

LXXXI. HOW TO BENEFIT FROM THE WORD PREACHED: 1 Corinthians 12:10; Luke 8:18

INTRODUCTION. After teaching the Parable of the Soils—which deals greatly with how someone receives the Word of God preached to them—Jesus says in **Luke 8:18**: "Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away."

CON(TEXT). Now, we as a Church are currently working our way through Paul's letter 1 Corinthians. And we can learn in 1 Corinthians 12:10 that *Some Christians are given the spiritual gift of prophesy and they should use it to build up the Church.*

I) Prophecy can be simply *telling others the gospel* so that they may be saved (Acts 2:14-20).

II) Prophecy can be *foretelling* future events (Acts 11:27-28).

III) Prophecy can be *forthtelling* new revelation, such as speaking directly from God to people (Isaiah 48:17).

IV) Prophecy can be *forthtelling* old revelation, such as explaining and applying what God has already said in the Scriptures (Romans 12:6).

We argued that this spiritual gift mentioned in 1 Corinthians 12:10 is this kind of gift, and what we in our day would even call Preaching. It is the same gift mentioned in Romans 12:6. **Romans 12:6** "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to [the] faith." This shines light on what God means, when He says through Paul in **1 Thessalonians 5:19-21**, "19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast what is good."

So then we have three main truths to bring together:

I) Since some Christians are given the spiritual gift of prophesy and they should use it to build up the Church, therefore all Christians should want to most benefit from their preaching of the Word (1 Corinthians 12:10; Romans 12:6; 1 Corinthians 12:7).

II) All Christians must not despise prophecies (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21).

III) Everyone must take care how they hear when the Word is preached (Luke 8:18).

So let me present to you this doctrine for today's sermon:

DOCTRINE. Christians must take care how they hear the Word preached

so that they benefit from, and do not despise, prophecies.

OUTLINE. Let me give you 13 things to put into practice so that you benefit from and not despise prophecies.

I. HOW TO BENEFIT FROM THE WORD PREACHED (Selected Scriptures).

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

I) Prepare yourself beforehand through consideration and prayer
(Selected Scriptures).

- **(i) Consider that the Creator, Sustainer, Savior, and Sovereign is about to speak to you through His Word: 2 Timothy 3:16** "All Scripture is breathed out by God."
- **(ii) Pray for yourself: Psalm 119:18** "Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law."
- **(iii) Pray for Christians: John 17:17** "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."
- **(iv) Pray for unbelievers: Romans 10:1** "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved."
- **(v) Pray for the preacher: 2 Thessalonians 3:1** "Finally, brothers, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored..."

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

II) Give serious attention to the Word preached (Luke 19:47-48).

- **Luke 19:47-48** "47 And he was teaching daily in the temple. The chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy him, 48 but they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were hanging on his words."

BOYS AND GIRLS, YOU NEED TO LEARN THIS.

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

III) Come with a holy appetite for the Word (1 Peter 2:2).

- **1 Peter 2:2** "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation."

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

IV) Come with a tender heart, ready to be pierced by the Word (2

Chronicles 43:27).

- **2 Chronicles 34:27 (of King Josiah)** "Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants, and you have humbled yourself before me and have torn your clothes and wept before me, I also have heard you, declares the LORD."
 - A tender heart is the opposite of a hard heart. A hard heart comes to the Word with mind already made up and resolved to hold its own positions even if the Scriptures would contradict them.

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

V) Receive it with meekness (James 1:21).

- **James 1:21** "Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls."

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

VI) Do your best to shake off drowsiness (1 Thessalonians 5:6).

- **1 Thessalonians 5:6** "So then let us not sleep, as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober."
 - **Acts 20:9** "And a young man named Eutychus, sitting at the window, sank into a deep sleep as Paul talked still longer. And being overcome by sleep, he fell down from the third story and was taken up dead."
- **WATSON:** "Take heed of DROWSINESS in hearing. Drowsiness shows much irreverence. How lively are many when they are about the world—but in the worship of God how drowsy—as if the devil had given them opium to make them sleep!" — **Watson, Thomas. The Works of Thomas Watson (p. 702). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.**
 - **WILLIAM GURNALL:** "I should wonder if such sermon-sleepers do dream of anything but hell-fire. It is dangerous, you know, to fall asleep with a candle burning by our side—some have been so burned in their sleep that they have never waked till they have been in hell." — **William Gurnall, The Christian in Complete Armour; or, A Treatise of the Saints' War against the Devil, 8th ed., 3 vols., vol. 1 (London: Printed for Richard Baynes, 1821), 199.**

Sleeping through sermons physically or spiritually is as dangerous as playing with fire.

WATSON: "I do not deny, that a child of God may sometimes, through weakness and indisposition of body, drop asleep at a sermon—but not voluntarily or ordinarily. The sun may be in an eclipse—but not often. If sleeping is customary and allowed, it is a very bad sign, and a profanation of the ordinance. A good remedy against drowsiness is to use a spare diet upon

the Sabbath. Such as indulge their appetite too much on a Sabbath, are fitter to sleep on a couch than pray in the temple." — **Watson, Thomas. The Works of Thomas Watson (p. 703). Monergism Books. Kindle Edition.**

Take care to get good rest Saturday night, and be mindful of your diet Sunday morning.

BOYS AND GIRLS.

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

VII) Mingle the word preached with faith (Hebrews 4:2).

- **Hebrews 4:2** "For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened."

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

VIII) Test everything by the Word (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21; Acts 17:11).

