

More...Where our hunger meets His Promises

Ephesians 5:18 NLT

- Week 10 -

“Everyday Grace - the Practical Spiritual Gifts”

Part 2

A person who has a prophetic Grace on their life functions in the role of a prophet. They'll listen to the Holy Spirit and then share a prophetic utterance - a prophetic word - as the Lord gives it to them. But everything they say will be comforting, edifying, and exhorting - building and encouraging everyone up. They will see things as the Lord whispers to them - things having to do with people's lives that no one else could know about. It's all positive, life-giving, and hopeful. They will speak deep things into people.

We're talking about the spiritual gift of prophecy in First Corinthians chapter twelve - the gifts list - the nine manifestation gifts of the Holy Spirit. As we continue with the series titled "More", we're learning about the Person, the work, and the Power (Greek, *dunamis*) of the Holy Spirit - the lesser-known Person of the Trinity (depending on what kind of theological or church background you come from). So, we're re-introducing, and for some, re-digging old wells - or for others, learning some new and fresh material.

When we receive a word from a prophet, it will be as them speaking Life *into* us - we will know that it's a word from the Lord, and it will have three markers to it. In terms of prophecy, we are New Covenant believers. In the Lord's supper, we partake of the New Covenant - not of the Old. Scripture calls it a "new and better covenant" - a covenant of Grace, and not a covenant of law, which means, there is freedom in what we do. We get to actually enjoy the Presence of the Lord, and to enjoy the presence of one another - and even enjoy the suffering of this world because we know it's producing something amazing in our lives.

We're not having to fight *for* victory - we get to fight the good fight of faith *from* victory, because the battle has already been won by Jesus, himself. He said on the cross, "*It is finished [Tetelestai].*" We now live our lives out of the finished work of Jesus Christ, which means we can have Life, Joy, Love, and Peace in a world that is losing its mind right now. We can live up in a down world - all of us - because we're in this New Covenant, where prophecy is defined very clearly as this: where we are built up, encouraged, and comforted that God has our future secured.

The three markers of new testament prophecy are this:

1. it edifies - literally means to build up
2. it encourages - means to inspire courage - you're lifted - courage is imparted to you
3. it comforts - the impartation of rest and peace

Do you know that, because we are now in this new and amazing - and what the Bible calls a "better covenant", we now get to live life out of the overflow of his Grace, of his Presence, and of the Life that he continues to pour into us. Remember what we said about getting your buckets filled - the Bible says we're to ever be - or continually be - filled with the Spirit. *"The Holy Spirit is not weird - people are weird."*

Would it be okay with you if the Holy Spirit helped you? Would it be okay with you if God, through the Holy Spirit, helped you live up in a down world? Would it be okay if the Holy Spirit showed up and gave you the answer you were looking for? - or imparted wisdom to you that you didn't have before? - or if the Holy Spirit showed you something and spoke something into your heart that you delivered to another person, and they were edified? - they were encouraged, and they were comforted when they left your presence? - because the Lord *spoke* into their lives.

That is the Spirit of new testament prophecy - it is *not* when people bring doom-and-gloom prophetic words to you - but rather, it should comfort, edify, and encourage you. *"The Holy Spirit enables and empowers us to live Life out of the overflow of his Person, Presence, and Power,"* Would it be okay with you if you lived a life that was so overflowing with his Presence, Person, and Power, that everywhere you went, you leaked out Life on other people? - and then you could truly say from your own heart, *"I live to lift - I live to lift others - to lift up the brokenness of this world - to make a difference for other people."*

It's not even *about* me - it's what God wants to do in me, through me, and upon me so that others are lifted. Would it be okay with you if the Holy Spirit so filled you that you just leaked out his residue everywhere you went - every store you walked into - where you live, work, and play - that everywhere you go, people are strangely drawn to you. Amazing encounters of the God kind have been happening all week in people's lives simply because they're showing up.

