

God's Presence and Prophecy

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[0 : 0 0] Marjorie just wanted us to know that God was her rock and was very ever-present in her life and this morning we explore God's presence in prophecy and the spiritual gift of prophecy is listed amongst the gifts of the Spirit yet sadly for Christians so often it's one of the many gifts that we don't explore because if you are like me maybe in life and in my Christian life nobody really gave me a lot of teaching on prophecy it was all great it was brilliant but it wasn't something that we were encouraged to do in the everyday and of course prophecy is for forth telling it's it's not a crystal ball it's not sort of foretelling forth telling somebody's future it is actually God speaking into our lives in an amazing way and for those of us who have experienced that for those of us who practice that for those who have moved in the power of the Holy

Spirit in prophecy will know how powerful that has been for our life and our journey when God has spoken directly into a situation Christians you me followers disciples whatever we call ourselves here however as we encounter the presence of God we are called more and more into the power of the Holy Spirit and what a difference in the Holy Spirit and what a difference in he can make and my goodness does he need to make a difference at this time in us and through us I don't know about you I sense along with many people there is a sense of urgency at the moment in this world of people wanting to know God but maybe not through the ways in which we have expressed that in the past and so there is this element of this experiential encounter with God that we read about not only in the Bible but also as well we read about and we experience through our everyday life Marjorie said to stand on that rock confident in his presence and his power that is given to us given to us on the day of Pentecost not just for a few poured out for all people this is a gift that we can use this is an amazing tool in our toolbox for those who wish to use it and prophecy is one of the many tools that God has given us especially in evangelism and I don't know about you maybe you have tried that line with people excuse me um do you believe in Jesus no thanks very much or we've got this amazing thing happening at church do you fancy coming along to us um no thank you just or maybe you stood at the bar in a pub and the person next to you you feel this pain down your leg and say excuse me if you just got pain in your leg yeah how did how on earth did you know that that's amazing that's great do you mind if I pray with you yeah I'd love you too you know see the difference that experiential move of the Holy Spirit that is that burning bush that wakes people up that draws people's attention and comes to life you know move in the power and presence of the Holy Spirit reply from many Christians how do I do that we're going to talk about that this morning when it comes to spiritual gifts be qualified feel qualified experience and use the gifts sadly among some areas of the Christian church moving in the prophetic power of the Holy Spirit hasn't been um advertised well or practiced well it may be more about ritual than about moving in the power of the Spirit and Christians have received very little teaching that was mine but the prophetic can seize people's attention I want you to imagine really if somebody gave you said oh here's a recipe for a cake that's really exciting isn't it all those lovely ingredients but it's nothing like tasting it is it it's tasting taste and see that the Lord is good and maybe as we move more and more in the prophetic I always remember the Old Testament prophets had a tough job you know sometimes in prophecy we give a message that maybe is quite tough for people you know I remember Jonah Jonah is one of my favorites you know it was all great wasn't it it's great

Jonah Jonah did this thing I'm happy to do this in my own setting but Nineveh no you must be joking but God's way of seizing attention is the people of Nineveh used to worship fish gods so how did God arrange for it God arranged for him to arrive in a fish spew him up on the beach he said I mean job's half done isn't it really here I am God gives us the tools and we need to use them his presence in his purpose pictures visions dreams words Mark Stibbe in his word in prophetic evangelism talks a lot about this of lives being changed powerfully changed in life and here we have he says um Paul Paul had a vision to share the gospel that night Paul had a vision he saw a man from Macedonia in northern Greece pleading with him come over here and help us so we just decided to leave for Macedonia at once for we could only conclude that God was calling us to preach the good news there have you ever dropped anything that you were doing to go and preach the good news because

God told you to and to be received what a great opportunity to do that trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding my experience was um having moved in the prophetic I found this amazing move of God that God can do it anywhere that you want he wants to do it 24 7 one of mine happened to be at an eight o'clock communion book of common prayer God can work through the book of common prayer believe me I didn't used to do the book of common prayer at eight o'clock in the church where I was a curate but the faithful six came along they were there and I was privileged that morning because my vicar had decided to go off and launch a boat and give me the eight o'clock communion which was his little group and club that was great so fortunately having had a bit of a past in high anglo-catholic I do know the book of common prayer so I think they were quite impressed they looked a bit bewildered at the beginning but there I was in all my finery all dressed up you can imagine this or try to imagine you may need prayer afterwards um so there I am in all my finery eight o'clock communion singing all the responses oh lord open thou our lips and they replied those great I was doing well and then we came to communion and the faithful six came along

