

## The Patio Pulpit For October 28, 2020

“...and to another prophecy”

“Good evening, brothers and sisters in Christ. This is Pastor Johnny coming to you this evening from my albeit dark and stormy Patio Pulpit on October 28, 2020, which has of necessity had to move inside, just 6 days away from our Presidential election. I hope you vote this coming Tuesday or have already voted for the men and women of my choice. The latest early vote count tally has now exceeded the 75 million mark. Incredible. I’m guessing that that historic turnout means that one candidate is going to experience a landslide victory. And that’s enough about politics.

Take your Bible and turn to 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians chapter 12. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians, chapter 12 and we’re going to be in v.10. We will be concentrating on **the gift of prophecy** tonight. You may already know this, but the gift of prophecy was “the” gift of the 9 in this passage that Paul exhorted his readers to seek after. All the gifts were important if for no other reason than the Spirit gave them to the church. But as we will see, prophecy was the outstanding gift. **1 Corinthians 14:1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.**

Lets cut to the chase tonight and go straight to v.10b.

“...and to another prophecy.”

(1 Cor. 12:10b NAU)

I observed something yesterday while I was studying for this lesson that I had never noticed or observed before. It has to do with my experience with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and the gifts He gave me back in 1974 when I was a newborn infant in Christ. And this is what I observed.

I saw the undeniable fact that what the saints in Corinth experienced in the 1<sup>st</sup> century, I and my Charismatic friends experienced in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It dawned on me that I and all other Christians who were baptized by the Spirit into the body of Christ and so richly blessed with the gifts of the Spirit back in the ‘60’s and ‘70’s experienced the very same experience the Corinthians experienced when they were baptized by the Spirit and so richly endowed with the gifts of the Spirit.

**It was new to them in 50AD, just like it was new to me and thousands of other new converts to the faith in the heyday of the Charismatic Movement in 1974AD.** There is nothing new under the Sun. And we abused the gifts just as much as the Corinthians did on their worse day.

We were all babies in the faith and like a bunch of little babies who think they know everything except their parents discipline them, we desperately needed a mature disciple of Christ to mentor us in all things Christian. That was what we needed. But what we **wanted** was to be left alone to enjoy studying the Bible on our own lest anyone tell us we might not be right about this or that. I know I didn't want anyone telling me I was wrong. And I believed and espoused some pretty weird stuff for a few months after getting saved. Do you know what the underlying doctrine of Deism is? It says that, "sure, God created the heavens and the earth, but then He just walked away and left it all on its own." I remember saying that...out loud...once. My new charismatic friends looked at me like I had just said "I'm going to convert to Islam" or something.

And I remember saying this to a young lady I had known before I became a Christian when I ran into her on the campus of CPCC in 1974. She said she knew that I had become a Christian and wanted to know about the Holy Spirit. She asked me, "Do you have to have the Holy Spirit to be a Christian?" And I basically told her, "Why, heck no, Gertrude. You don't have to have the Holy Spirit." That my friends is heresy. I spoke it in abject ignorance as only a babe would say such a thing.

But back to the Corinthians and the Charismatics, how can anyone so flagrantly abuse the gifts of the Spirit? By taking Scripture out of context number one, and making it say things it doesn't say number two, and by applying Scripture in ways it was never intended to be applied, for number three, and number four, by rejecting the clear word of God in favor of ear-pleasing false teachings.

The gifts of the Spirit are supernatural or divine endowments given to the church, the body of Christ, designed to build the faith of all saints. The gift of prophecy is possibly the most important and most valuable gift given to us. Tonight, we're going to see what it is and what it is not.

The Greek word behind our English word for prophecy is **προφητεία** and is defined in the Greek dictionary/lexicon “as the gift (χάρισμα) of inspired speaking granted to believers by the Spirit *prophecy, ability to prophesy* (RO 12.6); (2) as the utterance of a prophet *prophetic words, inspired saying, prophecy* (1C 14.6); (3) as a foretelling of future events *prediction, prophecy* (MT 13.14); (4) as the work of a prophet *prophetic activity, prophesying* (RV 11.6).”

It is one of the “speaking gifts” granted to the church by the Holy Spirit but it isn't the same gift that is given to pastor/teachers who are told to be diligent about rightly dividing the word of truth before they preach it or teach it. This gift of prophecy as you will hear me repeat, is best described as a spontaneous gift given to individual men during the course of a local church gathering for worship. It is the gift of inspired speaking granted to believers by the Spirit on the spot.

“...to another the gift of prophecy.” The gift of prophecy is not preaching as most commentators suggest and as I believed for many, many years only because one of my favorite pastors interpreted it that way. It is not the kind of preaching that God-called pastors and teachers exercise when they stand behind a lectern or pulpit to bring the word after they have spent hours and hours working on their text. The gift of prophecy is a spontaneous, Biblically-based and Biblically sound word from God through the gifted, Spirit-filled individual. And it isn't the individual who chooses the gift of prophecy, the gift chooses him. And obviously from the context, it is possible for those who want to have this gift to seek it and have it granted to them by the Spirit. I guess we could then apply that to any spiritual gift we might fancy. I guess.

Turn to chapter 14 and v.1. *NAU 1 Cor. 14:1 Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.*

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The gift of prophecy in our text is a gift the same way that tongues is a gift, it is the direct intervention of the Spirit in the mind of those so gifted. It is not the delivery of a prepared sermon. It is the gift of the Spirit to individuals who are assembled with other believers to worship in spirit and in truth.

Now turn to 1 Cor. 14 and v. <sup>23</sup> *Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? If a congregation sounds like a room full of madmen, strangers will in fact thank that it is a room full of madmen speaking jibberish like patients in a loony bin.*

<sup>24</sup> *But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all;*

<sup>25</sup> *the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you. (1 Cor. 14:23-25 NAU)* Prophecy is always given in the language of the congregation and strangers who visit that congregation will 99 times out of 100 speak the same language. When strangers visit Eastway I expect everyone who worships here to speak in English, else how will we be able to minister to those visiting our church?

That verse, v.24, shows us that the gift of prophecy is not preaching from the pulpit but rather preaching as the Spirit gives utterance to those prophecy-gifted individuals in the local body. There isn't even a hint that what these men are speaking was prepared beforehand and written down in a manuscript.

I will close tonight with this. What were the men in the church at Corinth called who prophesied through the gift of prophecy? Prophets, they were considered prophets. They weren't so different from the prophets in the Old Testament. <sup>19</sup> *So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts.*

<sup>20</sup> *But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation,*

<sup>21</sup> *for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Pet. 1:19-21 NAU).* The gift of prophecy was ministered by the Spirit in the church at Corinth in the same manner. And it could be that God intends every church in our day and time to have prophets in each congregation, men of God through whom the Spirit will speak to the church as the spirit of the prophets are moved. This isn't giving every man in the church permission to just say any ridiculous thing that pops into his head. It is simply recognizing men of God who are inspired to speak the truths of God at any given moment during the assembly in strict adherence to the written word of God. This does not give anyone permission to disrupt the worship service but to speak in sync with the worship service. *“For God is not the author of confusion but of peace.”*