

Judah Smith: Why Preachers Should Say 'I Think' Before Claiming to Hear From God

Pastor Judah Smith recently said he wishes more pastors would conditionalize their words from the Lord by saying "I think I heard from God."

In a recent sermon at Churchome, Smith said, "I am concerned as a fellow follower of Jesus—frankly as a human being, I am concerned that we run around and lightly use these [four] words together: 'God spoke to me.' ... I just want to suggest to our community, maybe we could be a little different and start using terms like 'I felt that God might have—' In the old days in church, Christians were talking like this: they'd say 'I was impressed in my spirit.' But it's actually a little bit more helpful than 'God said.'"

He added that using phrases like "God said" without allowing for ambiguity or misunderstanding can hurt people and also often misrepresents the process of hearing from God.

"The combination of 'God said' has been used—whether admittedly, willingly [or] intentionally—to kind of control stuff and manipulate people," Smith said. "Because if God said, what am I supposed to do with that? ... I believe that God does impress things and does give an impression or suddenly we have a sentence in our brain and we feel like it came out of nowhere and we start thinking on it and we're like 'Man, I think God is speaking to me.'"

Smith continually affirmed, however, that God does speak to us, both through the Bible (the one place we can feel 100 percent confidence saying "God said") and through personal revelation. But he urged believers to exercise greater

humility and even repentance regarding inaccurate prophecies and words from God.

“Hearing God is not a perfect practice,” Smith said. “But it is a practice. And the Bible makes it clear that hearing from God happens in part—meaning we’re not perfect at this. Meaning there should be a part of our Christian journey, our faith journey, that actually goes, ‘Hey, I want to double back. Remember when I said I thought God said? He definitely didn’t say that.’ When’s the last time that happened to you?”

Watch the video to hear Smith’s full sermon.