

# How to Preach God's Word

by Zac Poonen

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*The gift of prophecy is speaking forth the word of God in everyday language, and it requires faith, wisdom, and preparation to communicate God's Word effectively.*

**Duration:** 41:20

**Scripture:** Ecclesiastes 12:9-12, Matthew 13:52, John 3:16, Acts 2:17, Romans 12:6, 1 Corinthians 14:3, 1 Timothy 2:12, 2 Peter 1:19

**Topics:** "Holy Spirit", "Biblical Preaching"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of sharing God's Word without being influenced by cultural norms or denominational traditions. It highlights the empowerment of all believers, regardless of age, gender, or social status, to prophesy and speak God's truth in everyday speech for edification, exhortation, and consolation. The key points include being filled with the Holy Spirit, studying and arranging God's word, sharing in an interesting and practical manner, and loving people to spur them to action.

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## Transcript

So let's begin by looking at a verse in Acts of the Apostles chapter 2. We have to see what God's Word says and then see whether we are supposed to do it or not supposed to do it. Are sisters supposed to share the Word of God or not? We have to be clear from Scripture. There are many areas where our understanding is influenced and affected by our culture.

Indian culture and the particular denominational culture you came out from. And that's not really you. It affects much older people also.

I've seen people who are 70-80 years old who are enslaved to the culture they got from their denomination. They say they believe the Bible is God's Word. But what they really believe is God's Word is what their elder or pastor taught them in the particular church they grew up in.

And one of the things I decided when I was a young man is I will not allow Indian culture or my denominational culture to influence my thinking. That is one thing that has set me completely free. So even if I sat in a church where they believe something else, I wouldn't argue with them.

I wouldn't get up and preach something different, but inwardly I would disagree with them. So I believe many of us are slaves to not slaves, but are influenced to a greater extent or lesser extent by our culture and that's why in most churches they feel that young people can't share anything. Sisters cannot share

and the idea is that only older people can speak God's Word.

Okay, let's see here in Acts 2. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out on those 120 who were waiting for it and at the end of it the Apostle Peter explains this and says this is verse, this is I'm talking reading from verse 16. This is what the Prophet Joel spoke about. In the last days I will pour out my spirit on all mankind and your sons and your daughters it doesn't say about speaking in tongues, but will prophesy.

It's very interesting that the thing that amazed the people verse 7 was that they were speaking in an unknown language. They were surprised and Peter's and they said oh they must be drunk and Peter says we're not drunk then we would think that he is going to explain about speaking in tongues, but he doesn't. He talks about prophecy.

He says this is your sons and daughters will prophesy. It means another generation, not just the older people. Your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams and then social level, slaves, even on slaves, you know, that means the lowest level of society in those days were slaves and even if you belong to the lowest level of society in India you can prophesy.

That's the meaning here. So the distinction between man and woman is gone. Verse 17 middle sons and daughters the distinction between young people and old people is also gone in verse 17 and the distinction between upper class and lowest class verse 18 is also gone.

See all the distinctions that men make between men and women, older and younger, upper class and lower class is all gone. All can prophesy. All can see visions.

And what is the meaning of prophecy? That you can turn to 1 Corinthians in chapter 14. 1 Corinthians 14 and verse 3. The one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. See the contrast between speaking in tongues verse 2 one who speaks in a tongue speaks to God no one understands, but his spirit he speaks mysteries.

That is a between man and God. But when he speaks to men, I like what the message Bible says, when you proclaim God's truth in everyday speech that means not in an unknown tongue but in everyday speech. It's very important to understand that in preaching.

Preaching must be in everyday speech. Not in a language which others can't understand. Supposing you speak some tongue of some other country.

They can't understand it. In the same way if you speak at a level which like they say going over everybody's head that is also like an unknown language. You know for example a person speaks in some high English to impress everybody.

It's like speaking in an unknown tongue. You might as well keep quiet. But there can be a temptation for you to speak not in everyday speech.

Prophecy is in everyday speech. That means you speak, I mean you preach in the meeting just like you speak to people. Not in a special tone of voice.

I've been in some churches where they pray in a special tone of voice. That means they are not familiar with God. My children don't come and speak to me the special tone of voice.

Or you know I've been in some churches where they will tremble. Oh Lord. It's all artificial.

There must be no artificiality when you speak. That's the first lesson I would say to you in everyday speech. Just like you would talk to people in conversation.

No special shaking of the voice or high voice or anything. Just everyday speech. That is the way to prophesy and the purpose of prophesying is edification means building up.

Exhortation means encouragement and correction. Not correction as much as challenge. Correction is different.

