

# A Word From the Lord

by Jim Cymbala

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*Jim Cymbala emphasizes the importance of being open to receiving a personal word from the Lord for guidance in life decisions.*

**Duration:** 21:18

**Scripture:** Isaiah 53:7-8, Matthew 6:33, Acts 8:26-27, Acts 8:29

**Topics:** "Word Of The Lord"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of being obedient to God's promptings, even when they don't make sense or seem logical. He uses the example of Philip, who was instructed by an angel to leave a successful revival in Samaria and go to a desert road. Philip obeyed and encountered an Ethiopian eunuch who needed guidance in understanding the scriptures. The preacher highlights that God's guidance may come in various ways, and it is crucial to discern and follow His leading, even if it means leaving behind a comfortable or successful situation. The sermon also emphasizes the role of ordinary individuals, like Ananias, in carrying out God's plans and being obedient to His call.

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## Transcript

In the Bible, from the beginning to the end, there is something called the Word of the Lord. The Word of the Lord is when God, whether we think we're at a confrontation or a decision-making moment or not, when God, especially as we look to him, submissive to him and we want to, hear the Word of the Lord, a word of direction. It's not a word of scripture.

It doesn't compete with believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved. It's not in the same category of the just shall live by faith. It's not along the lines of be filled with the Spirit.

It's a personal thing. It's a personal word, seasonal, sometimes lasting. It's validity for only time or it's directiveness for only a short period of time.

But it's when God, in his love, like a father would help a child who was lost, it's when God sends a word to you, and there's many ways he can do it. I want to talk this on both ends of the sword here, both edges. It's when God sends a word so that we know what his will is, what the safe plan is, what the path of blessing is, because life can get confusing.

How many say amen? How many have ever been faced with decisions or even how to pray for someone? You didn't know what to do. Lift up your hand if you've ever been there. You just tell God, I don't know what to do.

And what we're looking for here is the Word of the Lord. In fact, in praying for people, rather than praying by rote, I've learned, it is very good that before we pray or even as we're praying, we keep an open heart to God to know what is the Word of the Lord, what is his direction, how to pray for this person. When you say, no, this person's got a problem, just pray for the problem again.

No, but his life's more complex than that. There's a word that the Lord can give. Let's see it in one of the most famous prophets in the Old Testament.

But we're gonna leave his setting very quickly. But let's just look at one. There's actually three words of the Lord that are mentioned in this passage in 1 Kings.

Now Elijah the Tishbite from Tishba in Gilead said to Ahab, who was the king of the northern kingdom, as the Lord the God of Israel lives whom I serve, that's the NIV, the King James has who I stand before. Stand before as in a servant waiting for direction from the master. So Elijah says, the Lord's gonna speak to you, the Lord that I stand before as a servant waiting to do what he told me.

That's an interesting truth for us to remember. Whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word. Then the Word of the Lord came to Elijah.

He just delivered the Word of the Lord to the king. Now the Word of the Lord comes to him. What is it? Leave here, turn eastward, and hide in the Caritha Ravine east of the Jordan.

You will drink from the brook, and I have directed the ravens to supply you with food there. That is not only an unusual word. You gotta have faith to obey that word.

When God tells you that birds are gonna come every day to feed you, you gotta be close to God. How many say amen? Amen. You can imagine some of us would say, let me hear that one more time.

Oh God, let me just hear that one more time. Okay, so he did what the Lord had told him. How did the Lord tell him? Through the Word of the Lord.

He went to the Caritha Ravine east of the Jordan, and he stayed there. The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the brook. Ah, but the Word of the Lord sometimes is seasonal.

Sometime later, the brook dried up because there had been no rain in the land. So now where God sent him has become a problem. Then the Word of the Lord came to him again.

Go at once to Zarephath in the region of Sidon and stay there. I have directed a widow there to supply you with food. Notice the three words of the Lord.

First of all, there's the word that Elijah delivers to the king. Somehow, God communicated to him, go to the king and tell him that there's gonna be no rain for the next months, years. Otherwise, you can't go to the king.

You can't make that stuff up. You can't just speak whatever you feel. The only way he could do that is God told him to do that.

