

These notes are designed to be used by small groups on Zoom, by members of a family or by a couple of friends on the telephone. They are based on our Sunday sermons and are designed to help us all think through the issues raised about “God in my Everything”. You will get the most out of them if you have heard the sermon first.

Sermon Date

Sunday 28th February Alan Hulme

Bible Passages

Acts 2:14-21, 1Cor 14:26-40

Theme & Introduction

The sermon explored the Spiritual Gifts of *Prophecy* and *Word of Knowledge*; particularly the guidelines we need to apply to enable the Holy Spirit to speak fruitfully into our church's life.

Questions

1. Read Acts 2:17-18
What do you think of when you hear the word prophecy?
2. Read 1 Cor 14:26-33 & 39-40.
Imagine the type of church meeting Paul must have been speaking about.
What was happening?
How does that differ from your experience of church?
What sounds like it was going wrong that moved Paul to want to set some guidelines?
3. Alan described prophecy as being like fire. In a hearth it can be building up and life enhancing. Loose in the house, out of control, it can be destructive and life diminishing.
 - i. Share any positive experiences you have of the gift of prophecy guiding the church's life.
 - ii. Share any negative experiences you have of people speaking words they thought were of God. What do you think went wrong in that situation? (*take care not to point fingers at individuals, but seek to learn from the experience.*)
4. Alan talked about the proper use of prophecy requiring three stages:
 - i. **Receiving** the message. *What does the person hearing this believe God may be saying?*
 - ii. **Weighing and Interpreting** the message. *Is it of the Holy Spirit? What does it mean?*
 - iii. **Pastoral application.** *What do we do with it?*Do those stages make sense to you? Why might such guidelines be necessary?
5. St Peter said, “*your sons and daughters will prophesy*” Acts 2:14.
St Paul said, “*be eager to prophesy*” 1 Cor 14:39.
How could you make yourself more available to let the Holy Spirit speak through you?
How do you react to Alan's claim that most of the “church directing” prophecies he has seen have come out of church prayer meetings?
Are your answers relevant to your “rule of life”?



EXTRA SECTION - THE TRICKY BIT!

This is not part of the main study, but there is a tricky section in the middle of 1 Cor 14 which Alan spoke about. If you want to explore that further, see below.

In his sermon, Alan said:

“I can’t ignore some tricky verses in middle of 1Cor 14, namely verses 34-35 which forbid women from prophesying. They are problematic for a number of reasons, not least because in chapter 11 Paul encouraged women to prophesy in public. How do the two statements fit together?

There is no easy answer and I know no bible scholar who has come up with definitive solution, but here are the three best possible explanations I know:

1. Tom Wright: believes this is most likely a local issue in Corinth – perhaps to do with husbands and wives disagreeing in public.
2. These verses are not present in some early manuscripts so we can’t be certain they are original to Paul.
3. D.A.Carson thinks that Paul has no problem with women prophesying, but as they weren’t allowed teach in that culture, they couldn’t be part of the weighing & discerning.

However, in this church, let me be clear: as we happily benefit from having men & women preaching, there is no restriction by gender on using the gift of prophesy.”

- Read 1 Cor 14: 34 & 35.
- Acknowledge any feelings they stir up in you, then remember that God made men and women in His image.
- Parts of scripture are hard for us to understand, especially because we are having to understand the culture into which things were written and work out what is a universal principle and what applied to that situation. How do you react to the three explanations outlined above?

END

AJH 27/02/2021