

Prophecy The Key Mark of a New Covenant Church

by Sandeep Poonen

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Scripture: Ephesians 4:11, 1 Corinthians 14:3, 2 Corinthians 5:15, Hebrews 11:6, Jeremiah 23:25, 2 Timothy 1:7

Topics: "Prophetic Voice in the Church", "Surrender to God's Will"

Description

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Transcript

I wanted to share a little word about a New Covenant Church. A New Covenant Church is a church that is marked by one thing. What is a New Covenant Church marked by? It's marked by the spirit of prophecy that is there throughout a New Covenant Church.

A New Covenant Church is not marked by a good preacher. A New Covenant Church is not marked by good leaders. They have all of those things.

They may have gifted teachers that God said he gives to the church. He gives godly elders that he gives to the church. But the mark of a New Covenant Church is that there's a spirit about prophecy that exists in every member.

We read that in Ephesians chapter 4, that God gives special gifts to some people, prophets, evangelism, teaching. But the intention of God giving those gifts is so that every single person may be built up and perform their function. And the function of every single member is to have a spirit of prophecy, a prophetic voice in the church.

So what is the state of NCCF? The state of NCCF is not the presence of good doctrine or the absence of bad doctrine. I hope, because there are many churches that may have that. A lifeless body has all the members of the body there, but it's dead.

You can measure the fingers and proportion to each other and be like, sounds like a human body. It's got two eyes, two ears, one nose, chin, everything's there, it's a body. No life to it.

Doctrine is like that. No, none of us want to get rid of any of our body parts, so it's very important. But what good is it if there's no life in it? So having all the right doctrines, being able to go through all of scripture and understand all the truths, just means that we value the parts of the body.

But what good is it if the parts of the body don't have life in it? And the parts of the body have life in it if there's a spirit of prophecy in each member. Otherwise, that member is dead. You got a paralyzed finger here, you got a paralyzed liver there, you got a paralyzed toe there.

No matter what part of the body you think you are, whether you think you're insignificant or not, God gave us every member of the body for us to use. And if we don't have life, if we don't have the spirit of prophecy in us, then we are dead. We're paralyzed and we are a burden to the New Covenant Church.

We're a burden to what God wants to accomplish in our lives through this church because we don't have a spirit of prophecy. We don't have a prophetic voice. So a living church is a prophetic church.

So if you turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 14, which talks about the spirit of prophecy that must exist in our church, here's a little way to understand whether we have the spirit of prophecy or we don't. Very, very simple but extremely important. 1 Corinthians chapter 14, we know verse 3, but one who prophesies speaks to people for edification, for exhortation, for consolation, to build them up.

Now see verse 4. Here's the contrast between two gifts. The gift of a tongue edifies himself and the gift of prophecy edifies the church. The gift of prophecy is a gift that is at the expense of one to build up the church.

If I have the spirit of prophecy, there must be one thing that must be present in me, which is that I must be dead, that I must not exist so that the church can be built up. Any spirit that in very subtle ways maybe tries to lift myself up immediately invalidates the spirit of prophecy. Any desire that wants self to be present in any way as one stands up and speaks or as one is trying to be in the church, if there's any smell of self, I cannot have a prophetic voice.

So it's extremely important what we memorize this verse this week. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 15. Why did Jesus die? To save us from our sins.

Why did Jesus die? So that we should no longer live for anything to do with ourselves. We have to be gripped that the reason why Jesus died was so that I die completely, that there is no agenda of self that permeates within me, especially when I come to the church. Because the spirit of edifying myself is not going to help build up the church.

It's the spirit of prophecy which has a desire from the bottom most part of my life to build somebody else up because I am dead. I don't exist. Faith says that God exists.

That's what it says in Hebrews chapter 11 verse 6. And he who says, he who comes with faith must say that God exists, that he is. By saying that God exists, I'm saying that I don't exist. I must, he died so that I die, that I cease to exist.

