

**Articles and Sermons :: The Art of Prophesying, William Perkins**

**The Art of Prophesying, William Perkins - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/1/4 14:56**

The Art of Prophesying

By  
William Perkins

**1. THE ART OF PROPHECY**

There are two parts to prophecy: preaching the Word and public prayer. For the prophet (that is, the minister of the Word) has only two duties. One is preaching the Word, and the other is praying to God in the name of the people:

'Having Â... prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith' (Rom 12:6);

'Restore the man's wife, for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you and you shall live' (Gen 20:7).

Notice that in Scripture the word 'prophecy' is used of prayer as well as of preaching: 'The sons of Asaph, of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, stringed instruments, and cymbals' (1 Chron 25:1);

'The prophets of Baal called on the name of Baal from morning even till noon Â... And when midday was past, they prophesied until the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice Â...' (1 Kings 18:26,29).

Thus every prophet's task is to speak partly as the voice of God (in preaching), and partly as the voice of the people (in praying):

'If you take out the precious from the vile, You shall be as My mouth' (Jer 15:19);

'And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. Then all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!"' (Neh 8:6).

Preaching the Word is prophesying in the name and on behalf of Christ. Through preaching those who hear are called in to the state of grace, and preserved in it.

Â“God has 'given us the ministry of reconciliation Â... Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us; we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God' (2 Cor 5:18,20);

'God from the beginning chose you for salvation, through sanctification by the Spirit, and belief in the truth, to which He called you by our gospel' (2 Thess 2:13,14);

'The gospel is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes' (Rom 1:16);

'Where there is no revelation the people cast off restraint' (Prov 29:18);

'How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?' (Rom 10:14).

From the Book, The Art of Prophesying:  
By William Perkins

**Re: The Art of Prophesying, William Perkins - posted by crsschk (), on: 2009/1/4 17:07**

Thanks pastorfrin

Here is a parraell thread;

([https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic\\_id25171&forum36&post\\_id&refreshGo](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id25171&forum36&post_id&refreshGo)) The Art of Prophesying ~ William Perkins

This is by far the best explanation of what Prophecy\Prophesying truly is.

**Re: - posted by Fuegodedios (), on: 2009/1/4 19:02**

This is a wonderful book. I agree with Crsschk that this is the best explanation of prophecy. Perkins also has a passion in this book to help the minister deliver truth aright. His chapter on the interpretation of scripture has helped me out a great deal. May all who read enjoy and be refreshed by the insight of Mr Perkins.

**Re: The Art of Prophesying, William Perkins - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/1/4 19:21**

Quote:

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crsschk wrote:  
Thanks pastorfrin

Here is a parraell thread;

([https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic\\_id25171&forum36&post\\_id&refreshGo](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id25171&forum36&post_id&refreshGo)) The Art of Prophesying ~  
William Perkins

This is by far the best explanation of what Prophecy\Prophesying truly is.  
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Thanks Brother,

Sorry, I did not realize this was out there; guess I was a little under the weather for the first one.

Was hoping it might spur on a bit of conversation on the subject, I see it as kind of parallel with the current thread:

Just who IS responsible for this state of affairs?

[https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic\\_id=26547&forum=40&234](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=26547&forum=40&234)

I believe there are some answers found in this book to the state of affairs we find today.

In His Love  
pastorfrin

**Re: The Art of Prophesying, William Perkins - posted by pastorfrin, on: 2009/1/6 16:52**

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By  
William Perkins

**2. THE WORD OF GOD**

The Word of God alone is to be preached, in its perfection and inner consistency. Scripture is the exclusive subject of preaching, the only field in which the preacher is to labour.

'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them' (Luke 16:29);

'The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat . Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do' (Matt 23:2-3).

The Word of God is God's wisdom revealing from heaven the truth which is according to godliness. 'But the wisdom, which

ch is from above is first pure Â... ' (James 3:17);

'Paul, a bondservant of God Â... according to Â... the acknowledgement of the truth which accords with godliness' (Titus 1:1).

The exceptional qualities of the Word, both in its nature and its effects, evoke our admiration.