- **1 Thessalonians 5:19-21:** "19 Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not despise prophecies, 21 but test everything; hold fast what is good."
 - **Acts 17:11** "Now these [Berean Jews] were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so."

NOTE, *You are not permitted to test preaching by the standard of your feelings, or prejudices, or likes, or dislikes, or preferences, or your own wisdom that you may even so eloquently call plain reason. You and I must test the preaching of the Word by the standard of the Word itself.*

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

IX) Labor to retain what you have heard (Hebrews 2:1).

- **Hebrews 2:1** "We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it."
 - **TAKE NOTES - the outline, the cross references, striking phrases or metaphors.**
 - **BOYS AND GIRLS.**

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

X) Pray that God would sanctify you as you hear with faith (1 Corinthians 2:12-13).

- **1 Corinthians 2:12-13** "12 Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. 13 And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to

those who are spiritual."

- **WATSON:** "The Spirit must make all effectual. Ministers may prescribe the medicine—but it is God's Spirit must make it work. Augustine said of the Holy Spirit, 'He has his pulpit in heaven, who converts souls.'"

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

XI) Resolve to put into practice what you hear (James 1:22-25).

- **James 1:22-25** "22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing."
 - (i) **Resolve to receive, believe, and defend whatever God says** (Genesis 1-Revelation 22).
 - (ii) **Resolve to believe every promise** (Joshua 21:45; 2 Corinthians 1:20; 2 Peter 3:9).
 - (iii) **Resolve to obey every command** (John 14:15; 1 John 5:3; Psalm 112:1).
 - (iv) **Resolve to avoid every bad example** (1 Corinthians 10:6-13).
 - (v) **Resolve to run from whatever is warned against** (1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Corinthians 10:14).
 - (vi) **Resolve to imitate every good example** (Hebrews 12:1).

BOYS AND GIRLS.

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

XII) Talk about what you have heard (Psalm 119:172).

- **Psalm 119:172** "My tongue shall speak of your Word."
 - **WATSON:** "Discourse on what you have heard, when you come home. One reason why some people get no more good by what they hear, is that they never speak to one another of what they have heard; as if sermons were such secrets that they must not be spoken of again; or as if it were a shame to speak of matters of salvation."

If you would benefit from the Word preached and not despise prophecies,

XIII) Praise God for sending Christ into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15; John 5:39; Luke 24:27).

- **1 Timothy 1:15** "The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."
 - **John 5:39** "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them

you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me."

- **Luke 24:27** "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself."

- **BOYS AND GIRLS.**

CONCLUSION.

Christians must take care how they hear the Word preached so that they benefit from, and do not despise, prophecies.

For the glory of God in Christ, let us take care.

HELPS

- ***How the Word is to be Read and Heard*** by Thomas Boston - <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/dvfkmu2ag8mxc75on14a1/How-The-Word-is-to-Be-Read-and-Heard-by-Thomas-Boston.pdf?rlkey=9ep87qv0qp4ul86990gtpycfg&dl=0>

How The Word is to Be Read and...

PDF Document · 191 KB



- ***How To Hear the Word Rightly*** (excerpt from The Ten Commandments) by Thomas Watson - <https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/216xgyrhq9ba3leidnzqj/How-To-Hear-the-Word-Rightly-excerpt-from-The-Ten-Comandments-by-Thomas-Watson.pdf?rlkey=dnm4vbiaq59y66sy5ps0c3i6w&dl=0>

How To Hear the Word Rightly (...)

PDF Document · 234 KB



PURITAN QUOTES

- *"Prophesying is a public and solemn speech of the minister, whereby he, being called thereunto of God, doth first open the will of God out of the word, and then doth apply it to the profit of the hearers."* — William

Perkins, *The Art of Propheying*, ed. Sinclair B. Ferguson (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1996), 5.

- *"Prepare for hearing it; pray earnestly for the blessing of God to accompany it... Men may read or hear the word diligently, but without the Spirit's influence they shall not profit by it."* — Thomas Boston, "How the Word Is to Be Read and Heard," in *The Whole Works of the Late Reverend Thomas Boston*, 12 vols. (Aberdeen: George and Robert King, 1848–52; repr., Stoke-on-Trent: Tentmaker Publications, 2002), 2:456.
- *"Be not only attentive in hearing, but retentive after hearing... The end of hearing the word preached is not chiefly to know and understand, but rather to believe, practice, and obey that which is taught."* — Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1965), 220–221 (section on the Fourth Commandment).
- *"Take heed of drowsiness in hearing. Drowsiness shows much irreverence. How lively are many when they are about the world, but in the worship of God how drowsy... In the preaching of the Word, is not the bread of life broken to you; and will a man fall asleep at his food?"* — Watson, *The Ten Commandments*, 219–20.
- *"I should wonder if such sermon-sleepers do dream of anything but hell-fire. It is dangerous you know to fall asleep with a candle burning by our side; some have been so burnt in their sleep that they have never woke till they have been in hell."* — William Gurnall, *The Christian in Complete Armour*, 3 vols. (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1958), 3:119 (in the section on Christian watchfulness).
- *"If you would hear the Word aright, mix it with faith. Believe the truth of the Word preached, that it is the Word... We are of those who believe to the saving of the soul." (Heb 10:39).* — Thomas Watson, *The Ten Commandments*, 221.
- *"Only the diamond cuts the diamond; only Scripture interprets Scripture."* — William Perkins, *The Art of Propheying*, 32 (modern edition).
**Repeated by Thomas Watson in A Body of Divinity*
- *"Discourse on what you have heard when you come home... One reason why some people get no more good by what they hear is that they never speak to one another of what they have heard."* — Watson, *The Ten Commandments*, 222.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The Big Picture (Main Doctrine & Three Foundational Truths)

1. The sermon's central doctrine is: "Christians must take care how they hear the word preached so that they benefit from and do not despise prophecies." In your own words, explain what this means and why the preacher says it is the "overarching point" of the entire message.
2. The sermon brings together three truths from Luke 8:18, 1 Corinthians 12:10, and 1 Thessalonians 5:19–21. What are these three truths, and how do they support the main doctrine? Which one challenges you the most right now, and why?
3. The preacher argues that the "gift of prophecy" in 1 Corinthians 12:10 refers to the gift of preaching (forth-telling old revelation). How does this understanding (supported by Romans 12:6 and church history) change the way we view Sunday preaching?