Exhortation is encouragement and challenge. Consolation is comfort for people who are disturbed. Those are the three things mentioned in verse three.

It's not teaching. The gift of prophecy is different from the gift of teaching. And when it comes to teaching it says very clearly in 1 Timothy 2 verse 12.

A woman should not teach. So what is a woman forbidden from doing? Teaching. But 1 Corinthians 11 says a woman can prophesy verse 5. It's speaking about covering the head.

A woman who when she prophesies or prays must have her head covered. That's all. The only rule is she must cover her head and then share God's Word.

That is because she is signifying thereby that I'm under a leader. Maybe the elder, maybe her husband, maybe her father. So that's the first thing you need to see.

That on the day of Pentecost things changed. That because the Holy Spirit is now poured upon people we can all of us share God's Word. So going back to Acts 2. Before you prophesy you must be sure that your life is open to the Holy Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. Think of it like this. When you ask Jesus, let me ask you this question first.

Where is Jesus today? Anybody? Nobody knows. Where is that? In heaven. Okay.

When he went up to heaven, when he ascended up to heaven, what did the angel say? He will come back. And that we call his second. Has he come a second time? Yes or no? Sure.

What about when he came into your heart? If you say he came into my heart, he must have come a second time. And a million people say that then he must have come a million times already. I want to tell you he hasn't come.

Then who came into your heart then? If Jesus is in heaven, who came into your heart? The Spirit of Christ. See, if you spoke about the Spirit in a Christian meeting, everybody would understand Holy Spirit. But supposing you go among the non-Christians and say you've got to receive the Spirit.

Yoga people say that's right. That's what we're also teaching. And the animists who worship all types of evil spirits, that's exactly what we believe.

We must receive the Spirit. So you've got to define the Spirit when you go to non-Christians. And that's why we don't tell them receive the Spirit.

We tell them receive Jesus Christ. It's the same thing. You read in the Acts of the Apostles, he said, receive the Holy Spirit.

But there, most of them were all Jews. They understood what he was talking about. They're talking about Jesus, understood the Spirit of Christ.

So when they are telling people to receive the Spirit, we're saying the same thing. That means I don't just believe in my head. I receive the Spirit.

And now receiving the Spirit does not mean I'm filled with the Holy Spirit. Because our heart has many, many rooms. And generally speaking, when a person is really born again, if he's born again because he loves Jesus and not just because he wants to escape hell, I believe at the moment of new birth, it's possible that most people would have surrendered everything to Christ.

Everything that they know, Lord, take my whole life. Some people are not like that, I know. But many people, without knowing it, they say, Lord, you can take my whole life.

But then over a period of time, they begin to lock off certain rooms. And see, some of you, when you were first born again, you probably never watched any movies at all. Then after a while, slowly you open the door and that slid one or two DVDs under the door.

And it came to a point, I'm not saying that Jesus would walk out if you watch any movie, but when he sees a certain type of movie you're watching, he goes out of the door. And that door, which was once occupied by the Spirit, is no longer occupied by the Spirit. You didn't tell him to get out, but you invited something in which he quietly left.

Or it may be another area, in the area of money, where you did something wrong or unrighteous, and he left that room. But the day you were converted, everything was the Lord's. But little by little, some of those doors got shut off.

Not shut off, the Spirit left. But you're still forgiven. You love Jesus.

You're not filled with the Holy Spirit. Be filled with the Holy Spirit means every area of my life, I've said, Spirit of God, it's yours. Even those difficult areas or areas where you're seeking, I'm seeking my own honor.

I want you to show me. There's a single door that I've kept locked from inside. I don't want it.

He says, I stand at the door and knock. So when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we can prophesy. So when a person gets up and speaks, see prophecy is called like a light.

2 Peter chapter 1, verse 19, we have the prophetic word made more sure to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place. The prophetic word is like a lamp that shines in a dark place. And how much, when you speak God's word, how much of it will be of God and how much will be of yourself? That's easy to find out.

If you've got 10 rooms in your heart and you've given one of them to God, I'll tell you that if you speak for 10 minutes, one minute will be from God, nine minutes will be yourself. Why? Because you give only one room in your heart to Christ. Another chap who's given all 10 rooms to Christ, all 10 minutes what he says will be from God.

So the choice is yours. See, we're not teaching your techniques in public speaking. That's not, that's all right for politicians and film actors and school competitions.

But here we are talking about prophecy. Prophecy means the Old Testament, it meant predicting the future. In the New Testament, it means speaking forth what God has laid on your heart, speaking forth the word of God.

So all of us can do it because all of us read the Bible and God says something to you. Even a young believer. I'll pour out my spirit, your sons and daughters will prophesy.

