cannot separate out one attribute from another, but we need to receive him whole.

We have to eat the whole lamb, and not just the parts that appeal to our appetite. And the issue of God's judgment brings the issue of God before us in a depth of consideration as no other subject can. And nowhere will we see the issue of judgment more profoundly than in God's dealing with Israel, both historically, presently, and in the future.

Can your knowledge of God make way not only for the Nazi holocaust, that that was not just some historic aberration, some accident in time, where some freaky character by the name of Hitler came to power and set in motion the process of annihilation, but that God himself was actually fulfilling his will and his word? And that this was only an instrument in his hand, a rod of his chastisement, but that God himself was the author of that devastation? Can you believe that? And can you believe that within the same century, another holocaust shall come, that will eclipse the Nazi time? That most of the Jews who are alive in the world today in Chicago, Rockford, Minneapolis, and Los Angeles, Moscow, where they are, will perish, and only a fraction or remnant will survive and become the redeemed of the Lord who returned to Zion? And we're going to witness that with our own eyes, the unbelievable devastation of world Jewry in modern times, a second time in this same century. And where will the church be then when that's taking place? Where will the nations be if there will not be a Jew safe in any place in the world? What will our condition be in this country? And what kind of a church then will stand in such a time and be able to succor such a people and identify with them in their time of greatest crisis and trial at the risk of their own life? These are the urgent questions that are prophetic. So when I hear a prophetic conference and men celebrated as the oracles of the hour, and there's not a whisper, a scintilla of anything about Israel and the church in the last days, I know ipso facto that no matter whatever else is being performed, that is not prophetic.

It may be fortune telling, it may be clairvoyance, it may even be the gift of prophecy, it might even yes, bring to individuals some personal word that they'll travel all kinds of distances to hear and to receive. But it's not prophetic in the sense that we have heard something needful for the church in this hour, in the

crisis that is before us, and that is impending. To omit that subject is to be disqualified, prophetically speaking, in my opinion.

And you know what you'll hear about that? You're off on a tangent arc. You've lost the center. You ought to be preaching Christ, and you're occupied with Israel.

That's because you're Jewish. But what the poor saps don't know is that the issue of Israel's restoration, Israel's preliminary judgment, Israel's return in exhibiting both the severity and the mercy of God that permits the Lord who is contained in the heavens to become their king when they are restored to Zion, is the issue of Christ, is the issue that glorifies him. And that's why Paul ends Romans 11 with all the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, unto him, to him and through him, on all things to whom be glory forever.

The issue of Israel, prophetically propounded, not sentimentally, is the issue of God's glory forever, the celebration of Christ as king and ruler, theocratically over his creation. It's not some narrow interest in some ethnic, racial identity because I happen to share it. It is the larger, ultimate, consummating purpose of God that concludes the age, brings the king, brings his kingdom, brings his glory.

And that's not preaching Christ? And yet the man who will bring it will be accused of being off on a tangent, or he'll be accused of many things. So be prepared for accusation. Be prepared for charges, when people don't want to hear the kinds of things that are painful to consider.

The destructive word before the word of restoration. And by the way, those prophets that have preceded me, the true ones, who are called the prophets of doom, Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, are also the same prophets to whom God gave the privilege of speaking the word of restoration. So we will be disqualified to speak a word of comfort in Isaiah 40, Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, if we have not first told Israel their sins and Jacob their transgressions.

If we have withheld ourselves from bringing necessary words of judgment, or the warning of impending judgment, we will be disqualified to bring the word of comfort. And I'll tell you that if there's not a people on the earth who can bring the word of comfort in the midst of Israel's crisis, they'll not survive it at all. Somebody has got to say to them in the wilderness place, your God will come.

He will vindicate you. When there's no visible evidence of such a God on the horizon, but all there is is the grim reality of a wilderness, of being stretched out, of being uprooted, of having lost all, and expiring in a broken and shattered condition. Someone has got to say to them at that moment, your God will come.

He will save you. He will extricate you. And that's more than just a nice word.

That's a prophetic word, because when they hear that word, the word has become an event. The lame leap, the eyes of the blind are opened, the water breaks forth out of the dry ground. Such is the power of prophetic proclamation to those who have not withheld their speaking of the hard word of judgment, that they can bring the word of comfort that is more than a placating, but is an event that actually heals and delivers.

