

# Prophetic Ministry

The message of repentance will take us through the impending judgement to the vision of glory. Prophetic ministry is threefold: the message of repentance we hear, the burden of judgement we feel, and the vision of glory we shall see. Prophets have ears that hear the counsel of God, hearts that feel his purposes, and eyes that see the future. Prophets see the end from the beginning and know the ways of perfect love to get there! So great, so needed their ministry, that GOD CAN DO NOTHING EXCEPT HE TELL HIS PROPHETS (Amos 3:7). Churches are founded upon apostles and prophets (Ephesians 2:20), men who flow in the mother river of revelation - the new, now words of a living God. Who can awake the church today out of the spirit of deep sleep in England? A stupour, a mental and spiritual blindness that has come upon preachers as well as congregations (see Isaiah 29:9,10). Who can bring a fresh revelation of Jesus Christ and him crucified? Who can correct the flood of charismatic heresies of the past ten years? Who can build the wall of our Lord's testimony and travail with weepings? There is only one answer. Prophets.

Before we go any further I must tell you where I am coming from. Born again, all of grace in a Wigan "Coronation Street" bedroom in 1973 I was quick to embrace evangelical doctrine, until God broke the mould in 1975, the second week in August, and filled me with the Holy Spirit. Tongues gushed forth, but I knew the dove had come to rest on me, and had a sense Christ actually was indwelling, within my spirit. Soon after this I needed deliverance ministry, and the demons departed in his mighty name. My desire for truth took me to the Bible college of Wales where Arthur Neil and Ieuan Jones lay the foundation of teaching ministry while the example of Samuel Howells in prayer spoke deeply to my heart. I am convinced, then as now, that praying goes beyond preaching, in the sense that spiritual breakthrough has to happen *before* we behave what we believe. After a painful two years as an evangelical curate with charismatic leanings, God had to break the mould again. In 1981-2 I discovered a discipline in intercessory prayer through praying in other tongues and the vital importance of the word confirmed with signs.

Increasingly I see the sense of holiness teaching in Romans 6, 2 Corinthians 4 and Philippians 3. So, in short, I'm a mongrel, but going on, thirsting for the word of the truth of the gospel. That is not the evangelical word (although our foundations must be there!).

It's not the charismatic word because there will come a day when those truths will not carry you on, because they usually deny death to self teaching by paying only lip-service to it. Truth you know by intimately experiencing it, will set you free from doctrinal prejudice, and your particular church mould. Who can cause us to experience truth? Apostles and prophets of the Paul, Barnabas, Apollos, Agabus kind. God is restoring those of the rare kind in the church today. We hold fast to the Head, Jesus, by joints (Ephesians 4 Ministries) and ligaments (Romans 12 gifts), as Colossians 2:19 exhorts.

## 1. AGABUS

Prophetic ministry comes on three levels. Firstly, Agabus (Acts 11:27-30, 21:10-14), the Ephesian 4 prophet. God makes a man a prophet. Elijah. Isaiah. Ezekiel. John the Baptist. Very few are called to this hard road of power, purity and persecution - "Some prophets". We know

that gift of prophecy doesn't qualify you to the ministry of prophet. Philip's daughters prophesied with sweet voices of encouragement, comfort and edification. Agabus came to Paul out of the blue, with no etiquette, to blow the cobwebs away with a **THUS SAITH THE LORD**. He was sent by the Spirit to bring a surprise reminder to Paul, to light up the reality of a past encounter. The Spirit had already spoken to the apostle concerning persecution and crisis in every city. He was not to return on furlough to Jerusalem. He was going to come to the worse crisis. The human element in God's people (Acts 21:4) was beginning to confuse Paul. They prophesied not to go to Jerusalem because their emotions were not yet cross-centered (21:12,13). How much prophecy today in guidance is incorrect because the living word has not divided soul and spirit? Soulless gifts cause havoc. That's why Agabus was needed to stir up memories in the background of Paul's mind.

How easy it is to forget revelation when many dear saints in need press upon you. Agabus quickened Paul in the expedition and execution of the will of God. There was an abrupt end to fellowship (Acts 21:13). Sheltered fellowship is a false refuge when the Lord wants to thrust us out. Ties of human sympathy are the strongest in preventing us from doing the will of God. Paul said "What do you mean by weeping and breaking my heart?" He loved them but it was time to go and face the prospect charged with hazard. Prophets like Agabus, help us to face the cross. The criterion for the will of God is the cross - the surrender of yourself wholly for God. May we renounce our self-leading, and depend on the Holy Spirit through true prophets.

2 Chronicles 20:20 is a great principle - believe HIS prophets and prosper. Did Paul prosper in going to Jerusalem? Yes, because it took him to Rome to write the most sublime epistles - Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians - the apex of divine revelation. Agabus proved to be God's prophet; in establishing the purpose of God. His prophetic **THUS SAITH THE LORD** seemed to bring everything to an end for Paul at Jerusalem. But no, his room in Rome became an anteroom of heaven. The prophet brings the principle of the Cross before the resurrection in our experience.

## **2. PHILIP'S DAUGHTERS (Acts 21:9)**

The gift of prophecy is to do five things.

- (1) **Edification** this means to build up or charge up like a battery. From edification we get the word "edifice" of a building. Anointed prophecy will strengthen you in your inner man. (1 Corinthians 14:3).
- (2) **Exhortation** calls you nearer the holy standards of the word of God. It measures our behaviour against the plumbline of the word. It includes warning and correction, not in terms of doctrine or emphasis of a particular set or group, but the balanced word. Truth must be spoken in love. Jesus was full of truth and grace. Truth is one arm looking for another. Truth and trust.....etc.
- (3) **Comfort** is speaking tenderly to. Here is prophecy coming to you from the Spirit of counsel. God's people need comfort when they suffer so they can minister comfort to those who also suffer. (2 Corinthians 1:3-6). These verses say something very profound. **YOUR EXPERIENCES ARE NOT PRIMARILY FOR YOU!**
- (4) **To convict of sin** (1 Corinthians 14:25,26) How we need meetings where we fall on our faces convinced that God is speaking straight into our hearts! The glory of God as the

perceptible presence of Jesus must enter in. We need the spiritual breakthrough of repentance today. Prophecy from Father's heart is one way toward this.

**(5) To learn** (1 Corinthians 14:31) When certain people function under the unction of the Spirit we learn. Those deep in prayer, deep in doctrine, who know the Cross work in their lives will prophesy anointed truth so we learn the words and ways of God. Shallow prophecy always follows shallow teaching. Where groups hear meat as well as milk, the depth of prophecy will deepen. Prayer fellowship with the risen Lord must occur for true prophecy. Also remember that better Christian books will contain new, now words of prophecy to teach us.

### **3. SIMEON (Luke 2:25-35)**

The third level of prophecy is that God made man a prophet. God's nature is to come through the new creation man. Even Moses in the old covenant lamented:

***"Oh, that ALL the Lord's people were prophets and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them!" (Numbers 10:29).***

Simeon was a prophet in a general sense because the Holy Spirit clothed him, gave him revelation, and led him into the temple in perfect timing. He had a revelation that before he died he would handle the Lord's Christ. Every one born again is a priest - someone through whom God can come, and a prophet - someone through whom God can speak. Has your calling been revealed to you? What will you see or handle of the Lord Jesus?

Fulfillment came to Simeon in old age and then he spoke a personal prophecy to Mary:

***"a sword will pierce through your own soul also".***

When THE SPIRIT COMES UPON THEN THE SWORD WILL PIERCE THROUGH. The Holy Spirit leads to the Cross. Mary knew many crosses. Her heart must have felt Joseph's indecision, whether to go through and marry her. She suffered the years in Egypt as a refugee. She knew the personal stigma of her pregnancy after leaving Elizabeth in the hill country. (Luke 1:56). She knew the sword enter her emotions at the beginning of his ministry at Cana on a wedding day when he seemed to be saying - "woman, don't presume to tell me what to do". She must have heard the insults of the Pharisees who believed Jesus was born of fornication (see John 8:41,48). The natural ties were severed in Matthew 12:47-50 when Jesus proclaimed that anyone could be his mother, brother, sister by DOING the will of God. Proximity to Jesus will cost you - the sword will go through your heart if you obey the revelation God has given you.

So the Simeon kind of word was fulfilled many times. Anyone with a prayer life and filled with the Holy Spirit can be used in this way. Perhaps unwittingly. If it is from God the fulfillment will be real. Paul wanted all to prophesy (1 Corinthians 14:5). God will make some a prophet in the Ephesians 4 sense. And God made man a prophet....to show forth the present mind of God, or to speak like Simeon did. There are mysteries here, for even a man's tragedy can be a parable of how Jesus feels about the church. I remember a brother who married a beautiful believer, but they couldn't have sexual relations, due to previous sexual abuse. It seemed to him a parable of how Jesus could not penetrate his bride with his Lordship. Even in intense

personal suffering there is a parallel in the spirit realm. Are we aware of the sword that pierces our heart for the purpose to refine us and annihilate self? True prophecy is to make God's people learn the way of the Cross.

## **TWO TENDENCIES**

The church either accepts or rejects prophetic ministry, which has been sent by God. The mark of prophetic succession is persecution. If the local body **INCLUDES** the prophet then **RESTORATION** will be the result. If the local body **EXCLUDES** the prophet, the tendency will be toward **DESOLATION**. However, the prophet sent by God will face some forms of persecution. He comes to bring the message of crucifixion of self, new areas of the work of the Holy Spirit, to develop ministries particularly prayer. He will be an automatic target of the enemy!

### ***(a) EXCLUSION (Luke 13:31-35)***

Herod killed John the Baptist, and after that Jesus would not speak to him. Those who throw stones of criticism, stones of opinion, stones of resentment against true prophets will not hear from God. Jesus answered Herod not a word, because he beheaded John. A fox is cruel, cunning and works at night. Evil spirits have similar characteristics and will come against the prophet.

Today the prophetic voice that convicts of sin in the camp is being spurned. The end result will be desolation for certain evangelical and charismatic and holiness churches. Prophets who are true to the heart of the Father want to gather God's people into the name and nature of Jesus. They want the bride to make herself ready, to become a perfect man, the full stature of Christ. But some are unwilling to come under the wings of healing and righteousness.

Prophets are usually excluded when they approach rulers. Zechariah was stoned for standing for the truth (2 Chronicles 24:20,21). God sent a prophet to Amaziah who did the most amazing act of schizophrenia in the Bible (2 Chronicles 25:14-16). The Bible has ample evidence of exclusion, and the resulting desolation.

### ***(b) INCLUSION (Acts 3:18-26)***

When the message of repentance is obeyed, restoration will come. God wants to restore, to bring back all things to their original purpose. The phrase "restoration of all things" really means the born again universe. The land will no longer mourn for sin in the millenium. The new heaven and new earth will be Eden restored, an age of innocence, harmony, total security and love. The Old Testament prophets share this vision of glory, a new golden age, a spiritual honeymoon with Jesus reigning from Jerusalem for a thousand years. Hallelujah!

***"Him you shall hear" (Acts 3:22).*** That's the focus of the prophets to get us to hear the Master. We are sons of the prophets and the covenant. A covenant is a legal, binding pact between two parties. God writes the terms or the conditions to every covenant. As we obey the conditions of the promise we enter the inheritance, the blessing. Prophets get God's people to pray and to obey. The first blessing (Acts 13:26) is the conviction of sin as a revelation of the Holy Spirit.

These two tendencies are seen in the life of Josiah. 2 Chronicles 34 and 35 (most of it) are a

great testimony to the king who humbled himself to hear God speak, taught the words of the covenant and purged Judah of occultism. But the end was a strange destruction because he didn't recognize the voice of God through a foreign King (2 Chronicles 35:20-24). From the chariot of rebellion he went to the chariot of death. Most of Josiah's life was restoration but the end was desolation.

## **DANGERS**

Several dangers need to be mentioned because false prophets are in the church displaying their charisma but not their character. See Matthew 7:15-20. The fruit of the life must be right living. Sometimes prophets can use their charisma as a cover to conceal defects in character.