See what it says in Romans 12 about prophecy. You've got to understand prophecy as just speaking forth the word of God. And there are some who can do that more and some less.

Romans 12, verse 6, since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us must exercise them accordingly. If prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith. That means a person who has full faith in Christ is one who has given every room to Christ.

I trust you completely, Lord. I trust you so completely that you can have all my time, all my money, and all the DVDs I have and all the TV channels I have. And you control the remote.

I, it's all yours. I have faith that you will guide me to the best. The person who doesn't have full faith in Christ will say, yeah, I know, Lord, that in some areas you can guide me.

But in certain areas, I think if I choose myself, it'll be better. So, okay, fine. God doesn't kick you out of heaven for that.

But your proportion of your faith is less. Like I said, one room in 10. Then prophesy according to the proportion of your faith means if another person can speak 20 minutes, maybe you can speak only two minutes.

You don't have to be silent. If you have opened your life to spirit of Christ, you can say something. But according to the proportion of your faith, you know, the story of the talents.

Oh, one man took one and made 10. Another man made five. Another man just kept one.

So when the master came back, even though they all started with one, one had 10, one had five, one had one. So if they go to the market to buy something, this chap can buy 10 times more than this chap who's got only one. So that's some principle like that.

When you share the word of God, maybe three of you were converted on the same day 10 years ago. But one person is 10 times ahead of you today. And he can share 10 times more than what you can share because he's opened his life more to Christ.

That is what determines the quality of your sharing. If we depend only on our cleverness, you know, then, of course, whoever is more intelligent and clever can find clever thoughts from the scriptures. And the world is full of clever thoughts.

In Jesus' time also, there were people with clever thoughts. They were called the scribes, brilliant people which study the scriptures and come out with all types of bright ideas from it. And you can also come out with all types of bright ideas when you read the scriptures or you heard somebody else.

And a scribe is someone who will listen to others, analyze it, process it, and put it forth as if it is his own message. But see what Jesus said in Matthew 13, verse 52. The scribe, Matthew 13, 52, the scribe must become a disciple.

And when the scribe becomes a disciple in God's kingdom, then he can bring out from the treasures of God's word, from the old covenant and the new covenant, wonderful truths if he has become a disciple. If he's only a scribe, he will just say clever things because he's a very intelligent person. And that other person who is in the church is not so clever.

So he doesn't get such clever ideas when he reads the Bible. So prophecy is not the same as scribes preaching. That's why I say you've got to start with being filled with the Holy Spirit and say, Lord, my whole life is yours.

I want to live for you. And live like that all the time. You know, you can be filled with the spirit one day and not filled with the spirit the next day.

Just one particular area where you don't keep your conscience clear. And you lost the power of the spirit immediately. Or some area where you don't set things right with somebody.

You may be saved still. I'm not saying you lose your salvation, but you lost the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I think a lot of young people don't value the fullness of the Holy Spirit enough.

They imagine, oh yeah, I'm filled with the Holy Spirit because years ago I had an experience where I spoke in tongues. That may be true, but it's all gone today. So that's the first thing.

Now I'll show you another verse in Ecclesiastes. I like the Living Bible paraphrase of it. That's why I'll read it in the Living Bible.

Ecclesiastes in chapter 12 and verse 9. This is a very beautiful passage. So let me read it to you like this. The preacher was a wise man.

There's a difference between wisdom and knowledge. Knowledge is information. Wisdom is how to apply that information in practical life.

There are a lot of people who have knowledge who have no wisdom. Bible knowledge without wisdom. Wisdom is, okay, this wonderful truth I'm gripped by.

How does it apply in my practical life? The preacher was a wise man. He was giving people wisdom, practical application. He went on teaching people all that he knew.

He didn't hold back anything. Everything that he knew, he shared with people. He didn't want any credit for it.

He just wanted to share everything he had with others. That's the reason why we share everything on the internet. We're not worried if they take it and preach it as if it is their own.

Let them do it. We want to share with the whole world everything God has given us. And so as you grow, there'll be more.

You may start with a cup and finally become a river many years later. And it says here, he collected proverbs and classified them. He pondered, searched out.

Pondered means he thought about it. God has given us a wonderful mind. And when you read scripture, you must think about it, ponder.

Search out means you study the scriptures. You compare scripture with scripture. Search out, ponder, then you compare this with that.

And if you really want to speak God's word, brother or sister, you've got to study God's word in your spare time. If you're a student, don't neglect your college studies. If you're working, don't neglect your work.

But in the extra time you have, even if it's only 15 minutes a day, study the scriptures. I have many times said to people, you can get a copy of what we have here through the New Testament, verse by verse. It's different from through the Bible.

