

Speak Life

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 September 2016

Preacher: Steve Aiken

[0 : 0 0] Good morning. It's good, these old hymns that are powerful, aren't they? And it's good you've got so many children here.

I love children. It's one of the things I liked about my former church. Lots and lots of children. Because when you have the children, then there's hope to get them before the world couldn't pollute them.

And then they can work on their parents and neighbors and others. Two words have kept coming to mind this week.

Speak life. And with so much negative coming out of the news reports and news magazines and even conversations that people have about the weather.

I remember a number of years ago when I was in Hoyk. I worked with Youth with a Mission there for a few years. And I went in to buy a chocolate bar at a news agent.

[1 : 0 8] And all I wanted was a chocolate bar. And this lady said, oh, the weather is terrible, isn't it? And just popped out of my mouth. I said, isn't it good our life is not determined by the weather?

She just looked at me funny and I took my chocolate bar and left. But there's so many negatives, you know. If it's rainy, oh, streak.

If it's overcast, it's terrible. Then it gets warm. Oh, isn't it too hot? In Proverbs 18.21, it declares there's death and life and the power of the tongue.

Or in Peter's case, and we've been covering 2 Peter 1, there's power. There's death and life and the power of the word, whether it be spoken or written.

In 2 Peter 1, Peter counters the negative when writing that God's divine power grants us everything we need for life and godliness.

[2 : 1 3] And that his great and precious promises enable us to partake of the divine nature. Then he challenges us to develop the character of God that enables us to come into the kingdom of God.

These verses speak life, reminding us of God's incredible love and provision. They urge us to grow into maturity in Christ and avoid the corruption of the world.

To keep walking in this life, though, Peter brings a warning. And I want to read 2 Peter 1, verses 16 to 2 Peter 2, verse 3.

So it's 2 Peter 1, verse 16 to 2 Peter 3, verse 3. Or 2, yeah. I think I left my tongue at home.

I'll take a drink while you're looking it up. And I think this is of the NIV. NIV. For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power.

[3 : 2 7] But we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the majestic glory, saying, This is my son whom I love.

With him I am well pleased. We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven. And when we were with him on the sacred mountain, we also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable.

And you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things.

For prophecy never had its origin in the human will. But prophets, though humans, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves.

[4 : 42] Many will follow their depraved conduct and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed, these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories.

Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping. Peter wrote what he knew to be true, what he had witnessed firsthand when Father God confirmed his Son Jesus Christ.

He was speaking life, but he knew that in their midst and ours, false prophets and teachers were leading people astray.

This is why he emphasized the importance of pursuing God's promises and developing Christian character. Was Peter denying the prophetic word?

No. In fact, he declares clearly that true prophecy comes from God, inspiring people by his Holy Spirit. The problem was not prophecy itself, but false prophets and teachers who didn't listen to God.

[5 : 48] They were inspired by their flesh or Satan, declaring things to lead people away from the truth and into deception. Muhammad with Islam, Joseph Smith with the Mormons, Colonel Rutherford with the Jehovah's Witnesses, Reverend Moon of the Moonies, and a multitude of others fit in this category.

And even we have today former evangelical ministers that are preaching, leading people astray, giving words that violate the word of God.

This is why Peter kept nagging believers to get into the truth and develop godly character. Knowing the word of God protects us from deception.

It reveals false prophecy and wrong teaching. It speaks life that enables us to come into God's fullness and then help others to come into his fullness as well.

God has used prophecy throughout history to communicate who he is and what he wants for his people. The Bible is a result of God's prophetic word, first revealed to his prophets, then spoken and written down for our benefit.

[6 : 59] Two basic aspects of prophecy are foretelling and forth-telling. Now, I hadn't heard really about that before. I think sometimes, I know I thought this, that prophecy was somebody just predicting the future.

That's not just what prophecy is about. Prophecy, there's foretelling, which sometimes, and there are a lot of prophecies in the Bible that will tell what's going to happen in the days ahead.

And some of those are still to happen. But then there's foretelling, and I think most of prophecy is about foretelling, where the prophets are calling people back to God, reminding them of their sin, reminding them of the promises of God, and calling them back.

If you look at Jeremiah, Isaiah, and these others, most of it is foretelling, telling forth the word of God, reminding people of where they need to stand with God.

And sometimes, you know, we get mixed up on this, and then if somebody says, well, I have a prophetic word for you, you know, we get scared.

[8 : 14] Because we, you know, I don't know. I don't know where you are, but God still gives prophetic words today, okay? But we need to know this prophetic word, so we know whether it's from God or not.