- 1. *Prophecy logos.*** Prophecy to be anointed must come as a river, bubbling up from the central depths of the spirit of man or woman. To speak in the form of prophecy as mental truth is exhorting - the Romans 12 gift. We often fail to make the distinction. True prophecy is an operation of the Holy Spirit, flowing forth like an artesian well. You cannot stop it. The words have to be uttered. Speaking logos truth is not true prophecy. The word is not being highlighted by the Holy Spirit.....therefore it is knowledge and not life.
- 2. *No inner witness.*** True prophecy will have an inner registration. Luke 1:39-41 is a beautiful example. The babe John leaped in Elizabeth's womb at the greeting of Mary. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. True prophecy will quicken your mortal body or clarify your mind or bring liberty to your will or will purify your emotions. There is inner witness (Romans 8:16).
- 3. *Loquacity.*** Sometimes people utter "prophecy" from a talkative spirit. Check the prophets life. Do they know the dealings of God? Have they been to a personal Cherith? Elijah was a solitary man, not driven to the loneliness of the wilderness, but enjoyed being alone with God, proving his provision; supernaturally given. We prophecy according to faith (Romans 12:6), and not because we enjoy the sound of our own voice.
- 4. *No conditional back-up.*** Beware of prophecy with no conditions. God is not an automatic blesser of mankind. Too many prophecies contain grand visions of glory, love, comfort, dominion. Remember Ecclesiastes 5:3 - a dream comes through hard work. Only the diligent will rule and be rich says Proverbs. Every promise has a condition. True prophecy will mention repentance and judgement as well as love and glory.
- 5. *No submission to husband / elders.*** To submit is to yield up your preference (not your principle) in loving self sacrifice. Beware of women with dominating, manipulating schemes. The Jezebel spirit will attempt to teach through prophecy. It will draw away disciples after itself, causing havoc, immorality, and occultism. God's order is important. What is the priority for a married person? GOD - MARRIAGE - FAMILY - CHURCH - MINISTRY. If the ministry has taken second place to God (or in some cases become of first importance), the seeds of desolation are being sown. We must be wise. This is why the single status should be elevated in our churches, because much more scope for ministry can occur. It is easier being a bond slave to Jesus, laying your life down for the church, performing and perfecting your holy calling when you are single.

## DEVELOPING PROPHECY

**1. Love. (1 Corinthians 13:2)** Without it we are nothing. Love is not dreaming up nice things for people, but active compassion. Love is the ability to make the problem you encounter come to the cure of the Cross. That was the great demonstration of love. Do we identify with the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ? Prophecy that is only truth uttered can be hard, cold, lifeless. Righteousness and truth demanded the cross. Love and mercy provided the cross. Love is not sentiment, but an allegiance to the cross. After Pentecost, Peter flowed in agape, a self sacrificial love. Before Pentecost it was phileo, a fondness, preference, a hero worship for Jesus where Peter himself was in support of the Lord. After Pentecost the love of God came through him without self-effort, but in the power of the Holy Spirit. The word must divide soul and spirit. (Hebrews 4:12). Soul love cannot bring the purposes of God into another life. Sentiment has no energizing power, no moral urgency. Agape never fails.

**2. Faith (Romans 12:6)** Our faith is extending our life to prove the loyalty of God's word. God has given us all the measure of faith.....the kind of faith that he operated when he spoke Pluto, Neptune, Earth into being. The worlds were equipped and furnished by the word of God. (Hebrews 11:3). The creative power of the God kind of faith set the stars in their courses, produced the Himalayas, made night and day. NOW FAITH is the substance, the undergirding of things hoped for. We hope for the fulfillment of the promises. Faith is certainty the word of God will work for us personally. NOW FAITH IS the evidence, the confirmation of things not seen. What evidence? The evidence is the title deed. The property you own becomes yours when you sign the title deed. When we were born again and filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus gave us all the promises in Christ Jesus. They are YES (true) and AMEN (a creative reality) for the believer. Jesus signed the title deed when he voluntarily shed his blood on the Cross. He gave you the confidence to own all the promises of God. The words of spirit and life belong TO YOU! As soon as we obey the condition of the promise and believe; the seed of that promise in our hearts will produce; things not seen will happen. The unseen promise will materialize through faith. The prophet must believe the prophecy, and so must the person receiving it. To believe is to be and live in that prophecy. Our faith level will determine the outworking of prophecy.

**3. Fire (Jeremiah 5:14)** How can words burn into the hearts of God's people unless the prophet has experienced the fire of the Holy Spirit? . . . a burning spirit (Isaiah 4:4), is needed to extract the precious from the vile. HE SHALL BAPTIZE YOU IN HOLY SPIRIT IN FIRE preached John. Fire is the most important part to Baptism of the Holy Spirit and in England the least known. A new zeal and new perfect love can only be in our hearts as the blood and the fire do a work of cleansing and purging. Malachi 3:1-3 is for those last days, so that we as priests may offer praise, thanks, and good works in righteousness. When we know fire, then prophecy will take God's people higher. The fire burned Isaiah's lips; there was a WOE and a LO before the commission of GO. God forgive us if we attempt mission by any other method.

**4. Humility (2 Kings 5)** Namaan was angry that Elisha had not personally seen him, but the word has gone forth to bathe seven times in the Jordan. His pride didn't like that one either! To obey the living word, we may have to lose our dignity to receive our deliverance. Humility is before honour (Phil 2:5-10).

5. **Obedience (James 1:22)** To hear only is to build on sand. Obedience will be blessed. The most tragic story of disobedience is found in 1 Kings 13 where we read of the danger of an older prophet bringing advice contrary to the revealed will of God. Disobedience to the logos word is sin. Disobedience to the rhema, specific word of God to you personally is rebellion. When God leaves a prophet he is worthless.
6. **Patience (Hebrews 6:12, James 5:10)** Abiding under trials with consistency is vital for the prophet and for those who receive prophecy. Sometimes God's presence will leave us, so he can see what is in our heart. If we suffer for doing good we must take it patiently. Character is formed through patience, and the promise of God comes to us when we are ready to handle its responsibility. Look at the patience of Jeremiah, Ezekiel - both men viewed as failures in the world, but through the suffering of patience saw their prophecies come to pass.

## DISCERNING PROPHECY

There are seven tests to judge the source of prophecy.

- (a) **Deuteronomy 18:22** - does it come to pass? The word of wisdom related to future events within prophecy must come to pass. Acts 11:28 is a good example. Now there is an area of difficulty. Say, a prophecy with a clear condition is disobeyed by the one receiving it. Then the fulfillment is certainly hindered until the obedience.
- (b) **1 John 4:2, Luke 1:44** Inner witness. The demons did know Jesus had come in the flesh (Mark 1:24). Scripture is not contradictory. A free translation of the verse in John's letter reads.....***"every spirit that goes on confessing that Jesus has come in your sense realm is of God."*** You see mediums can nod and agree with the message of salvation, without it touching their heart. A minister can pray eloquently an evangelical kind of prayer and yet not be born from above. Inner witness, the Holy Spirit bearing with our spirit, will bring a release to our thoughts, wills and emotions. True prophecy will have a quickening effect upon us.
- (c) **1 John 4:4** Does the prophecy have the effect that you want to overcome the world spirit, that refuses to acknowledge Jesus as Lord? Does it cleanse you?
- (d) **Revelation 19:10** The testimony of Jesus is the spirit behind the prophecy, not the prophecy itself. Know the gentle, Lamb spirit that refuses to retaliate. Also know the Lion spirit of boldness and challenge. Prophecy must have the comfort of the Holy Spirit and the challenge of the Lordship of Christ.
- (e) **Revelation 22:18,19** Is the prophecy adding or taking away from Scripture? True rhema will back up the principles of the logos word. Sadly, much charismatic prophecy fails this simple test. Obviously prophecy from someone soaked in Scripture carries more weight than utterances from a novice. Yet this may not always be the case. Freshness in the Spirit is vital and some mature believers have lost the spontaneous anointing.
- (f) **1 Corinthians 14:29-33** The time is upon us when we must obey this clear teaching. There is safety in a multitude of counsellors and a few prophets! Do other gifted members in the body witness to the prophecy?

**(g) *Matthew 7:15-20*** If the fruit is right, the roots are in the Lord Jesus. Does the man or woman display charisma only? The supernatural alone is NOT the attestation of something coming from God. Note James and Jambres (2 Timothy 3:8,9 Exodus 7:11,12,22 and Exodus 8:7,19). Beware of the prophet who continually draws attention to himself. The annihilation of self brings a greater infilling of the Holy Spirit.

## DEALINGS

In the eyes of God the success of any believer, any group, any mission, any church is NOT eloquent preaching, charismatic gift or natural sagacity or manipulative skills, but the depth of God's dealings in the heart. Your heart is a garden of flowers and weeds.

“UNITE MY HEART, O LORD, TO FEAR YOUR NAME”, cried the Psalmist. Make it your prayer today, tomorrow for the next year! Unite, bring into one focus all the discordant elements of your personality. God is single, one God (Deuteronomy 6:4) we are double...flesh and Spirit (John 3:6). There is the battle of Romans 7:15-25 which we all have to encounter and win if Jesus is to be Lord. We can be like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. The Gadarene demoniac had 6000 personalities! We may have quite a few.

We need the dealings of God to drive out demons. Mary had seven cast out and was the first evangelist. We need the dealings of God in the sin area and with the angry, jealous, critical, lustful, ambitious self-life!

Whatever level of prophecy we operate on (ministry, gift or general), we must have the dealings of God. Isaiah had dramatic dealings. The concentration of sin on his tongue had to know the purging fire. Ezekiel did not grumble over the food arrangements (4:15) nor did he shed tears over the removal of his wife (24:16). The sufferings of Jeremiah were a continual dealing by the hand of God. The Cross principle “so death works IN us, but life IN you” must be at work for the purity of anointing to flow.

There is no ABC of how to be a prophet. The dealings will be different with all of us. Both Jeremiah and Ezekiel were priests and failures. Both Isaiah and Daniel were aristocratic figures who knew success while they lived. All four, however had dramatic dealings.

Daniel serves as a good pattern. He lived through four reigns: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Darius and Cyrus. He outlived them and OUT THOUGHT them! When the church is corrupt you overcome in Christ. Israel was corrupt, in captivity, but Daniel overcame. The power to overcome came because he had successfully overcome the battles of body, soul and spirit. Daniel won the first round - the desire of his body to eat good food. The basis for victory is to break habits. You must conquer your appetite. If there is plain living there will be high thinking. The second round was the battle for the mind. Daniel knew alertness and discipline in prayer despite busy schedules in court life. God gave him the interpretation. The third round was the battle for the spirit. Everybody had to prostrate themselves to worship the king. True believers will answer in accordance with Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego (Daniel 3:16-18). The ultimate test of history is worship: who will you serve: Satan or the Lord?

Are you brave enough to withstand the evil day? Can you face the wrath of the antichrist? Yes the Holy Spirit can give you wisdom and a mouth to answer the accusations that will come

against you. We need the dealings of God AS NEVER BEFORE. Without them, we will betray the Lord Jesus. The pursuit of the human race is either to be abased by worshipping Satan or purified by worshipping God. Prophetic ministry will come back in these last days to make the Bride ready for this glorious return. Seek, desire, covet earnestly the gift of prophecy. Come to the Cross. Be being filled with the Holy Spirit. Submit to your redeemer and resist the devil! Through repentance and judgement we will come to glory.



# Readings on Prophecy

## **DAY 1**      **1 Cor 14:1 :**

***“Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.”***

What is a prophet? What are his qualifications? Can everyone prophesy, or should it be the spiritual few? Is a prophet simply one who prophesies? In the next few days we will be considering these questions.

