
IHOP Lifestyle 6: Being the Voice

A. INTRODUCTION

1. The fourth acronym “P” stands for “Prophetic / Power”.
2. “Prophetic” means being the Voice of God and being the Forerunners in preparing the way of God (from the Isaiah 40:3-5 mandate).
3. “Power” means operating in the Power of God for our life and ministry, and moving in healing, signs, wonders and miracles (Mark 16:15-18).
4. It should be a norm to move in the power of God! Jesus taught it in Mark 16:15-18 and Paul taught it in 1 Cor. 1: 5-8. The book of Acts tells us that power is in the blueprint of the Church.

B. BEING THE VOICE

1. As the Forerunner ministry, we are to be the Voice of God. This is a vital and important core value for us. We are more than a House of Prayer or another Christian community. We are the Forerunner community.
2. It is the Sacred Trust of the Lord for us and we must be faithful in being His voice. We must be committed in cultivating this core value, and preparing ourselves and others for the Unique Dynamic at the End-of-the-Age.
3. It is vital to understand about being prophetic because it sets the primary agenda of our prayers as we should agree with His heart and His plan. The purpose of our teaching sessions and the forerunner school is to prepare the way of God (Isaiah 40: 3-5).

C. WHAT IS THE FORERUNNER MINISTRY?

1. There are seven Biblical prophecies concerning the ministry of Forerunners in preparing for the Second Coming of Jesus. All of them specifically describe Forerunners at the End-of-the-Age.
2. John the Baptist did not fulfill the prophecies concerning Forerunners in all seven prophecies. The ministry of John the Baptist is only a foreshadow and a partial fulfillment (Isa 40: 5).
3. All seven prophecies describe the rising of Forerunners in a global dimension and at the End-of-the-Age. The following are the seven prophecies: Isa. 40: 1-31; Isa. 57: 14-15; Isa. 62: 10-12; Micah 2:12-13; Zechariah 4: 1-14; Malachi 3: 1-6; Malachi 4: 1-6

D. WHAT IS A FORERUNNER?

1. Forerunners basically prepare the people of God to be ready for the return of Jesus. In turn, the people of God will prepare the nations for the coming of Jesus. Forerunners break out and break open for others (Micah 2: 12-13).
2. Isa 40: 3-5 is one of the clearest descriptions of the Forerunner Mandate. There are four truths in Isa 40:3: “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the Lord...”
 - a. The Voice refers to the prophetic messengers of God in speaking the heart and plan of God before the Second Coming of Jesus.
 - b. The three-fold Cry will proclaim, make sense, and bring new understanding.
 - i. Proclaim: Forerunners proclaim “Now” what the Holy Spirit is “Soon” to emphasize in a global way. Forerunners say what no one is saying, one step ahead of time.
 - ii. Make sense: Forerunners make sense of what is happening before it actually happens, through the Word, so that the people of God will agree with the heart and plan of God.
 - iii. Bring forth new understanding and paradigm of God: We need to know who is Jesus when He returns (Matt 16: 15) so that we will understand Him, His heart, and His plan, and not be offended with Him. For example, the Pharisees resisted Jesus because they did not understand.

E. WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A FORERUNNER?

1. Firstly, it means to be His Faithful Witness, speaking the heart and truth of God faithfully, boldly, with clarity, with no reservation, not drawing back and not exaggerating.
2. Secondly, more than just speaking, we must have a great allegiance unto Jesus and His heart for Israel, the Church and the nations (John 3: 27-30). It is not about us, but about Jesus & His kingdom.

F. WHAT DOES BEING A WITNESS MEAN?

1. It means being a Person who speaks what he or she has seen or have understanding of personally. It may not necessarily be an open vision, but that person must have personal insight, revelation and understanding through the Word, meditation, prayer, and the revelation of Holy Spirit.
2. As a result, we can speak faithfully for decades (not just for a season) and we do not draw back in the midst of misunderstanding and opposition.