Got the idea? The word of a prophet is an event. The word of a prophet is a requirement. But it's an event that destroys before it blesses, brings down before it raises up.

And he's got to speak it unstarngly, laying bare false foundations, without fear or the regard of man. Because the fear of man is the most paralyzing factor that reduces a church and controverts its ability to be the prophetic entity of God in the earth. The fear of man.

And I'm not just talking about man in the world. I'm talking about man in the church, man in the system, man in the pew. The fear of our neighbors, the fear of how we are seen, how we are regarded, how we are received, how we are considered, is probably the most mitigating and compromising factor that has kept many from a full obedience to God.

The prophetic man has got to come to the place of real death, that total death by which that fear alone is executed. Because if that fear is alive, the prospect for compromise, for the reduction of the word as event follows. The word has got to be spoken unsparingly, without fear of how you will be considered, how you will be understood, how you will be received.

Show me a people who have come to a place of such freedom in God that they are totally immune to the way in which they are viewed by other Christians. That's the cross saying. Only the cross can perform that kind of devastating work, because the man who brings the devastating word must himself first be devastated.

Because we're all subject, we're all susceptible to wanting approval, wanting recognition. And the freedom from that only comes with the totality of death that has already been mentioned today. And in fact, it's the word of the prophet that brings that death.

I love when Dale said, when he heard that message from me on Unit for Christ's Sake, he was not just hearing a message, but the message was an event and the very flavor of death and the chill of death went right into his soul to bring death. Well, if we're going to be a prophetic people that speaks to the dry bones that they might live, to bring life by our word, resurrection by our word, we need also to bring a word that brings the death. And we will not be able to bring it to any measure beyond what we ourselves have experienced in the reality of God.

So these institutions now that are springing up that are producing prophets with a three-month course or a program, I don't know, we have a prophetic school ourselves every summer. You're invited. This is our 25th anniversary this summer.

But we don't purport to produce prophets. We only seek to aid, help, encourage, share, and not necessarily those who have prophetic callings only, but to bring the prophetic sense of the issues of the church that are becoming to it in its prophetic responsibility. So the prophet blows the whistle on the things that are false.

He has to have such an intense love of the truth. He has to wince when he feels that truth is being curtailed. There's something about it.

There's a fire in the man for the issue of truth, for integrity, for things as they are, for reality as it is. And that's why before the son of man could speak to the dry bones, and Ezekiel 37 had to be brought out and down by the hand of the Lord and the Spirit of God into the valley of dry bones. And he had to have his face rubbed into the grit of the death of Israel, which his flesh did not want to consider.

He had to go into a valley. The valley of dry bones is a place of depression. And that's what we shrink from.

We don't want to see or consider depressing things. And that's where truth is. Before it's glorious, that's where it is.

And if we're not going to see with God the thing as he sees it, whether it's about our church, our condition, the nation, our locality, our marriage, our personality, our ministry, we'll not be able to speak for him. They were called seers before they were called prophets. And there needs to be a ruthlessness about our own unwillingness to see and consider hard things.

It's painful for the flesh and a displeasure for men. But those things must be addressed. The difference between the false and the real needs to be contended for fiercely.

Have you ever been in a place where everyone is having a ball and it's all amens and hallelujahs and seems like a glory time and you're the only one that you think, like Elijah, I'm alone, I'm left, who is groaning. You're the only one whose kishkas are knotted and there's an anguish in your soul, a prophetic anguish, because while everyone else is celebrating, you're wincing. Why can't you enter into that celebration? Because it's a false celebration, because it's a pseudo thing, because it's a machination, because it's a humanly prompted, soul-ish kind of a thing that everyone is enjoying, but you know intuitively, instinctively and deeply it's false.

You cannot enter in. You cannot allow your soul to be compromised by going along, even though you're sitting in the front row and you're standing out conspicuously by your inability to enter in and everyone will notice, still you have no alternative, but to be that loathsome and offensive thing who just has not the liberty to go along if there's something in the depths of you and in the deeps where the issues of truth, reality and righteousness are propounded, that does not give you that liberty. To make a concession there, merely for acceptance, merely not to be a strange visage, an uncomely sight, is to lose your prophetic edge, is to lose your credibility.

