

## Receiving Your Word

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Isa 61:1 The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, 2 to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor . . .  
.NIV

This Prophecy - had two-fold fulfillment

1) to the people in Isaiah's time it pictures the deliverance of Israel from captivity in Babylon as a Year of Jubilee when all debts are cancelled, all slaves are freed, and all property is returned to original owners (Lv 25).

Also, it was fulfilled in Jesus' time. . .

Luke 4:16-21

16 And Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives  
and recovering of sight to the blind,  
to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor ."

20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." ESV

The fulfillment of the prophecy in Isa 61 was fulfilled when Israel was delivered after 70 years of captivity. I don't think the things that happened following the Word of the prophet felt like favor.

Finally, in the NT, Jesus came to set us free in a new way.

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, I assure you, most solemnly I tell you, Whoever commits and practices sin is the slave of sin. 35 Now a slave does not remain in a household permanently (forever); the son [of the house] does remain forever. 36 So if the Son liberates you [makes you free men], then you are really and unquestionably free. AMP

Early this year the Lord, in the middle of a sermon, told me to prophesy that, "This is the year of the Lord's Favor". I feel like that favor was a special blessing upon us here at WAM.

2Cor 6:2 For he says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you."  
NIV

I have been trying to interpret every thing that has happened as a part of the favor of God. Some things have felt pretty painful - not like favor.

Question:

Have you ever received a word from the Lord, and then it seemed like the very opposite happened?

What is the first thing you think of when that happens? - false prophet? Yeah?

Exposition:

There are two things that can happen when you get a word from the Lord -- depending where you are with God. Sometimes when God speaks a word to someone, He then takes them back to a previous time. At other times, when He gives a word to someone He wants to take them forward into the future.

Exposition:

In the church there are always two kinds of people: stuck and ready.

- 1) Stuck - People stuck in the past
- 2) Ready - People ready to go into the future

The stuck are not yet free of their past - so all their spiritual linkages are back there - in the past. So, God has to camp out there, in that part of their life to bring them to obedience, freedom and wholeness - to get them free for their future.

There are two battles over every issue:

- 1) One battle to get right/free.
- 2) Another battle to stay right/free.

- 1) One battle to take ground.
- 2) Another battle to hold that ground.

### Stuck in the Past

In the case of people who are stuck, God works in their life to get them where they should be right now

- ready for the future.
- to take ground that should have already been taken.
- to take ground they have forfeited by disobedience.
- or to re-take ground that was taken and then forfeited by going back to unbelief or disobedience.

They are stuck in their past and God's work in their life will be to get them free from their past, in the present, so they can go on to their future.

The Word is true. It is out there - available - but the people who are stuck have to deal with the past to go forward. So, when a promise or a word comes to them, they can't be released into their future until they first deal with their past.

So, when the Word of the Lord comes, what happens might look like the opposite of what was prophesied, because God is still dealing with issues that should have been taken care of in the past.

So, if a word of favor comes to you, it may look like the opposite happens because you are still hung up in the past.

- a disobedience that has not been permanently repented of.
- a wrong that hasn't been forgiven
- a perspective that needs to be changed (poverty mentality).
- or anything.

When a prophetic word comes to us, we can't be released into our future until we are released from whatever it is that holds us here - stopped by the past.

God never just moves on! He never ignores tests we have failed. He just keeps giving them till we pass. He keeps doing remedial work until we get free of the past, lay aside our rebellions, fears, wrong perspectives or doubts.

## The Progressive Work of God

His remedial work is progressive - more and more intrusive in our life.

### 1) Our Father Guides Us By His Eye

Psa 32:8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. 9 Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, else they will not come near you. NKJV

- intimacy of looking into the face of God
- desire to please him, bring joy to His face

Illustration: My Dad could signal me across the table with just a look - to stop. . .

### 2) Our Father Guides us W/His Voice

God speaks to us:

#### a) In the Scripture

2Tim 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It straightens us out and teaches us to do what is right. 17 It is God's way of preparing us in every way, fully equipped for every good thing God wants us to do. NLT

Do you KNOW the Bible? Do you READ the Bible? Do you STUDY the Bible? Do you PORE OVER the Bible? Do you LOVE the Bible? IF NOT, WHY NOT!?

Christian, this is God's word to you.

You're saying, Oh God speak to me.

God will speak to you if you will; Open His book and: read it, study it, pray over it, and practice it.

Show up when the Word is being taught. One of the secrets of the powerful NT church. . .