Julie came up for communion I didn't know these people at all totally separate congregation as the eight o'clock often is and there they were all definitely in the position to receive I start off at this end um the body of Christ keep you in eternal life and no I think actually the words are so I get them right here we go the body of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee preserve thee and thy soul into everlasting life isn't that nice a long thing until I get to this lady in the middle and the world stops and I sense the Lord saying tell her that her son is held in my arms hmm is there any more no that'll do just do it so I just said I just sensed that the Lord's saying that your son is held in his arms to which case she flooded at the altar rail totally flooded the other five were like meerkats this doesn't happen when the vicar does this oh my goodness so we just had a short time of ministry there and we continued along I was told that you have to go to the door to shake everybody's hand on the way out at the eight o'clock apparently that is the formal thing that you do at eight o'clock thank you very much vicar very nice very good when is Nick back you know um and she makes her way to the end of the line and I said sorry I just don't know you I don't do this at all she said

[9 : 17] I haven't been to church for 40 years my son was diagnosed with cancer on Friday and I sensed the Lord saying you need to go to church on Sunday and I will speak to you and she said I was faithful you're the first church I came to and she said the Lord is faithful and I know that he's held it in God's arms and that's my prayer and I felt the Lord tap me around the air and say so you don't think I can work through the book of common prayer the good thing was is I was then called into the vicar's office on Monday morning and told I should never ever do that at the altar rail because it spoils worship and that's why I'm here thank you the prophetic move of the word of God is powerful and I would really encourage you that to move in that to move and exercise the gifts to operate and grow in confidence in the gifts of prophecy and of the Holy Spirit and here's just three pointers as to how we do it the first one is prayer build that relationship with God get to know him get to know his voice do that 24 7 we've been talking about prayer immerse yourself in prayer know that relationship with him so that when the prompting comes you know you know where it's coming from I often question myself and say you know is this of me or is this of you Lord in that relationship that we build in prayer 24 7 we know the prompting of God we know that relationship that closeness that he wants for it and Jesus speaks truth and he is the truth I am the way the truth and the life he's not going to speak lies into somebody's life that's somebody else's job to do that that's the evil one that tries to do but this is truth that we speak in and especially true when we operate in the gifts of prophecy

I want to be the sure as we used to say in the past job you know I promise to tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth or as one of my colleagues said and nothing like the truth once but it was um you know that's what we want isn't it we need to do that is to move in truth and have that confidence dear friends do not believe every spirit but test the spirits to see whether they are from God because many false prophets have gone out into this world this is how you recognize the spirit of God test it to see that it comes from God be adventurous do that so my desire is to ensure that I minister and who receives that brings comfort hope love maybe even in my case when people have spoken into my life a strong word of direction one of the moments that um God spoke really clearly was um when the collar was coming along and I can tell you I put up a really good fight you know you can run but you can't hide as they say but we were

Mandy and I had taken some time away we were just testing this Lord is this really of you is this what you're asking of us and with that we were there and on this retreat and a guy comes past looks in through the door we didn't know him at all sort of looked in came past and then came back again and said excuse me I don't I don't know I don't know you both but I've just had this picture for you both and it's amazing yacht in a harbour is most fantastic boat ever he said and you mate pointing at me he said you're manic he said you were all over this thing he said ready for it to go and then pointed to Mandy and said but you're the anchor of love and it's not going until you're ready and that was amazing for us that's what we needed to hear because we needed to do this together and not just Clive thinking that it was something that was really exciting God speaks into the situations ask and you will receive maybe you're here this morning maybe you're listening on the podcast and you are wanting the Lord to speak into a particular situation that you are in ask if you have a picture for somebody if you have a word for somebody if you sense for somebody don't hold back on it test it and go and share it because it will probably be life-changing for you as it was for us as it was for the lady at the altar rail and it is for thousands of other people who receive a word or or prophecy in various different ways operate in the gifts of prophecy is for prayer we read in the bible we reveal words for us this week our young people have been focusing on prayer and prayer ministry it was so exciting you know things were just bubbling up it's really great when you've got that freedom but maybe as we get a little bit older maybe in a little bit stilted and oh we better be a little bit careful with this maybe we need a new freedom that the Lord wants to give us for this time to share with the people who we are seeking to reach who need to hear that experiential expression of the power of God presence we're talking about presence know the presence of God in every situation whether that's in the workplace whether wherever you are during the day know the presence of God practice the presence of God imagine you can imagine being a disciple waking up in the morning you're waking up with Jesus thinking what on earth is he going to do today what are we going to see what has changed people nothing has changed when we wake up with Jesus in the morning what are you going to show us Lord what what what are you going to lead us to do who are we going to meet who are we going to speak to who are you going to lead me to pray with are you going to give me a word for somebody it's exciting know and work in the presence and power of the Holy Spirit God responds to the prayer of faith and in his presence we know him Jesus showed us his prime purpose purpose was to be closely connected with the father and we should too inseparable to know that presence and to be ready ever ready to respond knowing God getting to know him for his sake not just for ours learning discernment as well to discern say Lord is this yes it is of me because I recognize your voice you've heard me say I I I