It's the first step in becoming false. I don't know about this, but if we go on, in Jeremiah and Ezekiel, God speaks of the false prophets as prophets. Does it mean that at one time they were true and became false? Did they come full-fledged false? Or was there a process of reduction by which their integrity was corroded, compromises were affected? They did not keep their prophetic hearts with all diligence in that daily wrestling, fighting the good fight of faith, and over a course of time found their whole prophetic call controverted and altered to the point where they had become false.

You have to keep your prophetic soul with diligence. There needs to be such a jealousy for the truth, such an aliveness that any variation from it, any deflection, anything spoken, sounded, that seems to be but is not, cannot go by you untested. Because every time we condescend to go along, because of the pressure of our tears or the weight of an occasion, something takes place of a corrosive kind.

We lose something of the sharpness of our spirits. There's a dullness that sets in when we give either our silent or spoken amen to that which is not real and that which is not true. Are you jealous for reality? Are you jealous for the truth? This is the prophetic distinctive.

But it's painful to maintain and costly. And not that he's always right in it. If the work of the cross is somewhere lacking and there's something subjective in him that is being touched and it's really not God's heart that he's reflecting, then what he's moved about is something peevish rather than something spiritual, something personal, rather than God's very response to that thing.

And the prophet never knows whether he's right on with God or in any given moment can miss it. Whether it's his subjectivity being expressed, his own personal human dimension, or God. There's a continual tension between the possibility of missing it at any point in particular and how he reacts, how he responds, and what he says.

And yet, for all that, he's not allowed the luxury of silence. He can't forfeit his obligation. He's required, even in that tension, to speak and to express what he believes is the truth as he knows it in his inner man.

So the whole issue of inner man, the whole issue of where is the locus of the way, the point from which you view reality, is the critical point. Are you viewing externally, visibly, soulishly, in your senses? Or are you viewing and responding from the depths of your inner man where the reality of God is, or his spirit in your spirit? Are you trained in that? Do you know the difference? Can you distinguish between your soul and your spirit? How do you view, how do you move, how do you respond? Are you alive to the reality of what is in you by virtue of God over a course of time in a protracted and painful history by which something has been established which is the reality that you're jealously maintaining and you can't allow it to be compromised? That will make you strange, and that will make you not one of the boys that goes along. That will make you to react differently than others, when everyone else seems to be in agreement that something is being, is particularly blessed, and something in you is going off the other way.

That kind of thing needs to be jealously nurtured, maintained, and kept, or you'll not have a basis for a prophetic sense of something out of which God can speak. I can give some examples. One time in Australia, in a place where I was not a scheduled speaker, the Lord had me to attend and to share at this charismatic work, and they were having one of the great celebrations, and I was sitting, and I was completely unmoved, completely untouched, in my spirit.

Everybody else was having what seems to be like a great time in the celebration of the Lord, but inside my spirit was unmoved, because I could distinguish between what is in my inner man as against me. And as we were coming to the end, and I was soon to be called on, the Lord chose the scene in a and I looked through the facade of seeming happiness and joy and festivity and celebration, and what I saw was insecurity, conflict, doubt, guilt. You know that Australia is a land of convicts, and underneath the facade of what was external was the reality and the truth of their lives that was not overcoming, that was not victorious, but was only being superficially gilded with amens and hallelujahs.

And in that moment, I'm hearing my name called to speak, and I come up on the platform. I have a choice, you always have a choice, to speak the kind of thing that would be in keeping with the kind of mood that has been established, or speaking the strange and inward insight that you have received in a moment when God froze time. And of course, the true prophetic man has no choice but to speak the true things.

It is a moment of truth. And so I described to this congregation, I said, as you were worshiping, the Lord froze the scene for me, and I saw through the facade of your seeming celebration, the actual truth of the condition of your life, of insecurity, fear, faithlessness, contradiction, doubt, all these kinds of things. And it was like a man throwing the brakes on, and you could feel the whole room shuddering at the collision between what seems to be that has the universal approval of all in a congregation, and what is being spoken by one solitary, frail man on the platform.

Foolish, weak, an object of derision, contemptible, all those things is one against the many, and they had a choice to make. Whether that one was speaking for God, as God, with God, to the truth of their condition, or the man is false and needs to be stoned. But I praise God that the word of truth went forth with such an

unction, that God anoints that it went into the congregation, and they broke.