But there's a foretelling, where God will tell us ahead of time what's going to happen in the future, and the foretelling, where the prophets will call people back to line them back up with God.

And most of the Bible, most of the prophets, were calling people back to God. This is God speaking through his messengers to call his people back to himself, to restore them into loving and holy fellowship.

And as I said, most of the prophets, that's what they were doing. They were forth telling God's tough love to bring restoration and life.

Though some prophetic words were strong and harsh sounding, and if you've read Jeremiah and Isaiah and Ezekiel and these others, there's some heavy duty prophecy there. All of it was God speaking life.

[9 : 31] It was all God speaking life. He loved his people. He was being tough with them, but he was trying to draw them back. Out of darkness and bring them into life.

He was offering his people a future and a hope, even as they were suffering the consequences of their own sin. False prophets use lies and deceptions to lead people away from repentance and life.

Millions are caught up in Islam, the Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and other false religions and cults. Many others believe the lie that they can practice sin and immorality and then praise Jesus on Sunday and think heaven is still available.

And I know I've mentioned, you know, I think it was last week where some in our church, a couple of young people came out as homosexual. And they had been lied to by others.

They said, well, the scripture really didn't mean it. What the scripture meant was something else. And I said, you're wrong. The Bible makes it very clear. You know, the thing is that Bible makes it very clear about relationships, doesn't it?

[10 : 41] God hates adultery. God hates lying and cheating. God hates deceiving. So it's not just one sin.

God wants us to avoid all sin. But not to be deceived. And we can be deceived, you know, be deceived by our own self, can't we? Or deceived by somebody else that would try to lead us away from the truth.

Well, I believe that God still speaks prophetically through his word, through his people today. It's essential that we remember Peter's caution.

So I want to expand on Peter's caution. Any prophetic word must never violate God's revealed word. If any teaching, any prophetic word, if it doesn't, if it violates what this word says, then you have to reject it.

Because there's not, God is not going to give any new truths, okay? He's revealed what he wants to say to his people in here. He may give us greater understanding of what he says in here, but he's not going to violate.

[11 : 57] There's not going to be another savior, okay? I know Reverend Moon came along and said, and he convinced thousands of people. Thousands of people followed the Moonies.

And you think, well, it's really stupid, but a lot of people, intelligent people. I know in Oregon, they had a camp in Eastern Oregon that the Rajneeshis had bought a big ranch in Eastern Oregon.

And there were hundreds and hundreds of people, intelligent people with college degrees and maybe had even gone into theology that had believed this garbage because they listened to a lie.

They didn't, they were impressed by somebody that deceived them. They weren't in the word of God. And that's why we need to know what the word says.

So any prophetic word, any teaching that comes that violates the revealed word of God, the Bible, then we have to reject it. Periodically, someone comes along declaring that God has revealed when Jesus is returning.

[13 : 08] What there's a, this guy that had a Bible, what a radio program. I was at a couple of years ago. I forget what his name is. But he came on and says, I finally figured out when Jesus is returning.

Well, right away you say, you know, you shut him off. What does the Bible say? No one knows. No one but the Father knows, not even the Son.

Well, Jesus knows now, but when he was on earth, no one knows but the Father for the hour of Jesus' return. And yet there are people that will come along and they'll look in the Bible and they'll say, oh, now I figured it out.

This has happened and that's happened and then all these people come up, oh yeah, that must be true. That sounds good. Forgetting what, the warning that Jesus gave, they say, well, that sounds really good.

I think that adds up. So they quit their job, they sell their house and they stand around waiting for the Lord to come on this certain day. And does he show up? He's not there, is he?

[14 : 13] Jesus spoke clearly that no one but the Father God would know the exact day or hour. He gave us signs to look out for, to prepare us for his return and to be aware of those who prophesy falsely.

The prophetic word will direct people to God, not lift up a person or a movement. Prophecy, even when it strongly challenges sin or wrong attitudes, will always be constructive and speak life.

When you see even these heavy-duty prophecies in Scripture, they always spoke life. They always went to lift people up and bring them into restoration.

If somebody comes and dumps on you and condemns you, then that word is not from God. It may convict your socks off. If you need to be convicted, well, great, receive the conviction.

But the prophetic word, which comes from God's word, will be to lift you up. And if you have a teacher or a counselor or anybody that comes along and condemns you, then just say, I don't receive that.

[15 : 30] Because God may convict me, but he comes to build me up and restore me, to draw me to himself. It gives people a way to change, such as a prophetic word through Jonah to Nineveh.