When you're overflowing with the Presence of the Lord, you *smile* a lot more - you just become approachable - people are just drawn to you because you smile - because there's something inviting about you - and compelling about the person that you are. But here's the Good news - it's not *you* - it's the *Spirit* and *Presence of God* in you - *wooing* them and *drawing* them. Strangely, they don't even know why - like a bug to a light - "*Oh, it's so-o-o beautiful!*"

This is what happens - when you get filled, and the Holy Spirit is living his Life in you, through you, and upon you - you just *show up* - and you leak out, people will say things like, "*I don't even know why I'm telling you this, but...*" - and *you're* thinking, "*I do, and it's not me - it's He. It's the Holy Spirit. It's Him inside of me. You're telling me this because He wants you to tell me,*" and as you listen and as you're aware, God begins to activate the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit, like the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge.

You see it coming - you know things that you didn't know before, and Life happens, and you begin to see that person in 3-D because they're letting you into their life, and you see them from every angle in the Holy Spirit - and all you're doing is standing there smiling. Why? - because the Holy Spirit is showing up - and we all walk away lifted - in a world that's losing its mind - where people are getting meaner, and there are crazy things like road rage and shootings on highways - people are being taken - things are happening in our world that are dark right now.

If you can show up with the Light and the Life of the Holy Spirit - his gifts operate in you - because you're not afraid of him anymore. There's *nothing* to be afraid of with the Holy Spirit. He won't make you weird - he'll make you attractive - and people will be strangely drawn to you because that Light is just flowing out of you - you can't put it *out*. "*This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine...*" (written in 1925 - a poem converted into a religious chant/hymn that caught on by a lot of hurting, broken people that said, "*No matter what, I'm going to let His Light shine through me.*"

This lesson is titled, "*Everyday Grace,*" because we're talking about things that are practical in the Spirit. We're not talking about things that are etherial and mysterious, and we're not chasing "glory clouds", we're saying "*How does this work?*" Where I live - in a classroom, where I'm almost forbidden to say anything about Jesus - and yet your Light is shining, and kids are strangely drawn to you and their teachers are strangely drawn to you, and you're not saying anything, you're just glowing - because the Holy Spirit is ministering and shining through you. All you're doing is showing up - and he shows *out* - through you. ...*This is practical!*

1 Corinthians 13:1-3 NASB

“If I speak with the tongues of mankind and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give away all my possessions to charity, and if I surrender my body so that I may glory, but do not have love, it does me no good.”

In other words, Love is the foundation for everything. In fact, its not only the foundation, it's the walls, rafters, and everything else. We're building a house of Love, wherein God likes to hang out and live his Life through us, and literally touch the lives of people and provide lift for them.

1 Corinthians 12:1 NASB

“Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be unaware.”

Paul was writing to people he knew and could identify - he wasn't writing to a nameless, faceless crowd - he was writing to people that helped him establish a church in Corinth in seven different locations, but they were small in number- a handful of people - like our Connect groups all over the community. He says, “I don't want you to be ignorant or unaware,” and lists twelve manifestation (*expressive*) gifts of the Holy Spirit (*manifestation* simply means *to express*).

1 Corinthians 12:7 NASB

“But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”

“Manifestation” gifts - to *each* (all of us) is given the manifestation (expression) of the Holy Spirit for the common good (these gifts are not for us personally, but are for *all*). *If they're not for them, they're not for me* - it's not about “*me*”, it's about “*we*” - all of us *together*. We can break these down into various categories. Last week we talked about the discerning gifts: word of knowledge, word of wisdom, and discerning of spirits. The next category is the declarative gifts - that which you express, declare or say: prophecy, tongues, and interpretation of tongues.

Prophecy - a message of encouragement from God - spoken or delivered through a person. Every believer has the ability or the enablement of the Holy Spirit to prophecy - you have the ability to do it. The proof is not from experience or from our emotions, but from the Word of God and through Scripture because that is our authority.

Two Elements of Prophecy:

1. Forthtelling. declaring something that is - preaching Scripture is forthtelling the Word of God - that which has already been written and declared - unpacking something that is already established

2. Foretelling - a message of encouragement from God of things to come. God can give you a word of knowledge and you can know something you didn't already, and then you share it and declare it for that individual. It will comfort them, encourage them, and build them up.

