

### Prophecy

Is everything you profess actually true? I must confess that I sometimes miss the mark. It's not that I try to abandon the truth and engage in mere fables, and I hope I have moved beyond the ignorance of infancy. Sometimes it feels as if a bandit has stolen the truth from me and substituted the contraband of lies in its place. Whether it's hearing from a friend on the phone or listening to someone famous on television, we want the truth. It may come on strong like a column of infantry or softly like the sweet strains of a symphony, but the Bible tells us we should value the truth. And that's why we should also listen to God's prophets – his truth tellers – reading carefully their words recorded in the Bible.

*Now why* (you may be wondering) *are some of the words in that first paragraph underlined?* Those underlined words are actually closely related to each other, showing that speech touches every aspect of our existence (their common Indo-European root is bh<sup>ā</sup>-<sup>2</sup> – appendix 1, American Heritage Dictionary, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 2000). Let's spend this week learning to appreciate the truth of the wonderful existence God offers us, and giving God thanks for the ones he sent to bring us this good news – his prophets and everyone who speaks God's truth.

#### Monday – Straight from the Source

*“As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country.”* Proverbs 25:25

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:10-12. Who is the source of information for the prophets? What does this tell you about the reliability of that information?
2. Much of the Old Testament is prophecy. What should be your response to those prophecies in light of this passage and 2 Timothy 3:14-17?
3. Read Micah 5:1-5a and, using what you know about Jesus, interpret its meaning in your own words.

**Making it Personal:** Some parts of the Bible may be hard to understand the first time reading them. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in understanding how God's word applies to your life.

#### Tuesday – Searching Intently

*“We search the world for truth; we cull the good, the pure, the beautiful, From all old flower fields of the soul; And, weary seeker of the best, We come back laden from our quest, To find that all the sages said Is in the Book our mothers read.”* Scripture – John Greenleaf Whittier, 19<sup>th</sup> c. American Quaker poet

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:10-12. What was the manner and purpose of the prophets' search?
2. What guidance does Acts 17:10-12 give you in pursuing your own search like the prophets?
3. Take a look at Ezekiel 34:11-16. What assurance is there in knowing about the search God conducts?

**Making it Personal:** What can you do to search God's word, and respond to God's search of (or for) you?

#### Wednesday – Prophets

*“After the prophets, the false prophets; after the apostles, the false apostles; after Christ, anti-Christ.”*

John Chrysostom, 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> c. Archbishop of Constantinople

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:10-12. How have the prophets served us?

**Text Insight:** Prophets sometimes told of things to come, and other times spoke of God's present will for his people and those around them. It was not a matter of predicting the future, but being God's messengers.

2. What does Deuteronomy 18:22 and 2 Peter 1:19-21 tell you about the actions of God's prophets?
3. What response did Ezekiel get in Ezekiel 33:30-32? How did God reassure him in verse 33?

**Prayer Focus:** Pray that God's word would be spoken by his people and that the congregation of FBC will put it into practice.

#### Thursday – Preaching by the Spirit

*“To teach in order to lead others to faith is the task of every preacher and of each believer.”* Thomas Aquinas,

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:10-12. How did Peter's readers hear the promises God made through the prophets?
2. What did Jesus tell his disciples to do in Matthew 28:16-20? How would you have felt? Would his further instructions in Acts 1:1-5 encourage you? Why?

**Digging Deeper:** Read Acts 2:1-41 and list the various things done by the Holy Spirit, along with what those things accomplished. Ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance and strength in following God's will in your own life.

#### Friday – Time and Circumstances

*“Resolved – never to do anything which I would be afraid to do if it were the last hour of my life.”* Jonathan Edwards, 18<sup>th</sup> c. American theologian

1. Please read 1 Peter 1:10-12. Why would the prophets want to know the time and circumstances?
2. In Acts 1:6-8, what did Jesus tell his followers as he gave them instructions for spreading the good news about him? How would this have made you feel?
3. What insights do Matthew 24:36-51 and Mark 13:32-37 provide as to why we may not have been told the date and time of Jesus' return?

**Making it Personal:** Pray for patience as you serve God, waiting on his good timing for all things.

**For the Weekend:** Re-read 1 Peter 1:10-12. Which part of this passage do you identify with the most? Why?