

# Earnestly Desire to Prophecy

by Zac Poonen

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*This sermon emphasizes the importance of thirsting for righteousness and seeking spiritual gifts, particularly the gift of prophecy, to bless others. It highlights the need for genuine love, humility, and faith in pursuing God's gifts and sharing His word effectively. The message encourages believers to prioritize encountering God and allowing rivers of living water to flow from within them to bless others.*

**Scripture:** John 7:37, 1 Corinthians 14:1, 1 Corinthians 14:3, 1 Corinthians 14:31, Jeremiah 29:11

**Topics:** "Thirsting for Righteousness", "Spiritual Gifts and Love"

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## Description

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## Transcript

Yeah, I'm very thankful that I unexpectedly had a long period here, and that's partly because my three sons are here, not that the rest of you are unimportant, but there are many thousands of children I have in India too. But as we grow older, we are commanded in scripture to allow our children to be available for us. So I've always followed scripture, and I seek to follow it till the end.

And I was thinking today of a command in scripture which I feel that many believers in CFC churches are not obeying, not only here, in other places too, and that's in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and verse 1. So as you read it, there are two commands here in this verse. Ask yourself whether you have obeyed both of them. Very short commands.

The first command is pursue after love, not just love, but the type of love described in chapter 13, where it says you can have faith, chapter 13 verse 13, you can have faith in Jesus, you can have hope that he's coming again, and you'll be like him, but love is the greatest of all. Faith is not the greatest. Please remember this when healers and others say to you, faith is the greatest, I say the Bible says in 1 Corinthians 13 verse 13, faith, hope, and love, love is the greatest.

Not saying faith is not important, but once you're born again, it's good to have more and more faith, but a lot of people are pursuing that. I wonder if there are more people pursuing after us to get faith for healing or faith for money. How many people are pursuing after love, which is the greatest? You'll ultimately find

when you stand before the Lord, if you don't find it earlier, that the greatest is not faith, it is love.

I don't have to wait till then to find out because I believe the Word of God. So even if I don't have the faith that somebody else has, okay, fine, let me have love which others don't have. That's what puts us all at an equal level.

When it comes to faith, we think that person's got more of that, but what's hindering you from loving? What's hindering you from reading 1 Corinthians 13 and say, I want to be like that, first of all, towards my wife, towards my husband, for example, love is patience. Take that one characteristic of love and determine, I'm going to pursue after that love where I'll always be patient at home, no matter what my husband does or does not do, no matter what my wife does or does not do. It's a little more difficult with children, but it can come.

Pursue patience. Very, very important. I believe God gives us children to teach us patience.

I had four professors of patience at my house, and gradually I learned that we're all the same. Nobody's different. Take every opportunity in your home to pursue after patience.

And love, here's another part of love. It says here in 1 Corinthians 13, middle of verse 5, love never seeks its own. That's a tremendously challenging verse.

And always begin at home. There's a proverb in the world itself that says charity or love begins at home. If it doesn't begin at home, it's very easy to show love to the strangers.

Like you heard me speak about that wife who told her husband once, you please speak to me in the gracious way you speak to a stranger who comes to the door. At least that much. That's enough for me.

How do you speak to a stranger who knocks at your door? Never rude. A total stranger just came to the door. Here's the wife says, can you speak to me at least that level of gentleness and graciousness? Love never seeks its own.

And we've all failed. But we'll never progress if we don't judge ourselves when we fail. I believe that's the reason many don't progress.

They keep on doing it day after day after day, month after month after month, because each time they fail, they don't judge themselves. It's like a student studying arithmetic, got the addition wrong, doesn't correct themselves and says, teacher, no, I don't want to listen to you, and keeps on getting it wrong for the next 10 years and never learns addition. But if he's willing to listen to the teacher and say, this is where you went wrong, you're going to carry over what is left or what you added up in one column to the next column, then only you get the right answer.

It's like that, you know, if every time we judge ourselves in our home, in our office, when we are driving the car and interaction with other believers, when people come to gossip to us and all types of things, if we judge ourselves, don't judge the other, judge yourself. Lord, where have I acted contrary to love here? Please show me immediately so that I can at least confess it. Maybe I'll take another 20 occasions before I overcome it.

But fine, if I deal with it now, I've got only 19 more occasions and then I'll be finished with it. You don't finish with anything in one shot. The child does not learn how to walk in one day.

Pursue after love, love that is patient, a love that never seeks its own. I just took characteristics I read from there. I want to encourage you to think about that.

I don't want to mention too many things. But then there's a second command in 1 Corinthians 14 verse 1 that is earnestly desire the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Now, I've had a lot of interaction with the charismatic movement, though I've never been a part of it.