G. TWO KEY DIMENSIONS TO BEING A FAITHFUL WITNESS

1. We are to be a Voice and not an echo.
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- a. We must personally “see” it and personally cultivate understanding and grow in the message.
 - b. We need to Pray and Meditate, while waiting in the wilderness (Luke 3: 1-3, Isaiah 40: 31) Rev. 10:8-10 likens this to eating the scroll.
 - c. The season of preparation is required and is mandatory. It is where we become real, deep and authentic, coming to the place where the “message is the messenger” and the “messenger is the message”.
2. We have to be faithful in speaking
- a. We must be faithful witnesses even in the midst of misunderstandings, unjust criticisms, rejection, loneliness and opposition.
 - b. This is probably the most difficult out of all the other core values because it affects our relationship, image and identity at a deep level. It is vital to learn how to carry our heart as many become bitter or hurt.
 - c. We can take encouragement from three of the best faithful witnesses in the Bible: Jesus, Apostle John and John the Baptist.
 - i. Jesus
 - Jesus is the Faithful Witness (Rev. 1: 5) and He is our ultimate model. “Faithful Witness” is Jesus’ first title in the book of Revelation and it emphasizes Him as a Voice in speaking the heart & truth of God.
 - Apostle John also emphasized Jesus as a faithful witness (John 3:11; John 5:31-32; John 8:13-14, John 8:18, 23; John 18:37; Rev. 1:5; Rev. 3:7, 14; Rev. 19: 11).
 - As a faithful witness, Jesus did not hold back the negative. He gave rebuke, and spoke about judgment and End Times. Jesus did not exaggerate the positive in His promises and prophecies. He spoke with no regard to criticism, without drawing back.
 - We need courage and grace to speak both the positive and negative with no exaggeration or holding back.
 - ii. Apostle John
 - Apostle John was a faithful witness (Rev. 1:2, 9). He was called to proclaim the book of Revelation.
 - It was a difficult message to proclaim to the church without “reducing” the content (e.g. Rev. 6:9-11; in Rev. 9:15, 18).
 - It is a hard message to preach now, even though it is canonized Scripture. We can imagine how tough and intense it was for John to preach it.
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- iii. The Bible exhorts us to be His faithful witnesses (Isa. 43:10-12). John the Baptist (who was beheaded) and Apostle John (who was in prison) are two examples (John 5:35, Rev. 1:2, 9). The Book of Revelation promises the rise of End-Time faithful witnesses (Rev. 6:9; Rev. 12:11; Rev. 12:17; Rev. 19:10; Rev. 20:4).

H. FIVE ATTITUDES AND APPROACHES IN BEING THE FAITHFUL WITNESS

It is important to speak the truth of God faithfully. Yet it is vital to have the correct heart posture and right spirit. In John 1:17, Jesus spoke the truth with much grace.

From Proverbs 4:23, we can see that it is important for us to guard our heart. Many voices of God have become harsh, bitter, angry, and hurt over the years because of rejection, misunderstanding and criticism. We must beware of the Elijah syndrome (Romans 11: 2-4, 1 Kings 19:1-8) and guard against this.

The five attitudes or approaches we should have are:

1. We must be Biblical
 - a. Everything that we proclaim or say must stay within the boundary of the Written Word of God. We should never say things that contradict or violate the Word of God.
 - b. We must know the Word, speak from the Word, and prove from the Word. We should never use our spiritual experience (i.e. vision, dream, etc.) to build a doctrine or a truth. All supernatural experiences must be authenticated by the Word of God.
 - c. It is vital to know the Bible. We do not just study the message, but we must be familiar with the Bible.
 2. We must be Clear in proclaiming
 - a. We must speak with clarity, be straightforward and be precise.
 - b. We must speak without exaggeration or deduction (Rev. 22: 18-19). We must not add to the Word and we must not diminish the Word.
 3. We must be Bold
 - a. We must not be intimidated or draw back due to fear, opposition or rejection (2 Tim. 1: 7; Heb. 10:37-39) even though we will face opposition and misunderstanding.
 - b. We should never get into the political spirit, i.e. saying the “right” thing to please people or gain favor. We must ask God for courage (Joshua 1: 4-9).
 4. We must be Tender
 - a. We must be tender in our speaking, even with those who treat us wrongly or harshly. We must watch and guard our heart.
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- b. We must not speak with the wrong spirit or with bitterness and anger. We should not react against those who speak against us. We must watch out for a vindictive spirit when we speak.
 - c. The key is to check our heart, carry our heart, and deal with hurt and rejection (Prov. 4:23).
 - d. We must understand that what we speak is for the benefit of others (even enemies) and it is not about getting even with the person. It takes one to have a right spirit to be a faithful witness.
5. We must speak with Humility
- a. This is not about us, our agenda or our ministry (John 3:29). We are friends of the Bridegroom (John 3: 30).
 - b. We do not speak out of personal agenda, to win an argument, or to build our ministry.