I I sense God you know when and you know don't don't go for that thus says the Lord stuff you know scares people off you know God has told me this is for you whoa maybe I just sense the Lord is saying this for you I sense the Lord you know give yourself a bit of a safety net and let them weigh up and discern what God is saying to them this reflects back to the earlier point about the prophets that that you know that it's not only the prophets that hear from the Lord we we all hear nobody can tell me you didn't look in the in your Bible in your Bible reading there was a word that leapt out at you it's Margaret Redd you know a word maybe that you felt you had to share with people a word that embedded itself in your heart for today maybe go home and read it again and the last one is persistence you know I'm expecting to go to the 10 30 this morning and I will move in the presence of God but then that ends at 11 30 no we are equipped empowered enabled people enthused and excited for a world that needs to hear at the moment a people who are totally lost who are fearful who need to know are searching for something else because everything else is falling around them and what do they need Jesus but maybe it's that experiential move of the Holy Spirit that people will actually wake up that thing of maybe a word or something maybe something you've read something maybe that thing where you get drawn to people I always remember on a youth alpha there we we did this about prophecy on the Holy Spirit day has anybody done a Holy Spirit day in alpha you don't know what you're missing if those people with the hands up tell them bring your friends it's absolutely amazing you know this sense of people I've done this thing for ages as a

Christian or something new but I didn't know there was this power element and I remember on a youth alpha there was a kid called Foxy and he came along and he said the next alpha that he came on he said do you know what he said that really worked he said I felt I had to smile at this woman at the bus stop he said that's all I had to do he said I'm stood there and he said I was praying and saying this stuff that Clive's been talking about on alpha how does it work on and he said I just want you to smile at that woman and so he said I gave her a nice big beam as I was waiting for the bus and she came over and she said to me thank you so much she said I've had a lousy a lousy few weeks but your smile has just lit up my life and given me hope is it that difficult people is it that difficult when the Lord asks you to do something prayer presence and persistence be persistent seek the gifts stir up the gifts in the power of the Holy Spirit finally do you not quench the spirit do you not treat prophecies with content but test them all hold on to what is good you know don't quench the spirit don't dampen it down it's alive and it is alive to be fed as we move more and more in the presence of God it sort of flows out of you when you move in the supernatural presence of God and maybe more and more there are those here maybe if you're listening on the podcast you're saying Lord I want to do that I want to move more and more in the presence and power of your Holy Spirit in prophecy I want to bring that to people's lives I want to bring them good news

[20 : 45] I'll finish with a very quick story from Mark Stibbe in his book if you can get hold of it now it's a very old one but here and demonstrations of God's power and he tells a story of here of a friend of mine was sitting in the back of a taxi the Lord spoke to her and she lent over and said to the man in front you're not a taxi driver you're a surgeon and you're from Ukraine the man was amazed because that is exactly what he was he asked her how she knew and she said because Jesus told me at that moment a picture dropped into her heart of a young girl with the name called Anna she shared with the man that he had a daughter called Anna the man became very moved at this point he had left his daughter behind in the Ukraine and missed her greatly she was called Anastasia Anna for short needless to say this revelation opened the door to the gospel between my friend and a taxi driver she had never ever met

God is good do we want to make a difference in people's lives I think somebody nodded at me then do we want to make a difference in people's lives please as part of this series explore more and more the prophetic do the things that we we are called today let's maybe let's just take a moment before we continue in our worship now you be you you