2. Key Scriptures to Study

4. Read Luke 8:18 in its context (the parable of the soils). Why does Jesus repeat the warning "Take care then how you hear," and what does the promise/threat in the second half mean for how we listen to sermons?
5. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:19–21. What does it mean to "not quench the Spirit" or "not despise prophecies"? How does the command to "test everything" protect us from both gullibility and cynicism?
6. The sermon repeatedly returns to the idea that all Scripture is "breathed out by God" (2 Timothy 3:16) and that hearing faithful preaching is like hearing God Himself speak. How does this truth (see also Hebrews 4:12 and 2 Chronicles 34:27) affect your attitude before, during, and after a sermon?

3. The Thirteen Practical Points

Work through these either one at a time or in clusters. For each point, ask: "What does this look like in my life?" and "What practical step will I take this week?"

Preparation (Point 1)

7. The first point is to prepare beforehand through consideration and prayer (including Psalm 119:18 and John 17:17). What specific things does the preacher suggest praying for before church? Which of those prayers will you begin practicing this coming Sunday?

Attention & Appetite (Points 2–3)

8. Point 2 urges us to “give serious attention” like the crowds who were “hanging on [Jesus’] words” (Luke 19:47–48). What distractions commonly keep you from giving full attention during preaching? How can you fight them?
9. Point 3 calls us to come with a “holy appetite” (1 Peter 2:2). Have you ever caught yourself thinking, “I wish the sermon was on a different topic”? How does the sermon use the analogy of a newborn infant and God’s providence to correct that attitude?

Heart Posture (Points 4–5)

10. Point 4 describes a “tender heart” using King Josiah’s example (2 Chronicles 34:27). What does a tender heart look like when the sermon confronts sin or brings uncomfortable truth? Contrast it with a hard heart.
11. Point 5 says to “receive it with meekness” (James 1:21). What would change in your listening if you approached every sermon with the attitude “I am ready for whatever God says”?

Alertness & Faith (Points 6–7)

12. Point 6 warns against drowsiness (with strong words from Watson and Gurnall). Practically, what does the sermon recommend to “shake off drowsiness”? Which of those habits do you most need to adopt?
13. Point 7 tells us to “mingle the word preached with faith” (Hebrews 4:2). What is the difference between mentally agreeing with a sermon and actually mingling it with faith? Give an example from your own life.

Testing, Remembering & Sanctification (Points 8–10)

14. Point 8 commands us to “test everything by the word” and to be “good Bereans” (Acts 17:11). The sermon warns against testing sermons by our feelings instead of Scripture. Can you think of a time when you did (or were tempted to do) that? What is the right standard?
15. Point 9 encourages taking notes to “labor to retain” what is heard (Hebrews 2:1). How has (or could) note-taking help you remember and apply sermons? Try it this Sunday and discuss what you noticed.

Obedience, Conversation & Praise (Points 11–13)

16. Point 11 says we must “resolve to put into practice what we hear” (James 1:22–25). The sermon lists several specific resolutions (believe every promise, obey every command, imitate good examples, etc.). Choose one resolution that stood out to you and share a concrete way you will apply it this week.
17. Point 12 urges us to “talk about what you have heard” after the service

(Psalm 119:172). Why does the sermon say many people receive little benefit from preaching? How could your family, community group, or circle of friends make post-sermon conversation a regular habit?

18. Point 13 calls us to end by praising God for Christ (1 Timothy 1:15; Luke 24:27; John 5:39). Why does the preacher say that if we will not praise God for Christ Jesus, we cannot properly benefit from the word? How can every sermon—even one on spiritual gifts—lead us back to Jesus?

4. Personal & Church Application

19. Looking back over all thirteen points, which one or two do you sense the Holy Spirit is most pressing on you right now? What single, measurable change will you make in how you prepare for, listen to, or respond to preaching?
20. As a church family, how can we help one another obey the command “Do not despise prophecies” and “Take care how you hear”? Suggest one practical idea the group could adopt together (e.g., prayer before service, note-sharing, follow-up discussions).

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Well, beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, friends and visitors, after teaching the parable of the soils, which deals greatly with how someone receives the word of God preached to them, Jesus says this in Luke 8:18. Listen carefully. Take care then how you hear. Take care then how you hear. How you listen. And the context is when the word of God is preached to you. Be very diligent and careful how you listen to God’s word when it is preached to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, Christ says, “And from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.” Take care then how you hear.

Now, we as a local church are currently working our way through Paul’s letter called First Corinthians. And in that letter, we are in a portion where Paul is dealing with the spiritual gifts and he is naming a few of them. And we can learn from 1 Corinthians 12:10, the specific part where he says to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy. So prophecy, we can learn from that part of the verse that some Christians are given the spiritual gift of prophecy and they should use it to build up the church. That is the whole point of spiritual gifts: to edify the church. It is given for the common good.