Ground rules for giving a word of prophecy:

1. Don't use Elizabethan english as found in the King James Bible.
2. Don't announce that you have a prophetic word for somebody - just show up and encourage them and it will lift them, edify them, comfort them, and encourage them.
3. It must be in alignment with Scripture - if it contradicts the written Word of God - toss it! (but in love, of course)

It's not something deep and esoteric and strange - it's Life-giving - not weird, but simple. You can operate in the Spirit of prophecy according to the new testament by going and encouraging somebody.

John 16:13 NKJV

"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come."

Absolutely! - according to God's Word, he will - so why does that make us afraid? - or nervous? It *should* make us excited, because the Holy Spirit will show us things to come. That's Bible - and it's as practical as making coffee in the morning. He wants this to be normative in our lives so that everywhere we go, we're just pouring out and leaking out this Life.

Acts 2:16-18 ESV

"But this is what was uttered through the prophet Joel: "And in the last days it shall be, God declares, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; even on my male servants and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy."

"All flesh [each]... dreams..." - if your dreams have slipped away, and you're not dreaming anymore because life has beaten you down and roughed you up - that's not of the Lord - he says you will *increase* and *grow* in your dreams the older you get. Why? - because the word of wisdom is now working on all the things you've learned through life - the hard way - and now it conglomerates that into one thing - it congeals it. Now you've got dreams you never had before because you know what works and what doesn't, and the Lord can give you dreams. You can see the pieces of a puzzle working - the pieces of a clock moving - all the connected systemic parts that create that dream that come into a reality.

God's given that to you in your life experience - and the older you are - the more experience you have to release that. It's time to dream again. All will prophecy - this is available to all of us. Pastor Robert Morris says in the book The God I Never Knew, *"You want to prophecy? - give a word to someone else? - go encourage them - just go encourage."* Some of us do that so naturally that we don't even realize we're operating in a spiritual gift. Others walk away from you lifted up because you operate in this naturally. It's *super-natural* - but seems natural to *you* because you do it so often and effortlessly. *That's* the Spirit of prophecy.

All of the declarative gifts are here for edification (to build up - to lift), encouragement (to inspire courage), and comfort - *not* for correction - that's old covenant, where men were singled out by God to speak into nations, by a very specific calling. This is completely different. Old covenant prophets gave warnings because they were speaking into kings about the livelihood of a nation - about urgent things at a different level.

Biblical protocols for testing a word

If you think you have a word of warning for somebody, you better put that before the Lord - test the spirit. If you are *given* a word by someone as from the Lord - if it doesn't resonate with your spirit - then put it on a back-burner and let it simmer on low. A prophetic word will resonate with your heart - you'll know in your knower - but if it doesn't, it may mean it's a word for later, so get it in writing or recorded for a later time.

We have to be serious about these things - setting boundaries for how they are delivered to us, and whether our spirits bear witness to them. The test: does it encourage, edify, and comfort? If not, send it to the back burner - or hit the delete button. We don't need anything that's not of the Lord and out of alignment with Scripture!

1 Corinthians 14:1-4 NIV

“Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church.”

1 Corinthians 14:31 NIV

“For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged.”

It may happen in the hallway while standing around talking - through a hug - through a word of encouragement - through a word of gratitude - but you walk away edified, exhorted, and comforted. *That's* the Spirit of prophecy at work in the house of God. Also, if you think you have a word for the church, first write it down so it can be tested by the church elders and staff, and if it is indeed a word for the church, then it will be delivered. The spirit of a prophet is subject to the prophet - meaning you can turn it off and on and subject it to biblical protocols in exercising spiritual gifts. So, prophecy - Yes. You all have it - the ability and opportunity to comfort, edify, and encourage!

Prayer

Father, thank You that your spiritual gifts are for everybody. Everyone here is an “each” and is “all flesh,” according to Joel 2:28 and Acts 2:16. You have poured out Your Spirit on all flesh - on everybody - and we’ve been empowered and enabled by Your Holy Spirit to prophetically encourage and speak Life to others. You have given us this ability, and it’s on our hearts - we show up and You show out.

Holy Spirit, would You speak to every person here and cause us to know what You want us to take away from this, and assimilate and incorporate into our lives - right where we live, work, and play. Help us to grow up, grow out, and grow deep.

We give this to You in the name of Jesus.

Amen