And so the quality of New Covenant Christian Fellowship here is a reflection of how dead we are. Dead to everything about ourselves, everything. It's reflected in the way I talk to my wife.

It is reflected in the way I talk to my family, physical family. It is reflected in the way I behave around the church. It is reflected in my speech.

It's reflected in my look. It's reflected in my work. Whether this is a man who has died to himself or still in some way wants to edify, to build himself up because he thinks he is somebody.

We have to be gripped with it. We have to be gripped with the fact that the only chance of God having a prophetic voice through my life is if I am nothing. If I'm absolutely dead, that I have no agenda, no ambition, no ambition except that the name of Jesus, the name of God be glorified.

And that comes at the expense. It comes at the expense of my name. That's what I have to pay in order to get God's name to be glorified.

The payment God asks me is not burning myself at the stake. It is not giving all my money to the poor. The expense that God says you want my name to be glorified, I want your name.

I want your name to be crushed. I want your reputation to be made nothing. Then my name has a chance to be glorified.

And I wanted to share a couple of verses from Jeremiah chapter 23 which talks about false prophets. The New Covenant Church is a church that has true prophecy in it. And as I said, the state of NCCF is not decided by how good the speaking here is on Sunday morning.

It is a reflection to a certain extent. But the real reflection of NCCF, the maturity of NCCF is by the level of self-destruction that exists throughout. God is not fooled by what we speak.

God is not fooled by who stands up here. God is looking at each person's heart and says, I want to look and see who's dead, who's truly dead. And God will bear witness to such people over time.

God will lift such people up. God will give a spirit of anointing on such people that they'll be able to bless everybody around them because God sees the heart and sees that that person is dead. And you cannot help but the spirit to come on such people, for the spirit to anoint such people who are truly dead.

So we must commit that. We must long for the Lord to say, Lord, I want to be absolutely thoroughly dead. Then I can have a spirit of prophecy.

It is impossible to prophesy if I don't have faith. And it is impossible for me to have faith if I'm not dead. As long as I exist, I can't have a spirit of faith because the spirit of faith says God alone exists.

So if I wonder why, Lord, you've not given me a prophetic voice, I may have a lot of things to share. I may be able to study God's words tremendously. I'm able to speak a lot.

I may be able to process a lot. I've got a lot of intelligence. But the anointing, the spirit that is able to anoint my words may be missing because God says you're not dead.

You've been able to process a lot. He gave you a good brain. You're able to do a lot of things.

But you're not dead. That is why it doesn't bear fruit. The five loaves don't end to blessing 5,000.

Immature people eat of it and are blessed. But the truly spiritual listen to it and say, something's missing. And I fear that for myself.

And I fear that for our church, that our Bible studies can be good knowledge sharing. But there's a lack of a prophetic voice in our midweek gatherings. That's honestly the biggest thing that I'm worried about is not Sunday morning.

It's the state of our midweek groups. And do we have a spirit of prophecy in those times? And if we just come to share information, it's going to be an absolute waste of time. But if we take it seriously, Lord, that the reflection of your church at NCCM is going to be a reflection of how dead I am when I speak in the midweek groups, then the Lord will bear witness of it in our lives over time.

He'll bear witness to it in those times. That man is a true prophet. That man has a spirit of prophecy.

And I can build on it. I can build on it. And we must covet it.

You don't have to expect instant miracles. God wants to see and test us in different ways. Sandeep, are you truly dead? Different ways.

He's going to allow circumstances to happen. He says, Sandeep, are you truly dead? And when he shows me that I'm not dead, he says, will you mourn over it? He says, still, you're still alive. You still think you exist.

Die to it. Allow yourself to be crushed. So see, in Jeremiah chapter 23, listen to this, Jeremiah chapter 23, verse 25, we'll read along.

Verse 25, I have heard what the prophets have said, who prophesy falsely in my name, saying, I have a dream. I had a dream. How long? Is there anything in the hearts of the prophets who prophesy falsehood, even in these prophets of deception? Here's what makes these people so deceptive in their hearts.