A moment of truth came, one time, once and for all, and when it came, they recognized it, received the truth of it, and broke over it, and set in motion the process of repentance by which there could be and will be, and probably has been, a joyous celebration that will not be a fiction or a charade, but the authentic reality that they purported to be having. Are you following what I'm saying? How often do those moments of truth come to God's people? Only so often as God has a man in that place who can sense that truth, and communicate that truth, over and against the objection of all who do not want to consider it, because it's painful, it's costly, it means going back to the drawing board, it means back to square one, it means that everything we have been about is fraudulent, make-believe, dubious, false. You can see how the fear of man will keep one from bringing that moment of truth to a congregation, and if he's going to unmask the lie, and blow the whistle on the things that are fraudulent, then he needs himself to be the authentic thing.

We can't bring people to a consideration of the things that are false, to which we ourselves subscribe. That's one of the reasons why Elijah and John the Baptist were wilderness prophets. They had to be out from the institution, the establishment, the amenities, the lifestyle, the civilization, to which they were God's caustic voice and critic.

They could not share in those realities, and yet be the voice that addresses them. Understand what I'm saying? So how is there a way that the prophetic man can be in the world, address the things that are threatening to the life of the Church and its reality from the world, and not himself be a partaker of that? It's part of the requirement, and why the issue of wilderness is a significant factor in the shaping and the maintaining of such a man and such a separation. The prophet is required to establish an alternative to what he's condemning that is powerful enough to displace the lie.

He presents a view of reality that is yet unknown to the congregation, and yet he's got to project it in such a way, not just to commend it, but to make it so feasible and so real as something to be sought and something to be sacrificed to obtain. He presents a view of reality not yet known to the people, but he presents it as a word. He presents it with an authority that would commend it and require the congregation not only to seek it, but to forsake anything that is an alternative that is not real.

He brings a heavenly and an eternal sense that obliterates the kind of validation and endorsement that the world's values have had upon his hearers of that time. If he had not come, they would not have thought that what they were celebrating was real. When the prophet comes, however, he's not only blowing the whistle on what is false, but he brings a sense of what is true and what is eternally true.

He brings the sense of eternity itself and inducts the hearers into it. By his speaking, he sets in motion and brings his audience to a place where the false can become the true. The word becomes creative and establishes something of an understanding that was not given before.

It pierces through the false, it raises another standard, and makes that the foundation of life. Therefore, it must be an extraordinary kind of speaking. That's why the word has got to be an event.

Something has got to be changed. Something has to be foundationally altered. The man that speaks it has got to somehow speak it not just as a view, but as something that is compounded out of the reality of his own life where he will not have any cogency or any value.

He calls God's people to sacrifice because he raises the ultimate issues of the faith, particularly in the last days where they will not be fulfilled without the likelihood of great sacrifice, opposition, persecution, oppression, martyrdom. What he brings is more than a word of explanation, but he has to win his hearers to the willingness to make the sacrifice necessary to fulfill the thing that has been put before them. When we talk about Jews in the last days and the Holocaust that's coming and uprooting and Jews fleeing through nations, somehow the hearer has got not only to be apprised of that scenario, but enlisted in it to the point where they would be willing to make those sacrifices of taking in a remnant of that people, whatever the cost to themselves.

He not only presents a view, he has got to obtain a kind of commitment that will affect that situation, which means a willingness for suffering, the raising up of the cross. So there is so much. The prophet abhors lightness.

He respects and deeply guards the sanctity of language and its meaning. He is concerned for words that become abused, like the word prophet itself. If that should become a commonplace, if that is a glib something that does not represent what God intends and it becomes widely accepted and foundational, we are already in a movement towards the loss of the church as church.

So not the least of the prophetic functions is the jealous regard for language itself and employment. The key words, speaking. I had to reprimand a brother this morning who was filling my ear with nice things at a time when I am trying to find the mind of the Lord, thinking that I was going to be called on in the morning time and had to say to him, once you have a call, you think you are going to be in God's service and you don't know that there is a time for silence, that you don't fill a man's ear with trivia, who is looking to the Lord himself to bring a word.

But what I was wanting to communicate is that you do not have a sufficient respect for words themselves that you are able so readily to fill the air with your banter and with your conversation. The prophetic man is much more jealous, not only of speaking, but also of silence. He knows that words will lose their currency if he is given to too much or too frequent speaking.

