

## Breathe in, Sing out | Prophecy

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Series: Come, Holy Spirit

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John 7:37-39

Doing the stuff, Praise, Holy Spirit.

A pastor many centuries ago needed to talk to his church about some of the things that were happening amongst them. There had been an outpouring of the Holy Spirit people were speaking in tongues, people were prophesying, and healings were happening. Much like some of the things that we are seeing here and even asking for more. But this also came with a bit of confusion and chaos. So he needed to pastorally and lovingly set them straight.

He starts the portion of his letter talking about this with this statement:

***About Spiritual gifts, I do not want you to be ignorant.***

And I feel very much the same as Paul. I do not want any of us to be ignorant about spiritual gifts. And we are a church community that believes that one of our key callings is to host and steward the presence of God. And when the presence of God is here, he releases gifts. You will hear people speaking in languages you may not understand, you will hear that people are getting healed emotionally, physically and even Spiritually, and you will hear us share things that we think are happening in people's lives or in the community those are called prophecy or words of knowledge and such things. And I do not want any of us to be ignorant.

Now that same pastor, I talked about above as he was writing to this church told them:

***Earnestly desire Spiritual gifts and most of all, the gift of prophecy...***

He like Moses is telling his people, oh how I wish all of you could prophesy. He like Ezekiel is speaking to see that God's breath fills every dry bone. He like Joel believes that sons and daughters will prophesy.

And I like Him, long that all of you could prophesy. And I like Him, really believe we should not be shy as individuals and as a community to ask the Father to pour out his Spirit on us. To breathe on us again and that as his breath fills us we will speak out.

There is this connection between God's breath and God's speech. The Spirit of God and his word. This is why after the apostles receive the Holy Spirit, they begin to speak out about the wonders of God.

So today we will continue to talk about that relationship between God's Spirit and his spoken word. How when we receive the Spirit of God it causes us to speak out. And I am using speech quite generally. Covering spoken word to written word to other expressions is considered speech.

So after Jesus was baptised, kinda like the people we baptised today, the Holy Spirit comes on Him like a dove. Then he is led by the spirit into the wilderness where he is tested. And you know what happens next?

***Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.***

Luke 4:14-15 (NIV)

He is filled with the Holy Spirit, he teaches, and he speaks out. Spirit and word. He breathed in God's spirit now he is speaking out. But news about him spread throughout and people praised him. This is why

***because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.***

Matthew 7:29

Because, unlike other teachers, Jesus' word and teaching seemed to carry God's authority and power. Things happened when Jesus spoke. God speaks because he intends to do something. To bring order create and bring life. And Jesus, because he is full of the Holy Spirit speaks and his words have that authority.

When Jesus said to people they are forgiven, they left him forgiven. When he spoke to the lame and told them to pick up their mats and go home, they picked up their mats and were home for dinner. When he spoke to evil spirits and commanded them to leave someone, they left shrieking. When he spoke to the wind and waves, they stopped whatever they were doing to listen to him and obey. When Jesus called out the dead from a tomb, they jump out of that place. So much so that when he raised his friend Lazarus from the dead, he had to call him by name so that just in case there was another dead person in there, they do not come out instead.

Filled with the Holy Spirit, Jesus speaks out and his speech has authority. Then after his death and resurrection, Jesus breathed on the disciples and then sends them out just like he had been sent out by the father. Now, go do what I have done and your words will have authority just like mine. And they go on teaching, healing, prophesying in this authority.

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we speak in his authority. This is why when two of them meet a lame person they simply say, "Rise up and walk." They don't go, "Oh God, please may this man walk today." No, they speak in authority. That is why here when we pray for the sick, we say "Be healed..." The few times we have had to cast out evil spirits, we say, "Be free". We are standing not in our power but in His authority because we are filled with the Holy Spirit. This is the same authority you have when you have received the Holy Spirit. We will cover some of this when we talk about healings and miracles.

Now, I wanna tell a few stories.

One day Jesus was with his core group of disciples. And he asked them, who the crowds thought he was. There had been so much speculation about who Jesus was. The thing was not just that he performed miracles. If you look at the history of the Bible and even stories from the middle east, many others performed miracles. But Jesus had an authority that none of the others had. They even asked Jesus if he thought himself greater than Moses and Abraham. It is the authority he had and the claims he made. That made Jesus stand out and made people unsure of what to make of Him.

After they gave a few answers from the crowds. Then Jesus asks them who they said he was. And those questions, they also had. Peter steps out from the rest and says

***Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God."***

And Jesus tells him this:

***"Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven."***

Matthew 16:16, 17

Jesus is saying, you have spoken knowledge only God could have given you.

Another time, Jesus meets a woman by a well. She alone at the well because others may not have wanted her company because of the things they knew about her. Her failing love life was an open secret.

They get into a conversation and she gets theological. Because when we are hurt and feel powerless we use theology to push God and people away. Jesus asks her to go bring her husband. She says she has none.

Then Jesus replies:

***“You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”***

John 4:17-18

These are things about her that she knows that a stranger would not know unless she had said it to them. Or of course unless, in this place revealed by the Holy Spirit. This is called a word of knowledge.

Then because of this she trusts Jesus and says, okay, I think you are a prophet and now asks something close to her heart... She asks where the correct place of worship is. And I think it is because if you have ever been desperate like her and feeling unwanted and unforgivable, your only hope is God. And to have lived feeling like because of her race she was not ever going to be close to God must have been crushing her.

Then Jesus said:

***“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”***

John 4:23-24

Now Jesus is sharing information with her that is encouraging to her but she does not know about it. He is saying to her the good news. That she and everyone else can have access to the father through the presence of the Spirit and the word of truth.