And I've seen they emphasize faith is the greatest. That's wrong. And secondly, when they emphasize spiritual gifts, they say especially that you may speak in tongues.

I say no. I go by scripture, pursue spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. Not tongues.

That's so 100% against what generally the charismatic movement teaches, that entire sentence. And we must not just react against that and say we don't want it at all. No, the Bible says earnestly desire spiritual gifts.

Now, I'll tell you, when I pursue after love, that is the fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control, fruit of the Spirit. And the fruit of the Spirit makes me a better person.

But love is not centered in oneself. The one aspect of love is it does not seek its own. If I want to become more and more and more and more like Jesus, you could be seeking your own.

I want to be more Christ-like. I want to get a reward from the Lord in the final day. I want a reputation from others in the church that I'm a very Christ-like person.

You can all be seeking your own in your pursuit of Christ-likeness. But the fundamental mark of Christ-likeness is he did not seek his own. If he sought his own, he'd never have come from heaven.

You see how we can be deceived about this matter of becoming like Jesus, that I want to become like Jesus, and my motive is that people honor me, or I become more Christ-like just because I want to impress God or something. No, love does not seek its own. And if you desire to be a blessing to others, you cannot do that without spiritual gifts.

It is impossible. So I'll tell you this. Those who do not desire the gifts of the Spirit are those who don't care to be a blessing to others.

And if you have not sought out the spiritual gifts, it's because, I'll tell you to your face, you don't care about whether you bless others or not, so long as people think highly about you as a very spiritual Christ-like person, you're happy. That's a lot of garbage. I don't want it.

To be Christ-like is to think of others. God so loved the world that he gave his Son for the world. And that is the type of love the Bible speaks about.

And you cannot love without pursuing spiritual gifts. If you are loving, if you think you're loving, and you're not pursuing other spiritual gifts to bless others. See, spiritual gifts are not to bless myself.

The only gift of the Spirit mentioned here is speaking in tongues, which blesses myself. And I'm not surprised all selfish people seek that, because that's the gift that blesses me. Don't seek the other gifts that bless others.

Some people seek the gift of healing to get honor. Again, seeking my own. There's such a lot of seeking one's own in seeking spiritual gifts.

Why not have a generation of people rising up in CFC churches who seek for spiritual gifts to bless other people and not oneself? And it says here, especially verse 1, that you may prophesy. I want you, brothers and sisters, to please take this command of Scripture, which you have not even bothered about, seriously, at least from today. And now when it comes to prophecy, also, again, the charismatic movement has led people completely astray, because they don't understand the New Covenant.

They haven't read the New Testament. They predict the future. Prediction of the future is not New Testament prophecy.

But the old covenant prophets did. You know, revealing something about the person's past. You think that's a supernatural gift? There are people who have told me, who have actually, I've actually heard this.

I went to some person, some preacher, and he told me everything about my past. I was convinced this is a man of God. I began to respect him.

Foolish. I'll tell you a true story that happened in India that was reported in the newspapers. There was a little child in North India many years ago, who, when she was, I don't know, about, I don't remember the age, eight years old or so, began to speak about her former life, about her previous life where she lived in another part of India, and described everything in detail about some 80-year-old woman who died on the day she was born, eight years earlier.

And she could describe that person's life from childhood, where she lived, the house she lived in, every little detail. It's a true story. And the Hindus presented that as an example.

They said, now at least you believe that you can be born again into this world after you die. That's what they teach. When you die, you're born again in another form into the world.

And here is an example. And there are multitudes who swallowed it. I didn't swallow it.

Because I say, there are a hundred demons who know every detail about every person who lived on this earth from the time of Adam. And they've got a record of it. And they can go and tell anybody how somebody lived in David's time, or Paul's time, 2,000 years ago, or 80 years ago when somebody died.

The only way to, the easy to fool a person, pick up that person who died on the day this person was born, and when this child is about seven or eight years old, come into that person, into this child, demon possessed, and that child can speak every single thing that happened to that other person. And if you swallow that, that's a type of prophecy. I'm sorry to say some Christians are swallowing.

That's not prophecy. That's demonic. It's not Christian preachers who say such things.

Even non-Christians say that. I'm just warning you. And when it talks about the future, the devil knows a lot of things that are happening here and there.

And he's a very smart person. He can put a lot of those things together and predict that certain things will happen when he knows that somebody is planning something. And there's a very good chance of his success, 99% chance of his being able to do it.

He'll say, this is going to happen tomorrow. This guy's already planned it. Or so-and-so is going to buy this home one week from now.