Our attitude to this gift of God should be evident from 1 Cor 14:1, quoted above. We are to earnestly desire to prophesy, to track down this gift like a missile after a Mirage jet. Paul did not rebuke the Corinthians, despite all their carnality, for seeking manifestations of the Spirit. But in verse 12 of chapter 14 he says, “let it be for the edification of the church that you seek.” So long as our desire is God-centred and not self-centred, the blessing will come from prophecy, and so we must encourage ourselves to seek.

Verse 39 (KJV) exhorts us to COVET the gift. The unusual Greek word used, zeloo, gives us our words ‘zealous’ and ‘zealot’ and means to strive after with a holy jealousy. We perhaps understand ‘covet’ to mean the unhealthy desire to possess what others have, but this is not the sense of the Greek word. God would have us set our heart on the best, and part of that best is the gift of prophetic utterance.

Before Pentecost, the followers of Jesus were set apart to seek the Lord and to wait on him for the ‘power from on high’. But this waiting was not a passive lounging about. It involved zeal. The disciples were concentrating all their attention and energies on the promise of the Spirit. They were ‘earnestly desiring’. So, with our seeking. The Lord cannot bless indifferent, casual enquiries.

Though the concept of ‘tarrying’ for the Spirit has fallen out of fashion, the need for dedication, soul-searching and a process of submission to the will of God is still with us, and no spiritual gift comes without it. Gifts do come by grace but God rewards the diligent. The diligent in prophecy will have spiritual richness (Proverbs 13:4), and will know spiritual rulership (Proverbs 12:24). Are you determined to humble yourself in fasting, seek God’s face, and pray in the Spirit as never before?

## **DAY 2**      **Rev 19:10 :**

***“I am your fellow servant, and of your brethren who have the testimony of Jesus. Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.”***

True prophecy always exalts Jesus. The inspirational breath behind an utterance from God is one of testimony to the One who is Truth, and it will speak of the Lamb spirit of Jesus or the Lion of Judah, our Lord. As well as this, true prophecy opens our eyes and hearts along with our ears to more of Jesus. No matter how obscure the content; no matter how particular it is to a certain situation, the underlying truth of it will be rooted in the person or work of God in Jesus.

Any manifestation of the Holy Spirit will tend to draw us closer to God, and this should be applied as one test of true prophecy. The Holy Spirit’s work, according to the words of the

Lord, is to guide us into all truth, to glorify Jesus, to convict of sin, of righteousness and of judgement, and to take what is of Jesus and declare it to us (Jn 16:8-15). Thus, we can expect prophecy, which is of the Holy Spirit, to do these very things.

He leads us again and again to the work of the Cross. Repentance and agape love are the foundations of this manifestation of the Spirit. It is an abuse of prophecy to point the finger, to accuse or to condemn, and a harsh word which leaves no room for mercy is often the product of a judgemental mind, not the Holy Spirit. Even when secrets are revealed to believers concerning the state of their hearts, there should always be a way out, an escape to mercy at the throne of grace. The problem with harsh prophecies is often a hardness of heart in the one who is speaking. All prophecy is a mixture of the pure word of God and the expression of the human heart, and the purity of a word from God will be proportional to brokenness of the heart before God. Oddly, we can only have a broken heart if we are whole-hearted! If our devotion to the Lord is half-hearted, then our prophecy will be impure. HE IS LORD (1 Corinthians 12:3) is the basis for all true manifestations. Are we obedient up to the light we have received? If so, our utterances will know the dew from heaven. The Spirit of truth testifies to that which is under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

**DAY 3**      **Cor 14:31 / 12:29 Eph 4:11 :**

***“For you can all prophecy one by one..... Are all prophets?.....  
And he gave some to be prophets.”***

Confusion often arises from the seemingly contradictory statements of Paul about prophets and prophecy. In one place he encourages ALL to prophecy, and then seems to say that only some have this gift. What is the answer?

There is a difference between a prophet and one who prophesies, between the MINISTRY of a prophet, and the MANIFESTATION OF THE GIFT. The gifts of the Holy Spirit are available to all, whereas the specialist ministry is the product of a time of training in the things of the Spirit, and is a calling to a life-style.

The major prophets of the Old Testament were men who experienced, through deep prayer-lives, something of God beyond normal perception, and placed it in contrast to the character of man.

<b>Isaiah:</b>	saw GREATNESS of God ( <i>Isaiah 6</i> )	SMALLNESS of man ( <i>Isaiah 40:22</i> )
<b>Jeremiah:</b>	saw GOODNESS of God ( <i>Jer 31:31-4</i> )	WICKEDNESS of man ( <i>Jer 17:9</i> )
<b>Ezekiel:</b>	saw GLORY of God ( <i>Ezek 1:43</i> )	SHAME of man ( <i>Ezek 16:23</i> )
<b>Daniel:</b>	saw GOVERNMENT of God ( <i>the visions</i> )	FOLLY of man ( <i>Nebuchadnezzar</i> )

These men were experienced in the discerning of spirits, the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge. Isaiah saw the Lord; Daniel had great wisdom and perception; Jeremiah had great

knowledge. Their lives demonstrated their ministry. This is not so for one who simply uses a gift of prophecy. The four major prophets were all men of the Cross. Isaiah was concerned with the condescension of God. This is the clearest revelation of the Incarnation. Ezekiel, the prophet of hope, because although Israel was taken captive, God still showed them glory. Jeremiah was the prophet of contradiction. A holy God can meet you in wickedness and sin. Daniel was the prophet of the second coming: God's Kingdom will be established.

**DAY 4            Acts 21:9,10 :**

***“Now this man (Philip the Evangelist) had four virgin daughters who prophesied. And as we stayed for many days, a certain prophet named Agabus came down from Judea.”***

Agabus is an example in the New Testament of a man who had the calling and ministry of a prophet. Note that, although Philip's four daughters prophesied, they were not prophets. Agabus is one of the prophets from Jerusalem mentioned in Acts 11:27, who “showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine.”

The word of the Lord by Agabus was (1) predictive, and (2) demonstrative. He, by his actions, demonstrated what would befall Paul in Jerusalem, as the Old Testament prophets before him had demonstrated the events leading up to the exile. Isaiah walked naked and barefoot for three years for “a sign and a wonder against Egypt and Ethiopia” (Is 20:3); Ezekiel lay on his left and right side according to the number of years of judgement (Ezek 4:4-6); Hosea demonstrated Israel's spiritual adultery by taking a “wife of harlotry” (Hos 1:2-9). These men were not occasionally prophesying, but living lives of prophetic meaning.

The content of the demonstration of Agabus was a confirmation of all that the Spirit had been saying to Paul. (Acts 20:23). But there was a difference in his delivery and intention. The purity of his prophetic word shows that he had erased all sense of self-interest from his ministry, and learnt how to quell his own emotions. By contrast, the Tyre believers who also spoke ‘through the Spirit’ counselled Paul not to go up to Jerusalem. The moving of the Spirit was indeed upon them to prophesy, but they mixed their own feelings with the word, and tried to reason with Paul. They were all too aware of their own sorrow and sense of loss.

Every prophecy is a mixture of the human spirit and the spirit of God; We cannot prophesy purely, unless we have crucified our emotions. Agabus spoke the word of God and left Paul to exercise his power of choice. Those who, by their prophesying, seek to influence and dictate the actions of others are power-hungry. They have mixed the word of the Lord with a spirit of domination.

**DAY 5            1 Cor 14:29 :**

***“Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.”***

There is never an indication in scripture that we are to accept prophecies without question. However bold, thrilling or powerful they appear, they are to be ‘judged’. This word, DIAKRINO in Greek, is made up of DIA -‘right through, throughout’, and KRINO – ‘to separate, choose, pick out, estimate, distinguish and discern’. So, the process of judging a prophecy is to discern the good from the bad, picking each word over thoroughly to separate the meat from the bones. In the course of one prophecy, there may be sentences, passages, whole sections belonging to the class of human exhortation rather than the ‘rhema’ word of God, and we must sharpen up our spiritual senses by practise to distinguish the prophetic from

the merely human.

The verse in 1 John 4:1,2 tells us to “test the spirits, whether they are from God”. There are three spiritual areas, the satanic, the Godly, and the human, and we are exhorted to distinguish between them. That which is of God confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh. The indwelling Holy Spirit is unique to Christianity, and only true prophecy will manifest Jesus in the midst. His presence changes us, challenges us, consoles us. True prophecy effects a wonderful transformation from fear to faith, from dullness to expectation, by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The presence of the Redeemer will cause some contemplation of the Cross, a fresh appreciation of the atonement. The presence of ‘another Jesus’ however (2 Cor 11:4) will exalt the flesh and titillate the senses. There are those in the Church who are prophesying in a ‘different spirit’ of a ‘different gospel’. The Bible calls these ‘false prophets’. Their power comes from a deceiving spirit and their aim is to entice unwary believers into bondage and error. Jesus says of them in Matt 7:23 : “I NEVER knew you.” These false prophets have never known Jesus as Redeemer, never submitted to the Cross, never denied self, nor come willingly into the service of God. They have power, but it is not the power of God. Only believers who are constantly ‘judging’ will be able to spot the difference, and so escape deception. If you love the truth you will escape deception (2 Thess 2:10). Our discernment must always be in line with the word that will judge everything (see John 12:48).

#### **DAY 6      1 Cor 14:3 :**

**“He who prophesies speaks edification, and exhortation and comfort to men.”**

The gift of prophecy can easily be turned on, but does it fit in with the flow of the meeting or does it disturb, confuse, divert? Let the Body of Christ be the judge.

Paul rebuked the Corinthians for being undiscerning:

***“Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren?”***

**(1 Cor 6:2-5).**

Now, Paul was here expecting the Christians to make wise decisions on matters that affected the lives of believers. When a man or woman stands to prophesy in the church, is that church able to judge the effect this person will have on the fellowship as a whole?

Sensitivity to the spirit is essential. Just as vital is sensitivity to each other and to the general trend of the meeting. We are members of Christ and of one another. If we are ‘in love’ with one another and concerned for each other’s welfare, we must apply the test of fellowship to prophecy. There are those who make use of a gift of prophecy - even a genuine one to dominate a church. This person gathers followers for himself, being in love with his own personality instead of the family of God. What does the scripture say?

***“If anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet” (1 Cor 8:2);***

***“For if anyone thinks himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself” (Gal 6:3);***

***“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” (Eph 4:3);***

***“Submitting to one another in the fear of God.” (Eph 5:21).***

Satan is a master of division. True prophecy will not scatter but gather saints into the purpose of God. The Holy Spirit is ONLY ONE SOURCE. There is no second opinion. True prophecy edifies the Body of Christ, comforts, challenges and cheers. It flows in the same directions as the fellowship, making God's work there a harmonious whole. Beware the Jezebel spirit that flatters and teaches via prophecy (Rev 2:20-22). It will ruin unity and always seek to divide leadership, and usurp man's authority. Jezebel said to Ahab "I will give you Naboth's vineyard." Women can prophesy and teach. The real meaning of 1 Timothy 2:12 is that a woman cannot teach from her self-working authority.

**DAY 7      1 Cor 14:30-33 :**

***"If anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. . . the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, for God is not the Author of confusion, but of peace."***

There is often a mistake made by young Christians moving into the realm of prophecy. This is to confuse demonic mediumship with prophetic utterance. Many who have had no experience of the supernatural but the occult, think that the movement of the Holy Spirit is just like that of a demonic spirit, which speaks through a willing mouth.

Some, believing this to be the way of prophecy, have opened themselves up to spirits of deception, and led others astray. Others, more cautious, have avoided danger, but have also missed the gift of prophecy by misunderstanding the means by which God works. They think that, because God has not moved upon their tongues to speak through them, that they have failed.

But the Word of God says, "the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." In other words, the human spirit, through which the anointed word flows, is under our control at all times. No word of God is so urgent that it just MUST be voiced there and then. Any sense of compulsion is of the devil, not of the Holy Spirit. God guides, prompts and inspires, with our full co-operation; the devil drives, urges and usurps, taking control of the faculties for himself.