Through the Bible is short. Through the New Testament is 500, 600 hours. Every single verse from Matthew 1 to Revelation, the last verse, study.

You need only 15 minutes a day. In three years, you'd be like a Bible school education. So search, ponder, search.

And then it says he arranged. Preaching is like serving food. If you go to a good housewife, how she's cooked, somebody invites you who wants to honor you at a lunch.

See how their table is arranged. See how the salad is arranged. How the carrots are cut up into little small pieces and put in a circle.

It doesn't give you more nutrition because it's put in a circle. Even if it's all a big hodgepodge, as far as your body is concerned, it's the same. For example, supposing I invite you for a meal and I put the... Actually, there's just one bowl.

And in that bowl is the rice and the curry and the pickle and the papadum and the vegetables and the meat and the ice cream and the coffee. Everything is in one. I say, ultimately, it's going down to your stomach, man.

What does it matter? Take it. I think what you'll say is, I'm not feeling very hungry today. And I won't blame you.

But I know it's all going to be in the stomach mixed up. But let it get mixed up in the stomach. But when I see it, there's something attractive about it being arranged like that.

And I'll tell you, when you share God's word, it's good to arrange your thoughts like that. It goes across much better. And that's why I say, don't try to speak without any notes, unless you've got a lot of experience.

Otherwise, it's better to plan ahead. And you don't have to read the whole thing, but just write down three or four points. Classify them.

It says, arrange them. And then the next thing it says is, the preacher was not only a wise man, he was a good teacher. He not only taught the people correct truth, but he taught it in an interesting manner.

We have to teach in an interesting way. Delightful words, it says here. See, even if you're teaching the greatest truth from the Bible, the people are bored and they're not listening to you.

What's the point speaking? You might speak to an empty room. You have to speak in a way that is interesting to that person. And that's something you can develop.

You know, you think of yourself sometimes as a person sitting over there listening to you. Was that interesting? And I feel a lot of people have turned away from scripture because they say, this is a boring book. And certainly one ministry our church has is to tell people it's not a boring book.

It's an interesting book. That's one reason I did 70 hours through every book in the Bible to say every book is interesting. Every book has got a practical application for us today.

So you may not have that knowledge of scripture, doesn't mind. You're not called to be a teacher like me. But even the little that you share, even if you speak only two minutes, don't bore people with a heavy, monotonous type of tone.

You must be. And I don't say this will come in one day, but in the beginning, when you stand up there in the pulpit, you're nervous. I was nervous too.

It's like the first day you learn to swim. You're scared to stand in a pulpit. It's like being thrown into the swimming pool and you don't know how to swim.

And especially if you're thrown into the deep end. There's something like that, standing in a pulpit is being thrown into the deep end and you don't know anything and you have to wait till somebody pulls you out. But after a while, you've learned.

So don't be disturbed because, oh, I'm so nervous. I'm so scared. Children are scared when they first take into the pool, but they learn much quicker than adults.

And the younger you are, the sooner you can get over that nervousness. And little by little by little, you get over it and you say, now I have to concentrate more on really sharing in something that will be interesting for people to hear. And where the word of God is coupled with practical application, it will really be like that.

Then it goes on to say, the wise man's words, verse 11, are goads that spur to action. Like something that spurs somebody to action. You know, when we were riding horses in the military, you could, the horses are trained so that you give a little push near their belly and they gallop.

Or you pull the bridle and they slow down. You goad that horse to gallop now. Don't just go out a little trot.

So God's word must be something that spurs a person to action. That's what it says here. The wise man's words are like goads that spur to action.

And they nail down important truths. That means here's a truth, a piece of wood kept on top of this, and you take a nail and hammer it down, it's fixed. Truth must be like that.

Nails down that important truth. And then finally it says, students are wise who master what their teachers tell them. A student is wise if he masters what his teacher tells him.

But my son, verse 12, be warned, there is no end of opinions ready to be expressed. And I've seen that in many sharing meetings. I don't mean here, but in many house meetings, I find that people just get up and share their opinions.

There's no end of it. This is what I think. When I say nobody wants to hear what you think, let's hear the word of God.

No end of opinions to be expressed. And studying those opinions can go on forever. Verse 12, Living Bible, and become very exhausting.

And I've been in meetings like that where people give their opinions and it's really exhausting. You feel exhausted at the end of 10 minutes. So here is my final conclusion.

Fear God and obey his commandments. That's a beautiful passage on sharing God's word. So, I want to encourage all of you to seek whenever you get time to go before God.

And say, Lord, I want to offer my whole life to you. I want to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And I want to study God's word.

