

Spirit-Filled Pastor: What to Do After God Gives You a Prophetic Word

Editor's note: This is part two of a three-part series. For part one, [click here](#).

I had a particular experience years ago that stirred my heart on the vastness of the harvest field. It was 1979, and I wasn't serving the Lord. I was living in a sinful lifestyle.

But two pastors approached me saying that God would use me in an evangelistic way and would open doors for me into Australia and Japan. Two years later, I surrendered to God and told Him I would go wherever He wanted me to.

Not long after that, I picked up a hitchhiker who turned out to be an Australian triathlete who was traveling around the world. Through a series of mishaps, he lost his passport and belongings and ended up staying with me for several weeks.

During that time, I had the privilege of leading Him to the Lord. He eventually became a pastor, and that relationship opened up many doors for me to minister in Australia over the years. I've ministered in 40-50 other nations as well. But the one place I did not go was Japan.

Japan has always had a special place in my heart because I am half Japanese. My mother was Japanese, and I was born in Japan, but I have lived in America most of my life. We moved to the U.S. with my dad, who was in the Navy, when I was 3. Later, after my parents had divorced and my mom remarried—my stepfather was also in the Navy—we moved back to Japan, where I attended an American high school.

I had not been to Japan for decades, but when the Kobe

earthquake occurred in 1995, I had the privilege of going back to see how the ministry could help. One evening while I was there, I went up to the room where I was staying and began to weep uncontrollably. I was so overwhelmed by the needs of the Japanese people.

Not only were there great material needs because of the earthquake, but there were vast spiritual needs. I was burdened by the brokenness of the people, and I began to once again hear the cries of the multitudes of people in the valley of decision. The Lord was allowing me to feel a small part of His heartache for the lost.

Since that time, God has taken me back many times to help, following earthquakes, tsunamis and other natural disasters. I've had the privilege of praying for people in their Parliament, which they call the Diet, and I've prayed privately for many other people in their government. God has done some amazing things there. I'm praying now about the 2020 Olympics that will be held there, asking God how He might use us to be involved in serving and ministering. My heart's desire is to see the Land of the Rising Sun become known as the Land of the Risen Son.

Earlier this year (2019), I was talking to missionaries and pastors serving on the Texas-Mexico border in a place called Roma. We had sent truckloads of resources to help with the earthquake in Mexico City and most recently assisted local churches that were providing aid to the humanitarian crisis there.

The wife of one of the missionaries told me, "My dad says he knows you. He's a pastor in Houston, and before you started serving the Lord, he and another pastor had a word for you outside of your exercise business. They saw you were running from the call of God on your life." Now, I'm coming back to this message I wrote in 1995, and I'm reconnected with the very pastors who gave me that word!

I share this, first, because it validates how God speaks to us through impressions, words and dreams. But it always has to be filtered directly through His written Word so we know it's not contrary to His nature, character, works and spirit. And second, I share it because my heart continues to break over the needs of so many around the world as well as the state of our own nation. God wants the church, through our knee posture and being in His presence, to be willing to get up and obey when He says go. And everywhere we go, He will come, because when we're in His presence, we bring it with us.

Willing Servants, Surrendered Hearts

God is preparing us to go, and He wants us to be aware of the wiles of the devil but to give no place to him. We go in the power of the risen King, and His presence goes before us and His presence is in us.

The harvest is still plentiful, and the laborers are still too few. Are we willing to be those laborers? I believe that because of the long periods of peace and prosperity in America, we, the American church, have sometimes become apathetic and complacent in our comforts. But the Lord is stirring us again; everything that can be shaken will be shaken. We cannot just say, "God, I will do whatever you want"—we must be willing to *do* whatever God wants. We have to obey.

Many of us pray, "God, whatever it takes, whatever You want, I want to do it." Yet when the time comes, we're so comfortable in our circumstances that we don't want to take a step of faith to go. I recall how the children of Israel all agreed and said to Jeremiah something like, "Whatever God wants, go find out, and we will do it." They all agreed. But when Jeremiah came back and told them what God wanted them to do, they called him a liar (Jer. 42:1-11, 20-21; 43:2). They spoke the right words with their lips, but their hearts had already decided what they wanted to hear. So, the question comes back

to us, "Do we really have ears to hear what the Lord is saying today?" The way of the cross means saying, "Not my will, but Your will be done."

When we look at the book of Leviticus, one of the five offerings that was presented as a sacrifice to God was called the burnt offering, which represents total surrender to the Father's will. That's what Jesus did when He prayed, "Father, not my will, but Your will be done." Jesus became the burnt offering, a sacrifice offered up to God for us. Likewise, we are told in Romans 12:1 to "present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service of worship." We are to follow after Him.

Jesus didn't say, "take up *My* cross and follow Me." He said, "take up *your* cross and follow Me." Our lives are the sacrifice we offer to God, our wholehearted obedience to His will. When we hear God speak, we must die to our own desires, even if He asks us to do something we don't want to do. There are times I have said to Him, "OK, I'll go and I'll do this or that, but I don't want to." But every time I obeyed and went, I was so glad I did because it fulfilled a longing in my heart.

As we look back at Luke 10:1, we see that Jesus is making a promise to the disciples. As He commissioned them to go into each place two by two, He promised that if they would go, He would come. God is saying to us, "I want you to go and prepare in every city and place where I send you and then I will come. If you will go, then I will come." I believe God is about to move mightily, like we have never seen, and we must be willing and faithful to go where He sends us.

It is not a sacrifice to serve God; it's a privilege. Will we be those laborers who will help in the mighty harvest of souls? God continues to ask this question of us as a ministry, as individuals and corporately. I believe God is saying to all of us, simply, "Say yes! Make yourselves available and obey,

and I will give you the desires of your heart!" {eo}

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