

How Excesses and Extremes Are Diluting the Prophetic

There is too much emphasis on prophets and the “prophetic” today. I see it on a regular basis. Over time, the excessive use of this word has pulled it into the ditch, meaning there is no longer a balance associated with it, but it’s become extreme.

Of course, I believe in the ministry of the prophet and the prophetic and its importance, but in the New Covenant, there are five ministry gifts (Eph. 4:11). I remember when the late Kenneth E. Hagin, a foremost prophet in his day, was directed by the Lord to start a Bible school. At first, he wanted to have it be a school for just the prophets like in the days of Elijah, but the Lord dealt with him and told him that the school would become exclusive and extreme if it was only for prophets. In other words, it would give people the wrong impression, and tendencies would be to esteem the prophet’s ministry above the others.

Bringing Balance

I believe one of the reasons we have so many false prophets and sensationalism that is outside the genuine flow of the real prophetic is because we’ve emphasized it more at the expense of the others. Even the very word “prophetic” has been illegitimized because of its excessive use. We need to bring balance to this ministry and to the very word itself.

You see, the word “prophetic” has different meanings and implications. One can be prophetic and not be a prophet. One can be prophet-hearted and not be a prophet. One can prophesy and not be a prophet. One can flow under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost and not be a prophet.

A prophet is first of all a preacher and a teacher of the Word

of God. Second, he has at least two revelation gifts (word of knowledge, word of wisdom, discerning of spirits) that operate through his or her ministry on a regular basis. Third, he moves in the gift of prophecy (who ever heard of a prophet who doesn't prophesy?), which means to speak under the inspiration of the Spirit. All believers can prophesy (1 Cor. 14:1) but when a prophet prophesies, it is a higher level of anointing.

Prophecy Misunderstood

The words "prophecy" and "prophesy" are also misunderstood. Prophecy is not only "thus saith the Lord", but the most common use of it is to speak unto edification, exhortation and comfort (1 Cor. 14:2). Believers who are not prophets get themselves and others into a mess when they try to prophesy with revelation. You can't give yourself a revelation. We have so-called prophets today who are teaching believers how to move in the revelation gifts. These things happen as the Spirit wills, not as we will. Some believe they are moving in revelation, but it is only visualization and imagination.

Furthermore, the greatest use of prophecy for the believer is to sing or speak in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs (Eph. 5:18-19, Col. 3:16). In other words, prophecy does not just flow from God from heaven to earth, but from believers from earth to heaven. There are 150 psalms that are "prophetic" that mainly flow from earth to heaven.

The Prophets Ministry Requires Greater Maturity

Finally, I believe the prophet's ministry requires a higher degree of maturity. Although prophets can bring great blessing, they can also do much harm if they're not mature and seasoned. Many people in the body of Christ have been hurt and misled by false revelation and false prophecy. Some have married the wrong person, gone into the wrong ministry, moved to the wrong place, associated with the wrong people because of false prophecies. Be very careful.

It takes many years to become a mature prophet, not only in character, but being skillful in the anointing. I see many young prophets today who are constantly blabbing everything the Lord tells them or shows them. One of the marks of a mature prophet is that they have an acute sense of the timing of the Lord for the release of words or visions they receive. Visions, revelations and prophecies seem to come at a dime a dozen these days. We've cheapened this gift. Its sacredness has been lost to this generation.

Although I do believe that in these final hours of the last days, much prophecy and revelation is being released, especially in dreams and visions, with it has also come much falsehood and counterfeit. My father in the faith, Kenneth E. Hagin, would sometimes hold unto things the Lord showed him for years before releasing it. The real truth is that often people just want to show off their spirituality and constantly talk about what God is showing them. It seems like these people have a prophecy and a vision every other day. This causes them to operate in pride and puts them in a performance mode. The devil accommodates them.

For example, there are true prophets who move in genuine revelation one moment and then they yield to familiar spirits the next moment. The tragedy is that they don't know the difference. There's one prophet I know who gives me the creeps. I'm sorry to word it that way. I feel uncomfortable when he prophesies. Familiar spirits follow him because he yields to them regularly.

Listen, it's not only the Holy Spirit who knows supernatural things about people, but familiar spirits also do. Don't be fooled or so wowed by supernatural knowledge that a so-called prophet may give you. Judge all things by the Word, the anointing and by whether it brings glory to God or attention to man.

To be warned is to be armed.