Now prophecy, I would remind you, can sometimes in the scripture simply mean telling others the gospel so that they may be saved. Prophecy can be foretelling future events. Prophecy can be forthtelling, new revelation directly from God. Not just predicting the future, but just speaking from the Lord directly to people. And prophecy can also be defined in scripture as forthtelling old revelation. Meaning, it

is not new revelation directly from God, but it is what God has already said in his word, and it is preaching, teaching, and applying God's word. So the question we asked last time is which one of those is Paul talking about in 1 Corinthians 12:10. And we argued that the spiritual gift mentioned here in verse 10 is this last kind of gift: forthtelling old revelation such as explaining and applying what God has already said in the scriptures. And it is what we in our day would simply call preaching, the gift of preaching. And this is how a majority of those throughout church history have understood this spiritual gift.

That is why after the Reformation, the very first book we have written as an instruction manual for preaching was written by a guy named William Perkins. He is the father of English Puritanism. And Perkins wrote a little book called *The Art of Prophecy*. *The Art of Prophecy*. It is such a helpful book on preaching that it is still in print today. And he wrote it in the early 1600s. *The Art of Prophecy*. And in that day, everyone understood the same thing as if we saw a book titled *How to Preach*. Everyone reads *The Art of Prophecy* and does not go, "He is teaching people how to foretell or foretell like future things or tell the future or new revelation." No. Everyone has always understood that that means it is talking about the preaching of God's word. So Perkins writes that book, *The Art of Prophecy*. This is the same spiritual gift I argued, we argued together, that is akin to preaching. And it is the same one that is mentioned in Romans 12:6. Paul says there, "Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them. If prophecy, in proportion to the faith," in proportion to the faith which is synonymous with what is written down in the scriptures, the yardstick, the rule, the standard that God has revealed. So I think that is the same gift. It is mentioned in Romans 12 that is mentioned here in 1 Corinthians 12.

And this actually shines light on what God means when he says through Paul in 1 Thessalonians 5, "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything, hold fast what is good. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything. Hold fast what is good."

All right. So thus far in the introduction we have three truths that I have mentioned that we need to bring together so we can properly understand this. Three truths. First, since some Christians have the spiritual gift of prophecy (that is, preaching) and they are to use it to build up the church, therefore you and I should want to benefit from that gift. Right? God gives some people the gift. So Christians should want to most benefit from the preaching of the word. That is the first truth.

Second truth: all Christians must not despise prophecies because God commands us, "Do not despise prophecies." So we must not despise the preaching of the word.

And the third truth that we need to bring together is everyone must take care how they hear when the word is preached. That is what Christ says in Luke 8:18.

So God has given some the gift. Therefore, we should want to benefit from the word preached. We are commanded in 1 Thessalonians 5, "Do not despise prophecies." Okay? And Jesus exhorts us in Luke 8:18. Be very careful how you

listen to the word of God being preached to you.

So let me present to you this doctrine for today's sermon. Here is the overarching point of everything that we are looking at: Christians must take care how they hear the word preached so that they benefit from and do not despise prophecies. Christians must take care how they hear the word preached so that they benefit from and do not despise prophecies.

What we are doing as we work our way through 1 Corinthians is we have already got the explanation, the application of the spiritual gift of prophecy in 1 Corinthians 12:10, but I thought it would be good to take an entire week to show you not only what those with the gift of prophecy should do in the preaching of the word, but how you can most benefit from listening to the preaching of the word. So that is what we are doing today because Christ says take care how you hear. I want to equip you to take care how you hear because God commands you and I, "Do not despise prophecies. Do not despise the preaching of the word." I want to equip you to think through and apply how to make sure that we do not despise prophecies. And since the spiritual gift of preaching, of prophesying, is given for your good, I want to equip you to make the most of it and have the most good done to you.

And I will admit at the outset that I have been greatly helped in thinking through the practical application of this by two of my dead heroes, Thomas Boston and Thomas Watson. Thomas Boston and Thomas Watson. If you have read through Thomas Watson's sermons on the Ten Commandments, I have gleaned a lot from a whole chunk in the fourth commandment, how to obey it, how to properly apply it. So in sanctifying the Sabbath day, he has this whole section on how to listen to the word preached when you gather with the saints on the Christian Sabbath, just like we are doing right now. He says, "I want to help you obey the fourth commandment." And one of the things that happens on the Lord's day is the preaching of the word. And so here is how you can most benefit from it. And then Thomas Boston in his sermons through the Westminster Shorter Catechism just takes an entire sermon to say, "How should the word be read and heard, listened to?" And so I have greatly benefited from both of those. And I will link both of those written sermons for you in my notes. They will be on our app and on the website so you can also read them. And I encourage you because all I can do is skim a little bit of what they have said, but if you would take time to read those, and they are not very long, but read those sections, you would be benefited by them.

So, how to benefit from the word preached. Let me give you thirteen points, thirteen things to put into practice so that you benefit from and do not despise prophecies.

First, how to benefit from the word preached: Prepare yourself beforehand through consideration and prayer. Prepare yourself before coming to hear the word preached. By consideration and prayer, first consider before you come and hear the word preached. And I do not mean just a couple of minutes before. It could be that. Maybe you forget and it is that. But I mean before you leave the

house, maybe on Saturday night, Sunday morning, before you hear the word preached, consider that the Creator, Sustainer, Savior, and Sovereign Lord of the world is about to speak directly to you through his written word. You are about to hear from God himself. As you hear the scriptures explained and read and applied, it is the same as if God himself is the one speaking to you because all scripture is breathed out by God. So whatever is in accordance with the scripture, you could take and say this is what God says to me. And this is why when we have the reading of the scriptures, we begin and conclude with "This is the word of God" or "This is the word of the Lord" to remind all of us we are hearing from God himself. So if you want to hear God speak to you, read the scriptures out loud. You want to most benefit from the spiritual gift of prophesying, then you need to prepare yourself beforehand. First of all, just through consideration. I am considering what I am about to hear from the scriptures is the very word of the Creator, the Sustainer, the Savior, and the Sovereign over all creation. God is about to speak to me.