He didn't just make that up. Notice he says, before the God before whom I stand, I'm his servant. He gave me a directive.

Now I'm telling you, here's the Word of the Lord, O king. It's like Moses told Pharaoh, I got a word for you, Pharaoh. This is what's gonna happen next.

And the same word came to Elijah to give to King Ahab, wicked King Ahab. Now the problem is the famine affected him. The drought affected him.

So the Word of the Lord comes to him. Notice how personal and specific this is. The first one's sensational.

O king, hear the Word of the Lord. There's not gonna be any rain. Now there's a very personal word.

Go to the brook Kerith and live there and drink from the water and I'll send birds. I mean, that's about as personal as you can get. That's not doctrinal.

That's not a doctrine. He could have read Moses from Genesis to Deuteronomy. He never would have got a verse where to go in the time of the drought.

No, God gave him a word. You know, God probably has a word for some people here tonight because you don't know what to do next. He has a word, if you believe in a word, if you're open to a word.

Now that word keeps him near the brook Kerith and then everything's fine for a while, but now that runs dry. So he's run out of water and now another word of the Lord comes to him and says, now go to a place in Sidon. I've already got a widow waiting for you there who's gonna supply you with food.

Imagine, everyone else didn't know what to do and Elijah was just as cool as a cucumber because he was moving by the direction of the word of the Lord. Everyone else was scratching their head and trying to figure out what to do and he just was, speak, Lord, your servant is listening. Go to the brook.

All right, that's run out. God, what do I do next? I'm glad you asked, Elijah, go over here. I got a widow already waiting to feed you and take care of you.

That's called the word of the Lord, but notice two things about it. In the first case, he delivered the word of the Lord. In the second two cases, he received the word of the Lord.

How did the first word of the Lord go to the king? Through the mouth of Elijah, the prophet. He spoke it. How did God speak the two words to Elijah for what he was supposed to do? We don't know.

Bible's silent. Was it a still, small voice? Did some other prophet come to him and speak to him? Was it a dream? Was it a vision? It had to be something where he knew, this is God telling me, and notice how specific it was, naming towns, talking about a brook. Do we believe in that anymore? I believe that God has never changed.

You say, well, I don't hear of that anymore. Well, look, the problem is not with God. If there's any problem, it's with us.

How many say amen? How many believe God can still speak and give a word to his people? Yes. Now, the first one, he gave the word to a king. Second one, he received in some manner that we don't know.

Now, that's what I wanna talk about here. Are you open and do you need today and do you believe in a word from the Lord? Some people think that's just spooky and that's just emotionalism, fanaticism, but oh, I'm gonna just show you here briefly that it's obviously not. It's something that was matter of fact to the early church.

Now, some of you here need a word from the Lord. And if you'll quiet yourself, and I'll tell you in the end what you just need to do, and you wait, God will give you the word that you need. I guarantee that because God can't lie.

Others of you, some of you here, that's been your desire to be the vehicle to give the word of the Lord to another person. That's been a longing in your heart. You've wanted to be in such fellowship with God that you could speak that word in season that will help that person.

It's your word, your voice, but how you got it, you got it from God. And the people will know that's the Lord speaking through a sister. I'm not talking spooky now.

I'm not talking about fanaticism. I'm talking about something matter of fact. I'll show you how matter of fact it is.

Now, you might say, Pastor, on that second part, I would like God to use me with the word of the Lord. You know, don't you think Pastor Todd wants to get up this Friday and give the word of the Lord? Not just a Bible message, but maybe one sentence that comes from heaven that bam, it just helps somebody out of the dilemma they're in. Well, of course he does.

We all do. How many would want to be a blessing to others through the word of the Lord? Just lift up your hand high. All right.

Well, Pastor, that's great, but Elijah was a prophet. You know, prophets are prophets. You're right, Elijah was a prophet.

But you know how matter of fact this was to the New Testament church? Because the Spirit was gonna be poured out on all flesh. Men and women, black, white, and all the other colors, they were all gonna drink of the Spirit and be able to be used in marvelous ways by the Lord. Again, as I said to my brothers and sister from Denver, if you go by what you've seen in America and what you're used to growing up, that will hinder you and that will bind us.