So, the word of God requires that we are in full use of all our faculties - mind, body and spirit, whereas a demonic word given through a medium requires just the opposite, complete passivity. The Holy Spirit quickens our mortal body, but the devilish spirit seeks to bind our faculties and take them over for his own use. A prophet is not a robot. He does not go into a trance. He is using his own brain, tongue and emotions at the same time as he speaks the word of God. This means that he can hesitate, stop, re-start, interject his own thoughts, or even abandon the prophecy altogether, at his own volition. And, if he does not open his mouth and use his tongue in obedience to the prompting of the Spirit, the prophecy will pass from him.

Prayer preparation before the public meeting is the priority for all prophets, so they may be sensitive in heart.

**DAY 8      Rev 22:18,19 :**

***"If anyone adds to these things, God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life....."***

There are serious consequences for anyone tampering with the word of God. The warning

above specifically covers the Book of Revelation, but it reminds us how careful we must be not to wander out of God's spoken word of prophecy into the realm of the flesh. It also provides a further test of true prophecy: God's spoken word will never contradict God's written word. Genuine prophecy is always based on scripture; we need a good factual knowledge of the Bible, therefore, to be able to 'judge' correctly.

Prophecies illustrate and illuminate what God has said before. Their freshness or seeming 'newness' is just because our minds were previously dull to the voice of God. They do not reveal 'new' doctrines. So many destructive heresies could have been nipped in the bud if believers had 'judged' the enticing new revelation being presented in a prophetic format. Anything startling or unexpected should be considered most carefully, and it is best to pray for confirmation before accepting such a word, though God sometimes catches us unawares. But anything plainly contrary to scripture must be rejected, however powerfully - or perhaps, humbly - spoken.

We live in an age of deceitful charm. Recently, a religious leader said that, "war is a tragic record of the past, and is not on the agenda for the future." A Christian politician called this statement 'prophetic'. Yet any student of the Word knows this is false by turning up such passages as Matthew 24:6-8 or Luke 21:20-24. Whatever scriptures are interlaced with a prophecy must be appropriate, spontaneous and full of the quickening power of the Spirit.

The balance of Scripture is vital. Did you know the pre-tribulation view of the rapture came from a prophecy in 1830? J. N. Darby endorsed it; George Mueller refused it. Most today accept escaping before the reign of the Antichrist, but the balance of Scripture has been broken. The depth of prophecy is proportional to the depth of Bible truth in the prophet.

**DAY 9**      **Gal 5:22 :**  
***"The fruit of the Spirit is.....goodness"***

Prophecy is the fruit of the prophet's walk with God. The content of a genuine prophecy, therefore, should demonstrate the Spirit of goodness, but we must discern what is good and what is a mere parading of a benevolent personality. False prophets APPEAR good - they wear the clothing of sheep, that is, of believers. But inwardly they are ravenous wolves seeking to devour the flock. One small point of interest here: the disguise of the false prophet is the clothing of the SHEEP, not of the SHEPHERD. This is not to say that our leaders cannot lead us astray, but a reminder that we should exercise the same Christian caution towards our fellow believers as towards our pastors and teachers.

Jesus counsels us to ***"know them by their fruit. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?.....a bad tree cannot bear good fruit."*** (Matt 7:15-20). Some of the rotten fruit that falls from the tree of deceivers is described for us in the Bible:

Persuasive heresies (Matt 24:11) false signs and wonders (Mark 13:22) heretical doctrines which bring the truth into disrepute (2 Peter 2:2) secrecy and hypocrisy (2 Tim 3:6 / 2 Pet 2:1) covetousness - desire for money, power, influence, popularity etc - (2 Pet 2:3) vanity, pride and foolishness (2 Tim 3:7-9 / 2 Pet 2:18,19) worldliness (1 Jn 4:5) and the end result - bondage (2 Pet 2:19).

Paul knew that after he had gone, from the fellowship of believers men would rise up, speaking misleading things, to draw away the disciples after themselves (Acts 20:30). These are men

who dominate the flock and teach slavish submission. Teaching which exhorts the Christian wife to participate in the ungodly practices of her unbelieving husband does not come from the Holy Spirit of goodness. Beware such leaders who lack the fruit of the Spirit and prophesy to boost their ministry. The greatness of leaders is to be found in their relationship to Jesus and the holiness of their personal lives, not in their ministry. So we need to discern the source and the life behind each prophecy, looking for the good fruit of the Spirit. Esteem GOODNESS of character above GIFTING of charisma. One test is always the logos word. Rhema must NEVER contradict the logos principles of the written word. If it does, then pride.....the very curse of hell has entered the mind or heart of the one who has prophesied.

**DAY 10      1 Cor 13:2 :**

***“Though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.”***

The sort of love Paul spoke of here was the sacrificial love of God which is showered into our hearts when we are born again. Emotional love, affection, sentiment, sympathy - these are the loves of the soul of man, and sexual love is of the body. But the love of God is spiritual love, pure and without selfishness. Since God IS love, everything he does is based on his love. Without it, we fall very short of his intentions.

Prophecy is of no lasting value without God's love, for that love seeks to build up the Church, bind up its wounds, bring forgiveness and healing, and do good to all around (Acts 9:36-42). Love is goodness in action, the Word of God in DEED as well as in TRUTH. Prophecy that flows from a heart of Agape love deserves our close attention, because it will minister Spirit and life. Many prophecies seek to arouse emotional reactions of awe, respect, even fear, or they stimulate only the soulish aspects of love, such as fondness towards the Word of God or affection for the fellowship. True prophecy, spoken out of a heart of love, goes like an arrow to the heart of the matter and breaks down all the barriers we erect against God.

The letter of 1st John is full of the practical use of Agape love. When we are moving in God's love, we know him, we obey his commandments, we discern error, we love the brethren, we lose all fear of judgement. The prophecies which come forth out of a heart of love demonstrate these qualities. Even a sharp word or rebuke, spoken in love, carries the mark of authenticity, for we instinctively recognise the Spirit of Jesus behind those words of chastisement. We know that God's love sent Jesus to the Cross, and in his Body that same love chastens and disciplines us. False prophecy, on the other hand, is incapable of conveying the tenderness of God's love, because the enemy is incapable of agape love. The Father heart of love in a prophet will pray the purposes of God into being for other lives. This is turning a knowledge of mysteries into a real ministry.....getting others to go for Jesus Christ.

# **IF YOU KNOW YOU ARE DEAD, YOU CAN HOLD FAST TO THE HEAD.**

The Cross of Jesus Christ deals with every problem. There law, sin, self, the world, the devil are finished forces. He descended to deal with every human problem. He ascended so we may finish his heavenly ministry here on earth. These are twin pivots of Paul's letter to the Colossians. The cross of Jesus Christ is the route to glory, the road to ministry, the rendezvous of all testimony.

## **JUDAISM**

Helping grace with law. Not resting wholly on work of Christ. FINALITY of the CROSS.

## **DESCENDED**

to deal with law (2:14)

self (2:11, 3:3,5)

devil (2:15)

world (2:20)

C

O

N

F

L

I

C

T

## **ASCENDED**

therefore not capable of carrying out all his ministry (1:24)

## **GNOSTICISM**

Angels as links in a chain (Christ as a link). ALL FULNESS of Godhead bodily in him.

Contemporary Gnosticism is the New Age heresy. Heresy is skilful intermingling of truth with error.

The cross is God's NO to man's YES. God says NO to the devil by Jesus spoiling the principalities and powers. In effect this was more than stripping them of their rank, but actually tearing them off his body as it hung on the cross. He had been made sin, giving the demons a legal access to his very person. HE SPOILED THEM because his spirit was still pure, spotless as the lamb of God.

Because man has a satanically inspired nature before he comes to be born again, he will always say yes to the enemy, the self-life, the world and the law as a means to approach God. The Cross finished this massive deception. The Cross also says YES to man's NO. We are

unable to fulfill the words of Jesus without a radical change of inner disposition. We need a new heart, a new spirit. If we know we are dead to law, self and the world, we can hold fast to the head of all things to the church, the Lord Jesus Christ.

These cross truths are vital when we come to the matter of ministry. For testimony (what Christ has done in us) precedes ministry (Christ through us in the power of the Holy Spirit). Testimony is allowing the cross to overcome our problems so that Christ is in us the hope of glory. Christ is not an outside adviser to the Spirit filled saint, but an inside advertiser.

So TESTIMONY precedes MINISTRY (we can only minister what we are by grace). MINISTRY is proportional to TESTIMONY (we cannot go beyond what we are in him, we minister according to our proportion of faith).

Today many ministers of the gospel are on the brink of serious disease, emotional fragmentation elements of doublemindedness, because the cross of Jesus Christ is not seen as the very back bone to all ministry. When the cross deals with I (human personality) and flesh (natural affections) then you can have a ministry. But flesh as Luther said always wants to be exalted before it is crucified. The heresies of Judaism and Gnosticism invade the church today in subtle forms. Legalism atrophies much reformed church practice while licence has shared much charismatic experience. Heresies take away from the completeness of Christ. We insult God if we think the cross is not enough to bring ministry out of testimony. We disgrace Christ if we add law to grace, or see grace as license. Jesus went through the Cross to be the federal head of a new humanity, of a new breed, a new creation. So we must live in the death of Christ to the old man (Colossians 3:5).

A new revelation of the cross will salvage many ministries. Hundreds of preachers today need a new repentance before refreshment can come again from their ministry. We are coming to a dead end in this nation. Big names are played out from schedules so busy that flesh (the old life) has fulfilled them. The word must be manifest, shown forth as life from heaven by preaching. (Colossians 4:3,4; Titus 1:3). Listen to Paul. He asked the church at Colosse to pray also for us, the apostolic team. Epaphras prayed for the church that they have full conviction concerning the will of God. He laboured in prayers poured out from the heart (Colossians 4:12). God grant the Holy Spirit give to ministers fresh revelation of the Cross. Prayer DOES NOT CHANGE THINGS. IT CHANGES YOU FIRST by leading to Calvary so wrong attitudes, strong desires of the flesh and opinions can be removed, so the Spirit of Christ may birth more of the beauty of the new creation.

We are COMPLETE IN HIM, positionally, by our standing in Christ. We must realize our position, our legal status, by entering the vital reality of it. A key is shown in Colossians 2:9,10. The performance of our completeness, wholeness, security only happens as we enter the spiritual warfare and overcome unseen principalities and powers. Too many sermons overemphasize what we are in Christ, without showing the route to how this be a reality in our lives.

Colossians 3:3 “FOR YOU DIED” — that's our position. Colossians 2:20 “IF YOU DIED...” — that's judging us whether our position is our performance. Have we died from the world-spirit that refuses to acknowledge Jesus as Lord? The world may talk of him as Saviour, but never as Lord. We cannot say we are complete in him if the world is still an attractive force to us. God hates hypocrisy and is coming to judge the church with the plumbline of his word.

The persuasive words of the world-spirit can anchor our souls in deception (Colossians 2:4). Those rudiments or orderly, fundamental spirits of evil are waiting to hold us down to views and opinions detrimental to the advance of the gospel. We must cast DOWN and pull DOWN from our minds the strongholds of thoughts instigated by evil spirits. Win the battle of your mind. How are we rooted and built up in him? (see Colossians 2:7). by a preprogrammed mind

full of the word of God. Words in conflict with the word of God will bring unbelief. Philosophy, psychology and humanism will cheat the believer of their inheritance. We are nourished by the sincere milk of the word. Faith knows no other foundation than the word. The word will WORK if those who believe (1 Thess.2:13). If you believe you will be established (Isaiah 7:9) so we are rooted in Christ by HEARING, READING, STUDYING, MEMORIZING and MEDITATING the word. We are transformed in a process of metamorphosis. Like a butterfly emerging from the chrysalis, we change from the basic principles of the world to the renewed mind. (Romans 12:2 and Colossians 2:8). “Reasonable service” in Romans 12:1 is really our service of the word in the Greek., We must be renewed in our minds in order to prove the GOOD ACCEPTABLE and PERFECT will of God. Grasping the word includes meditation.