## 10. PREACHING THE WORD

We have discussed the preparation of the substance of the sermon. Now we must think about the actual preaching itself. Here two things are essential:

(i) the hiding of human wisdom, and (ii) the demonstration or manifestation of the Spirit.

Human wisdom must be concealed, both in the content of the sermon and in the language we use. The preaching of the Word is the testimony of God and the profession of the knowledge of Christ, not of human skill. Furthermore, the hearers ought not to ascribe their faith to the gifts of men, but to the power of God's Word (1 Cor 2:1,2,5). But this does not mean that pulpits will be marked by a lack of knowledge and education. The minister may, and in fact must, privately make free use of the general arts and of philosophy as well as employ a wide variety of reading while he is preparing his sermon. But in public exposition these should be hidden from the congregation, not ostentatiously paraded before them. As the Latin proverb says, *Artis etiam celare artem*— it is also a point of art to conceal art.

The 'demonstration of the Spirit' (1 Cor 2:4) becomes a reality when, in preaching, the minister of the Word conducts himself in such a way that everyone— even those who are ignorant of the gospel and are unbelievers— recognise that it is not so much the preacher who is speaking, but the Spirit of God in him and by him (Mic 3:8; 1 Cor 2:4; 14:24,25; 4:19,20). This is what makes his ministry living and powerful (Luke 11:27).

Such a 'demonstration' will come to expression either in speech or in gesture. The speech must be spiritual and gracious. Spiritual speech is speech which the Holy Spirit teaches (1 Cor 2:13). It is both simple and clear, tailored to the understanding of the hearers and appropriate for expressing the majesty of the Spirit (Acts 17:2,3; 2 Cor 4:2-4; Gal 3:1).

For this reason none of the specialised vocabulary of the arts, nor Greek and Latin phrases, nor odd turns of phrase should be used in the sermon. These distract the minds of those listeners who cannot see the connection between what has been said and what follows. In addition, unusual words hinder rather than help people in their efforts to understand what is being said. And they also tend to draw their minds away from the subject in hand to other things. In this connection, too, mere story-telling as well as vulgar or foolish statements must be avoided.

Gracious speech expresses the grace of the heart (Luke 4:22; John 7:46). Such grace is either of the person, or of the ministry.

The grace of the person is the holiness of the heart and of an unblameable life. While these do not in themselves qualify anyone to be a minister, no-one can do the work of the ministry without them, for several reasons.

1. Because the doctrine of the Word is hard to understand and to practise. Consequently the minister ought to express what he teaches by his example, as a kind of model or type of his own message (Phil 4:8; 1 Tim 4:12; 1 Peter 5:3).

2. A person is not godly, however much he may understand the Scriptures, if he does not possess an inward sense and experience of the Word in his heart (Gen 18:17-19; Ps 25:8,9; Amos 3:7).

3. God abhors godly speech which is not joined with a godly life (Ps 50:16,17). As Gregory of Nazianzus (c.329-c.389) said, it is as strange to see someone who is supposed to guide others on the way wandering out of the way himself, as it is to see a physician with signs of disease in his own body.

4. It is one of the secrets of ministry that the minister ought to cover his infirmities, so that they are not obvious. Ordinary people do not distinguish between the ministry and the minister. They are not able to see the importance of the ministry without first assessing the person of the minister. Herod heard John Baptist willingly, not because he was a good minister, but because he was a good man (Mark 6:20). Gregory of Nazianzus strikes the right note again when he says: 'He that teaches sound doctrine, and lives wickedly, reaches with one hand what he knocks away with the other.' John Chrysostom (347 A.D. - 407 A.D.), commenting on Matt 20, says: 'The doctor of the church by teaching well and by living well instructs the people how they ought to live well; but by living ill he instructs God how to condemn him.' And again: 'It is an ea

sy matter to show wisdom in words; teach me to live by your life, this is the best teaching.' Words do not make as great an impression on the soul as works do!

5. A minister who is wicked, either openly or secretly, is not worthy to stand before the face of the most holy and almighty God (Lev 10:3; Isa 6:6-8; Jer 15:19). That is why the judgments of God remain for wicked ministers to tremble at (1 Sam 2:17,25).

William Perkins: The Art of Prophesying