You also need to prepare yourself beforehand through prayer. Prayer for yourself.

I will give you a little bit of a cheat code right now. One of the later points is take notes. So there is a trick. You can do that now and not get to the end and be like, "Oh, snap. I should have been taking notes the whole time." You should be taking notes. Even if it is on your phone in a note app, you should think when a scripture reference jumps out, anything, the main points that will help you remember or scripture references like I will reference a scripture and I am not going to have you flip in your Bible to every single verse that I reference. Sometimes all that is necessary is to just jot down Psalm 119:18. Then you can take your notes and return to it later. Pray for yourself Psalm 119:18. "Open my eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of your law." Before you hear the word preached, pray that you could pray the scriptures. They guide us into even how to prepare ourselves to hear or read the word. So consider the greatness of God who is about to speak to you. Pray for yourself. Pray for Christians in general. Pray what Christ prays for all of us. John 17:17. "Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth." Because you not only want to benefit from the word preached, but you want your brothers and sisters to benefit from the word preached. So pray for them before you come that God would sanctify them in the truth. His word is truth just like Christ prays for us. Pray also for unbelievers. Pray like Paul guides us to pray in Romans 10:1. He says of his kinsmen according to the flesh, brothers, "My heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved." So pray for unbelievers. Ask God, "Open my eyes. Sanctify all of us who are Christians. Save those who are not yet united to Christ through faith." And then lastly, pray for the preacher. Whoever is going to preach the word of God that day, pray for them. Just like Paul says in 2 Thessalonians 3:1, "Finally, brothers, pray for us that the word of the Lord may speed ahead and be honored." Pray for us. So, pray for yourself. Pray for other believers. Pray for unbelievers. Pray for the one who is preaching the word. Here is a great way to prepare yourself beforehand through consideration and prayer.

I would commend to you Thomas Boston's sermon on this. He spends a great deal of time at the beginning of that sermon talking about how to prepare yourself even before you come to hear the word preached.

But the second main thing I would tell you if you would benefit from the word of God preached, which you should all want to, is to give serious attention to the word. Give serious attention to the word preached. Boys and girls, look up here. Listen. Listen to this verse. As Jesus was teaching daily in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men of the people were seeking to destroy Jesus. But they did not find anything they could do because all the people were hanging on his words. All the people listening to the Lord Jesus Christ preach in the temple while he was on the earth. They were, Luke writes, hanging on his words. That means they were paying such careful attention to every single word that the Lord Jesus Christ spoke to them. Does that sound crazy or does that sound well? Of course. The God-man is right here in front of us speaking to us. Boys and girls, can you imagine if the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to us today in the flesh and got up here behind this pulpit and it was Jesus Christ himself, the God-man, who started preaching, would you pay attention or would you think, "Nah, I will just go about my business like it is any other day." You would pay really close attention, right? Adults, you know you would. Could you ever fall asleep while Christ is preaching? Would you have wandering thoughts? Would you be thinking about something else or what you are going to do later or the troubles even that you have had the past week? Or is it just like if Christ were here in the flesh speaking to us audibly? That is, I am laser focused. I will be hanging on his every word. Brothers and sisters, what is the difference? When all scripture is breathed out by God, every time you hear the word of God explained and read, it is the same as if you are hearing God himself. I do not mean that I am God or I am speaking new revelation. That is not what I am talking about. But if all scripture is proceeding from the mouth of God, then when you hear it preached, you are hearing explained and applied the very things God says. You and I should pay such careful attention to the word being preached just as those did in the day of Christ when they were hanging on his every word. Boys and girls, you need to pay careful attention. You need to be diligent to listen carefully when the word of God is being preached to you. That is one of the reasons that you are in here. We want you to learn that from a young age. How to listen to preaching, how to try to understand, how to believe the promises, how to resolve to obey the commands, how to comprehend what is being said to you. And boys and girls, that is even why the preachers of our local church directly address you to help you understand what God says. You need to understand that you need to hang on every word. I encourage you, I exhort you, if you would benefit all of you from preaching, give serious attention to the word preached.

Thirdly, if you would benefit from the word preached and not despise prophecies, come with a holy appetite for the word. Come with a holy appetite for the word. 1 Peter 2:2, "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation." Long, Peter says, "This is a command from