I. SEVEN-FOLD DISTINCT PURPOSES OF BEING HIS FAITHFUL WITNESS

God's people are to be Faithful Witnesses in the End Times with seven distinct purposes or messages. Matthew 24:14 tells us that Jesus will only return after His people give a Complete Witness of the Gospel of the Kingdom.

It is more than preaching the gospel of forgiveness and grace, which leads to personal salvation in Jesus Christ. Forgiveness of sin and eternal life are both very important. However, the full Gospel of the Kingdom is far bigger and wider than the forgiveness of sin.

The Gospel of the Kingdom begins with forgiveness of sin and salvation, but it is also about the returning of a King to take over nations. He will remove every sin, wickedness and evilness in what is called judgment. He will then replace all governments with His own kings and priests in the Millennium Kingdom.

There is a huge storyline with both positive and negative aspects (Isa 60:1-2), with tremendous unfolding and crescendo of many events that have to be witnessed. Acts 3:19-21 is the best summary of the Gospel of the Kingdom in a passage of scripture.

The seven-fold aspect of being His Voice is:

1. Personal Salvation
 - a. We should never stop preaching the gospel of salvation and never be tired of calling people to personal salvation in Jesus.
 - b. The gospel has to be continually preached and received by people in all the nations. Rev. 7:9 promises the greatest harvest at the End-of-the-Age.
2. Expose lies and deception
 - a. The Bible warns about false and distorted messages, false teachers and messengers, deceptions and lies, unsound doctrines at the End-of-the-Age, that

will cause many to turn away from the truth and eventually result in the Great Falling Away (Matt. 24:4-14; Mark 13:5-6,22; Luke 21:8; 2 Thess. 2:3; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:13).

- b. False teachings will accelerate as the preaching of the gospel accelerates (Matt 24:4, 5, 11, 24). Many will be deceived (Matt 24:5, 11). All of these will lead to the Great Falling Away (2 Thess. 2:3).
- c. One of the responsibilities of a faithful witness is to expose lies and deception. The Bible makes it clear that there are times to confront and bring righteous judgment to ministries with wrong and destructive doctrines or messages. (Matt 18:15-17; John 7:24; 1 Cor. 5:1-11; 2 Cor. 11:12-15; 1 Thess. 5:14, 21; 2 Thess. 3:6-14; Rev. 2:2; Rev. 14-15, Rev 20)
- d. God wants us to confront and expose lies and deception because they deceive and seduce people into error. The context in 2 Peter 3:17 is the End-of-the-Age. Wrong doctrine will cause us to stray away from steadfastness in Christ.
- e. It is vital to approach this with the right spirit and right approach or process (Matt 7:1-4). These are important principles and “tension” to uphold in exposing lie and deception:
 - i. We should have a culture of honoring other ministries for what they do and contribute, and not be critical of them.
 - ii. We should seek to bless the budding virtues of another ministry. We should not focus on weakness and deficiency because all of us have lack and deficiency as all are immature. We should not focus on differences in style and expression, but celebrate the diversity.
 - iii. But we need to expose major error in doctrine or teaching. We should not get personal, but deal with the issue. We should do it with tenderness and tears, covering the issue with much prayer. We should not do it out of a vindictive spirit, but with a heart of compassion and backbone of steel. We should expose errors, lies, deceptions, with the right spirit and process (Matt 7:1-5).
- f. We should learn to distinguish the three differences in errors:
 - i. Heresy is a totally false message which totally denies the ultimate truth. It is a detrimental error. Examples are teachings that Jesus is not the Son of God but an angel, or that Jesus is not the only way to salvation. The right approach is to expose the heresy and to refuse fellowship with those who preach heresy.
 - ii. Deception is partial or distorted truth, which is serious and damaging in the long run, as it hinders believers from experiencing the fullness of God. Deception may eventually lead to major error. Examples are the Hyper-grace message and Replacement theory. The right approach is to confront and correct the deception. Yet we should not reject the fellowship because these people could be sincere.

iii. Errors are made not in major doctrines of the kingdom. Examples are the Cessationism theory and whether the rapture is pre-tribulation or post-tribulation. The right approach is to be gracious and patient. Let God sort it out and we should accept the difference in the meantime.

