

Prophecy, A Mixed Blessing *by Dick Iverson*

Prophecy is a wonderful gift that God has given to the church. It has such power to lift, inspire, strengthen and confirm. It is a spectacular gift that can hold us in such awe because of the futuristic nature of it.

God often uses prophecy to speak to us today. Some teach that God no longer speaks. Some suggest that He spoke in the past giving us the Scriptures, but now that it is complete He no longer speaks directly to man. I cannot find this reasoning in the Scriptures. I hasten to say that there is something unique and special about the Holy Bible and that no other book has the same authority, but God continues to speak to His church in a very sovereign way through prophetic utterances. When this gift is functioning the way God intended, it is the source of great comfort, edification, and exhortation in our life.

Throughout my Christian walk, and especially during my fifty years of ministry, there have been a dozen or more times that the word of the Lord has come to me through the prophetic gifts given to the church. Many of these prophetic words have had a very positive impact on my life at very crucial times.

In the process of receiving a word from God, there is by biblical requirement, a responsibility placed upon those receiving "a word", to try the spirits and see whether they are of God. We are to prove all things, hold fast to that which is good (I Thess. 5:21) and judge prophecy (I Cor. 14:29). However, at the same time we are judging prophecy, we are also told not to despise prophecies (I Thess. 5:20).

Why would anyone despise prophecy? The reason why is that at times prophecy can be affected by the person giving the prophecy and it may not be "all God". Just because there can be the potential of false prophecy, however, we do not want to reject the all prophecy. Do you throw away all your twenty dollar bills because you occasionally find a counterfeit \$20? No! You judge between the two and you hold fast to that which is good.

I would like to give you an example of something that was very important to me when I was a young Christian. In 1950 I was not yet married and I had just returned from the British West Indies. I had experienced a moving of the Holy Spirit in the meetings I was conducting. Many people were saved and healed in Jamaica, The Bahamas and Cuba.

Eddie and I were engaged during the year that I was traveling with T.L. Osborne and when I started my own ministry in Jamaica. My plans were to come home for our wedding and then return to the British West Indies with my bride. I was 20 years old and this was an exciting open door.

On my way home I stopped to visit my former pastor and there was a man visiting with him who was a prophet. He knew nothing of my past, my present or my future desires. As we were visiting, he said to me, "I have a word from God for you. May I give it to you?" I had heard the term "a word from God" but I had not ever received one before. I gave him permission.

Immediately he began to give me a prophetic word. The prophetic word was that the Lord was going to send me to the islands of the sea and the souls that I would win would be like sands of the sea. When he said that, having just been on the islands and planning to return, I felt a tremendous witness of the spirit. Yes! This was of God! Yes, I was to return and finish what God had called me to do.

However, he had no sooner finished with that part of the prophecy when he stated, "And the woman that you have chosen is not the woman that I have chosen for you." And then he said something about her being too worldly.

I had known Edie for nearly four years. We had been engaged for over a year. I loved her very much. You can imagine that this word hit me like a hammer. We were only two weeks away from the wedding, and yet I didn't want to make a fatal mistake by marrying the wrong person. For the first time Edie and I began to argue. I began picking on her and trying to find the reasons why I shouldn't marry her. This was a very uncomfortable time, especially for Edie who had done nothing to deserve this treatment.

The wedding preparations were underway and everybody was excited but me. Now I had this prophetic word which said that I was to go to the islands of the sea, which I felt right about, but it also said that I was not to marry this woman that I thought was the one I was to marry. This was one of the most difficult seasons of my life because I knew that I couldn't marry Edie unless it was the will of God.

I decided I would go out into the woods one day where I liked to talk to God and I told the Lord that I would not come back until He would speak to me and tell me whether or not I was to marry Edie. I walked the woods weeping and crying and seeking God. After about four hours, the Lord asked me this question, "How many witnesses do you have to the word that was given?" Well, I had no other witness. I didn't feel good about the prophecy. I knew my parents were in favor of our marriage. I wanted to marry her. The only word that I had in opposition to this marriage was from this one prophetic word.

Then the Lord spoke to me and said, "Did I not say that you were not even to believe Me, but that My Father bears witness and My works bear witness?" And then He went on to say, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses let every words be established." That freed me from the prophetic word that I couldn't understand or agree with.

You may have five prophecies to do a certain thing, but that is only one witness, the "prophetic witness". For two or three witnesses, you need to also have the witness of those over you in the Lord, and you need a witness in your own spirit. You must not be controlled and directed by prophecy alone!

As we approach the coming millennium, there will be a lot of prophetic words. Please remember, "In the mouth of two or three witnesses let every word be established." That doesn't mean two or three prophecies. The prophetic word is one witness, you need two or three other witnesses in order for you to walk in that direction.

My ministry has taken me to islands all over the world and it seems that God still sends me to islands. That part of the prophecy I had received was accurate. But the other part of the prophecy was not correct. I am glad that I properly judged it, because next year Edie and I will celebrate 50 years of a very happy and fruitful marriage relationship! Thank you Edie! And thank you Lord!