What we gotta do is look at the Bible and say, God, do it again. God, do it again. Come on, God, do it again.

How many are with me? Let's just clap our hands. God, do it again. So, who's the number one persecutor of the Christian church in the book of Acts in the early chapters? Saul of Tarsus.

And Saul of Tarsus is on the way to Damascus and he has an appearance of the Lord. Light shines, knocks him off of his mount, and who are you, Lord? I am Jesus, whom you're persecuting, even though he's persecuting the church. But Jesus is so identified with Christians that when you persecute a Christian, you persecute Jesus.

Oh, isn't that a good thing to remember? When you persecute a Christian, when the world goes after or anyone goes after a Christian, you're going after Jesus because we're one with Christ. Now, he's blinded by the vision, the light, the shining brightness, and he ends up being guided into Damascus, and he just ends up blinded and he doesn't eat or drink for a while, and he's just cut off from the physical world. Not a bad thing to happen to us.

Because when you're cut off from the physical world and lose those influences, you open many times to the spiritual world, which is more real. You see, there are waves in this room, and if I got a transistor radio or someone talking on the walkie-talkie, there's all kinds of things happening in this room that you and I can't see. Just because you and I can't see them doesn't make them real, make them not real.

They are real. So now he's like that. Now, how is God gonna get Saul to the next part of the journey? This man's gonna be the greatest apostle who ever lived, but right now he's just a blind, fasting, new convert.

And then look what the Lord does. And in Damascus, there was a disciple named Ananias, and the Lord, who was he, a prophet? No, what was he? Just an ordinary man, a disciple. And the Lord called to him in a vision, here's the word of the Lord now, Ananias, yes, Lord, he answered, just matter of fact.

Just matter of fact. To the early church, that was just matter of fact. He was there, the Lord called, and he said, yes, Lord.

It's just matter of fact. To us, it's like, what did you hear? Did what happen over there? And to them, it was just, well, this is what Jesus said would happen. It's better for you that I go so then I can send the Holy Spirit.

The Lord told him how, doesn't say. Go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and ask for a man from Tarsus named Saul, for he is praying. In a vision, he has seen a man named Ananias come and place his hands on him to restore his sight.

God's given a word already to Saul of Tarsus while he's praying. A man's gonna come and lay his hands on you, his name Ananias, so you'll know how real I am to you. Lord Ananias answered, I have heard many reports about this man and all the harm he's done to your holy people in Jerusalem.

Do you have anyone else you'd like me to pray for because I'd like to pass on this one. And he has come here with authority from the chief priest to arrest all who call on your name. Isn't that a great name for Christians? All who call on your name.

But the Lord said to Ananias, go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. And I will show him how much he must suffer for my name. Then Ananias went to the house and entered it, placing his hands on Saul.

He said, brother Saul, the Lord, Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you were coming here. Saul must have said, how did you know that? How could you possibly know of what I just went through? Oh, but when, see, you get a word from the Lord and the Holy Spirit's working, all kinds of stuff is happening. He has sent me so that you may see again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

So we don't hear about Ananias anymore in the Bible. But he's the first man who prayed for Saul to have his eyes open, to be filled with the Spirit, and to give him that first little kick of follow Jesus now. God's got great plans for you.

There'll be problems, but don't worry, you just go. You're a chosen vessel. Who was that delivered through, notice? An angel, Gabriel? No.

Michael, the archangel? No. Writing in the sky? Do you realize how that the Lord has limited himself for the most part to many times beside dreams and visions? He speaks through other Christians. Ananias was a believer.

And to show Paul how much he would need of the believers in his life, he sends an anonymous believer into where he is with this word from the Lord and this prayer and this faith and this just, man. Imagine Saul of Tarsus, his insides must have been exploding. I see Jesus and this guy comes praying for me.

He knows what just happened to me. He's telling me about the future. How would he know that? That's gotta be God.