Nobody else knows about it. The devil does. There are things like that.

The devil doesn't know the future, but he knows everything that different, different people are planning, and he puts them all together, and he can even predict some things about the future. So I'm not fooled by all this. When God filled me with the Holy Spirit, one of the things that happened to me was I became alive to realize that there's a spirit world, which I was not as alert to it after I was born again.

So that's not prophecy. In the Old Testament, the prophets predicted something that would happen 100 years from now, 200 years from now, 700 years from now. That was prophecy.

But in the New Testament, prophecy is not predicting the future. The Old Testament prophets would go to a king or somebody else and say, you must do this. That's called directive prophecy.

You never find directive prophecy in the New Covenant, never. There are two instances where a man called Agabus prophesied something about the future, Acts chapter 11 and Acts chapter 21. And I don't have time to show that to you.

You read it sometime. In Acts 11, Agabus said, there's going to be a great famine, period, full stop. He never told anybody to do anything.

If he had told somebody, therefore you must do this, that would have been directive prophecy. Agabus was a genuine prophet. He predicted something and stopped.

God can do that. In Acts 21, he predicted this man, Paul, who has this girdle, when he goes to Jerusalem, he'll be captured, period, stop. He didn't tell him, therefore you should go or shouldn't go.

No, that would be directive. He stopped with that and said, Paul, it's up to you. Paul decided I'm going.

But there was some foolish so-called charismatic people in the earlier part of Acts 21 who prophesied out of their own spirit. You know the word spirit very often in the New Testament. You don't know whether it's capital S or small s because in the Greek language, it's all capitals.

So the translators had to decide whether this is Holy Spirit or their spirit. And Acts 21 says, from their spirit, they prophesied, said, Paul should not go to Jerusalem. They were the foolish people.

They are not real prophets. And how do we know Paul was supposed to go to Jerusalem according to the will of God? Because the Lord told Paul in a vision, as you have proclaimed my name in Jerusalem, you will also do in Rome. We know what the Lord wanted.

I'm just giving you these warnings about what is not prophecy and what is prophecy. It's mentioned here two verses later in Acts 14, verse 3. When a person prophesies, he's speaking to men and women in the church for edification that is building them up spiritually, for exhortation that is challenging them spiritually, and for consolation that is comforting them. So what is prophecy that you're told in verse 1 to seek for? Seek for a word from God that will challenge people, that will comfort people, and thus build them up spiritually.

And who should seek for it? Every single born-again person. Not for your own honor. Don't type prediction and all this type of stuff, which is a deception.

Go by Scripture. Everyone who prophesies challenges, comforts, and builds up. So you don't have to do that only in a church.

You can prophesy when you're speaking to somebody on your phone. Two sentences at the end which can challenge that person, or comfort that person, or build up that person. Or when you write an email, one sentence at the end can be a prophecy.

Prophecy means challenge, or comfort, or build up. Is it so difficult to add one sentence at the end of your phone call, or one sentence at the end of an email to somebody you know well? It's so easy, but you must seek God for the gift of prophecy. I mean, you can put whatever bright idea comes into your mind.

That's another thing. But if you seek God for the gift of prophecy, and not just from Bible knowledge, but say, Lord, give me a word appropriate for that person. You'll be amazed to see what God will give you.

And you don't have to be a great mature saint, because it says here to all of you, earnestly desire to prophesy. Now I want to tell you something. The church in Corinth was not a very spiritual church.

Many of them were pretty immature young believers. Are you an immature young believer? Seek to bless others with the gift of the Spirit, and don't seek it for your own honor. Love does not seek its own.

So first, pursue after love. And simultaneously, don't wait till you become perfect in love. That'll happen only when Christ comes.

So if you wait till you're perfect in love, you'll never prophesy. But as you're pursuing after love, seek for the gifts of the Holy Spirit as well. That's like your march.

Left, right, left, right, left, right. Pursue after love. Seek for prophecy.

Pursue after love, and seek for prophecy. Keep on growing, and let both your legs grow simultaneously. The fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.

Both should be equally long. You know how a little child is? The legs are so small. Think of that, the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit.

And as the child grows, both legs grow equally. Has it been like that in your life? Or have you been only pursuing the fruit of the Spirit? And even that, you've not really got very far. So why is he compares prophecy with tongues here? So I want you to see that difference, because it's very relevant for the time in which we live.

Verse 4, one who speaks in a tongue builds up, edifies means builds up, only himself. It's true. When a person speaks in the gift of unknown tongues, which God gives, not some rubbish that he was taught in some Pentecostal church.