the Lord Peter. Long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation." It does not mean justification. He is talking about the whole picture of salvation, our justification, our sanctification, our preservation by God's grace all the way to glorification. You and I need to be like newborn infants who long for that pure spiritual milk which is the word of the living God. You need to remind yourself that man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God. If I ask you, do you believe that? I think all of you would say, "Yes, I do believe that." But do you act like you believe that? That is the more important question. Not only do you believe that is true, but do you act like it? Lord, feed me. Feed me from your word. And here is the thing that I think sometimes gets in the way and why you may not benefit as much from preaching as you should. You may not have an appetite for the specific kind of meal being served on a specific day. It is steak and you wanted chicken, something like that. And you are like, "Wow, I am really not that interested in the subject matter of the sermon today. I already understand this or whatever. I really wish it was about something else." And I would submit to you that is just your own pride getting in the way. It needs to be wherever we are at. By God's providence, in the scriptures, it is in the Bible. I need to know it. And it does not matter what I feel like. It does not matter which kind of meal I want that day. This is the meal that is set before me. And in God's providence, this is the passage of scripture we are in. Maybe because one of the pastors said, "You know what? We are going to pause and go through a psalm." Or it is just our seventy-ninth sermon in First Corinthians. But all that is the providence of God. This is where we are at. This is God's word. Every word of the Lord proves true. All scripture is breathed out by God. Man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God. So we just say this is the meal and I want to feast. So come with a holy appetite for the word itself, not just for a specific subject or topic that you want addressed or anything like that. It may be that in the very moment whatever sin is being dealt with is just not an issue in your mind or whatever promise is being expounded and applied is not as sweet to you in that moment or whatever direction is being exhorted is like yeah I am doing that or whatever. And so it may feel like this is not really benefiting me that much right here and now. But the truth is it will be equipping you for the future to either face those kind of things when you need that promise that you despised in the first hearing of it because you did not feel like you really needed it or you need this clear direction or someone else needs that direction in the future. So you may not feel like you need it right now. I just encourage you to tell your feelings to hush and say, "I want to have a holy appetite for the word." Like newborn infants long for the pure spiritual milk that by it you may grow up into salvation. You all know that an infant does not get to decide what they are given to eat. And if they did, it would be disastrous. Mom gets to decide. Dad gets to decide. They get what the Lord has providentially given them. And so you and I are to be like that. Not like an infant who says, "You know what? I do not really want the milk today." It is like, "Well, that is what you need and that is what you are getting." You and I need to be like that. Like a newborn infant. Long for the pure spiritual milk. So come to hear

with a holy appetite for the word.

Fourthly, come with a tender heart ready to be pierced by the word. Come with a tender heart ready to be pierced by the word. Listen to 2 Chronicles 34:27. This is speaking of King Josiah. The Lord says to him, "Because your heart was tender." Because your heart was tender and you humbled yourself before God when you heard his words against this place and its inhabitants. And you have humbled yourself before me and have torn your clothes and wept before me. I also have heard you, declares the Lord. Things went well for Josiah. The Lord says, because your heart was tender. And the whole point was the word that the Lord spoke to Josiah was really bad news for Josiah and Jerusalem at that time. But Josiah did not come to hear the word of the Lord and think I am going to receive it if it is just good and everything is going to go really well for me. He is like, "No, no, no. Whatever God says, even if it is a prophecy of judgment, I am going to receive it, believe it, submit to it. That is what matters. God says it, that is all that matters. It does not matter how I feel about it. It does not matter if it is like, 'Oh, that actually convicts me like crazy. I do not like it.'" No, it is none of that. It is his heart was tender. Notice he says, "When you heard God's words against this place and its inhabitants," it was a prophecy of woe against Josiah and the people at that time. But the Lord commends him. He says, "Your heart was tender. You humbled yourself when you heard his words. Therefore, I have heard you, declares the Lord." Come with a tender heart, saying, "Lord, pierce it however you want. Whatever sin there is, convict me of it, and do not let me wiggle out. Do not let me shift over and act like that does not really apply to me or I do not know if that command or what the pastor is saying is really that clear that I should do this." So, it is always shifting to the side. A tender heart is the opposite of a hard heart. A hard heart comes to the word of God with the mind already made up and resolve to hold its positions even if the scriptures would contradict it.

A tender heart says God instruct me if I am wrong about something expose it. Expose it. So come with a tender heart, ready to be pierced by the word, saying, "Lord, if I am believing something wrong, expose it and help me to change the way I am thinking. If I am living wrongly, expose it and give me the grace to repent and say, you know what? This is what God's word says. This is where I want to go." Come with a tender heart. Expecting you and I should expect to be wrong about some things. When we come to the word of God, we should come with, you know what, there is probably a ton of I have no idea that I am either thinking or acting, believing wrongly about. So, you just kind of come with that expecting God is right. I have probably got a ton of things I do not even realize that are wrong with me. So when something gets exposed, you just go, "Yeah, that tracks." Like, "That is par for the course. I was actually thinking wrongly about that." Rather than responding with, "Well, that is not what I have always believed." Or, "I do not really think that or so and so says this," we need to be careful to just come with a tender heart ready to be pierced.

Fifthly, if you would benefit from the word preached and not despise prophecies, receive it with meekness. Receive it with meekness. This is what

James 1:21 says. Receive with meekness the implanted word which is able to save your souls. Receive it with meekness. That means you are just ready for whatever God says. I am going to believe it. I want to just understand what he is saying and then labor to apply it according to what he says in all the scriptures. I want to understand this verse, these verses, and apply it appropriately for God's glory. Receive it with meekness, which is able to save your souls.

Sixthly, if you would benefit from the word preached and not despise prophecies, do your best to shake off drowsiness.