He's got to say less and say it more forcefully when the time comes and stand guard over any tendency to just talk. If I get on the subject of false prophets, I don't know if that will come tonight or tomorrow before we conclude, we have to ask where does the prophetic man get his message and his word? God says you did not stand in my counsel, that your word was one of your own imagining. It was your own envisioning.

It was not my word and yet you ran with it and you spoke it and expected that it would be fulfilled. Because you are not only a deceiver of others, you have deceived yourself. You think that your word is my word and you have even prefaced it with thus says the Lord when I never said it and I never sent you.

How is it then that the false prophet did not receive a word from the Lord? Because the only place in where it can be received is in the counsel of God. It's in the secret place. It's in the holy place.

It's in the place of communion. It's in the place of quiet. It's in the place of separation where he has made time and room and allowance for that communication with God.

He's jealous over the issue of silence, over the issue of quiet, over the issue of words, over the issue of speaking. And because of that, he's more likely to find the disposition and time and place where God can communicate in the quiet the thing for which he should speak. And when he does so, he doesn't have to

preface it with a thus says the Lord.

The hearers will know that it's a word out of the heart of God, from the counsel of God, from the secret place, from a man who has been there. Those who have always to say thus says the Lord, thus says the Lord are likely to be speaking their own counsel, their own wisdom, their own imagining, their own envisioning because they have not been in the place where the holy word could have been communicated. That means that the prophetic man has to be vigilant about silence, about quiet, about his own time with God.

And if a church is called to this, it itself needs to come into that respectful attitude. Time for celebration, time for rejoicing, time for worship, time for quiet, time for not staying up late unnecessarily with banter, small talk, and all the kinds of things that we like in a kind of a freshly socializing, but an earlier to bed, earlier to rise up with John Wesley at 4 a.m. while it's yet dark and the light has not yet broken. And to seek God in the quiet place before the rest of the world wakes is the place where God's counsel is most likely to be given.

I want to pray for such a church because I have not seen a time when the issue of true propheticness is more cogent than now. And the false thing is so everywhere about us and so beguiling and so attractive. So Lord, grant a willingness for the kind of training and preparation of the man and of the church that is required to be the thing in itself.

Not only what it says, but what it demonstrates. Not only what it proclaims, but what it shows forth. The reality of God as God.

The sacred task of sharing your divine view, your perspective of things as you see them. Painful things from which we would shrink. We don't want to consider them in a way that must come to the consideration of the church if it's to fulfill its own prophetic call.

So grant us a heart for this, Lord. Grant us a respect for this. Grant us a willingness for such a preparation.

We invite you, Lord, to deal with those soft places in our own being that are too concerned for how we are viewed by men. How we will be appreciated. How we will be regarded.

For how shall we speak to hard things, my God, if we are compromised by that concern? So we ask you to raise up the cross, the suffering that necessarily is part and parcel of the shaping of a prophetic people and the willingness, my God, to be dealt with. Grant us histories of dealings, your dealings with us. The secret things that are unseen, unknown by others.

The kinds of episodes and events that come out of a life of obedience that can't be anticipated, that will be horrendous, humiliating, that we have to bear as pain and out of which comes a residue of the knowledge of you, an exquisite knowledge that is not given in any other place. It's the fellowship of your suffering and grant, Lord, a willingness in your people to bear it. Restore the great word, Lord, to us that the church has at its foundations the apostles and the prophets.

As the holy prophets of old, so also the holy prophets of our own generation and the last generation. A respect, my God, for this precious and foundational calling. A willingness ourselves to be it, if that is our call personally, and certainly to be it, as it is our call corporately, as the church in the world.

Seeing and communicating to its own nation and civilization and culture an understanding of its own history, its own events, as God would have it to be understood, who is soon coming in judgment to judge the world for its longstanding blasphemy and rejection of a God that it has not deeply considered. Raise up a prophetic church, Lord, that calls even the nation to an awareness of that God before that judgment comes. And we bless you and thank you for the privilege of it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Now, I can go on with false prophets? Or do you want to take a break here? Praise the Lord. That was good, huh? I mean, it's so weak to say that was good, but that was good.

At least for me. I really felt God speaking to my heart. He wanted to tell me I should take an offering for art.

He lives up in Minnesota in a community. They live by faith in the whole community. You're not breeding pigs anymore or anything, are you? But I think it's important for each one of us, as we respond to the Word that God has spoken to our heart, that we would have an opportunity, at least, for a response financially to make that response.