I don't mean that garbage. I mean a genuine gift of tongues, which not somebody taught him to speak, but which the Holy Spirit gave him when he did not try to repeat what somebody else told him to do, or which he heard some blabbering in some Pentecostal church, and he began to imitate that. That's rubbish.

Renounce it and forsake it. Don't insult God by that type of imitation. Imitation currency is a crime, and imitating tongues is a crime.

If God doesn't give it to you, fine. God doesn't give it to everybody. But don't imitate it.

You don't have money, don't produce counterfeit currency. That's all I'm saying. Better to have little than to have counterfeit currency.

So don't seek for the gift if you find it. But notice this, that one who speaks in the tongue builds himself up. There is a value in it.

And I can testify to that, that the gift of tongues has helped me to build myself up for the last 45 years. But prophesying edifies the whole church. So if you want to build up the whole church, what you need is not tongues, but prophecy.

And that's another thing charismatic Pentecostal people haven't understood, that tongues does not edify the church. But yet you see them blabbering away in tongues in public, it edifies nobody, because it's counterfeit. I'm not fooled by it.

Look at Paul's own testimony concerning speaking in tongues, verse 18 and 19. I can say this with all my heart. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all.

Is Paul ashamed of it? Not at all. He says, I thank God he's given me this gift. And he says, more than all of you Corinthians.

But, verse 19, in the church, I would rather speak five words with my mind. That is prophecy. Than to instruct others rather than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue.

Do a little mathematics here. How much better than tongues is prophecy? How much better than tongues is prophecy in the church? 10,000 divided by five, 2,000 times. Always remember to share a word that will challenge or build up a challenge or comfort or build up someone in the church in your normal known language is 2,000 times better than somebody who speaks in a tongue in a church.

If you believe that, you will not be amazed and enraptured with people who speak in tongues in public. You'll say, the guy doesn't read the Bible. Paul wouldn't do it.

He would not do it. He'd say, I'll speak rather five words with a known language that will bless people more than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue. How many people understand that? So, prophecy.

I want you to turn to this passage in Luke chapter 13. Luke's gospel chapter 13. Sorry, Luke 11, not 13.

Luke 11, the disciples asked Jesus a question. Lord, teach us to pray. John taught his disciples to pray.

You teach us to pray. Here's another thing. Most Christians, if you ask them, what was Jesus' reply to that question, they will stop with what is known as the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, all the way to thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen. That's what the Lord said in answer to the prayer.

I say that was just the beginning of his answer to that question. That was just the introduction. What about the rest of the answer to that question? Lord, teach us to pray.

Here it is. Verse 5. Then he went on to say to them, answering the same question, Lord, teach us to pray. This is how you should pray.

It's like a man who goes to his friend. He's teaching them how to pray, remember? That was their question. And here, the picture, the friend is God.

You're praying to God. Go to God, even if it's midnight. This friend goes at midnight, verse 5, and says, friend, please lend me three loaves.

What for? I'm hungry. No, I'm not hungry. I've had a full meal.

I don't need anything for myself. Are you like that? Quite satisfied with your Christian life? Wonderful. God's blessed you immensely.

You've learned to overcome sin. God's blessed you in every way. You don't need any.

But a friend of mine has come and I have nothing to give him. This is a guy who's concerned about somebody else. He's pursuing after love.

And because he's pursuing after love, he's seeking for gifts. For whom? For others. Love is for yourself.

Fruit is yours. Gifts are for other people. So here he's seeking for the gift of the spirit to help some other needy person whom he loves.

Now, listen, this happened at midnight. Now, if somebody comes to your house at midnight, don't ask him, have you had your dinner? You don't have anything in the house. Because he may say, no.

What do you do then? You let him do what this guy did. Obviously, there were no stores there. He had to go to his friend's house at midnight and knock over there.

But he had such a concern for this friend that he asked him, have you had your dinner, my friend? He said, no, I came from a long journey. He said, fine, I'll get you something. I finished, we finished dinner.

We got nothing in the house. But I'll get you something. I love you enough.

I love you enough to go and wake up my neighbor at midnight. You do that? And you read these things, put yourself in that person's face and ask yourself, would you do that? Would you go to your friend's house at midnight? Bang. And he says, verse 7 from inside, don't bother me.

The door is shut. My children are in bed. You're waking them up.

I cannot get up and give you anything. I have something here, but I can't get up and give you. Sorry.

How many of you would continue to knock after that? Most of us would give up. I wouldn't go to a neighbor. I mean, if he, I may go to a neighbor and I'd ask for some, but if he says, even if he's a NCCF person and he says, hey, listen, don't trouble me, man.

The children are in bed. You're waking them up. I'll go away.

