

Message Ten

The Excelling Gift for the Building Up of the Church

Scripture Reading: 1 Cor. 14:1, 3-5, 12, 24-26, 31-32, 37, 39

- I. Prophesying is the excelling gift produced in the growth in life through the enjoyment of Christ for the building up of the church—v. 12; Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 14:4b.**
- II. Prophesying in 1 Corinthians 14 is not in the sense of predicting, foretelling, but in the sense of speaking for the Lord, speaking forth the Lord, to dispense Christ into people—vv. 1, 12, 39a:**
 - A. Prophesying is to speak to men building up for the church, encouragement for the believers, and consolation for the saints' spiritual welfare—v. 3; cf. 3:12.
 - B. Prophesying convicts people, judges people, and exposes the secrets of people's hearts—14:23-25.
 - C. Prophesying is for the building up of the church, which is the organism of the Triune God, in the way of life—vv. 4-5.
- III. God's desire is for all of His saints to prophesy—Num. 11:29; 1 Cor. 14:31.**
- IV. Prophesying is the excelling gift among all the gifts, making its seekers excelling—v. 12:**
 - A. Prophesying is excelling in revealing God's heart, God's will, God's way, and God's economy to His people—cf. 12:8.
 - B. Prophesying is excelling in convicting people, exposing people's real condition, and showing people their spiritual need.
 - C. Prophesying is excelling in speaking forth Christ to minister and dispense Christ to people for their nourishment.
 - D. Prophesying is excelling in building up the church in the organic way that it may be built up as the organism of the processed Triune God for His fullness, His expression.
- V. All the believers have the capacity, the ability, to prophesy, and all have the obligation to prophesy—14:31, 24:**
 - A. The capacity to prophesy is in the divine life, which the believers possess and enjoy and which needs to increase within them so that this capacity may be developed unto their ability—Col. 2:19; cf. 2 Tim. 4:5.
 - B. The obligation to prophesy is the fulfillment of our spiritual service, in which we are indebted to God's salvation—Rom. 1:14-15.
- VI. All the believers have been charged by the apostle to pursue, to seek, and to desire earnestly to prophesy—1 Cor. 14:1, 12, 39a:**
 - A. We are enabled to prophesy by learning (v. 31) in the Word of God, in the growth of life, and in our contact with God—2 Tim. 3:16-17; 1 Thes. 5:17-20; Gal. 5:16, 25:
 1. We need to be revived every morning—Prov. 4:18; Lam. 3:22-24; Psa. 119:147-148.

2. We need to live an overcoming life every day by calling on the Lord's name in every place and living in the index of His eyes—1 Cor. 1:2; 12:3b; 2 Cor. 2:10.
3. To live an overcoming life is to live a prophesying life by loving the Lord to the uttermost (1 Cor. 2:9), fellowshiping with Him moment by moment (cf. 1 John 1:6), walking according to the spirit (Rom. 8:4b), and speaking the word of the Lord in season and out of season (2 Tim. 4:2a).
- B. We are enabled to prophesy by being perfected by the prophets—Eph. 4:11-12.
- C. We are enabled to prophesy by practicing to speak in all the meetings and by telling people about Christ—1 Cor. 14:26; Phil. 2:16a; 2 Tim. 4:2a, 5.

VII. In order to practice 1 Corinthians 14, there is the need for the highest meetings of the church, meetings in which “each one has”—v. 26:

- A. The proper church meeting is a “one another” meeting, a “round table” meeting, in which we speak to one another (Eph. 5:19), teach and admonish one another (Col. 3:16), consider one another and exhort one another (Heb. 10:24-25), and listen to one another (1 Thes. 5:20).
- B. The proper church meeting makes the believers living by developing their organic ability and function—Eph. 4:16.
- C. Before coming to the meeting, we should prepare ourselves for the meeting through our experience of the Lord or through our enjoyment of His word and fellowship with Him in prayer.
- D. After coming into the meeting, we need not wait, and should not wait, for inspiration; we should exercise our spirit and use our trained mind to function in presenting what we have prepared to the Lord for His glory and satisfaction and to the attendants for their benefit—their enlightenment, nourishing, and building up.
- E. We must labor on Christ, our good land, so that we may reap some produce of His riches to bring to the church meeting and offer to God—Deut. 16:16.
- F. Thus, the meeting will be an exhibition of Christ in His riches and will be a mutual enjoyment of Christ shared by all the attendants before God and with God for the building up of the saints and the church.

VIII. We must speak with the three constituting elements of prophesying:

- A. We must possess a knowledge of the Word of God—the human element of learning—2 Tim. 3:16-17; Ezek. 3:1-4.
- B. We must have the instant inspiration of the Holy Spirit—the divine element of inspiration—1 Cor. 14:32, 37a; 1 John 1:6-7; Rom. 8:4.
- C. We must have a vision concerning God's interest and economy, concerning the church as the Body of Christ, concerning the local churches, concerning the world, concerning the individual saints, and even concerning ourselves—the view through the enlightening of the divine light—Eph. 1:17; 1 Cor. 2:11-12.
- D. We speak what we see with the living words of this life under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and with His enlightenment—Acts 5:20.
- E. For the sake of the building up of the church, we need to build up a habit of speaking the word of the Lord by letting His word dwell in us richly—Col. 3:16; cf. 1 Tim. 6:20.