Let's see if it says that we sow spiritual things and reap physical things. Excuse me. And I just really feel like it's important for all of us to be able to make a response specifically to this Word.

This money will all go to art, depending on your ministry. Make the text out to River of Life. You got envelopes? There's envelopes, if you need an envelope.

But I just want to pray that the Lord would speak to each of you what He would have you to do as we respond to this Word. I'm grateful for this Word. I really do believe it's a metal Word for the body of Christ.

Personally, I don't know anybody else who could really share it other than art. I believe it's a Word we're going to hear more and more. It's not going to be a Word that's very well appreciated by a lot of people, I don't think.

But that's okay. Those of you who are here, we hear what the Spirit is saying to the church in this hour. So let's pray.

Father, we just ask that you seal that Word in our heart for those who would be wrestling with things that were said. Lord, that you help them to wrestle through to your end. Lord, we ask now that you would speak to our hearts how you would have us to respond in a financial way to our brother who travels the world literally by faith, lives in a community by faith, has come down here with no expectation or anticipation for any finances.

And Lord, I know many times after he gets done speaking, they probably give him less than some places that he goes. Or not give him anything at all. Sad state of our church, Lord.

But here we are in this season, in this hour, Lord, with an opportunity to sow into ministry, into a life, Lord, that has been laid down at the altar for your purposes, Lord. Lord, we know there's 30-fold ground, 50-fold ground, 100-fold ground. Lord, I know this is 100-fold ground.

Thank you, Lord, for a person that has the tenacity to be able to go to Israel, speak a word that's not accepted by most of your people, and yet it goes forth as the Word of the Lord. Lord, we know looking through the Old Testament that that happened again and again and again. We applaud and celebrate Jeremiah, Isaiah, Ezekiel, but Lord, in their time period, Lord, they weren't celebrated.

Lord, we're disliked. The Word says we decorate the tombs of the prophets, and yet we are the ones that killed them. Help us, Lord, to have that discerning ear to hear what the Spirit would be saying to the church in this hour.

And Lord, may our financial response right now even be a statement to that end, that we desire to be a people, individuals and corporately, that hear what the Spirit is saying to the church. We thank you for that, Lord. Bless this offering.

Bless those that are giving. Bless the word, the seeds that have gone into our heart, Lord, that they might bear fruit, and that that fruit might remain. In Jesus' name, amen.

You guys can go ahead and pass that. A couple quick announcements here while you're worshiping the Lord with giving, the worship, right after this is over, right next door here in this small room, I'd like the team from Las Vegas to meet, just very quickly, and then there's going to be food is ready. Is it ready now? It's getting ready for anybody that wants leftovers.

And yeah, what's in the dinner tonight is at five o'clock. Five o'clock here. Dinner here at five o'clock.

It's pork chops, right? They killed the pig. They killed the pig. I didn't hear it squealing, but they killed the pig.

That was the greatest statement of a pig I ever heard. How did that go? Steve's Jewish, what did he say? Non-kosher protoplasm. My dad used to raise pigs.

I'll have to tell him that one. That was great. One other announcement, too.

For those of you that are interested, and this would be a wake-up call for my team, at three o'clock here, we want to do a workshop. We want a workshop to be in worship, and so if you play any instrument, or if you sing, or even if you're an intercessor or a dancer, you're invited to come. We do that from three to four-thirty or so, and so we'll do that here at three o'clock.

We're not trying to burn anybody out, but we've come here to serve. We've come here to impart. We've come here to give, and so if you're interested, it's just for those that are interested.

If there's one person that's praying to the Lord, if everybody wants to come, that's fine. We're not looking for numbers. We're looking for people that are interested that we can share and just kind of do some little workshops and share some stuff with us, the stuff that the Lord's been teaching us, and lay hands on people, pray over you, and impart, and see what happens.

Also, for those that are praying about getting a word, we'll be doing some prophetic ministry, too, so that'll be running this afternoon next door, too. I think that's it for the announcement. All right.

I want to just encourage you that the tapes and books that are outside the table are for your equipping. I really believe that the Word that was just spoken needs to be listened to again. We thank the Lord for cassette tapes and technology.

It allows us to hear the Word and receive it and meditate on it. I know I'm going to listen to it with greater interest. God is speaking to us.

God is speaking to this conference, to the church, to the body. It's His body, and He's preparing the workshop. It's time to train and prepare, train and prepare for 24-7.