You know, Jonah had a prophetic word, didn't he? You're all going to die. It's not very nice, is it? And you think, well, he says, judgment is coming.

But God was hoping that prophetic word through Jonah would shake them up and they would repent, and that's what happened. And God forgave them, didn't he?

He didn't say, oh, wait a minute. I said you're all going to be judged. Too bad. No, because they repented, because they responded to the prophetic word, he gave them life.

He forgave them. Let me read verses 16 through 19 again, but in the J.B. Phillips translation. We were not following a cleverly written up story when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[16 : 40] We actually saw his majesty with our own eyes. He received honor and glory from God the Father himself when that voice said to him, out of the sublime glory of heaven, this is my beloved son in who I'm well pleased.

We actually heard that voice speaking from heaven while we were with him on that sacred mountain. The word of prophecy was fulfilled in our hearing. The word, you should give that word your closest attention, for it shines like a lamp amidst all the dirt and darkness of the world until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts.

What prophetic word is Peter writing him out? This is a, anybody have the answer?

What was the prophetic word? Actually, it was a who. It was Jesus, wasn't it? Jesus was a fulfillment of the prophetic word.

All those hundreds of prophecies over thousands of years about the Messiah that will come. There was a fulfillment of the prophecy. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah, the fulfillment of the messianic promises declared by God's prophets over thousands of years.

[18 : 10] Peter, James, and John heard it fulfilled personally on the Mount of Transfiguration. This is why they confidently declared it to others. This is why Peter writes in verse 19, you should give that word your closest attention, for it shines like a lamp amidst all the dirt and darkness of the world until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your heart.

This beautiful imagery of prophetic word speaks life. It brings light into darkness, order from chaos, understanding in the midst of confusion. It directs people towards loving reconciliation with their creator, savior, and Lord.

False prophets and teachers, though, bring death, confusion, condemnation, and oppression. They lead people away from the loving relationship and freedom that God offers. Do we need to be afraid of being deceived by prophecy?

After all, Jesus declared that in the last days, if the tribulation hadn't been cut short, the very elect would be deceived. But God hasn't given us a spirit of fear.

This is why Peter reminds believers to know God, pursue his promises, partake of his divine nature, and mature in Christian character. Once we know who God is, what his principles are, and walk in them daily, we're unlikely to be deceived by false prophets and teachers.

[19 : 42] We will recognize the errors because we know the truth. Settled in God and secure in his word, we won't be interested in their lies or afraid of the future. This is why it's so essential we daily read, study, and meditate on God's word, as well as practice it, live it out.

The best way to confront error is the truth. About 1974, our pastor in America played a cassette.

Those of you that are young, they're little things. You can ask an older person what a cassette is. But it played a cassette of a prophecy by David Wilkerson, and maybe even some of you heard that, those that were alive back in 1974.

But he spoke to the church. He's the one that wrote The Cross and the Switchblade and was a prophet. He was a prophet of God. He was an evangelist, but he was a prophet of God.

And he gave the church a prophecy about the proliferation of homosexuality. And it was heavy.

[20 : 56] It was shocking what he said on that tape. And a bunch of Christian leaders scoffed at him and told him that he was way off base, he was stupid, and all these kind of things.

But there were others that believed what he said, and they began praying. They began warning their people. Well, the thing is that what David Wilkerson prophesied then has happened.

And it's even worse than what he prophesied. We need to pray that God will raise up other anointed prophets for these last days.

Men and women of God within the church and those that will speak without the church or outside the church who will lovingly but boldly proclaim the truth in the midst of all the deception and lies.

People need to hear the way back to God before it's too late. We need to pray that God will raise up people, godly men and women who will declare the truth.

[21 : 58] Not necessarily speak, oh, well, this is going to happen in the future, but calling people back to God. People that will not be afraid of the mockings or the, you know, the accusations because there will be.

These prophets, I mean, look what happened to Jeremiah. You know, he was thrown into cesspools, he's put in the stocks, he was thrown in jail, he was starved, they tried to kill him constantly.

We need to pray that there will be men and women who will rise up and be willing to stand in the gap and declare the truth.

Prophets that will stand up. People need to hear the way back to God before it's too late. We have some Christian leaders that have turned and they are prophets for the enemy.

So we need the prophets of God to speak the truth and draw people back to God. So how can you and I be a prophetic voice today and only have ten more pages?

[23 : 02] Is that all right? No, actually, it's just, I'm almost done. Just in case you got scared there. How can you and I be a prophetic voice today?

