

New Covenant - the Gifts of the Spirit -Part 4

by Zac Poonen

The New Testament offers a new way of relating to God, where all can know God personally, including women and children, and prophecy is not limited to men.

Duration: 9:38

Scripture: Joel 2:28, Acts 2:17-18, 1 Corinthians 14:3-31, 1 Timothy 2:12, Hebrews 8:8-9

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "New Covenant"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the shift in the meaning of prophecy from the Old Testament to the New Testament, highlighting that in the New Testament, prophecy is about speaking forth the word of God to build up the body of Christ, not just foretelling the future. It discusses the importance of not being misled by false prophets who tell people what to do, as true New Testament prophecy does not involve instructing others. The sermon also addresses the freedom for both men and women to prophesy in the new covenant, encouraging believers to embrace this gift and not be hindered by cultural or traditional constraints.

Transcript

So, the Holy Spirit is poured out on all mankind, and it doesn't say here in verse 17, your sons and daughters will do miracles, no. But it does say here, your sons and daughters will prophesy. And that's another word which is completely mistaken.

In the Old Testament, prophecy was mainly foretelling the future. Mainly about the coming of Christ, and about things that were gonna happen to Israel in the future, etc. But in the New Testament, prophecy is not foretelling the future at all.

1 Corinthians 14.3 says, Prophecy is speaking forth the word of God to build up the body of Christ, to encourage, challenge, rebuke, comfort, build up the body of Christ. You never read of any other type of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 14. Now, we do read in the Acts of the Apostles about one man called Agabus, he was rare among the prophets, who did say something about the future.

In Acts 11, he said about there's gonna be a famine. In Acts 23, he prophesied that Paul would be bound in Jerusalem. But, in both those cases, he never told people what to do.

In New Testament prophecy, even if somebody tells the future, he never tells anybody what to do. He never said, there's a famine, so you fellows should send money. No, no, no, no.

He knew where to stop. He didn't say to Paul, you're gonna be bound, so don't go. He never said, so don't go.

Then he would have been a false prophet. False prophets are those who tell you what to do. Very simple guideline by which to find out false prophets.

You'll never find a New Testament prophet telling another person what to do. In the Old Testament, they did. The kings would come to the prophets, tell us what to do.

Hang on, he'd say, come back after a couple of days, I'll tell you. He'd tell you, you must do this. But there's not a single instance in the New Testament of a person prophesying and telling another person what to do.

If the Christian church had only understood this, they'd have been saved from so many calamities. So many people are being told whom to marry and whom not to marry. By self-appointed prophets.

Where to go, what to do, what house to buy and what job to take. Christianity is in the Old Testament and these are false prophets. Because there is no such prophet today in the New Testament who can tell you what to do.

You know why? I'll tell you why. Hebrews chapter 8. He's saying, the days are coming, verse 9, when I will make a new covenant. Hebrews 8, verse 8. I will make a new covenant.

And this will not be like the old covenant, verse 9. Because in this covenant, verse 11, they will not teach everyone his fellow citizens saying, know the Lord or know the Lord's will. For all will know me personally. From the least, least means a little child, to the greatest saint.

Even the little child can know God personally as a father. That's why it says, all can prophesy. And that means the sons and daughters, Acts 2.17. When it says, your sons and daughters will prophesy, it doesn't mean they'll go around telling other people what to do.

Like you see in a lot of charismatic circles. A lot of people say, somebody prophesied over me that this is what I'm going to do. I say, brother, are you in the old covenant or the new covenant? And don't believe all these prophecies.

The Bible says, we are not to despise prophesying, but we must judge prophesying. Very clearly, it says that in 1 Corinthians 14. And you know, we can have a completely wrong understanding of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, if we don't understand the new covenant.

That's what I'm trying to say. And the other thing I want you to see is in the Old Testament, it was very rare for a woman to prophesy. There were some rare cases like Deborah and Huldah, in the book of Jeremiah and the book of Kings and in the book of Judges.

But mostly it was men. But in the new covenant, men and women can prophesy. And what is prophecy? 1 Corinthians 14.3, they can speak to the edification of the church, to build up challenge and courage.

When a church lives in the old covenant, they will not allow the women to share anything. They'll think the men are superior, the multitudes of churches like that. And I think a lot of us here have been under the old covenant for many years.

In fact, many of our churches live in the old covenant, our own churches. They think they're in the new covenant, they're not. Do you allow the women to prophesy? You know, there we can understand the hang-ups that brethren people have, and Pentecostals have, and Charismatics have.

We have a culture that holds us back from the freedom of the Holy Spirit. We think we are free, we're not free. We're bound by traditions as much as the Pharisees were bound.

And Jesus found it so difficult to deliver people from the traditions of the Pharisees. And I tell you, he finds it very difficult with a lot of Christians today. So what suffers? God's work suffers.

So I want to encourage you sisters to claim Acts 2.17 and learn to prophesy. The only thing the Bible forbids that a woman can't do is to teach, and to have authority, to have a position as an elder. Teaching is authoritative.

See, like what I'm doing right now. Prophesying is different from teaching. They're two completely different gifts.

Prophesying is to encourage people, to build them up. Teaching is authoritative, giving direction to the church. Eldership is giving direction to the church.

You're a blessed husband if you've got a wife who can prophesy. I feel sorry for a husband who shuts his wife's mouth and prevents her from prophesying. You're going to be the loser.

I would say that. You are going to be the loser. Fifty percent of your life will be cut off from direction from the Lord, because God gave you somebody to prophesy.

You won't listen. Because of culture and tradition. Your sons and daughters will prophesy.

Your young men will see visions. Your old men will dream dreams. Now, I understand that to mean that God will speak to us through supernatural means.

I don't think there's much difference between dreams and visions. The point is that God can speak to us when our minds are sort of resting in a supernatural way, warning us, you read right in the big book of Matthew, in the first two chapters of God warned people, don't go that way, don't go that way, through a dream. And we must be open to that.

These are some of the blessings coming to the Holy Spirit. And again it says, verse 18, I tell you, my men and women, verse 18, will prophesy. Why in the world does God say that twice? In verse 17 and verse 18.

The women will prophesy, the women will prophesy. God's trying to break this power of tradition. But He doesn't succeed with many people.

That's why I've always encouraged you folks. Be open. Let the Holy Spirit come upon you and put something on your heart that can bless the church.

Don't say I'm a woman. Well, you're an old covenant woman, okay. But you're welcome to enter the new covenant if you want to.

God won't force anybody. Do you know that God doesn't even force people to go to heaven? Tell me, which is more important? To go to heaven or to prophesy? Well, you surely know. To go to heaven is more important.

But God doesn't even force people to go to heaven. Where in the world is He going to force you to prophesy? He's not going to catch you by the neck and say, come on, prophesy. You've got to be open to go to heaven.

You've got to be open to prophesy. And if the people in your church don't allow you to do that, you pray that God will give you other openings somewhere else. Your church will miss the blessing.

But you can be a blessing somewhere else. When you visit somebody's home or somebody visits your home, you can bless them. You can't be hindered.

You can't keep a good woman down. I believe we really need to be open. It's one of the things in the new covenant where many people have missed out.

And, of course, some have gone to an extreme. They've gone right off on a tangent. And we have women pastors and leaders and Bible teachers and all that type of stuff.

That's one extreme.

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