Minstrels, be ready. It's not just in convenience. It's 24-7 in the Spirit without ceasing.

That's where the Lord's preparing us. So, tapes and books are there for you, if you'd like them for the equipping of the saints. If you've not registered, we just want to encourage you that the registration table is the one out beyond those double-glass doors.

Please make sure you register with us. We just want to make sure that we do things in order. If you're not registered, please make sure you go to the registration table.

Clint's already mentioned the Chinese. We might even put out the breakfast food so it doesn't get rancid. It might be still good if you'd like to have a brunch lunch type of thing.

T-shirts just don't really seem real important right now, but it's on the list. I'll just say it again. You've been there, you've done that, and you've got the... There are some t-shirts left, I suppose.

That's why we're announcing it. If you'd like one, hopefully the Lord will use it and remind you of where He wants to impress with you in the content of this conference. Anything else? Let's pray.

Father, we just thank you. If you have a purpose and a destiny in every life in this room, Lord, we thank you that the nations are waiting to hear the truth. Lord, we're limited so much by our language, our prejudices, our pride.

Lord, all the barriers you're tearing down the walls. We thank you, Holy Spirit, that you are sufficient to reveal Jesus. And we ask you, Lord, continue to pour into us and release into us, Lord, accuracy.

Lord, the spirit of truth might be burning, the spirit of burning in our hearts, if you reveal to us your word. Lord, let people hear and see of your goodness for your church. Let a prophetic church culminate and come forth as you call it, Lord, as you call it and you've destined the lives in this room to be that people.

Lord, we thank you for that call. We thank you for your provision and the anointing will do it. Your zeal will accomplish it, Lord, that your glory may be seen.

Father, I ask that you'd even continue to bring people from the outside in, that they might hear the commotion, the sound of the army, of the Lord, the assembly. And Lord, bring in unexpected visitors. Lord, bring, continue to bring unexpected visitation of more of what you want, more of your glory.

Interrupt this conference, Lord. Interrupt our plans, our ideas. Lord, we avail ourselves to you, but do what you want to do.

Bring forward, Lord, your order, your plan, your wisdom. And Lord, we thank you. We thank you.

Lord, we break now for this time, this food, this and we ask, Lord, strengthen and refresh your people. Strengthen, Lord, that we might hear. Strengthen us, Lord, not to fill our bellies, but Lord, strengthen our souls.

We might receive more of your spirit in Jesus' wonderful name. Amen. I just want to give one quick testimony, one quick testimony, brief and amazing.

There was a man here that came last night who is from the local area by nationality. It happened to be a Mexican man, whatever that's worth, whether he's Mexican or whatever. We have prayed that God would bring in people from this community to hear what he wants to say, not our conference, not who cares, but what he views us for as a conduit to bring your power and revelation.

And he came in here humbly. And Scott Leisner, where are you, Scott? He's a missionary to Costa Rica, beautifully speaks the language and talks to this brother. His name, I don't know about you, but it gets me excited.

His name is Joel. This Mexican man's name is Joel. And he's been by here and he saw the place, passed out and he said, what's going on in the Methodist church? What's happening to the Methodist? And he came in and he wanted and he sat in their service and he received and he wants to come.

I believe he's coming tonight. Joel is coming to receive more of the spirit. And then when he asked where we come from, we said we're out in DeKalb and he wants a ride to come to service on Sunday.

And I'm not trying to say he's hooked up in our church. That's not the point. He wants more of the spirit and the truth.

The true worshipers will worship in spirit and truth. God is going to bring people from the outside, whether it actually happens anymore or what. And I believe it will, but that's what we're preparing for.

This isn't just for our word. It isn't for our benefit. It's just our edification, though it is.

It's for us to take and to give to the nations and to give to people who are hungry. And it's exciting to me. And I thank the Lord that he's going to do that.

Be ready. I want to say to you, if you happen to be out pumping your gas or getting yourself some breath mints at the little drug store, tell them to come out and I'm going to do something crazy, OK? Anyone that's unsaved, just bring them in for free. We don't care.

Bring them in. We don't want to have a big registration. Who cares about that? Bring in the heathen.

Bring them in and let them hear the word. Let's in the right way. Freak them out for Jesus.

Amen. God bless you. Las Vegas people.

Come on into the room.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/7/SID7242.mp3>

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