I said, he's being disturbed. Why should I trouble him anymore? Let me go somewhere else. But this man said, no.

Why didn't he, why did he keep on knocking? Because he loved this friend of his so much who had come. That's what made him keep on knocking until he got those three loads so that he could give. That means he loved this other person so much that he had to get some gift to bless him with.

And I'll tell you why we don't seek for the gifts of the spirit. We don't love other people sufficiently. God so loved the world that he gave his best.

Sacrificially. And when we so love people, we'll really want to do something to bless them. Not with just a little bit of money, but something that will bless them eternally.

And so he kept on knocking. He said, I don't care how long you, whatever you may say, I'm going to keep on knowing. I'm, I love this man so much.

You have to give me these three loads. Then he says this neighbor of his, because he will not, he may not even give it as a friend, but because his persistence and disturbing him, he will get up and give him, what is he going to give? Read that wonderful phrase. Verse eight, last part.

As many gifts of the spirit as he needs. It's a beautiful phrase. As much as he needs.

I go to God and ask him to, Lord, give me something to bless these people with. He'll give me as much as I need. I can testify to that after 44 years of preaching in CFC.

I go to God like this, say, Lord, I don't have what it is to give these people who are in need. He'll give me as much as I need for the people. According to their needs, which I don't know.

So I say to you, verse nine, please take this seriously personally. Let me paraphrase his words. Ask like this man asked and you'll get.

Why didn't you get so far? You didn't ask like this man asked. You gave up after some time. Seek like this man sought and you'll find.

Knock like this man knocked and God will open the door for you. Why didn't you open the door so far? You didn't knock like this. You gave up after some time.

You prayed for something and I say, oh, well, maybe God doesn't want to give it to me. God said, don't bother me. Okay, go away.

And you've lived like that for years, not getting a number of things God wanted you to have. He wanted you to make your blessing to so many people. It never succeeded because you went away too soon.

From God's door. I'm saying that to everybody here. And verse 10, everyone who asks, every single person who asks like this will receive.

No exception. No partiality with God. And every single person who seeks like this man sought will find.

And every single person who knocks like this man knocked, it will be opened. What more promise do you want from Jesus? Why haven't you got them? Why hasn't the door been opened? I can tell you, God has opened the door for me hundreds of times. He's given me what I need for other people hundreds of times.

And I'm no favorite of God any more than you are. We are all God's favorite children. I just went to this passage and said, I'm not going to give up.

I'm not going to give up. I don't care how long it takes. I'm not going to give up.

I love these people. They must get the best. It's like you would persist to get something for your children.

You want to get admission for your children in some school or college. Oh, how you'll go. Oh, you love your children so much.

You love people in the church like that to bless them. Or do you come lazily to the meeting and say, oh, well, I just come to say hello to everybody. And that why we come, says he must earnestly covet to prophesy.

Then he says, let me tell you something else. He says, to assure you how much God wants to give it to you. If your son asks you for a fish, will you give him a snake? If you ask the Holy Spirit, will he give you an evil spirit? Some people are afraid.

If I keep seeking, I don't know what spirit I'll get. Your father will give you a snake, is it? He's speaking against that very thing that some people warn others. Don't be so crazy after seeking for the gifts of the spirit.

You may get an evil spirit. Your father may give you a snake. Imagine thinking that God will give me a snake when I'm seeking to bless other people in the name of Jesus Christ.

If you ask an egg, will he give you a scorpion? And then Jesus looked at the people and said, you all are all evil compared to God. Now, all fathers are not evil on the earth. You've got many good fathers.

Many of you are good fathers. I believe I've been a good father. But the best father on earth is evil compared to God.

In other words, the light of God, the love of God is so great that our love is so small. It's like a drop in the ocean compared to God's love. That's how great his love is, that he'll never give us snake.

He'll never give us scorpion. He'll never give us stone. And if you, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, verse 13, how much more will your heavenly father give bread? What is the bread? The gifts of the Holy Spirit, not to everybody, to those who ask him.

Now, do you understand why you haven't got it? You didn't ask. Or you didn't ask like this. You asked and gave up.

You thought, I don't want all the foolish things, the charismatic, but I also don't want it. But I want the genuine thing. I don't want any counterfeit currency in my wallet.

But I do want genuine currency. Earnestly desire gifts of the Holy Spirit. Now, turn with me again to 1 Corinthians 14.

He goes on there to say how it should be in a church meeting. Now, some people, I used to be in the brethren assemblies. They had this business of everybody getting up and sharing something before the breaking of bread.

But they jumped straight into 1 Corinthians 14, 26, bypassing all the verses before that. You can't jump into the middle of something. But if you go through 1 Corinthians 14 verses 1 to 25, then you can come to

verse 26.