Verse 27, because they intend to make my people forget my name by their dreams which they relate to one another. Verse 28, the prophet who has a dream and let him relate his dream, but let him who speaks my word, speak my word. And there's a contrast between the dreams and the great, brilliant ideas that we can have, visions during the day, dreams at night, imaginative ways in which we can figure out God's word, and then there's a little bit of, this is my dream.

I discovered this. This is how God spoke to me, as opposed to, this is God's word. This, I don't intend to let people forget God's name.

I want God to be lifted up. I want me to become a nothing. I want to be crushed.

I want God to be lifted up, and I can use all kinds of words to say that, but God's looking in my heart, and he's looking in my spirit as I stand up here and say, God, who's standing up here? Somebody who's trying

to also exist, or Lord, do I really want only you to exist, but I want me to be completely crushed? What does straw, verse 28, have in common with grain? And that's what I can feed people, dear brothers and sisters, as we meet in our midweek groups. What are you going to feed them with, straw or with grain? Straw is nothing, but grain has potential. Grain can be sold into people's lives, and it can bear fruit.

Verse 29, it's not my word like fire and like a hammer which shatters a rock. That is the mark of God's word speaking to me. This is the mark of God's word being able to get through to my life, is that it shatters me.

It absolutely crushes me to where I cease to exist. It's like a fire. You want to set fire to this building? What happens if that happens? What happens if a fire goes through to my house right now, when I drive back home, what's left? Nothing, just ashes.

Has God's word done that in my life? That's what happens when the word of God comes and speaks through an anointing person who's seeking to be completely dead. And that's the way God should speak through our lives. We don't have to raise our voice, we don't have to do anything like that, it could be two minutes, but it should be like a hammer that has come and crushed me.

It's like a fire that has burnt me up, that I no longer exist. Behold, I'm against the prophets who steal my words from each other and use their tongues to declare the word the Lord declares. I fear that, given that we have such a great teacher in my dad, in Zach Koonin, I fear that one of the things that can happen is we can so easily steal God's words from somebody else.

We can fool ourselves into thinking that we are of some spiritual metal. All because we've been listening to Zach Koonin. Now, you know how much we value him, you know how much I myself have recommended that we study him carefully.

I mean that, 100%, but we have to be very careful not to fool ourselves into thinking that because we've received all these things, that now we start listening to it, it becomes our own. And all we've done is just stolen his words, because we've forgotten how much we've stolen from him, or taken from him, we start to steal it and think it's our own. We think we're somebody.

What's the proof of it? The only proof of it is that it hasn't crushed me. It hasn't eliminated me, it hasn't eliminated self. And so wherever self is still present on the throne, wherever the word of God through Zach Koonin, through any prophet, through God's word reading directly, if it has not come like a hammer and crushed me, it's meaningless, I'm stealing.

I'm in great danger of being a false prophet. God says the New Covenant Church can be full of people who prophesy. Every single man.

Your young men and your young women can prophesy. So from the oldest to the youngest, you can have prophets sitting. Just think of it, every row, prophet after prophet after prophet.

And there are some true prophets and some false prophets. True prophets, false prophets, sitting in a church, a New Covenant Church, where everybody can prophesy. Who are the true prophets, who are the false prophets? True prophets are where the word of God comes spoken through any man of God or through God's word directly, and it comes like a hammer.

And it crushes me. It's like a fire that burns me up. And I don't have any great word to give to other people.

It's like a hammer that comes and crushes me. Is that happening in your life? God will bear witness to it. You don't have to try to do anything.

You can share a minute, which we give you that freedom to do, we ask you to do that minute or two. It doesn't have to take a long time, but God will bear witness to people whom the word of God is crushing like a hammer. You can't fake it.

Stealing God's words from Tozer or Lewis or Poonen doesn't really make a difference. God's not fooled. God's looking for crushed hearts.