Through meditation we will experience Colossians 3:16 — “let the word of Christ dwell IN you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” That is our private responsibility — to be built up in him. Take a word break not a tea break! Make much of the word of God.

Publicly, to be joined to the Head, to hold fast to Jesus in these days of mounting pressure and deception we are nourished by JOINTS and LIGAMENTS (see Colossians 2:19). From Ephesians 4:16 we can see that joints are the five fold ministry of apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, teacher. These men as gifts to the body of Christ build up the inner life. God brings increase to the body through such men and women. Its important to ask God to show you who to listen to. I have personally found Derek Prince, G.W. North and Morris Cerullo a great strengthening. We don’t hold fast to the Head by listening to one man every week, We don’t hold fast to the Head by listening to amateurs who work five days a week, have a busy family life, then stand up on a Sunday thinking their sermon is doing God a favour.

If you want to be a preacher it takes the whole life. Any Ephesians 4 Ministry worths its salt is FULL TIME for God.

Now ligaments must hold the joints together, and the ligaments are local Romans 12 gifts in the church that cement the truths with love. We cannot live exclusively on a diet of meaty Ephesians 4 Ministries. There is a need for local believers to develop their Romans 12 role. So the increase comes. Colossians 2:20, the next verse, says “therefore IF YOU DIED.., from the basic principles of the world. . .Are you dead to worldly ideas?

A recent Christian magazine had an article called The Winners’ Edge. The seven points revealed no cross, no openness to the Spirits leading and no love, “Dress and look your best at all times” is often good advice, but sometimes we need to dress according to the occasion. Rees Howells had to become a tramp to win tramps. The second slogan was “take inventory of your triumphs and positive attributes”, which will tend to pride. “Volunteer your name first when meeting people” is self sufficient psychology not biblical Christianity. “Never compare yourself with others. Set your own standards”.., perhaps neglects the truth we always are to compare our performance with the laws of the Kingdom (Matthew 5-7). “Use encouraging words when describing yourself to others” is hardly bearing one anothers burdens so fulfilling the law of Christ. “Look people in the eyes” can become a fixity of gaze which can bring mediumistic conditions”. “Always plan your work, and work your plan” tends to doing something FOR GOD rather than, doing something BY GOD.

Are you dead to the basic principles of the world? If you know you are dead, you can hold fast to the HEAD. That means the mother river of revelation can come to you. Jesus brings freshness to the crucified life. Believer, repent of possibility thinking; repent of the extremes of the faith gospel. Repent of not making repentance the first word in the gospel. Pray “unite my heart O Lord to fear your name.” No longer be doubleminded by being a man pleaser. Do

whatever you do AS TO THE LORD and NOT TO MEN, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance for you serve the Lord Christ. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. Accept the annihilation of self, because if we are not dead in his death in areas of our lives then the enemy still has a hold on us.

IF YOU KNOW YOU ARE DEAD YOU CAN HOLD FAST TO THE HEAD. Hallelujah! Then our testimony will be preserved and our ministry will deepen.

# THE HOLY CALLING

The holy thing about you and me is our calling. Most believers know they are saved, but don't know they are called. 2 Timothy 1:9 gets our thinking straight. We are saved and called in the grace and purpose of God. Its a calling before time began. Once a surgeon, an architect and a politician were arguing who had the oldest profession. The surgeon said he was there when Adam was cut open and produced Eve. The architect said he was there when God created order out of chaos. The politician declared he made the chaos! But you and me have the oldest profession — the holy calling.

In 1 Peter calling has five facets. They illustrate perfectly the true grace that Peter is underlining in his epistle.

## 1. PURITY. 1 Peter 1:13-15

**Our first calling** is holiness, not by works but through the cross. There is grace at the revelation of Jesus Christ. Romans 6:6 is a revelation. It speaks of co-crucifixion, the body of sin being done away with, once and for all. This unit of evil, or Mr. Indweller Sin is not temporarily put out of action, not repressed, but severed by an instantaneous act of God's power. The same tense of the verb is used in 2 Corinthians 3:14, where the veil of religious blindness is lifted completely away. In Christ, under the anointing of the Holy Spirit the veil is taken away. How we need all the Catholic, Anglican, Pentecostal, Baptist, Restoration and Faith veils TAKEN AWAY, so that clarity of mind in seeing truth and liberty of will in doing the truth can happen.

True grace deals drastically with the old man in the believer. To be pure AS HE IS, to be righteous AS HE IS, to be in the world AS HE (WAS) is declared by John to be possible. Impossible we think! By grace its HIM POSSIBLE. By grace alone we will win the battle of our minds and stop conforming ourselves to the strong desires of the old man along wrong lines. So often we need deliverance from evil spirits before the truth can renew our minds.

John 8:31,32 are great truths. As we continue in the word of God, the Holy Spirit can bring us into the reality of truth. The connecting conjunction between these two verses "AND" is a key. YOU SHALL KNOW (or intimately experience) the truth (or reality of Jesus Christ). Its one thing being in it! Its one thing looking at the word, being fascinated by it and enthralled, quite another dimension for the truth to act in you. The word of truth has SANCTIFYING power (John 17:17). That is power to separate you from the world-spirit and separate you unto the Lord. We are holy in our ~ndu~t as we think holy. The word must find place in our heart, dwell richly

~ with wisdom, be truth in our inward parts. Deuteronomy **6:4-9** reveals If you put value on God's word, it will put value on you! Thats the of Mark 4:24, 25.

Remember bees in the summer. They don't fly over flowers enjoying their colour to get honey. They come into the flower, bypass the stamens, and extract the pollen. The word has divine power once it is in our spirits. There it will build holiness. To know the TRUTH setting FREE, we (or most of us) need to be delivered from evil spirits. You cannot be holy, if other personalities are restless within. Deliverance is not the goal, but the gateway to holiness.

Obadiah 1:17 has the order. DELIVERANCE, HOLINESS then God can trust us with the INHERITANCE. We are called to be holy, without blame before him, in love.

## 2. PRIESTHOOD 1 Peter 2:9

We are a chosen generation, picked out for God's own interests. Priesthood is being someone whom through God can come. We are ministering priests, with two callings. We minister unto the Lord so he can minister through us. We come through the precious blood to receive the precious promise so that the precious faith can be tested by fire. Precious is a key word in 1 Peter and describes our function as priests beautifully.

We are a royal priesthood. Many believers think they are just worms. They take this idea from Psalm 22:6. Here the word for worms is special because it was a worm used by kings to dye their garments scarlet. These worms were squeezed to produce the scarlet dye. When pressure and affliction come to us, allowed by a Sovereign God, then do we act with royal dignity? Even if you think yourself just a little squirming worm, then get Isa 41:14,15 behind your ribs!

“Fear not you worm Jacob,  
you men of Israel (or N.T. equivalent “the church”),  
I will help you, says the Lord..  
I will make you into a new threshing sledge  
with sharp teeth. .

God can change a worm into a combine harvester. Some worms need to become world wide evangelists! Get a big vision from the Holy Spirit. Fast and pray. Prepare yourself before you go that anointed conference. God will speak if your heart is submissive and you will pay the price for Holy Ghost ministry. We need to be poured out ones ~Philippians 2:17), priests who lay down their lives for the brethren and the lost.

The job of priests is praise, that weapon that imposes silence on the enemy. The counsellor must move in praise before the problems are spoken. Praise makes God the centre of the situation. By exalting the character of God and by mentioning his names we give the Lord the opportunity to speak. Four stages in true priesthood in counselling or teaching or praying together: praise; mention the problem briefly; find a relevant promise of Scripture;

prayer. Prayer is pouring out of the heart, a reflex reaction to the problem shared. Prayer should bring us to the sanctuary stillness, where revelation can come. Prayer can be based on a promise, but if no leading to Scripture, just pray. The Lord may bring a passage or verse or perhaps a prophecy. This is a practical path to priesthood. We are priests when born again. To realize it takes time.

## 3. PERSECUTION 1 Peter 2:20,21

Pure priests shall be persecuted! Look at the spheres of persecution in the life of Jesus. (1) **PILATE** (world) washes hands, doesn't want to be bothered. (2) **CAIAPHAS (religion)** if loses the argument, will start a riot. (3) **JUDAS** (disciple) abuses the intimacy the Lord Jesus gives. When we do good and suffer for it we are to take it patiently. Christ left us an example. The word example here is the same word as in Romans 6:17 “delivered” or entrusted.” The Romans had the form of doctrine that was cross-centered. Another word is “moulded.” In Romans 6 they were moulded by the truths of co-crucifixion, making the death of Jesus their awn.

Again, the word “example” is also used in John 20:25, where it denotes “nailprint”, or the “print” of the nails. The godly shall suffer persecution. Vengeance is the deepest rooted sins of the old man. God watches our reaction in times of persecution. A strange thing may be happening to you. Something new to you (1 Peter 4:12). Our reaction as priests is to rejoice..

(1 Peter 4:13). We must suffer according to the will of God (1 Peter 4:19). That is not poverty, nor sickness. . . but the scope is huge. Jesus is not our example, but praise God, our substitute, in the areas of health and provision.

#### **4. PRODUCING THE PROOF 1 Peter 3:8,9**

We are called to inherit and be a blessing. We will produce the proof of resurrection life as we go through the testings and trials. Satan may be afflicting you, but in that very thing, God is testing our hearts. He removed his presence from Hezekiah to see what was in his heart. Under pressure we can still go on showing love. This is the radical superiority of true Christianity. The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church. This is where some of the mystics prove that they were not mistakes. Read Guyon's autobiography. Read St. John of the Cross "Dark Night of the Soul." Read Molinos "The Spiritual Guide." They pursued their Lord although they were reviled, imprisoned, scorned. You sense with Madame Guyon she knew a perfect love that could not return evil for evil.

Here is the place of Stephen, whose face shone like an angel when the stones started flying. The rapture spirit was in Stephen. He knew and his opposers knew that the words of Jesus came from his lips. John 17:8 is alarming and will be more and more true as the end of the age comes nearer.

The same words Father gave Jesus, our Lord can give to you and me. They will hate us, but his word will be a blessing that can never pass away.

#### **5. PARADISE 1 Peter 5:8-10**

The devil has two jobs. He goes to third heaven to accuse us before Almighty God. He comes down to earth to tempt, to hinder, to deceive, to lie, to murder, to divide, to devour. We are TO RESIST HIM. This is part of our holy calling. We are not on the defensive by passive resistance. We attack with weapons of our warfare: praise, binding and loosing, the spoken word, the blood of Jesus, prophecy (1 Timothy 1:18), intercession which means literally "to impinge by violence." We resist Satan offensively so the God of all grace can settle and establish us. If you fail to enter the warfare, you will not know the welfare. As Rutherford said "we can't steal into heaven without a conflict or a cross." We have to suffer for a while. This includes coming under the wrath of the antichrist. The order in Matthew 24 is very clear —the rapture comes after the desecration of the holy place and the cosmic blackout. The worldwide reign of antichrist will have to be encountered. Don't panic. The God of all grace will strengthen you. A NEW STRENGTH in the inner man is coming to the wise virgins. God will prepare the church for the coming onslaught of persecution. True grace comes from the Cross. Cheap grace misses out Calvary. Our path to paradise is through suffering. Here is a true grace statement. Say it aloud:

**PURE PRIESTS WILL BE PERSECUTED BUT TAKE IT PATIENTLY, PRODUCING THE PROOF OF JESUS PEDIGREE ON THE PATH TO PARADISE.**

All the P's in 1 Peter, including precious. God's way to peace is through tribulation (Acts 14:22). He cannot wave a magic wand over the world and bring harmony. The fall of Satan and the fall of man are real. God lives in only two homes: highest heaven and a broken contrite heart (Isaiah 57:15).

Check out Joel 2:31 and Matthew 24:29, and be aware we have awesome things to go through before the rapture. Come out of passivity and into priesthood.

It's the last minutes of the last hour of the last days. Know your holy calling and do the job God gave you to do.