1 Corinthians 14, that when you come together, brethren, when you assemble, somebody has a psalm, which is a hymn that they can ask for, or a particular teaching, or a particular revelation they got nowadays from Scripture. Those days, they didn't have a written Bible. Now, it's something I learned from Scripture.

Or a tongue, if there is an interpretation. Whatever you do, let it be done for building up, building up. My aim is to build up the church, not to seek my own honor, not to get a reputation that I shared something so, I said, garbage.

If you get up here and share something, and go and sit down and, oh, what a wonderful thing I shared. And have you heard that children's poem of, what's it, Little Jack Horner sat in a corner eating his Christmas pie, put in his thumb and pulled out a plum and said, what a good boy am I? You can sit like that after finishing your message here, sit back and say, what a good message that was that I shared. That is Little Jack Horner.

His hand in turn pulled out a plum and said, what a good boy am I? That's not the way to share God's Word. No, that's honor seeking. And if you go and sit back there after sharing something and say, what a good boy am I? Or what a good girl am I? You need to repent.

Go before God, put your face in the dust and say, Lord, I'm sorry for touching your glory. Have mercy on me. We've all done it.

I've done it, but I repented. That's why I got rid of it. I'm not telling you things as if I never did it.

I did it, and the Lord convicted me so badly, I repented and said, Lord, I never want to touch your glory. It's a terrible thing to touch the glory of God. That's how we lose out on God's blessing.

And now you take credit for anything that God enabled you to do, whether it's a prayer. You know, you can pray a wonderful prayer and then sit down and say, wow, wasn't that a fantastic prayer? A lot of people pray not to God. They pray to the audience and sit down and imagine what a wonderful prayer they have prayed.

So we must give the glory to God. Anyone who has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, let everything be done for building up. And then it says, how should it be in your meeting? First of all, verse 29, two or three prophets.

Everybody can seek for prophecy, but everybody's not a prophet. The Bible speaks in Ephesians 4, verse 11 and 12, about God as appointed in the church, apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds, and teachers. But that is a gift.

A prophet is one who almost permanently has a prophetic word from God, which penetrates people's hearts and reveals their inner condition. But prophesying is something which a person may just share two or three sentences or two minutes, something that the Lord lays on his heart. He's not consistent.

He's not, God doesn't give him a word every single time he's a prophet. So it says, in a meeting, it's best that first of all, those who have a consistent gift of prophecy, meaning junior prophets, they speak first, maybe two or three. In a big church, three, small church, maybe one or two.

And the others must pass judgment, verse 29. That means the others must not just swallow what this guy says, because he's not an Old Testament prophet who says, thus said the Lord. He's sharing something which he says, I think.

This is what the Lord has laid on my heart. Beware of those people nowadays who say, thus said the Lord. I have no respect for them.

Jeremiah 23 says, beware of these prophets who say, thus said the Lord. I have not sent them. Let me give you the example of one of the greatest prophets in the New Testament, the apostle Paul.

In the same book, 1 Corinthians, he gives us an example. Chapter 7. Remember, he's writing scripture inspired by the Holy Spirit without a doubt. But what does he think of it himself when he's writing it? 1 Corinthians 7, he says in verse 25, concerning virgins, I have no command from the Lord, but I give my opinion.

Oh, what a humble man. Brothers, sisters, I'm not telling you, thus said the Lord. I'm giving you my opinion.

God has found me to be trustworthy. I'm giving you my opinion. I have much more respect for such a man than these people who say, thus said the Lord.

I have zero respect for people who say, thus said the Lord. Further, he gives certain advice concerning women and marriage and all that. Then at the end, last verse, this wonderful section, he says in verse 40, in my opinion, she's happier if she remains as she is.

And I think—I love that expression. That's what I will always use. I think I have the Spirit of God.

I would any day listen to a man who says, I think I have the Spirit of God, than these guys who get up and say, thus said the Lord. This is the Lord speaking through me. I never listen to them.

A really godly man will say like Paul, I think I have the Spirit of God, and the Holy Spirit says, that is me, and puts it in Scripture. That's why I have more respect for such people. And if you don't want to be deceived, follow Scripture.

So coming back to seeking for spiritual gifts, it says here in 1 Corinthians 14, verse 31, you can all prophesy in this way. What is that? Words of comfort, words of challenge, building up. And everyone can be challenged, and everyone can learn.

And remember, the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets. It means you're the one who controls your spirit. Don't interrupt somebody and say, no, no, I have to say something now.

You don't have self-control. You're not under the control of the Holy Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is self-control.