And we all need, in a sense, to be prophets, don't we? We all need to be prophets to somebody to be able to call people, to be able to speak truth to people to draw them to God.

I know that this has nothing to do with my message, but sometimes I'd be reading through these prophets and say, God, please don't call me to do that. When you see what he asked some of these prophets to do as illustrations for his people, I said, Lord, please, I'm a very modest person, I don't want to do that.

But, so five suggestions about how we can be a prophetic voice today. One is get equipped. Know the Bible.

Know what God values, what he thinks about things. There are a lot of people who think they know what the Bible says, but they don't. Every once in a while somebody would come up to me and say, oh, well, the Bible says, actually, it doesn't say that.

[24 : 15] Are you sure? Well, read it. We need to know the Word of God. In order to be a prophetic voice, we need to know what the truth is.

We need to know what God thinks. Not what the world thinks, not what our flesh thinks, but what the Bible says. And besides the Bible, there's some good apologetic books by John Stott, Basic Christianity, or Issues Facing Christians Today.

Lee Strobel, who used to be a lawyer, when he came to faith, he wrote The Case for Christ and The Case for Faith. They're both good books. C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity.

There's a number of really good books that will inspire us and give us ways to more effectively be a prophetic voice to others.

The second thing is be filled with the Holy Spirit. He's the one, Jesus says, that will lead us into all truth and empower us to be his witnesses. Every day, before I even get out of bed, I pray, Lord, fill me afresh with your Holy Spirit.

[25 : 23] Search me and see if there's anything in me that's displeasing to you. Because I want to start today, even before I get out of bed, I want to have the right attitude, I want to be right with God so that I can be what he wants me to be.

I'm not saying I'm very spiritual, I'm just saying I try to get ready, okay, for then if I need to be convicted, he's there to do it.

The third thing is pray for and take opportunities. You know, ask God for divine appointments. Say, Lord, will you give me an opportunity? and maybe those that, you know, aren't able to get out very much, pray that God will have a friend call or something that you can speak the truth into their life.

A little encouragement, maybe over a cup of coffee or go to Coaster or Starbucks or whatever and meeting with a friend or a colleague of just speaking the truth.

Men, pray that God will turn the, you know, conversation around and then just gently speak the truth into their lives that might draw them to the Lord. And if they ask a question, you know, that you don't know about, say, hey, I'll check it out.

[26 : 43] But don't let them get distracted by, you know, throwing a red herring like, you know, what about the pygmies in Africa or something like that. The pygmies are okay.

What I'm concerned about is you, okay? Get them to refocus back on themselves and then be cool. Rest, in other words, rest, you don't have to go out and get the, all the proper clothing.

Be cool in that being relaxed. Rest in God. It's his responsibility to save people, isn't it? Our job is not to save people. Our job is to be ministers of reconciliation.

Our job is to communicate the truth and encourage people to come into the kingdom. And the fifth thing is keep praying for those you share with.

Some will reject what you share initially, but if we continue to pray for them, pray for the Holy Spirit to minister to them, then he can water that word that you shared.

[27 : 52] There are people that I shared with, told them the truth, and they just cut me off. Didn't want to know anything about me. Well, I just kept praying for them.

Kept praying for them every day that God would water the seed. Months, and one of them I think was several years later that I came across them.

They wanted to see me and they wanted Christ. I didn't go there to see them about the Lord. I went there about something else. But then in just talking in the conversation, because of the seed had been planted and the Holy Spirit was watering it, they came to faith that day.

As you and I live according to Peter's teaching in 2 Peter 1 and become prophetic voices to this generation, many others will hear the truth, come to faith, and have life as well.

Let us live the truth and speak life. Let's pray. Lord, I thank you that somebody spoke the truth to us.

[29 : 02] In a sense, they prophesied to us Jesus because he is a spirit of prophecy. It's Jesus. He's a fulfillment of all prophecy.

And we thank you that they spoke that life to us, that we might have life. And I pray that we would be a prophetic voice in this generation, that we would speak words of life to people.

We would speak life to people, that we would give them a way out of their darkness, that they might have life. Father, we thank you.

I bless this congregation. I thank you for the good things they've done in the past and the good things they're doing now for reaching out to the people in this community and reaching the children.

May they, may you anoint them an ever increasing anointing to be a prophetic voice in this community and even beyond. And I bless them, Father God, in Jesus' name.

[30 : 07] Amen. Amen. And now if Susan's going to lead us in the last hymn, shout to the Lord.
Amen. Amen.