

Rediscover the Fullness of Your Prophetic Call

The last few decades have centered prophetic ministry on the praxis of personal prophecy to build up, encourage and comfort (1 Cor. 14:3). It's not uncommon to find churches in major cities around the world who actively train their members to hear God and minister His Word to others. Conferences, books and podcasts have multiplied on this topic, and God's people have been blessed as a result.

However our emphasis of one application almost invariably means neglecting other critical applications. Has this been the case with our prophetic call? In our emphasis of personal prophecy, have we inadvertently neglected our prophetic call to justice and reconciliation?

In a June 2020 sermon, Pastor Matt Chandler of The Village Church argued that the modern church has refused to participate in society's discussion on race—a far cry from the ministry of Martin Luther King, whom we all honor and love. Chandler suggested we've abdicated our inheritance to the hands of “justice” movements that are antithetical to God's kingdom:

“And now one of the things that has happened is the church by and large has refused to participate. Which means that we have turned over—God help us—we have turned over what is our inheritance to dark ideologies,” Chandler said.

Today the social dialogue concerning race relations is no longer led by the voice of the church, as in the days of Martin Luther King. Instead, secular voices of Black Lives Matter and critical race theory have risen to leadership prominence. It seems to me we have traveled far from our prophetic heritage of abolitionism, suffrage and civil rights

for a more personal inspiration focus of prophetic ministry. Is it possible for us to rediscover our transformational voice in culture while maintaining our voice in body life?

I do believe it's both crucial and possible for the church to recapture a fuller sense of our prophetic call. God Himself is motivated to this end. It's in His heart to give the world a true testimony of Jesus—which is the spirit of prophecy (Rev. 19:10).

In this article, I list five practices to help us rediscover our prophetic call. While this list is by no means comprehensive, it reflects some keys I'm embracing today.

Cultivate friendships with people different than you. While many Old Testament prophets modeled lives of separation and asceticism, there are others—along with Jesus—who embodied a different approach. Jesus modeled a life before His Father and among the broken. This is the heart of the incarnation. While Jesus prophetically spoke against sexual immorality (Matt. 5:28), He was never accused of hating the sexually immoral. Instead He was called a friend of sinners (Matt. 9:11) because his entourage was full of broken people.

When we invest in friendships in our communities, our voice is shaped by God's love for our neighbor. In time, God's love gives us the necessary authority to speak His difficult words.

Enter the pain of others. The Bible's call to weep with those who weep (Rom. 12:15) is an invitation to experience the heart of God that breaks for humanity's brokenness. While this experience of prophetic lament can take place in private intercessory prayer, there is greater effect when done in the context of authentic friendship. Who in your greater community is in pain?

When we speak prophetically against societal ills without first entering into the pain of our neighbor, we sound like a resounding gong or clanging symbol (1 Cor. 13:1) to the world

around us. Conversely, when we enter the pain of others prior to speaking out, our voice is baptized in the supernatural power of the God of all comfort (2 Cor. 1:3-5).

Take restorative action. Since our family moved to the American South, we have intentionally taken our kids to historic civil rights sites as well as Confederate monuments. At these sites we have celebrated our progress, grieved our brokenness and prayed for the fullness of God's kingdom still yet to come to our nation. I'm certain that these simple trips have done more in the cause of justice than any social media post I have shared on the topic.

When we take restorative action, our lives get further aligned to the messages He gives us to proclaim. This releases transformational power on our ministry.

Routinely check your allegiances. One of the greatest hindrances to the gospel in our day is misplaced allegiances, particularly in the political realm. The problem is not political involvement, but uncritical support of a party, platform or personality. Uncritical support is a sign that our primary allegiance to Christ has been compromised by a secondary allegiance to man—it's guaranteed to diminish our gospel witness and our prophetic voice in culture.

When we repent of misplaced allegiances, we experience freedom from the political spirit and are restored to the supernatural power and purity of the prophetic.

Speak out God's vision for creation. God has a holy dream for creation; a dream that every man-made system fails to perfectly reflect. Part of our prophetic call involves affirming the points at which human systems reflect God's kingdom and denouncing where they directly oppose it. This double-edged sword separates soul and spirit, carving an image of the heavenly order God intends to bring to earth.

When we speak out God's vision for creation, we interrupt

earthly narratives with the great truth: God is full of both wisdom and goodness, and it's in our best interest to trust Him.

Grace to the people of God as we recover a fuller sense of our prophetic voice and play our unique part in today's Jesus Movement.

Listen to this episode of *Jesus Movement Now* on Christians and Black Lives Matter here. {eoa}