Cheap grace never tells you of your cross and your conflict and true picture of end-times. For

an excellent survey of the last days I recommend Paul Tan's book "In power and Glory." We come to paradise through many perils, but as you discover your calling He will help you and take you home.

## HOW TO BE A PREACHER

Preaching is more than sharing a word. It is the great divine call of God and needs a revival in England. It is still the divine method of winning souls to Christ, edifying the body of Christ and the precursor to signs and wonders ministry. I've just been talking to two young men about their future in Christian work. God has called them both: One to preach, one to pastor. How do we become a preacher? What are the steps to be taken to impart words of spirit and life and change the thinking of a spectrum of humanity?

Divine call is the first and almost only essential. Seeing Christ in the Word of God to become a knower of spiritual things means that the author of God's Word, the Holy Spirit is having His way with you in your life. This is beyond theological seminary and most evangelical Bible Colleges. We need men to be Spirit-taught, and to walk and live in the Spirit. They must overcome the devil with the Word of God before they can preach to others the unsearchable riches of Christ. Ministry is proportional to receiving mercy.

***"Therefore since we have this ministry as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart" 2 Cor 4:1***

When we receive from Jesus what we never can deserve; the gifts of repentance, faith and the Holy Spirit, then our ministry begins. So preaching the gospel begins at the same point. We impart only what we have experienced of Jesus Christ. We may preach true light beyond our experience from time to time but it will never impart the reality of truth which sets free. So the call of God on a life is of prime importance. Our only wise God sees the end from the beginning. He knows the origin and future even if to us it all appears hazy. The call of God to preach is confirmed by the body of Christ. As soon as a vicar said to me it's a case of woe unto me if I didn't preach the gospel, I knew that God had spoken months before. The way the call works out may not be what we have in mind, but God, rich in mercy, equips once that call has been settled in our spirits by the Holy Spirit.

Practical steps must follow the supernatural quickening. What are they? Bible college? A lively fellowship? Part-time courses and conferences? Remain in my job? There is no prescribed way, only a step-by-step walk in faith. Whatever way, there are certain guidelines:

- 1 Keep close to the Word of God. Meditate it, pray it
  - 2 Avoid talkativeness, gossip, criticism
  - 3 Exercise forgiveness and walk in love
  - 4 Be part of an Ephesians 4 ministry (financial and prayer support, go to conferences, read their material Etc.)
- (5)Join a local fellowship that knows how to move on with the cloud (i.e. doesn't get stuck year after year with the same revelation)
- (6)Develop your personal devotion with intercession in tongues, praying for missionaries, and worship in spirit and truth
- (7)Be willing to do the first works, (deeds of love and caring in the community.) People will listen to a man who exhibits compassion.
- Remember these steps don't give you a call or even produce a call in you, but will develop your

calling.

Now what sets a preacher apart is an experience of the Holy Spirit with fire. Luke 3:16 must be known. And to know for oneself what deliverance ministry is will certainly benefit the man who in the very nature of preaching has to face the demonic. There is no substitute for a mighty baptism in the Holy Spirit. Afterwards you will see things in a new way. You will see something of the difference between the character of God and the conduct of man. Yes the preacher must observe human nature as well as know the content of the Bible. The preacher must be aware of a vast range of literature, newspaper cuttings, film, politics Etc... because he has to find illustration and make the message live in a relevant manner. The baptism of the Holy Spirit releases personality and we need to be liberated in order to be a blessing to different kinds of people. I'm more and more convinced that this experience is essential to all forms of ministry. This plunge into the life and power of God has so many ramifications. The prayer life is deepened, the gifts of 1 Corinthians 12 open up, sonship rights can be realised, the authority of the believer is deepened, God's love begins to reach out to others, as well as the rivers of joy, peace, self-control.

A wise Puritan said three things made him a preacher: the Word of God, prayer and temptation. The Word of God must work in him the holy and faithful heredity of Jesus. The dispositions of the Son of God must flow from the preacher. How is this achieved?

- (1) By study of the Word : 2 Timothy 2:15
- (2) By reading of the Word : Ephesians 5:26, 27
- (3) By hearing the Word : Romans 10:17
- (4) By memorising the Word : Psalm 119:11
- (5) By meditation : Psalm 1:2, 3 Joshua 1:8

Think of your hand. Four fingers cannot grasp a Bible. You need your thumb. The first four ways of getting into the Word are incomplete without the thumb of meditation. Meditation will cause the Word to grow and incubate in the garden of your heart. These five disciplines will make a man or woman a preacher of the Word of God.

Secondly, prayer. Without it our words lack unction, our messages will be second-hand or lifeless letter. We live in strange days of paradox and irony.

I personally know well certain Christian groups who believe in the power of prayer and yet will spend more time in discussing the possibilities that lie before them. There is a great need for praying leadership rather than committees and elders who merely discuss then ask God to bless the latest idea. After ten years varying ministry I am more convinced than ever that God only blesses the Word He speaks to our hearts. The rest is the water of human self-effort rather than the wine of a joyfilled, implicit obedience.

The greatest labour of any preacher is the intercession. To intercede means to be violent against the enemy and situation. He or she must go exceedingly above the situation to confer with the Lord Jesus. We wrestle against demons

— we must overthrow unseen forces of darkness. Some use Scripture as an excuse not to fight, like the popular text of Exodus 14:13, not understanding the context or the new covenant. The Lord has to intervene supernaturally and make the Red Sea deliverance for the Israelites; doom for the Egyptians. The chosen ones had nothing to fight with. In the new covenant God has prepared weapons to combat the enemy and it's up to us to use them. We bind and loose, we resist the devil, we cast down imaginations, we do the wrestling. The victory has been GIVEN by the Lord Jesus paralysing the death dealing power of the enemy but it IS APPLIED by spiritual warfare. Any preacher who does not make preparation against the enemy is a waste of money, time and sermons!

Thirdly, temptation. How can the enticement of a pull from the enemy to make us live like the world make a good preacher? Jesus won the battles of the wilderness before He preached the Sermon on the Mount. When every temptation known to man was at an end He went forth in the power of the Holy Spirit. There is a difference between the wilderness as a place and wilderness experiences. It was unbelief, worry, mumblings that prevented Israel from getting into Canaan in God's ideal timetable. The wilderness experience is due to our sin and Satan's counterfeiting voice. However there is a wilderness place: A Midian for Moses, a Cherith for Elijah, an Arabia for Paul — and every preacher needs one or two of those in his earthly pilgrimage. The temptation to go back to a previous type of existence can come in the wilderness to the Christian worker. But we desire a better country, a better resurrection, a better covenant based on better promises. The sovereign God allows temptation to test where our heart and treasure are placed. God tests, the devil tempts. The temptation to make a name for yourself comes to experienced ministers of the gospel. The devil is no fool, but wise; he's not ugly but can appear attractive right and proper. The temptation to sin is different for all of us. We overcome by the Word of God in order to prove Him so that we may preach under the anointing of the Spirit.

Preachers need the revelation of the Cross in their lives and visions of Cavalry:

•Death works in me but life in you' 2 Cor. 4:12

There is life for a look at the crucified one because the life of Jesus is released at the Cross. We also need the cross to penetrate its working power into our lives. I remember the bitter pain of failing to enter Anglican Orders in 1975 as a young believer. Yet that loss was necessary. In the next few months I began to speak in tongues, times of fasting and prayer opened up, that all led to a deeper revelation of God. The one thing I didn't want to happen triggered a relationship with Jesus that was better. The calamity of failure was a necessity of fulfilment. Count all things loss that you may gain Christ. The Cross is the only way to glory. All men of God had born to them what God breathed out. It's not a matter of holy preachers with beautiful thoughts. The reality of the truth was lived out in the life. Only the Cross produces this and our cry at the throne of grace can only be: who is sufficient for these things? Only by grace we can share His glory, and grace comes from the poverty of the Cross. The more we enter grace the more we know the glory. Glory has the personal price of death working in us. The preacher must know the 2 Corinthians 4 Cross principle if the anointing is to remain on his ministry. Do you remember the case of Gary Gilmour who claimed the death sentence although life imprisonment beckoned as the easier choice. We must accept the death sentence of Romans 6. If we refuse the death position with Christ and the outworking of that position in our actual lives, two things follow:

(a) doctrinal error possibilities. Among charismatic ministries look at the extreme doctrine positions Satan pushes some into. Certain submission teaching went too far in the early 1980's. A lot of deliverance was over the top. Some took faith line on healing and insisted the flock shouldn't go to doctors with real casualties. Signs and Wonders have occasionally gone out of control with the transference of evil spirits. A huge lack of spiritual discernment has attended much that has begun in the Spirit but then ended in the flesh. The church stays fresh, vibrant and steadfast through doctrine first, then fellowship (Acts 2:42).

(b) a dead ministry. Look at the preachers who refuse the death-working power of the Cross in their lives. They cannot raise the spiritually dead to regeneration. They exhibit soulishness and use their personalities to sway the people, or advertise themselves to the detriment of the glory of God. Jesus will never push the sanctifying work of the Cross: we must echo John "I must decrease, He must increase." Saul sat on the throne for 40 years, but only reigned in his

first year when still under the anointing of the Spirit. How many ministers lead churches in the Spirit for a period then sadly fall away! Preachers, more than anyone else need the revelation of Cavalry and a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the full knowledge of Jesus to live in the daily freshness of heavenly reality. God has to ruin us before He can release us in relation to ourselves. I'm glad God ruined me after two sterile years as a curate. Out of the hurt and bewilderment came a ministry in the Holy Spirit. May we all be open enough to have new dealings with God so that He may graciously lead us on.

The death of Christ is not a dead entity or tragic cul-de-sac. It works. The glory of the indweller Christ can emerge from our spirits. We are persecuted; people are against preachers, but we are not forsaken. We preachers are a workshop where death works. We see a sovereign Lord and that "all things are for our sakes" (2 Corinthians 4:15). There is no situation where Jesus claims exemption! Everything is for our benefit provided we see the circumstances and environment as God-planned. There is a divine reason for the mental, social, spiritual suffering. Grace makes the affliction light as a feather. The thing that seems to work against us is really working for us. And this affliction, or employee is very profitable, there is a tremendous return. O come Holy Spirit reveal the truth of 2 Corinthians 4:17 to my heart. Whatever the preacher goes through he will not give up God or the vision that was given to him. May we know the elevation of spirit Stephen experienced when the stones were flying! His face shone like an angel — that grace and glory may flow through us when preaching the Word of God! Stones of accusation, doubt and under-cutting fly to-day against the Spirit-filled preacher. The identification in Christ's death is the only answer. Your congregation can kill your ministry with evil report. The preachers sent from God has a rod, and can use it in the Spirit, to bring order and humbling. Preachers must give life to the congregation through words of spirit and life in counselling, in the teaching class, in prayers and in preaching.

One last word. A director of a huge company recently amazed people by declaring the number one quality he looked for in managers was toughness. The same is true for preachers: mental and physical toughness is vital. The ministry is long hours; fairly unhealthy sitting for most of the day; decisions to be made quickly and with discernment; the need for a clear mind; the constant ability to communicate in speech or writing; the need to discern; the power to concentrate on the essential. There are many parallels. God grant England a new generation of diligent, determined disciples who will spend the time in training, who will heed the divine call, who will be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to be poured out for a needy world.

## **COMMANDMENTS**

Ezekiel prophesied as he was commanded. (Ezek. 37:7). The living word has the authority of a commandment. Jesus spoke personal instruction through the Holy Spirit to the sent ones in the forty days. (Acts 1:2). The preachers must have ears to hear the living, creative word. Obedience to these words will bring glory; the perceptible presence of Jesus Christ will come. (Leviticus 9:6). All prophetic ministry must hear words of revelation, mission, church life and deliverance. We are strengthened and equipped by the commands of the living word. This is beyond all mental knowledge that merely puffs up.