3. Announcing what is coming

- a. There is a prophetic dimension of being the voice, both in the positive aspect and in the negative aspect.
- b. Examples of a positive prophetic message can be the coming outpouring of the Spirit (Joel 2:28-32) and the agenda of the Holy Spirit in restoring the first and great commandment. (Matt. 22:37-38; Deut. 30). It is a prophetic invitation to rally the people of God to say “yes” and to prepare.
- c. There will be also negative aspects like to warn of the coming deception, and the coming judgment (Joel 2:1,11) It is a prophetic warning in calling the people of God and the nations to turn and to repent (Joel 2:12-18; Jonah 3).
- d. We have a vital responsibility of being God’s voice and His faithful witness because God does everything in perfect justice and He warns the wicked ahead of time before sending judgment.
- e. God always announces what he is going to do before He acts (both the positive and negative aspects), giving either an invitation to participate or a warning so that we would turn or repent (Amos 3:7).
- f. We have a responsibility to speak as God will “judge” us for being silent (Ezek. 33:3-8). Being a voice is about being a faithful friend, faithful to His heartbeat and His truth. John 3:29 is about the friends of the Bridegroom who stand and hear His voice.

4. Making sense of God’s judgment

- a. An important part of the message is to announce about the coming judgment. The teaching dimension of being a voice is to give understanding to God’s judgment, not just about the fact that it is coming, but why there is judgment and why the judgment is so severe.
- b. The Bible prophesized that there will be three emotions pertaining to the severe judgment of God at the End-of-the-Age. They are Confusion (Luke 21:25), Fear (Luke 21:26) and Offense (Matt 24:10). All these emotions make the people of God vulnerable to deception.
- c. It is vital for us to make sense and to bring understanding of God’s heart concerning judgment, so that instead of resisting God, we will agree with God. Judgment is the mercy of God and its purpose is to remove all things that hinder wholehearted love.
- d. This is an essential part in preparing His mature Bride. She will agree with His judgments because she understands His heart (Rev. 19:1-3).

5. Calling people to pray

- a. The intercessory covenantal invitation is found in the promise of Isa. 42:10-13 “until every nation sings” and in the cry of Rev. 22:17. Prayer is the covenantal way in which we ask God to come into all that is under our domain: our life, our heart, our circumstances, our ministry, our city, our nation and this earth.
- b. God will only send revival or judgment through prayer. Jesus will only return if we as His people invite Him.
- c. The vital principle here is that God will only come in the measure that He is invited and God will only come in the measure that His covenantal people ask Him to come (Ps. 115:16, Matt. 6:10, 2 Chron. 7:14).
- d. Rev. 22:17 is one of the most powerful prayers. “Come” is a covenantal cry. “Come near me” refers to Intimacy; “Come to me” refers to Revival; “Come for me” refers to the Second Coming. The vital role of the Forerunners is getting every nation to sing “Come, Lord Jesus!”

6. Praying for Judgment against Anti-Christ

- a. The Church will participate in releasing the twenty-one judgments in Rev. 6, Rev. 8-9 and Rev. 16, specifically in the final three and a half years of human history. We need to prepare the generation in which Jesus is returning so that the Church will keep the prophecy (Rev. 1:3).
- b. We need to understand why, to be familiar with the Book of Revelations and to agree in prayer (Rev. 8:3-5). Moses’ partnership with God in releasing the ten plagues on Pharaoh in Exodus 7-12, is a powerful prophetic foreshadow.

7. Witness of truth that results in the hardening of hearts against God and emboldened the hatred against God

- a. This happens in the final seven years of human history and it is called Judicial Hardening theologically. In His sovereignty, God allows the evilness and wickedness of the human heart to be revealed, to prove that His judgment is just and right (Rev. 19:1-2; Rev. 14:18-19; Rev. 15:2, 4).
- b. Pharaoh is a powerful biblical example of how the truth will cause many to oppose and hate God. Psalm 2 is a picture of what is going to happen and it reveals the evilness and rebelliousness nature of the human heart (Jer. 17:9).
- c. 2 Thess. 2:7 talks about the lawlessness within the hearts of men and God will remove every restraint to allow it to surface. Verses 10-12 reveal the judicial hardening and God will “help” by sending strong delusion to allow it to reach its maximum.

J. CONCLUSION

1. We must understand our call as faithful witnesses, and be diligent and intentional in preparing.
2. We must ask God for grace and courage because we need to speak the prophetic message (Rev. 10:11). Seek for the breaker's anointing so that we can break out of fear and inhibition, etc (Micah 2:12-13).