That is what a prophetic word is. When we share something about the current situation or a coming one that the hearer or hearers did not know about that we too could not know except by revelation by the Spirit of God. And the function of prophecy is to point to Jesus and encourage the church.

All prophecy from the Old Testament and even in the new points to the reality of Jesus Christ and the life in Him. Even today, if you receive a prophetic word, one of the ways to weigh it is by asking the question, does it point to Jesus and does it leave you encouraged. Even when there is judgement or a warning, prophecy always leaves us focused on Jesus and encouraged.

2 weeks ago, Joy said she felt that there was someone who has had trouble with their womb. That is information that person has but Joy would need to be told. On the same day, I shared that someone was struggling with a diagnosis of something they thought they had dealt with and it seems to have come back. Later that week, when I met a friend who was struggling with a diagnosis that they believed to have well under control I knew that God had her in mind. That is not information I had before. That is called a word of knowledge. But let us not get stuck around the terms.

In 2012, 3 people came up to me and talked to me about planting a church in a city in Kenya. 3 years later, I moved to Nakuru to be part of this church plant. That is the information they had about my future that I did not know.

1 year after that, I was travelling and someone said to me that God was inviting me to make a multicoloured tapestry with Him. One year after that I started leading this quite multicultural church. And then even beyond what I do here, I got involved in multicultural work within the wider church. That was information about my future that I did not know about.

And who gets to give prophetic words? We all can. Joel says our sons and daughters will prophesy. Paul encourages us to desire spiritual gifts, especially prophecy. So how do you know you have a word for someone?

One more story before we get to doing this together. I have told this story here before because it captures God's heart and how the prophetic works just so well.

A group of pastors were gathered for a meeting and during the prayer and worship, one of the newer ones who was greek got in his mind a very strange word. He has this word in greek that begins with an s and ends with at but it is not shirt.

If that happened to any of us here, you'd say that definitely was not God. And he said that too. The pastor leading the prayer meeting went up to him and said he thought he could see that he had a word for that lady. And now it is beginning to seem more and more that it could be God. It is so natural because these are just the same way words come to us in our minds every day. But he is now sweating and second-guessing.

Then he goes to this lady and says, “I think, God wants you to know that you are not a scadula” the Greek word for... you know.

This lady begins to sob deeply. You see little did this Pastor know that this lady was in her second marriage. She had been married to a pastor before and he was greek. In her past marriage, she was verbally abused. Her husband would call her a scadula in front of her friend, in front of her kids and it had wounded her deeply. And if you live in an environment like that over time it wounds you deeply and begins to mess with your identity.

Why was she crying? The Holy Spirit is called another counsellor. This is why people sometimes cry in the presence of God. Just like being in a counsellor's office, only better, the Spirit reaches depths in us that are sometimes wounded, hurt or in darkness and just one touch brings such release and tears come out.

What God did at that moment reveals something only she knew or at least this guy would not have known. And speak prophetically to restore her. And it opened that wound for prayer and conversations which I believe must have happened. What if this guy had shied away?

This is why Paul says to the church, you have got to desire the prophetic. Church, we have got to speak out when the Spirit is in the room. Because every time we speak out, we speak in God's authority. And God only speaks because he wants to act. He wants to act to heal, restore, build-up, rebuke and correct, encourage to bring dry bones to life.

So he is saying to us just like he said to Ezekiel, “Prophecy my son... Prophecy my daughter” What do you think the Lord is saying, speak it out. You have the authority, you have the permission, you have the Spirit of God.

Let us then do this together. I am asking you to sit in 3s and 4s.

It is not weird or complicated. As you pray for someone or as you sit together just pay attention to the thoughts and impressions you get or even how your body feels. This is one way you will know you have a word for someone. You feel you should tell them but nothing in you wants to. Doubt, you're sweating, fear all of it. So pay attention to that too. Will they take me seriously? What if I am wrong? It didn't feel particularly supernatural. And now you are scared. Go! That is when to go.

As I am praying for people, sometimes a word or a name will come to mind. And I will ask them if that meant anything to them. It is like why else would this thought be in my mind or even better what if this thought is about them. So, I gently ask, does this mean anything to you?

I was praying for someone and I just had a sense that I should pray about their work and their hands. As we prayed they shared that they had been in a season of asking God for something that they would do for work.

And it is different for different people. Some of us are visual so we will see images. Some are auditory so it feels like we hear a voice. For someone like me, I am a words person. You, people, pay me to weave words. So I will often get words. Some people are feelers and they would get sensations in their bodies. It is just in your natural way of being that God moves in and makes it supernatural. It is about being naturally supernatural.

Anyone of us can do it. But it takes speaking it out. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we speak out. If Joy did not speak out, we would not have prayed for that lady. If Hellen did not speak out we would not have prayed for those ladies with joint aches that went home better. I am constantly speaking prophetically over my team and even in the last year, I have seen them step out into what at the moment just looked like a distant future.

And how do these 2 work together? God would often give us information about someone that only they knew, which wins their trust, that God is present, he cares, loves and knows them. Then he releases a word for that current situation or the invitation about what God is doing in the future.

So why don't we do it?

1. Don't close your eyes.
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you a word for the person you are with
3. Then wait silently, don't rush don't get into some sort of prayer thing just stand there and wait
4. If there is a word or a picture or a phrase that has now come to your mind ask them politely; "Hey does this mean anything to you?"
5. If one of you says that makes sense to them, I invite the rest of you to pray over them
6. If none of it is accurate, just pray together still, thanking God for his love.
7. Remember to grab a document on, "I have received a prophetic word, what next"

*Let's Pray*