### **1 REVELATION John 15:9-17**

Abiding in Jesus is the abounding life. "Conscious communion with Him will result in unconscious communication of Him" said a great teacher. We make our home in God's love by keeping the commandments. We obey the words of spirit and life. We are not straining the

brain to keep obeying the ten commandments of the old covenant. They are to bring us to Christ; they cannot produce Christ-life; they are for the immoral, unrighteous, ungodly, the sinner before conversion. (1 Timothy 1:9,10).

The motivation of our service is love not law. We are to love one another as Jesus loved. We are to lay down our lives for the brethren. Our friendship to Jesus is tested by our obedience to the commands we hear in the Spirit. Will we do the revelation? In John 15:15 we get a big surprise. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are no longer mysteries... “for ALL THINGS I heard from my Father I have made KNOWN, to you.” Ministers of the gospel are mystery revealers! (see Ephesians 3:8-10), But revelation has a price — it is always attacked, because it does the devil harm. John 16:1 in one version says “these things of the Holy Spirit GUARD against the breakdown of your faith. The Holy Spirit knows Jesus perfectly. The words of John 14, 15, 16 guard us against enemy attack. We must receive rhema revelation in order to relay it in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Thessalonians were a young church who needed to be kept from the evil one. It was the word that did the work in those who believed. (1 Thess 2:13).

**(a)The word was RHEMA (1 Thess 1:5)**

Peter said “heed my rhema” (Acts 2:14). Its the specific now word of a living God for a specific situation. Rhema cannot be destroyed (1 Peter 1:25), has creative power (Luke 1:37), can easily be remembered (Acts 11:16), brings faith (Romans 10:17), is a sword to defeat the enemy (Ephesians 6:17). The word in the Holy Spirit can achieve much. These rhema words act as new testament commandments. Obedience brings blessing.

**(b)The word was RECEIVED (1 Thess 1:6)**

Despite the context of outer conflict (Acts 17:1-5), the seed was received. Resisting truth will stop our love for Jesus. Teachable spirit is important today. Too often we become clones of a certain line of truth and close our minds to revelation that doesn't come from a certain group. Inner joy was the sign that this church were receiving progressive revelation. The traditional set of mind or the rocky heart refuses to accept the word on a deep level. The wayside heart that has been rejected, manipulated or dominated cannot receive the word. Deliverance and inner healing must often come before the word is received.

**(c) The word was RELAYED (1 Thess 1:8)**

All the saints do the work of ministry! (Ephesians 4:12). The apostles were excited that the Thessalonians had done the number one job of evangelism. Paul was pleased they didn't need special ministries. People witness best when they are under three years old in the Lord. Zeal is when the revelation is fresh. The commission of the church is mission. Don't grab the phone for the evangelist. Every believer should sound forth the gospel.

**2 MISSION Matthew 10:5, 28:20**

Failure to fulfill the commission, the command to go, is bringing many churches into the perimeter of cursing. Key word in Acts is GO. Jesus makes His selection of those who are to go. He does not call for volunteers. We are to respond to the command according to His predestined purpose. Here are some key thoughts on the command to go and fulfill the great commission.

**(a) MAKING NEW ROADS**

We need revelation knowledge to know the new adventure (Isaiah 43:18,19). Don't look back

to the former things. Living commands from Jesus equip us for the future. God can make a road where there seems to be only wilderness. Go on His creative word to your heart. This is faith risking —the meat and drink to true missionaries.

**(b) INVENTING NEW SOLUTIONS (Acts 13:1-3)**

The command for teamwork separated Paul and Barnabas to the Holy Spirit. Sometimes people will not appreciate the new departure in your life. They don't see the wisdom of God in inventing a new solution. Between Acts 10 and Acts 15 there was a nine year delay for the vision to Peter to become corporately verified! If the thing is of God, others will come round to it... but it may take time!

**(c) SOWING NEW SEEDS (2 Timothy 3:14-17)**

New areas of truth must be taught. Longer we stay in ministry, the greater the danger of losing vision. Are we aware of God's emphasis..., the will of God to our generation? (see Acts 13:36). Deliverance; Death to Self; The Renewed Mind; Apostolic outreach; Five-fold ministry; Intercession; Body ministry and many other seeds must be sown for maturing churches.

**(d) SUPPLYING NEW FINANCE (2 Corinthians 9:6-14)**

The command to give is missed by many saints. We are TO LIVE TO GIVE. Joy in the divine loan of Proverbs 19:17. Be blessed by your current account of tithing opening the windows of heaven. To give one tenth to God is a command (Malachi 3:6-10). Invest in your deposit account by giving to Christian work. (Matthew 19:27-29). The Macedonian church were poor, but by the principle of giving and receiving they reached the great promise of Philippians 4:19. Cornelius gave and was spiritually blessed. Ananais and Sapphira took back part of the price and were cursed. Our attitude to money determines far more than we realise in the spiritual realm.

**(e) INSPIRING NEW PRAYER (Romans 8:26,27)**

If you want God to be in sovereign control of your life you must intercede in the Holy Spirit. These great prayer verses come before Romans 8:28. There is a strong link. The Holy Spirit must be given place to come together with us AGAINST our weakness. Prayer begins with weakness, or our inability to produce a result. Mission succeeds or fails according to our response to God's command to pray. Epaphras knew the burden of God to pray that the Colossians would stand complete in all the will of God. Perhaps he prayed Colossians 1:9-12 for them like the apostle. Make those verses a new prayer for your friends.

**(f) OPENING NEW DOORS Acts 16:6-10**

The imposition of the Holy Spirit was like a command *not* to preach the word in Asia. God can close some doors we by ourselves would have walked through, in order to open new ones. Prayer opens up doors of utterance (see Ephesians 6:19 and Colossians 4:3). When Peter and Cornelius both got praying, revelation came and a new door opened. Acts 10 was a great pivot in the early church. Cornelius knew Peter had received "things commanded you by God," and could receive them because his heart has been prepared by prayer. Sharing the right word at the right time is a great blessing for all. The church changed course from

- (a) Jerusalem to Antioch as its centre.
- (b) Jews to all men.
- (c) One man ministry to teamwork.

The new door is often opposed to the old doors we have, gone through. Notice the

contradiction in Peter's first sentence to Cornelius (Acts 10:34 "in truth I perceive that God shows no partiality"). For ten years after Pentecost, despite the success of his soul winning, Peter had respect of persons and a Jewish mentality. How many Spirit-filled believers today get stuck to old prejudices, outmoded conventions, and unrenewed thinking. After the stirrings of the Spirit, we need to do the commands of revelation. After Paul was converted, he had to know God's geography to meet up with Ananias and receive God's message (Acts 9:10-19).

### **(g)NOURISHING NEW SOULS**

Evangelism in the New Testament never stopped at new birth (Acts 14:26-28). The nurturing of new souls is vital. The implanted word takes months to save the soul (emotions, thoughts, decisions). I had a two year battle after conversion to get to the truth and for the truth to grip me... the loneliness and confusion of those days could have been avoided if a born again believer had taken an hour a week in giving me Bible studies. The apostles strengthened the disciples in teaching (Acts 14:22).

### **3 CHURCH LIFE (2 Thessalonians 3)**

True spirituality is not how many sermons we hear or conferences we attend. Even good meetings can keep us away from really knowing God in the depths. What really counts is our obedience to the commands (2 Thess 3:4). We must withdraw from disobedient believers (v6), admonishing them but not keeping company with them (v14, 15). Preservation of holy church life is an issue today because carnality ruins church life. The great determination of God is Jesus Christ and Him crucified. The dilemma of the church is carnality. A little leaven leavens the lump. I've known charismatic churches lack discipline and fall into deception and immorality. Commandments are God's way forward to making Jesus Lord. The purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, good conscience and sincere faith (1 Timothy 1:5). Motives outside Jesus Christ are unclean. The Holy Spirit broods over the fellowship that knows and teaches the pure heart. Unite my heart to fear Thy name is schizophrenia's prayer. (Psalm 86:11). The Lord your God is one. But we are double — flesh and spirit, the two factions warring and lusting against each other. The annihilation of self, of the angry, jealous, critical, ambitious, worldly self, must begin to occur if church life is to be safe. The destiny of your church is dependant on the dealings of God in the inner recesses of the human heart — in the leader's heart AND in your heart. Unite my heart is the prayer for today. O Lord bring into ONE FOCUS all the discordant elements of my heart, my personality.

Carnal believers enjoy remaining double personalities. We could go further and say many believers also suffer from demons, which add to the turmoil and confusion of their lives. 1 Corinthians 5:9-13 is a strong and neglected passage. We cannot eat with certain believers — the sexually immoral, the covetous, the extortioners, the idolaters, the drunkard, the reviler. We don't keep company with those who are greedy for money, those who secretly worship at the shrine of TV, those who are Freemason believers those who practise sexual uncleanness.

Romans 16:17 includes the divisive, and those who bring offenses to your spirit, who hurt you inwardly by the abuse of their mouth. 2 Timothy 3 verses 1 to 5 catalogue 18 characteristics of the church goer who denies the power of God. Note believers who resist the work of the Holy Spirit continually. Self is on the throne of their lives. Avoid them. Withdraw from believers who are still caught up in permissiveness, who love money, self, and pleasure. Beware ministers who want to make merchandize out of God's flock. Be a Timothy and follow Paul's doctrine and manner of life (2 Timothy 3:10). Don't fear the commands of Jesus Christ. Rejoice in their wisdom. Obey 1 Thessalonians 4:11.

#### **4 DELIVERANCE** Mark 1:27, 9:25

Here is a very practical area of commandments. “For with authority He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.” Authority is related to many areas — the word of God, the anointing of the Spirit, death to self, and especially our walk. Jesus never wasted a word or an action but was 100 per cent dependant on Father. That’s why the demons had to come out.

We need divine preparation in deliverance ministry to get results. We need to fast and pray. The person needing help must walk in forgiveness, confess sin and be desperate to be delivered. God allows the teaching Spirit and the Spirit of counsel to attend deliverance sessions, because ideal preparation is rare. With Jesus they came out WITH A WORD. With us its usually some counselling and some shouting! Why the difference? Firstly, the Master came to the frontlines of battle already prepared in prayer. He had been in glory before the command of Mark 9:25. After the vision can we take the verity (the truth) into the demon possessed valley? Blessing lives next door to responsibility. Deliverance is successful if we are prepared, knowing the word the Lord Jesus puts in our heart for the situation. Secondly, because of the normalcy of sin in the camp today, counsel must usually precede prayer. Sound ministry follows sound teaching, whether in public or private deliverance.

#### **THE X’s of EXORCISM**

**(1) EXPOSURE:** We must know what the demon is. We beat against the air if we are not specific. Sometimes the degree of exactness has to go to unfamiliar names when dealing with the occult. To command out the spirit of ouija or divination may not be enough in some cases. After a 3 day fast in 1987 the Lord began to give me occult names, and as the word of knowledge was applied these spirits were exposed and expelled. Deliverance should be relatively straightforward when the conditions are right. There is a ripeness about ministry — the knowing of those who minister, and the spiritual commitment of those who need the help. The binding of strong men: Antichrist, Jezebel and Death and Hades may have to be done in the name of Jesus before a demon will manifest. Let the Lord Jesus guide you. Sometimes demons will manifest and shake the head or shout “no” to the command of expulsion. Thats a good sign — they are on their way out. Just keep pressurizing them. If they remain, check sin, self, and occult renunciation areas, also unforgiveness. Demons will not expose themselves unless they have to. Always deal with the ground they are on. Lead people in prayers based on 1 John 1:7-9 and Romans 6:6-11. You may have to command it to be exposed in the name of Jesus Christ the Lord.

**(2) EXPLANATION:** There is no substitute for a real working knowledge of Scripture. We have to explain the Cross to stubborn demons. If passivity is addressed, then the Scripture “He set His face like a flint toward Jerusalem” may have the effect of loosing its grip. I say “may” because there are no hard and fast rules here, we must be open to specific leading of the Spirit. Get to know the basic Cross words of victory like Colossians 2:15, Hebrews 2:15, 1 John 3:8, Revelation 12:11. Remind the demons of their utter defeat and the final irrevocable victory of the Lord Jesus. Its sometimes right to explain where they are going to as well! However, command ministry to principalities and powers must be done by the spiritually mature. This is not a ministry for novices, but for those sensitive to the sword of Scripture the Holy Spirit appoints.