I have been in meetings where there was an open time of sharing, and some other meeting where I was not necessarily called to be a speaker, but where everyone is given a chance to share. And I felt I had a word, and somehow there was no opportunity for it, or they never invited me. My spirit is subject to the prophets.

I didn't get up and say, hey, fellas, don't go away till I've given you what the Lord gives. No. Lord, you didn't give me an opportunity, which means I'm not supposed to share that with you.

Maybe I'm supposed to share that another time. You don't have that humility. You will never be a prophet.

I guarantee that. And you'll never prophesy. The spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets.

If God doesn't open a door, keep your mouth shut. Don't try to push open a door. I'll tell you something about God's doors.

They're like these automatic doors. When you come near it, it'll open. If it doesn't open by itself, don't try to push it.

That's not a door God wants you to open. So the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets. And if you don't listen to that, there'll be confusion.

Everybody thinking that he has got a word from God. And God, verse 33, is not a God of confusion, but of peace. And he especially asks the women to be careful.

I'm not saying a woman cannot prophesy. A woman is never called to be a prophet or a prophetess. In the entire New Testament, there's not a single prophetess mentioned in the New Testament.

Even that Acts 21, where it says Philip had four daughters. You look up the NASB translation, it doesn't say they're prophetesses. They prophesied.

The correct translation. There's no prophetess in the New Testament. There's no female apostle.

There's no female prophetess in the New Testament, because those are positions of authority. God doesn't give women authority, either in a home or in a church. That would be subject.

But it's in the Old Testament, where there were individuals, there were prophetesses. Huldah was a prophetess in Jeremiah's time. Anna was a prophetess who came when Jesus was born up in the temple, when they brought Jesus to be dedicated.

So women are not called to be prophetesses. According to 1 Corinthians 14, they can prophesy. In fact, earlier on in chapter 11, it says when they prophesy, they should cover their heads.

So which means they can prophesy. They're not called to be prophetesses. 37, 1 Corinthians 14, 37.

If any of you think you're a prophet or spiritual, please recognize that the things which I'm writing you are not just my own bright ideas. They are the Lord's commandment. What is the Lord's commandment? Pursue after love, earnestly desire to prophesy, and, verse 31, you can all prophesy one by one.

And what happens if a number of people share a word from God, even if it's briefly two, three minutes each? Of course, because of time factor, you can't carry on forever. You've got to be reasonable. God's given us common sense.

By the way, common sense is as much a gift from God as any other gift of the Holy Spirit. Remember this. Sometimes we just need to use our common sense.

Don't ask for God's special revelation. Lord, which shirt shall I put on today? Don't wait for a revelation from God. Otherwise, you'll come here without a shirt.

Just use your common sense. I'm just giving you a ridiculous example. But listen, verse 24, 1 Corinthians 14, 24.

If in a church, first of all, verse 23, if in a church everybody speaks in tongues, people come in, they'll say they are mad. Have you seen mad churches? I've seen a lot of mad churches. A mad church is where everybody speaks in tongues.

Have you seen them? I've seen plenty of them. Why do I call it a mad church? I'm not angry with anybody. I'm just quoting Scripture.

You all speak in tongues, they say you're mad, verse 23. But if people prophesy, share a word in a known language, which will encourage, challenge, build up, just briefly, and a person who doesn't believe in all this comes in, he's convicted. I believe this is a result of prophecy.

That means, verse 25, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and he falls on his face and worships God and says, God is here. Now, the most important thing we desire in a New Testament church is that people must come in face-to-face with God. Not a great preacher.

They must encounter God in their hearts. They must go away from the meeting saying, we met with the Lord. The Lord spoke to us.

I met with Jesus in the meeting today. That is the best meeting. And that can happen if people seek for the gift of prophecy.

And if people say, Lord, give me a word from above, and maybe just two or three minutes, or five minutes, like some of you come here and get up and share for five minutes. Don't just share some bright ideas. Don't share something clever, which you can impress people with.

Seek for a word from the Lord. And what does it mean the secrets of his heart are disclosed? That means he sits there and says, this guy know my need. I know my need today.

He spoke exactly to my need. There can be prophetic articles that are circulated by church. It can be exactly according to the need of the person who receives it.

We pray for this when we send out the weekly word for the week. Lord, let this go prophetically to people who are in need, exactly according to their need. Or you get up here and share something.

We must pray that it will be prophetic. That means something which is in his heart, which nobody knew. He came there to the church with a need in his heart.

Many people come to Sunday morning with a need in their heart, and that need is met. Say, how in the world did this guy know what my need was? He didn't. God knew.