Do your best to shake off drowsiness. I have got a few quotes for you and they are so brutal that if I said them, you would get mad at me, I think. But the quotes by some of these former guys, it is like, "Dang, if I said that, they would get really mad." I will just quote someone else saying it to them and they can get mad at me and William Gurnall and Thomas Watson. But the general principle is what Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 5:6. He is talking about the way that we live our life, not being drowsy, not being asleep, spiritually speaking, lethargic, but being awake. He says, "Let us then not sleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober." It is a general principle for the Christian life. And surely we should apply that when we are hearing the word of God preached. So do your best to be alert, to be awake, to be sober minded, to shake off all drowsiness. And just kind of as a funny aside, you remember what happened to Eutychus when he fell asleep during Paul's sermon? Boys and girls, have you read that in Acts 20? There was a young man named Eutychus and he was sitting in like the second story of this house and he was sitting in a window like in the edge of a window and he is listening to Paul preach and he fell asleep and he fell out the window and he died. So do not fall asleep during sermons, right? Well, that is kind of a funny thing, but it is also like bro should not have fallen asleep. Some people are like, "Well, Paul should not have preached so long." Like, well, maybe it is a little of both. Watson says, "Take heed of drowsiness in hearing." Drowsiness shows much irreverence. How lively are many when they are about the world, but in the worship of God, how drowsy, as if the devil had given them opium to make them sleep.

William Gurnall. It gets better. William Gurnall. I should wonder if such sermon sleepers do dream of anything but hellfire.

It is dangerous, you know, to fall asleep with a candle burning by our side. Some have been so burned in their sleep that they have never woke till they have been in hell.

Gurnall is saying sleeping through sermons physically or spiritually is as dangerous as playing with fire or going to sleep with a candle burning right next to you. Do your best to shake off drowsiness. Let us not sleep as others do, but let us keep awake and be sober. How many instructive and helpful things have you missed in your life by not intentionally but despising prophecies and not paying careful attention to the word when it was preached? We cannot even calculate it. Do your best. Watson continues, "I do not deny that a child of God may sometimes through weakness and indisposition of body drop asleep at a sermon, but not voluntarily ordinarily, right?" He is saying, "Yeah, it happens, but not on purpose."

Like, you are not bringing a pillow. Not on purpose, not voluntarily, not ordinarily. He says, "The sun may be in an eclipse, but not often. If sleeping is customary and allowed, it is a very bad sign and a profanation of the ordinance of preaching. A good remedy, listen to this, very helpful. A good remedy against drowsiness is to use a spare diet on the Sabbath, such as indulge their appetite too much on a Sabbath are fitter to sleep on a couch than pray in the temple." That is exactly right. Let me exhort you with a couple of practical things to shake off drowsiness during preaching. Take care to get good rest Saturday night. What you do Saturday night matters and it prepares you for the Lord's day. So, take special care to get as good a rest as you are able to. And I would also add, be mindful of your diet on Sunday morning. If you greatly indulge, you are going to be a lot more sleepy. And I would just add as another little part, make a holy use of caffeine. It can help you. Take care to get good rest Saturday night. Be mindful of your diet Sunday morning and make a holy use of caffeine if you drink caffeine. Boys and girls, we need to be very careful to do our best not to sleep through the preaching of God's word. I know there are some of you who are asleep right now. My four-year-old is asleep literally right now.

But those of you who are not, we do not make peace with that. And we are not doing that when we are twelve, right? Stay alert. Shake off drowsiness so that we can pay attention to what God says through his word.

Seventh, if you would benefit from the word preached and not despise prophecies, mingle the word preached with faith. Mingle the word preached with faith. That means you are believing and resting in everything that is said. Listen to this in Hebrews 4:2. For good news came to us just as to them in the old covenant. But the message they heard did not benefit them because they did not mingle the word heard with faith.

It is not enough just to mentally affirm that what we are hearing from God's word is true. That is true. That is true. That is not enough. Mingle it with faith. You believe it. You rest in it. You trust in it. You labor to obey it. Mingle it with faith. It is not enough to understand simply in the mind. But our wills must be drawn to it and then our affections must love it and cherish it. So mingle the word preached with faith.

Eighth. If you would benefit from the word preached and not despise prophecies, test everything by the word. Test everything you hear by the word. Now, I am not saying and God never says to just simply test everything.

The whole point is you test everything comparing it to the scriptures, what God says in his word. Testing is not an exhortation to just be skeptical about every single thing you hear. That is not the same thing. He is saying test it by the standard of the scriptures. Because every word of the Lord proves true, we use what is called the analogy of scripture, meaning other parts in scripture shine light on other parts and it all works together. There is one principal author of scripture which is God himself. Therefore, none of it is contradictory. There are no errors. And parts that are maybe a little harder to understand are explained by parts that are easier to understand. And it shines light on those. Or as Thomas Watson said,

only the diamond cuts the diamond only scripture interprets scripture. So even for example, how are we going to know what Paul means in 1 Corinthians 12:10 by to another prophecy? How do we know which one he means?

If you look at the Greek word like well that did not help us that same word is used in those four different ways. Will you use the analogy of scripture you see how Paul talks about it in chapter 14 and the purpose of that gift and how it is set against the gift of the tongues so that it may build up the church. And then you also go to Romans 12:6 where Paul says the gift of prophecy is to be exercised according to the faith. And so you use the analogy of scripture to a verse that can be unclear like 1 Corinthians 12:10. Which one does he mean? Well, you use other parts and it shines light on it. So you test that by the scriptures. And when I tell you I think the gift of prophecy right here is that your job is to test it by the scriptures. Is that what God is saying? And does that make the most sense concerning what God says elsewhere? You test everything. Is that true? Oh, yeah. Like when I said, "Do not despise prophecies." You must not despise prophecies. I am not making that up. It is Oh, that is exactly what God says in 1 Thessalonians 5:20. Okay? So, that is how you test what I am telling you. But the whole point is to test everything by the word. That is what he says. Do not despise prophecies, but test everything. Hold fast what is good. The test everything is not by any other standard other than God's holy word. This is why the Jews, the Berean Jews in Acts 17:11 were commended. Now these Berean Jews were more noble than the Jews in Thessalonica. They, the Berean Jews, received the word with all eagerness, examining the scriptures daily to see if these things were so. That is why the phrase is be a good Berean. It is examining the scriptures. I hear this. Is that consistent? That is what God says. Cool. But you test everything you hear by the scriptures. And the reason I am belaboring that is I think actually many professed Christians or everyone actually tests everything that they hear. Every sermon you hear, every truth claim you hear, you automatically put it through a test. And I think the big problem is that many professed Christians test the preaching of the word by their feelings and not by what the Lord actually says.

