

Letter to a Reluctant Prophet

by Chip Brogden

Chip Brogden emphasizes the importance of being a faithful Christian before aspiring to the prophetic, highlighting humility, character development, and practical living.

Scripture: Matthew 16:24, John 15:5, 1 Corinthians 1:27, 1 Corinthians 13:2, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Galatians 5:22, Galatians 6:3, Philippians 3:8, 1 Peter 4:13, 1 John 2:6

Topics: "Christian Humility", "Spiritual Maturity"

Description

Chip Brogden emphasizes the importance of being a Christian first before aspiring to be a prophet, urging humility, meekness, and a focus on Christ rather than the prophetic word. He highlights the significance of walking in love, avoiding self-righteousness, and being faithful with what God has entrusted to us. Chip stresses the need to learn from Jesus, be led by His Spirit, and develop fruitfulness in character over seeking after gifts. He encourages expecting persecution, embracing weakness, and being willing to suffer for the sake of Christ, emphasizing the necessity of dying to self in order to truly live.

Transcript

Dear Friend,

It is with a certain fearfulness that I respond to your inquiry, for I am not an authority on such things. I can certainly relate to your reluctance at being identified among the company of the prophets when so many false apostles, prophets, and teachers abound. I wish I could point you in a proper direction, but I can only point you towards the Lord. It is He who selects His messengers, and I have nothing to offer you by way of what to do.

At most, perhaps you can look upon me as an example of what NOT to do, and take some word of counsel from a weak brother who has made many mistakes and endured many failures along the way. Perhaps you too will have to make even the same mistakes in order to learn, yet following my advice could perhaps help you to avoid the unnecessary heartache and cruelty inflicted upon yourself and others when thinking that you are doing God a service.

I would counsel you, first of all, to be a Christian. Do not spend too much time focused on that which is prophetic. Do not come to others as a prophet, but as a child. Let Christ be your obsession, not the prophetic word. For "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." There need not be turmoil in your heart about your calling; it is clear that you are among those that are "the Called, according to His

purpose." And what is His purpose? That you be "conformed to the image of His dear Son." That, above all, is your first calling.

Many are eager to wear the Prophet's mantle, but are reluctant to bear the Christian's cross. This cannot be. Given the choice between Christian or Prophet, choose Christian. Serve God as the earthen vessel you are, in the place you find yourself to be. Perhaps the Lord will indeed use you in some prophetic way, but if not then at least you have been faithful with the "one talent" you have been given. God will not give five talents to those who cannot be faithful with one, and will not give ten to those who cannot be faithful with five.

If you are a Christian first you will remember that you should walk softly, with meekness and humility, while esteeming others as better than yourself. Then the prophetic word, when and if it comes, will be seasoned with the appropriate amounts of mercy and grace. Remember that without love you will inevitably become as sounding brass - all judgment. If we cannot or will not stay in Love, God will set out to humble us shamefully before our brothers and sisters that we may know the depths of our hypocrisy and self-righteousness. That is evidence of HIS great love for all of us.

Now, concerning the prophetic word itself. God will give you the "what", but the "when" and the "how" are left up to you. "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." You can be right on target with the "what", but if you screw up the "when", and especially the "how", you do yourself and others unnecessary harm.

Jesus says, "Take my yoke upon you (this speaks of RESTRAINT on the way WE want to go) and learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls." What then? He gives us liberty to speak, but allows us to suffer for speaking out of ourselves. He bids us to be restrained, to take our liberty and give it back to Him, knowing that we can do nothing of ourselves. He does not force us to wear the yoke, but invites us saying "take My yoke." By giving up our freedom, we will receive it again.

No, we cannot just do what Jesus did, because Jesus bore the yoke of His Father at all times. We cast off the yoke so quickly. We are untrustworthy, but He is faithful. Let us not just imitate Him, but let us learn of Him. Let us not only be familiar with His Word, but let us become acquainted with His Ways. It is not enough to memorize what He said, we must take His yoke upon us and walk in tandem with Him.

Since Christ bids us to "learn of ME", beware of those who will try to gain access into your life with an inordinate desire to mentor or shepherd you. We may certainly seek the advice, prayers, and counsel of other mature believers. Even the little children in the Kingdom of God can teach us much. But people can only carry us so far, and there is a certain human pride which results in the teachers trying to form the students into their own image. This will not do. The Anointing, Who is the Christ, will teach you all things. His Spirit will lead you into all Truth. His grace is sufficient. There is no man or woman who can give you anything apart from what you have already in Jesus, for we have been "blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ".

Do you see dear friend, that God is more concerned with the messenger than the message? Do you see that the minister is more important than the ministry? If the messenger is wrong, the message will be wrong too. If the minister is wrong, the ministry will be wrong. And do you see that the Lord of the work is more important than the work of the Lord? Meditate on these things.

There really is no famine of the Word of God. If God is able to find the right vessel the Word will come forth in abundance. Therefore, He takes much time to mold, fashion, train, refine, purge, break down, build up, discipline and create His prophets. Yield to that process. It cannot be rushed, but it may certainly be hindered. We cannot force the Spirit, but we may certainly quench Him.

Ah, your gifts are given to you in a moment's time, but your fruit, your character, YOU, develops over many seasons of God's dealings. Do not be thrilled with your gifts, only observe if you are fruitful in Spirit, bearing much fruit, abounding in love, joy, peace, faithfulness, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, meekness, and self-control. You can be sure that there are more gifted people in the world than you, yet the fruit is what will remain when the gifts pass away. Never neglect the place of abiding in Him, and you will remain a fruitful branch in the Vine.

Expect misunderstanding. Expect persecution. Expect ridicule. Expect mistreatment. Expect suffering. Expect rejection. Then, you won't be surprised when it comes. And when it comes, shut your mouth, go to the cross, and die so you can live. Learn to kiss the hands that nail you to the cross, for as you are decreased, He is increased. It is not a better living we need, but a better dying. We cannot reach Pentecost but by way of Passover. There can be no resurrection without a crucifixion. There is no crown without a cross. To live, is Christ: to die is gain.

So if you want to boast, take pride in the things that make you weak, for when you are weak, you are strong - in Him. Be afraid of the praise and acceptance of others, for they are the fertilizer for the self-important and grandiose thoughts that are yours by nature anyway, which spring up in the shallow ground of your carnal mind. Carry about the Death of the Lord so you may have the Life of the Lord. Be ready to suffer with Him, that you may reign with Him.

And now, some practical advice:

As much as possible, stay away from money. Freely you have received, freely give.

Have no part in foolish and unlearned questions, either in the asking of them or in the answering of them. Give up your opinions and go to the cross.

Refuse to promote yourself, "your" word, or "your" ministry. If God gives you something to say, let Him see to the promotion of it.

The loftiest spiritual service will never take away from the most mundane earthly responsibility. Take care of your family, your pet, your lawn, your business, your neighbor. Keep your teeth brushed and your hair combed.

Don't be afraid to make tents. If you want to eat, work.

Be slow to anger and quick to forgive.

Before, you would never apologize even when you knew you were wrong. Now, be willing to apologize even when you know you are right.

This is my counsel, dear friend, and perhaps something I have said in this brief letter will bear witness with you. With these words then, I commit you to the care of the Lord Jesus Christ, Who is able to complete the work which He has begun in you and see you through to maturity, as you are rooted and grounded in Him,

being thoroughly equipped and strengthened by His Might which works in those who have taken up the cross to find power in weakness.

Of course, if I may serve you in any way, I hope you will call on me without hesitation, for

I am your brother,

Chip Brogden

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