**(3) EXPULSION** Acts 16:16-18: We command in the name of Jesus sometimes by a loud voice, sometimes with a whisper. There are two ways of blowing up a bomb — by exploding or diffusing it. We must have the childlike spirit of humility to be constantly used in this ministry.

Pride will come before destruction. I knew a minister in deliverance who admitted to erections when he laid hands on women. That is a ministry headed for destruction. We need to acknowledge the blood of Jesus Christ and experience its cleansing power. Virtue leaves us when demons leave through the name of Jesus. We need cleansing and quickening. Demons may leave through a concentration of pain in the mind or body, by yawns, through stiff fingers, shrieking or coughing or perhaps silently. There will be an inner registration of peace in your spirit if they have been expelled. If they don't come out check self centeredness, failure to break with occult, curses, and soul-ties.

**(4) EXHILARATION** Romans 8:11: The indweller Holy Spirit wants to exhilarate you with joy or rest. Sleeplessness, depression, apathy can easily follow deliverance ministers. After ministry a time of praise or worship is beneficial. Make God the center of your thoughts and emotions. Make Jesus central to your being. Always be teachable and listen to Bible teaching from the ministries. Live in the word of God to keep free yourself. Submit to God and resist the devil by praise and prayer. Come under discipline of the local body of Christ. Itinerant exorcists without a home church are in great danger... increasingly they will find it difficult to put on the garment of praise. We are commanded to praise as a duty; it imposes silence on the enemy (Psalm 8:2). Encourage the one who has been delivered to show gratitude to God. Its surprising how few really thank Jesus from their own will.

So the command of deliverance is needed today as never before, because Satan knows his time is short. God commands everyone to repent and believe the gospel. We need to be delivered from curses and evil spirit activity if we are to hear Holy Ghost revelation. As we obey, church life and mission can be entered so the Kingdom of God increases as more enter new life. May God give wisdom to see the sequence of the Holy Spirit. Church life will remain carnal if there is no deliverance. Mission will never be fruitful unless they are the commandments through the Holy Spirit to the sent ones. (Acts 1:2). God grant a new inner obedience because Jesus knew the commandments from Father were eternal life! (John 12:50). We are to speak LIFE, the words we hear in the ear should be declared publicly. May we know the open ear to hear the life in His voice. **LOVE'S BODY**

The Bride is making herself ready to be a comparable helpmeet for the coming King. The slowly maturing process is taking centuries amid the onslaught of the enemy and an increasingly selfish society. Whatever the circumstances of your church, **BELIEVE** the body of Christ is becoming **STRONG IN FAITH** and **BEAUTIFUL IN LOVE**. Always see that as God's ultimate purpose.

The central problem at the end of the twentieth century is that we have a spastic church. We hear the Head, our Lord Jesus Christ, but fail to obey His directives. Messages pour out through Ephesian 4 ministries, but the arms, and feet and hands do something else. We were born rebels and after being born again still have that unit of evil, the monster of the old man lurking within. Our head is in heaven and we do not let Him rule over us. Where Jesus is Lord the Holy Spirit can move. Is He slowly leaving the capitalist world of Europe and North America and coming in power to the third world? Love's body is stronger and more beautiful in parts of Africa, Asia and South America than in England.

Why?

The gospel of God has been adulterated, watered down by human reason, psychology and many heresies. The cure of the Cross is not generally applied in charismatic circles. Holy Ghost praying is rare, so the mother river of revelation has almost dried up. Check Acts 4:24-33... the lifeblood of the early church. Three steps are clear.

1. the disciples moved God (v24-30)

2. God moved upon the disciples (v3 1)

3. the church moved the people (v33)

There is no other path to revival than this principle. The result was economic balance in the redeemed community (v34, 35). We are a long way from that in England.

We need the Holy Spirit to give us travail and tears (Acts 20: 19, 31). . . a real influx from the Spirit of God to give us the Father's heart. Where is the travail Meeting? We need God to break up the fallow ground in us. Where is the meeting when we are truly led of the Holy Spirit to discover Jesus Himself? To gather together in His name is to be drawn by the Spirit into the nature of Jesus. We need to seek God for Himself. The answer is not more celebrations, more marches, more conferences, more crusades, more magazines, more sermons, but MORE of GOD! Our prayers are often unanswered because we have been full of our ambitions, our requests, our desire. Look at Acts 4 praying by the corporate church... YOUR servant David, YOUR holy servant Jesus, YOUR purpose, YOUR word, YOUR hand to heal! May God permeate our spirits with worship so He can be the center of our prayers.

1. Corinthians is a letter to a carnal church from a spiritual man. The man of suffering who EXPERIENCED 2 Corinthians could tell the church of God's interest: Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It took fifteen chapters for Paul to get from the cross to the resurrection. In his letter to the Ephesians only fifteen verses (1:7 to 1:22). To Corinth Paul keeps saying "now concerning this" and "now concerning that". The church was self—manufactured, charismatic, like a building on sand unable to stand against the storms. They were not much further on than the disciples at the Cross who forsook the Lord, and refused to believe the resurrection. Despite the gifts of the Holy Spirit, self was still on the throne at Corinth. Dilemma of the church now as then: CARNALITY. The determination of God was CRUCIFIXION. Only the Cross could transform them. We need to repent of charismatic hero-worship (1 Corinthians 3:1-4). We are to seek the Lord's face and humble ourselves. We have not got it. Prayer begins by admitting our weakness (Romans 8:26). Let's get back to the cross. Faith will attend to the word of God and intend to do it only when we have repented of our carnality.

Just because we cast *out* demons we think we are right with the Lord Jesus and moving on with God. However the disciples could cast out evil spirits (Luke 9:1) and yet were evil (Luke 11:13). The monster of self, the doubleheartedness of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde had not yet been destroyed. The outer mantle of anointing can fall on servants of the Lord without deep dealings of the Holy Spirit within. This is happening everywhere today. Outer power and ministry, but little or no inner character and life. The Cross in the life of the believer can change all that. Study this map of the key issues in 1 Corinthians.

WISDOM

AGAPE (13~  
GLORY

RESURRECTION (15)  
YOUR  
BODY  
(4-10)  
POWER

(SPIRITUAL)

MYSTIC  
BODY

	(10-14)	
PHILEO	BAPTISM (10)	(CARNAL)
BREAKING BREAD (11)		
EROS		
CROSS (1)		
FOLLY		
(NATURAL)		
SHAME		
WEAKNESS		

P.S. Figures in brackets denote the chapter.

### **(A) THE MYSTIC BODY.**

The church is weak because the natural mind has been ascendant. The church is powerful when the mind of Christ has been revealed and obeyed. Too often there is mixture — carnality, doing something for God, but not doing through God. Love's body, the church, the mystic body moves in power only when gifts of the Holy Spirit are seen in the context of holy communion (chapter 11) and love (chapter 13). The church will be spiritual and full of power when the gifts and character come together! Charisma and character will be beautiful together. Spiritual beauty means feeding on Jesus (communion) before functioning in the gifts. Check the charisma and fruit lists of 1 Corinthians 12 and Galatians 5.

WISDOM	LOVE
KNOWLEDGE	JOY
FAITH	PEACE
HEALING	LONGSUFFERING
MIRACLES	KINDNESS
PROPHECY	GOODNESS
DISCERNING of SPIRITS	TRUSTFULNESS
TONGUES	MEEKNESS
INTERPRETATION	SELF-CONTROL

Do you see a balance in these orders of gift and fruit? If you have wisdom but no love you cannot have a pastor's heart. If you operate words of knowledge but no joy, your teaching will become second-hand and gradually lack revelation. If you have faith but no peace your striving will bring times of stress in the family and domination of others. If you move in healing but fail the patience test you will probably make merchandise out of God's flock. Note 2 Corinthians 12:12 its signs and perseverance. Some hide their lack of character behind charisma. If there are tongues but no meekness, no dependance upon the Holy Spirit either passivity or deception will creep in. God wants a spiritual church of power. True power comes from a foundation of holiness and obedience. The charisma minus intercessory prayer is self-indulgence. We all want resurrection life. There's a price to pay. We must know Jesus as Lord (1 Cor. 12:3) as Love (chapter 13) and as Logic (chapter 14). We need to learn these truths together.

### **(B) YOUR BODY**

Paul warns about trouble in the flesh for those who marry. To the mature Ephesians he rejoices in marriage as a parable of Christ and the church. Yet in 1 Corinthians 7:4 he puts the principle of agape in an eros context, "the wife does not have authority over her body, but the husband. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife". We are not free

to please ourselves. We are not free to squander money or take believers to court! We are to glorify God in our bodies by fleeing fornication and refusing to be brought under the power of the appetites. When the body is for the Lord, then the Lord's overcoming power will be for the body! (1 Corinthians 6:13).

Have you ever consecrated your body, presenting it in the presence of the Lord for Him, for God's own interests? Our bodies are a mixture of dust and divinity..., they were formed by a sovereign act of the Holy Spirit. How much more is our body the Lord's property by right of redemption! He bought us out of the market place of sin, never to be sold there again! Let's pray together.

***O heavenly Father, through the blood of Jesus I come to present my body as a living sacrifice. I thank you that the altar sanctifies the gift — and your love and presence now sets me apart to serve you. I want to prophesy your life through me. Meet with me in my spirit and reveal the self-love that stops the gospel of God through me. Turn me and I will be turned back to you. Show me my sins, examine my heart, and come with your cleansing soap and quickening fire. Burn all my dross. As I wait I know you will act. I decide to flee sexual immorality. Give me strength to cast down imaginations. Teach me to discipline my body in Jesus name. Amen”.***

The consecration of our bodies is part of the Lordship of Jesus. He needs our eyes to see need, our hands to do the works of God, our mouths to speak prophetic truth and our feet TO GO.

There is a great battle or tension WITHIN the church today. Flesh versus Spirit, soul versus spirit, ego versus true humility. The work of the Holy Spirit is greatly hindered in love's body. Carnality must be exposed. True spirituality can only come through new revelations of the Cross of our Lord Jesus. Prophets are needed as never before. The stones will fly against them.

Yet, they will be strengthened by the Holy Spirit to denounce sin in the camp. The Lord waits to refine and purify the church. The judgement of the Lord is upon the church before it comes upon the nation.

***God says to leaders and congregations everywhere —“Your prophets have seen for you False and deceptive visions They have not uncovered your iniquity To bring back your captives, But have envisioned for you false prophecies and delusions  
Lamentations 2:14.***

If you are going to heal love's body you must bring a message of repentance today. Many true ministries are being forced out of the church. Many false ministries have risen to places of power and pre-eminence. Before the true anointed gifts of the Holy Spirit can come and correct us and heal and guide us, sin must be dealt with. Self must be annihilated, for God's love to flow again. Prophetic ministry is the call of the 1990's to the church of England. Many will refuse it, just like the dismissal of Enoch's preaching. SEEK HIS FACE. BE ONE OF THE RARE KIND. DO THE REVELATION. Then the Lord Jesus will make you strong in faith and beautiful in love. Hearts of faith and love will keep following Jesus to the end of this age.

“Move ME my children says the Holy One. And I will move upon you, again by My Spirit. You were born again to pray. You were filled with the Holy Spirit to worship in spirit and truth and prophecy. You were set free from demons in order to enter the spiritual warfare. You were healed of rejection, sorrow and many things, to love the lost and teach the truth in My love. Come to the Cross where all sin, all self, all precepts, all laws, all demons were forever

finished. Break up the fallow ground and I will rain righteousness upon you. Then My Father heart of care and prayer will be in your hearts as you repent and you will go forth in My name to the people and places I appoint to you. Move me by prayer and I will move upon you to move others to Me.”