God loved you enough to share something with him. And he said, boy, I met with the Lord in the meeting today. He had an answer for me.

Amazing how God can speak. Amazing. I've had some remarkable experiences of how God speaks and saves people from calamity.

Seek God with all your heart, my brothers and sisters. So, conclusion, verse 39, earnestly desire to prophesy. Don't forbid anyone from speaking in tongues, but everything must be done properly and in an orderly manner.

Okay, in conclusion, John chapter 7. How do we get here? John chapter 7. This is the only time I read about Jesus shouting when he preached. Most of the time he was very gentle. We read in Matthew chapter 12, my servant will not raise his voice, his voice will not even be heard in the street.

But here he shouted. John chapter 7, verse 37, on the last day, the great day of the feast, the only time we read of Jesus crying out with a loud voice. If anyone is thirsty, come to me and drink.

He's not inviting everybody. A lot of people say, whosoever will may come. Yeah, but the Bible says, if you're thirsty, come.

In another place, he says, if you're weary and heavy laden, come. What does that mean? Like I say, if you're sick and tired of your defeated life, come. Otherwise, don't come.

You heard me say how somebody once came to me and said, Brother Zach, I want to join your church because I'm fed up with this other church I belong to. I said, don't come. Don't come because you're fed up with that church.

Come when you're fed up with yourself. Because Jesus said, come to me those who are fed up with themselves. That's the meaning of those who are weary and heavy laden.

Are you fed up with yourself, your defeated life? Welcome to NCCF and to any CFC church. Anyone who's thirsty, desperately longing, hungering and thirsting for righteousness will be satisfied. So that's the first requirement, thirst for this life I've been describing.

And faith, verse 38. If you believe, you'll keep on knocking. My father loves me.

He will not give me a snake. He wants me to persist. It's the same story of the widow who went to the judge and kept on knocking until she got it.

Now when the man who went to the friend says only two parables, Jesus spoke on prayer and both of them, persistence is the theme. Faith, what will be the result? How do you know you got what Jesus wants you to give? Here it is. From his innermost being will flow rivers of living water.

If you ask the city corporation or whatever you call it here, city council, to connect your new building, connect water supply to your new building and you wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote, called, make a phone call, how do you know the answer? When the water came. If the water didn't come, you don't say, well, I have, by faith, I believe the water is here. So that won't quench your thirst.

When you actually see the water coming out of your tap and say, hey, I got the answer. And if you find living water flowing out from within you, blessing not only you, but others. What is a river? A river is not meant for you.

A well is meant for yourself. Jesus told the Samaritan woman, if you come to me, I'll give you a well that satisfies your own need. But this is a river.

Rivers are not meant for private water drinking. It's for everybody. A river will flow out from you that will bless others.

Don't rest. For whom is this? You qualify? See if your name is here in verse 38. Is your name here in verse 38? He or she who believes in me.

You've been timid. You're one of those timid believers who will not ask for too much. You remain dry.

Not even a well that satisfies your own need. And God wants you to make your river. Let me tell you what I believe.

You're a child of God. You're born again. And the blood of Jesus has cleansed you from all sin.

And you're honest and you keep a good conscience. Then I want to say to every such person, not everybody, but everyone who has really repented of their sin and has put Christ first in their life, made Jesus Lord of their life, wants to glorify Him and not seek honor for yourself. I want to tell you, you believe in Him.

It is God's will that you should be a blessing to not one or two others. The river doesn't bless one person. Little by little, more and more people.

Every single person here. Pain and humility. Seek God.

Thirst. Thirst is a desperate thing. It's not like saying, well, I like a glass of water right now.

We're all a bit thirsty. Not like that. If you've been wandering in a desert for seven days without any water, and you're dying of thirst.

Somebody offers you water, \$10,000 a glass of water. You take it. That's the type of thirst, Jesus speaking.

Lord, I've got only one earthly life. I've said that to the Lord many times. I said, Lord, only one earthly life slips by.

Every day it slips by. Some things I cannot postpone. Many things on earth can be postponed, but not this.

Because life is slipping by. I want the rivers to flow. I started praying for it, I'll tell you honestly.

I was about 22 years old. I prayed for it frequently after that. Fought for the gift of prophecy when I was 22 years old.

Lord, give me a word that will bless others. Can't you pray? And I was converted just for about three years then. One year after my baptism.

Seek God. He's a rewarder. Those who seek him, no, who seek him diligently.

Jeremiah 29, 11 to 13. You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart. When other things on earth are a priority in your life, forget it.

You will not find the answer. But when this is a priority in your life, it will be fulfilled in your life. Partiality with God.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/cLlzQdhTaas.mp4>

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