You remember, this preacher studied God's word. Studied it, searched, meditated, and compared compared and arranged it. I remember in the early days, I used to keep a notebook and write down so many pages and pages of notes.

I used to write as I studied the scriptures. And I still have some of them today. My first Bible, I used to write a lot in the Bible itself.

So that I could use it when I preached. And it's a good habit to write down something. Like, for example, when you're taking, I've told people when you take a Bible, when you're studying the Bible with one of these, through the Bible or through the New Testament, keep a little notebook and don't write every word.

You don't need to write every word. But the main points that strike you. And later on, when you want to study that book, you just got to look up the notebook.

What you heard for one hour, you can finish in five minutes by looking through your one page. That's the advantage of writing down. Because we tend to forget.

Oh, even two, three years later, you forgot what you heard. That's why we need to hear again and again and again. So if you write it down, you can refer to it easily.

So to be a good sharer of God's word, you need a little discipline in your life to do these things. But it'll help you a lot. Do you think you would pass in your examinations at school or college if you didn't have a little discipline to study and do your homework? So you do that five, six days a week.

Spend a little time studying God's word. One last thing. Most important of all, next to being filled with the Holy Spirit is to love people.

If you love the persons who are sitting in front of you, say, Lord, I really love these people. I want to share something. Maybe many of them are more mature than you.

That's okay. But I love them and I want to share something that will help them. Even a young person can sometimes share something that blesses an older person.

I've seen that many times. You all know that there was a court case against our church some years ago. It started about 11, 12 years, 11 years ago, I think.

And I remember when we were surprised when the court case came, I got a small email from my youngest son, Sunil. He was, what, 22 then? He said, Dad, you have to leave this court case with God. Let him deal with it.

And you carry on doing what God called you to do. Just preach the word. Don't let this distract you in any way.

If you allow this to distract you, maybe the court case will finish after some time, 10 years or so. But you would not have accomplished what God wanted you to do. And then even if you win the case, the devil would have won because he distracted you for 10 years.

So I said, thank you, my son. I'll obey that exhortation. I'll tell you I've tried to do that.

So therefore, in all these 10 years, I never canceled one meeting. I went every place where I went. I was supposed to go, I went.

And there are other brothers sometimes who, I remember one young brother in Tamil Nadu once, in one meeting, at the end of a conference, he said, I heard in this meeting, Brother Zak saying that, all of you have a few people whom only you know. Nobody else in this room knows the few people whom only you know. And that's your little world.

He said, I got a light on that, that God so loved that little world of the few people I know, that he sent his son, which is me, into that little world so that none of those people should perish but have eternal life. I never heard a light on John 3, 16 like that. So you see how he got light.

That blessed me. I haven't forgotten it for years. I remember another brother who can't even speak English sharing in one meeting how it is important to be crushed for God to make us what he wants us to be.

He says, think of the wheat that goes into the grinder and gets crushed and we make a chapati out of it and we enjoy it and eat it. But supposing in the middle of that, there was one grain of wheat that refused to be crushed and came out in the midst of this wheat flour as a grain of wheat. And even when it is kneaded into the dough, it still remained a grain of wheat.

And it was cooked, still remains a grain of wheat. And you eat it and you feel it. What will you do? Spit it out.

He says, that's what will happen if you're not broken in the final day. Boy, I've never forgotten that. That is a brother who can't speak English.

So there are people who are simple people who are gripped. I remember another brother saying, I'm a bus driver. And this matter of don't take revenge on anybody.

I'll tell you how it comes to me. He says, I drive the bus down the road and that guy comes at me at night with bright headlights. Doesn't dim it.

I feel like shining my bright bus headlights on his face to teach him a lesson. Anybody who's driven a car knows that temptation. But he says, I'm a Christian.

So I won't do it. I won't take revenge. See, he got light on.

Vengeance is mine, says the Lord. We don't think in terms of headlights, in terms of vengeance. But there are many ways.

What I'm saying is that there are little things. He's spoken only for one minute. I haven't forgotten it for years.

And I'm sure after that, I was careful with my headlights too. You know how we can help one another. So don't think that what you say is unimportant.

Don't hesitate. If you love people, say, Lord, I don't want to show these people I'm a great preacher. I just want to bless them with what you've given me.

A sharing time is like a potluck dinner. You know what a potluck dinner is? Everybody brings something and we enjoy it all together. Okay, let's pray.

Heavenly Father, I pray that all these young people will be helped by the little they heard today. And never to feel that they can reach the mountain peak in one day, or one year, or even 10 years. But to start climbing so that they will be effective witnesses of Christ.

By their words, encourage them, we pray. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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