Now, lastly, this was so commonplace to Christians and they were so ready to obey whatever the Spirit said, what the Spirit said, word of the Lord, it's in the same category, that when we read it in the Bible, we don't even hardly notice it anymore. Now, Philip was one of the original deacons, if you want to call him deacons. He was the one of the original seven that in Acts 6, they were having trouble feeding the widows.

There were some arguments breaking out. Even Christians argue sometimes, right? And they chose seven men to distribute the food so the apostles could give themselves to prayer and the word. And one of the men was Philip.

But when the Spirit is working, you don't need titles or Bible school. The person's gift makes room for them. And Philip just goes to Samaria and starts preaching up a storm.

He's no longer a deacon. He's an evangelist in fuego, on fire. And great things are happening in Samaria.

People are turning to God left and right. Ah, but see, with the Spirit, you never know what will happen. So if you're in the middle of a revival and you're the main preacher, don't you think you should stay there and continue the work? No, you gotta do whatever God tells you to do.

So what do we read? Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, go south to the road, the desert road, that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. Does that make any sense? If you're the preacher and you're having a big campaign and all these things are happening, but you're open to God, out of nowhere, God says, no, leave the crowds and leave all the people. Go down the desert and just go to a road.

To do what? No, just go to the road. I'll tell you later what to do. See, a lot of us, we're not gonna do anything until God shows us the whole thing in technicolor 3D.

We want the glasses to see the whole thing. And God doesn't work that way. How many say amen? He just says, go and do this.

Yes, Lord. Yeah, but that was only a prompting. You could be wrong.

No, I'm gonna obey God. See, unless there's instant obedience, unless we're ready to obey God, that we'll never learn how to receive and minister the word of the Lord. So he started out and on his way, he met an Ethiopian eunuch, an important official in charge of all the treasury.

This man had gone to Jerusalem to worship. And on his way home, he was sitting in his chariot reading the book of Isaiah, the prophet. And guess what? By the word of the Lord, that man finds himself there, Philip.

Now here's the verse. The spirit told Philip. What's the great message that the spirit has for Philip? Would you look at the words? Go to that chariot and stay near it.

I mean, wouldn't it be, thus sayeth the Lord, you are, no. Go to the chariot and stay near it. To do what? Just go to the, I got you to the road.

Now just go to the chariot. Oh, you're just imagining that, Philip. No.

Somehow he knew that that was an order from the Holy Spirit. And what did he do? He just went near it. And then Philip ran up to the chariot and he heard the man reading.

He wasn't told what to do. He heard the man reading Isaiah, the prophet. And he said, do you understand what you are reading? Philip asked.

How can I unless someone explains it to me? So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. And that's how the gospel went to Africa. Come on, can we put our hands together? That's how the gospel went to Africa.

That's how the gospel went to Ethiopia. Why? Because a man heard the word of the Lord and went to a lonely road that made absolutely no sense. You do not leave a big busy meeting to go to a road where you don't even know what you're gonna do.

And then he got this unspiritual sounding message. See the chariot? Go next to it and just stay near it. Boy, you gotta have faith.

You gotta have sensitivity. You wanna receive the word of the Lord tonight for your own life? Somebody here wanna receive the word, you don't know what to do in that situation, don't know what decision to make about that child or your finances or whatever, how the enemy is attacking you, you don't know what to do? God has a word for you. I don't know what it is unless he would give it to me.

He has a word for you. Do you wanna receive it? You gotta confess any sin the Holy Spirit convicts you of because sin clogs up the transmission system. You can't hear God's voice when there's a whole bunch of junk in there.

The wire's gotta be clear, clean. You don't have to be perfect. You just gotta come in the light and say, God, that thing you've been telling me about, forgive me.

I wanna walk before you in the light. I wanna be like Jesus. Forgive me for all my transgressions.

Come on, we can do that. And then just say, Lord, speak. Your servant is listening.

That's all. You don't need to go to Bible school. You don't go to seminary.

You don't have to have PhD. You just gotta say, God, forgive me. I'm your child.

If there's any junk messing up the transmission here, me and me able to hear, and now I just look to you like a child and say, speak. And when you speak, I will obey. And I let go from my mind all my

preconceived ideas.

I just empty myself. Speak, Lord.

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