



Catching God's Heart For The City

Open Heaven, Prayer Walk Coventry, June 2021

God's Heart for Coventry

Prayer is a partnership between Heaven and Earth. As well as lifting our requests to God, we can also expect to catch God's heart for our city as we pray. Whether for a particular street, a district, or the whole city, as we walk the streets let's be expectant that God will communicate his intentions to us to direct our prayers.

Whoever Has an Ear to Hear

Seven times in Revelation 2 and 3 Jesus says, '*Whoever has ears, let them hear what the Spirit is saying to the churches.*' God is continually speaking to his church by his Spirit. He speaks consistently and clearly, and Jesus expects all believers to have the ability to hear what the Spirit is saying.

Your Sons & Daughters will Prophesy

'In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy.' (Acts 2:17)

Pentecost shows us that the church is prophetic by nature. Put simply this means that by the Holy Spirit we each can hear from God and proclaim what we have heard.

How Can We Hear?

There are many different examples in Scripture of how people heard from God, showing the variety of ways the Holy Spirit will get our attention to communicate his message. Here are some examples.



Visions

'The word of the Lord came to me saying, "What do you see, Jeremiah?" And I said, "I see a rod of an almond tree."' (Jeremiah 1:11). The Holy Spirit will sometimes drop images into our mind's eye. The meaning may not be obvious at first, but see how God gets Jeremiah's attention and draws him into a conversation to communicate his message.



Creation & Our Surroundings

'The heavens declare the glory of the Lord, the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge' (Psalm 19:1-2). All of creation speaks of God, and he will often speak to us through reference to the things around us, like Jesus telling his disciples to look at how God has clothed the lilies and see it as a lesson that God will provide for their needs (Luke 12:27).



Guiding our Emotions

'In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us through wordless groans' (Romans 8:26). In his earthly ministry Jesus was often moved with compassion – catching God's heart for someone or a situation sometimes can't be easily expressed in words, but the Holy Spirit helps direct our prayers.



Music & Worship

'While the harpist was playing, the hand of the Lord came upon Elisha and he said, "This is what the Lord says..."' (2 Kings 3:15). There are many examples in Scripture of prophetic words coming in an environment of music and worship. *'Singing and making music in our hearts to the Lord'* (Eph 5:19) as we walk and pray can help position us to hear from God.



Praying

'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know' (Jeremiah 33:3). We believe that God answers prayer, but the suggestion here is that God will give specific insights to the things we are praying about.



Speaking in Tongues

'I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the mind also, I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also' (1 Corinthians 14:15). For those who speak in tongues, here we have an instruction to pray both in tongues and with our natural language, seemingly to alternate between the two. The suggestion is that by doing this the Holy Spirit will bring direction and focus to our prayers.

Often when God communicates this way it is simply to guide our own prayers. However, if you believe that God has given you insight or direction that may be helpful for others in their prayers, we'd love to hear from you. You can email us at feedback@openheavencoventry.org to share what you believe the Spirit is saying.

How Can We Be Certain?

Whilst in the Old Testament the prophet often stood as a lone voice confronting God's people and the nations with their errors, in the New Testament God communicates his prophetic message through the church at large.



Individual prophecies are usually incomplete: *'For we know in part and we prophesy in part,'* (1 Corinthians 13:9). No-one has a monopoly on hearing from God: we need to hear all the parts.



The principle of *'two or three witnesses'* (Matthew 18:16 quoting Deuteronomy 19:15) is applied by the apostle Paul to prophecy: *'Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said,'* (1 Corinthians 14:29).



All words are to be weighed and tested, *'Do not treat prophecies with contempt but test them all; hold on to what is good,'* (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21). A collective spiritual wisdom is needed to weigh, test, and hold fast to the good.



We should expect that similar and complimentary prophetic words should come from a variety of people which can then be weighed to ascertain that they are from God, discern what the overall message is, and consider how we should respond.



'For God is not a God of disorder but of peace,' (1 Corinthians 14:33). Prophetic words should bring peace and clarity, not confusion or disorder. We should not act on prophetic words that are unclear or incomplete, or that don't bring God's peace to a situation.

What's the Purpose of Prophetic Words?



Prophecy is given to direct the church in the purposes of God: *'Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.'* (Amos 3:7)



Prophecy is given so that God's people can have clarity and can run purposefully: *'Then the Lord replied: "Write down the revelation and make it plain on tablets so that a herald may run with it."'* (Habakkuk 2:2)



Prophecy is given to build up, to stir up, and to cheer up God's people: *'The one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.'* (1 Corinthians 14:3)

