

What the Apostle Paul Would Say About Today's Prostitution of the Prophetic

In Matthew 10:7-8, Jesus gave authority to cast out demons and to heal all kinds of sicknesses and diseases. He told the disciples, "As you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, and cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give."

Jesus instructed His disciples to not bring along money and other necessities, saying, "The workman is worthy of his keep" (Matt. 10:7b). They freely received the authority to perform signs and wonders in His name, and they were to freely operate in His power, and their needs would be met. They were not charging for their services, but they would be blessed as they go ministering.

This is not like the practices of some ministries requiring fees upfront. This is the prostitution of the prophetic known as "Simony," which is the act of selling church offices and the trafficking of spiritual things for personal financial gain. In Acts 8, Simon Magus believed the gospel message taught by Philip and saw that people were baptized in the Holy Spirit when the apostles laid hands on the new Christians. Simon offered money to Peter and John, saying, "Give me also this power, that whomever I lay hands on may receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:19).

Simon was a sorcerer who made money off divination. Psychics, astrologers and other occultists do the same today requiring payment before giving oracles and readings. This has been their practice for thousands of years. From the 8th century B.C. to the 4th century A.D., the temple of Apollo at Delphi

required payment for the oracles of the female priestesses known as the Pythia.

The Apostle Peter rebuked Simon for trying to bribe him for the anointing. Peter clearly said that the “gift of God” cannot be obtained by money. Simon’s heart was not right with God, being full of bitterness and bondage (Acts 8:23).

Paul revealed to Timothy that false teachers have fallen into temptation by trying to get rich, plunging into ruin (1 Tim. 6:9-10). And this was the motivation behind Simon Magus’ request. False teachers were marketing their services upfront, charging elaborate fees in-order to get wealthy as the false prophets in the Old Testament did the same (Ezek. 22:25, Jer. 14:14-16, Mic. 3:11-12).

Paul had these things in mind when, in the context of the use of prophecy, he said, “Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Examine all things. Firmly hold onto what is good. Abstain from all appearances of evil,” (1 Thess. 5:19-22). Prophecies are to be cherished and valued but are not to mirror pagan practices of charging fees. Prophecy is to have a higher standard than the oracles of pagan temples where money was mandatory.

Those who proclaim the gospel should receive their living for their ministry (1 Cor. 9:13-14, 1 Tim. 5:17-18). But they should not manipulate, cajole or prostitute their spiritual gifts, abusing their ministerial office and misusing spiritual gifts by requiring payment. When this is the practice, people are bound to the ministry that is prostituting the prophetic, returning frequently making payment to get their ears tickled while being led away from the truth (2 Tim. 4:3-5).

We cannot buy the gifts of God. They are freely given. Our giving to ministries is an act of worship, wisely stewarding the resources God has blessed us with. Our tithes and offerings support the gospel message and the mission of the

church, providing the salaries and administrative costs for the ministry that is obeying the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20). The gift of God is free, and as we freely give, God will supply our needs. {eoa}

This is part two of a two-part series on this topic.

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