Acts 2:42 They committed themselves to the teaching of the apostles. . .(msg)

When the apostles were teaching the scriptures, they showed up - period.

Ask yourself:

Is there a LESSON to LEARN here?

Is there a BLESSING to ENJOY?

Is there a COMMAND to OBEY?

Is there a SIN to AVOID?

Is there a NEW TRUTH to CARRY w/me?

God speaks through the scriptures.

b) By His Spirit (inner witness)

The Bible (in five places says)

Rev 2:7 He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says. . .NIV

c) Through a Sermon

God calls every Christian to be a preacher (proclaimer) of his Word. But there are some people that God calls to do what I am doing right now. (Preaching) I'm not being VAIN OR EGOTISTICAL when I say that I know that God has: CALLED me to preach, EQUIPPED me to preach, and EMPOWERED me to preach.

If I didn't believe that were true, I would have no business standing here today! God Holds Me Responsible for What I Preach. God wants me to be passionate about what I preach.

1Peter 4:11 Are you called to be a speaker? Then speak as though God himself were speaking through you. NLT

It is INCUMBENT UPON ME that I be prayerfully prepared when I come to stand in this sacred place! It is JUST AS INCUMBENT UPON YOU, that, when you come to church, that you be prepared to receive!! God expects you to be prepared to hear, just as much as He expects me to be prepared to preach. Amen? I'm responsible for what I preach today. You Are Responsible for What You Will Hear Today!

Is your FAITH WEAK today? Are you beginning to wonder if you can survive the walk of faith? Listen to the word of God. It will strengthen your faith.

"Faith comes by hearing & hearing by the Word of God."

That is why God is so serious about us hearing the Word.

God speaks through:

a) the Scriptures.

b) the Sermon

c) The Spirit

d) Through His Saints

e) Through Circumstances

John 5 - see what God is doing.

God guides us

With His Eye

With His Voice

3) Our Father Guides us W/His Hand - Discipline

Heb 12:5b . . . "My [child], do not despise the chastening of the LORD, nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him; 6 For whom the LORD loves He chastens, And scourges every [child] whom He receives."

"Scourges" - is the word used in Matt 27:26, and Mark 15:15, of the "scourging" endured by Christ and administered by the order of Pilate. If you've seen "The Passion of the Christ" - you know what the whipping of Christ with the "scourge" was.

In other words, This remedial action from God is painful.

He has blessing in our future. He loves us too much to leave us stuck in our past rebellion, sin, disobedience, wrong thinking, unforgiveness.

Stuff that sinners seem to get by with, God deals with in his children.

Heb 12:7-10

7 As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Whoever heard of a child who was never disciplined? 8 If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children after all. NLT

If you are able to sin without God's discipline, it's because you are not God's child.

If you are stuck in your past - God wants you released into your destiny.

Heb 12v7a "As you endure this divine discipline. . ."

It is possible to resist God's discipline. It is possible to stubbornly refuse to hear the Lord and lose your destiny.

Isa 30:10-15

10 They tell the prophets, "Shut up! We don't want any more of your reports." They say, "Don't tell us the truth. Tell us nice things. Tell us lies. 11 Forget all this gloom. We have heard more than enough about your 'Holy One of Israel.' We are tired of listening to what he has to say."

12 This is the reply of the Holy One of Israel: "Because you despise what I tell you and trust instead in oppression and lies, 13 calamity will come upon you suddenly. It will be like a bulging wall

that bursts and falls. In an instant it will collapse and come crashing down. 14 You will be smashed like a piece of pottery. . .15 The Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says, "Only in returning to me and waiting for me will you be saved. NLT

Prov 29:1 A man who remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed without remedy. NIV

If God gives us a word of favor - that is a word for us. But, the contradiction is, if you are stuck in the past, you can't get there from here - at least not directly.

The work of the Lord may not feel like favor  
- if we have to be guided by his discipline,  
but favor is what he has for us  
- when we are released from the past.

The first effect of the Word from the Lord will be to work in the past issues - to set you free for your future - for your destiny.

Somebody said,  
God gives you a word about your future and your destiny and your inheritance, and while you stand there lost in wonder, love and praise, God trips you up, throws you into a dark room and beats the living daylights out of you.

Yes? Anybody understand what he was saying?

There is a journey from revelation (prophecy spoken) to manifestation (prophecy released).

Example: Joseph - Gen 37

God gives Joseph a Word in a dream about him being in a place of authority and superiority over his brothers and his father.