God's looking for burnt up, where the word of God has come like a fire. And God bypasses a lot of the wise and the intelligent and goes to the babes. And God says, I'm looking for people who are going to go backwards and go and become crushed.

That's what a babe is. So helpless. So needing of help.

That's what is marked by the people who have the spirit of faith. They've been crushed. Let's have a spirit of prophecy in our church.

2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 7. Let me end with that. 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 7 says, God has not given me a spirit of cowardice. That's that word.

Timidity. The word for that is cowardice. God does not make people cowards.

The spirit of God when he comes upon us, it's not a spirit of cowardice. It's a person who is brave to let the hammer fall on himself and crush him completely. God has not given us a spirit that makes us shy back or draw back from the hammer that God wants to put into our life.

God wants us to reject all cowardice. Don't be fooled by thinking that because you are quiet in the church, you are humble. You're not.

There may be a lot of false humility. Another word for that is cowardice. That comes in, that is hidden by this mask of humility that says, I'm going to be quiet.

Same time, people who speak a lot doesn't mean that God's given them a spirit of boldness. Either one could be bad. The true spirit that comes upon us is a spirit that comes upon us with power and love and self-control.

But one thing will be true about such a person. They will not be cowards. They will not be cowards to allow the word of God to crush them.

And they will become bold. That is one thing that you see that happens. A lot of people mistake what happened on the day of Pentecost.

They think that everybody got the gift of tongues, so now today everybody who receives the Holy Spirit must have the gift of tongues. That's wrong. One thing that does mark people who have been filled with the Holy Spirit is that they become bold.

This is different from extroverted people. This is not extroversion. This is not faith because my mind just believes in positive thinking.

In our talking about faith, we can say, Lord, I want to have faith in you that you'll give me the divine nature. We've been speaking a lot about that. Lord, I have faith that you're going to do this in my life like Abraham.

But remember what preceded that faith. What needed that faith to be activated was Abraham had to become a nothing. God was waiting for 25 years for Abraham to become a nothing.

God was waiting 25 years for Abraham to be crushed. Then faith activated itself and a child was born. What would have happened if Abraham had become a nothing by 80 years old? I believe that Isaac would have been born when he was 80 years old.

God's not withholding Christ from us. He's waiting for us to become a nothing and to be coupled with our faith. Dear brothers and sisters, please hear me.

God is not holding back his Holy Spirit from us. He never does. He's not withholding Christ from you.

He never does. He's waiting for us to become a nothing. He's waiting for God's word to crush us so that we become a nothing.

Then faith gets activated very easily. Elijah didn't have to beg and beg and beg for the fire of God to fall. He could put water on the altar.

It didn't make a difference. It was his way of saying, God, this has nothing to do with my power. I'm just going to call on your name.

And the fire fell. When you put the whole sacrifice on the altar, the fire falls. When God sees that we are truly nothing, when God sees that we are gripped with being nothing, the fire will quickly fall in our lives.

And so if I look at myself and I say, God, I don't see the fire of God falling in my life. I see that I'm still too much of a coward when it comes to your crushing. The answer is very simple.

I've not become a nothing. I've not become a nothing. Lord Jesus, it is the spirit of the anointing of you has not come upon my life to where I can speak prophetic words.

There's only one reason. It's because I've not become a nothing. Lord, help me to become a nothing so that your word, your fire can fall upon me.

When I say only one thing is needed, you know, I've talked about faith already. You know, we've talked about faith. But let's not fool ourselves that faith and positive thinking are the same thing.

It's not at all the same thing. The heathen world has positive thinking. They also believe, can believe all kinds of great things about themselves.

Abraham could have believed all kinds of great things about whether he was going to have a child or not. But when did he become a nothing? That's when Isaac was conceived. Isaac was born.

We have to be gripped with this desire to become a nothing. That Lord, I cannot become a true prophet if I'm seeking to build up myself. In any way, the spirit of God will not fall.

Let us seek to become nothing, and let us speak great words of faith. May God help us.

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