Gen 37:5-11

5 Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him all the more. 6 He said to them, "Listen to this dream I had: 7 We were binding sheaves of grain out in the field when suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright, while your sheaves gathered around mine and bowed down to it."

8 His brothers said to him, "Do you intend to reign over us? Will you actually rule us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dream and what he had said.

9 Then he had another dream, and he told it to his brothers. "Listen," he said, "I had another dream, and this time the sun and moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me."

10 When he told his father as well as his brothers, his father rebuked him and said, "What is this dream you had? Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow down to the ground before you?" NIV

The next thing that happened was, Joseph found himself looking up from the bottom of a pit at his brothers. He wasn't over them. They were above him. They were debating whether or not to kill him. They had power of life and death over him - not vice versa.

There were some things that God had to deal with, in his character, to enable him to become the

man of God that could handle the position and authority that the Word of the Lord spoke of.

The Word of the Lord to him just launched him into a season of preparation and training.

- not just in gift and function
- but in character and life-style.

After the calling comes the training!

Joseph's Period of Training

1) Pit

Gen 37:24 Then they took him and cast him into a pit. And the pit was empty; there was no water in it. NKJV

The pit was a place of isolation - solitude - privation

- . . .bondage (freedom taken away)
- . . .someone else making decisions for his life
- life out of his control

The pit was a place of depression

- down, looking up - not reigning - begging
- place of humility
- place of poverty prized possession - coat taken away
- No comfort, no rest
- no hope - death of dreams?

2) Potiphar's House

Place of sexual temptation

Place of integrity tests

- submission to authority
- trusted with everything
- financial accountability

3) Prison

- death of pride (wrongly accused)
- opportunity for bitterness
- betrayed
- opportunity to get mad at God and quit

4) Palace

Truth: First the call - then the training

Testimony: My call to the ministry

Called into the ministry in 1971

Attitude - if you are going to be mad at me, Ok, but I don't like it

Feeble attempts - misery all round

Years of training

- got married

- became a father

- working as personnel manager of store like Wal-Mart

- thought I had escaped the calling - "only needed to be willing"

God tricked me - took a job as business manager in a church

- Jr High SS teacher

- Choir director

- Young adult teacher

- Manager/Contractor of a building project

- Divine contacts - leaders

- Divine challenges - on the job - went back to school for business

Divine Discontent

- Divine re-calling - new perspective/attitude - made a deal with God 1984 (13 years)

- Divine Appointment - new role in ministry - Associate Pastor - went back to school for ministry

Divine Assignment

- New Covenant - 1986 - 15 years after the initial calling

Divine Assignment - WAM

Divine Anticipation - Now

- A new stirring - God is doing a new, fresh work in my life

- Dealing with some stuff in my life (don't understand)

- preparing me - for I don't know what - words spoken over me?

- expecting a new anointing

Point: First the call - then the training

Note: the higher God wants to take you in anointing, the deeper he will work in your character. His gifts come to you by grace - no merit involved. His anointing is released as you submit to his hand in transforming your character. God's word to Joseph told him his destiny - but not his journey.

But, I see no record of Joseph getting mad at God, or complaining, or even demanding to understand what was going on. But, in the end, he acknowledged that it was not only God who gave him the word. It was also God who superintended the events that followed (the pit, the slavery, the prison).

He said to his brothers who had sold him into slavery. . .

Gen 50:20 . . . God turned into good what you meant for evil. He brought me to the high position I have today so I could save the lives of many people. NLT

Testimony:

There are so many things in my life that I don't understand.

- some of them good - enjoyable, family, WAM, devotion to/from friends

- some of them very painful

- ~ esp Lori's death.

- ~ ministry disappointments, ministry "failures"
- ~ personal disappointments & personal failures

I have to remember, God is still working on me.  
. . .preparing me for my destiny.

## Ready for the Future

If you are ready to go forward with God, a Word from the Lord begins to set you free to become something that you haven't yet imagined.

- Our goal is to stay current in our relationship with God.
- . . .to keep God the focus and priority of our life.
  - . . .not to confuse "making a living" with "making a life".
  - . . .to seek His kingdom first
  - . . .to give our life away for His purposes.
  - . . .to abide in Him and His Word
  - . . .to respond with obedience to His Word.
  - . . .to submit to the potter's hand in the making of our life and character.

Stay current. . .ready to go forward.

We can't sail on to God's favor if we have an anchor down in the past.

- We have to go back and pull up the anchor.
- . . .leave the harbor of "safe" refuge,
  - . . .to go to a place that God will show us in uncharted territory