Why are things and all of us have probably been there at some point. Why when you are first introduced to the doctrines of grace, five points of Calvinism, why are so many people so against it like because they are testing the preached word by their feelings and not by well what does God say? And all of you, I think you would agree, when you come there, it ends up being, you know what? It is just what God says in his word. And when you end up getting there, you go, you cannot avoid it. What do you do with Ephesians 1? It is what God says. What do you do with the entire chapter of John 10? It is just there. What do you do with all of John 6? It is just there. What do you do with Romans 8 and Romans 9? It is just it is just what God says. I know your experience is probably the same as mine because I have spoken with many of you about it. But it is that is what matters. Testing it by the scriptures, not testing it by our feelings. So you are not permitted, hear me very clearly, you are not permitted to test preaching by the standard of your feelings or prejudices or likes or dislikes or preferences or your own wisdom that you may

even so eloquently call plain reason. You and I must test the preaching of the word by the standard of the word itself. And that is it. That is the touchstone. That is the standard by which we examine everything. So when you come to hear, test it. But test it by what the word actually says, not by how it makes you feel or anything like that. If you do that, you will benefit from the preached word.

Now, ninth, labor to retain or remember what you have heard. Labor, if you would benefit from the word preached, and not despise prophecies, labor to retain or remember what you have heard. The best way to do that is to take notes. And I do not mean you are sitting there trying to like write a transcript, but I mean write down the main points. Be ready to write down cross references that you can follow up with later. Be ready to write down a striking phrase or a metaphor that stood out to you so that you more easily remember it. And then if you have that, you will be able to recall that to other people much more easily. Listen to Hebrews 2:1. We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest we drift away from it. We must pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest we drift away from it and we just do not remember it. Do not retain it. Do not act like it is still true. If you would benefit labor to retain what you have heard, then the easiest way is to just try to write down the main points and anything else that you might jot down that stands out to you or has an effect on you personally. Boys and girls, I encourage you, you need to learn how to take notes when you are listening to somebody preach. It is as simple as the main points that are being told, you just try to write them down. Or if there is a verse that the preacher says that stands out to you or you like, "Hey, I need to write that down." He said it was Luke 8:18 and then go look it up later, too, with your own eyes. That will help you remember what is preached. If you try to write down, if you are able to, you try to write down what you are listening to. This is, by the way, why preachers also need to preach plainly, clearly, and helpfully because you know as well as I do, some people that you might want to take notes, but you cannot. It is like, I do not know what I would have written down other than I would have had to write down every word. I do not know what the main points were. I do not know what the outline was. So, we as preachers need to be plain, we need to be clear, and we need to be helpful. And it will help you retain what you have heard if you take notes. So, I encourage you to consider that.

Tenth, if you would benefit from the word preached and not despise prophecies, pray that God would sanctify you as you are listening. Pray that God would sanctify you as you are listening.

1 Corinthians 2:12-13 says, "Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God that we might understand the things freely given us by God." And we impart this not in words taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. What Paul means there is it is the work of God the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer to help us understand and comprehend the things that God says to us. And so if you are praying, God, sanctify me as I hear your word. Spirit, sanctify me, you are submitting to that that it is the Spirit who works in and through us through the

preached word and in us to receive and understand the things freely given us by God who interprets spiritual truths to those who are spiritual. It is John 17:17. Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. Pray that for others. Pray that also for yourself.

Eleventh. If you would benefit from the word preached and not despise prophecies, resolve to put into practice what you hear. Resolve to put into practice what you hear. This is derived from James 1:22-25.

But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing. If you want to benefit from the word preached, resolve to not only be a hearer, but our hearing has to result in doing that. You are going to put into practice what you hear. So let me give you a few things to consider. Resolve to receive, believe, and defend whatever God says. Whatever God says. Christians, you are not allowed to be embarrassed by one thing in the Bible. You are not allowed to be embarrassed by even one thing. This is God's word. If we are embarrassed by anything in the scriptures, we are proving that we are embarrassed of God. Of course, there are things in the word that expose how stupid men can be, sinful things in the scriptures that can be like, "Well, this is really awkward." You cannot be embarrassed about those things and act like you have to be an apologist for God himself in some sense. It is like, "Well, yeah, I know that is kind of weird." No, no. This is what God says.

Resolve. You are going to receive, believe, and defend whatever God says from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22. Resolve also if you are going to be a doer, not just a hearer, resolve that you will believe every promise. I will. Whatever promise is given to me, resolve I am going to rest and trust in that promise. And here is why. All of the promises of God given to believers in the scriptures were purchased by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. So in no way do we want to despise his blood that he has shed for us. And when we see a promise and we will not cling to it and believe it and rest in it and get joy from it and courage from it, then we are disdainful of the things that Christ bought with his precious blood. So resolve that whatever promise is there, I am going to grab it. I am going to lay it close to my chest. I am going to believe it. I am going to rest in it. God help me believe every promise. Resolve also to obey every command. To obey every command. Resolve to avoid every bad example. There are many bad examples in the scriptures. They are written down for our instruction that we might not desire evil like they did. So resolve the bad example. I am going to avoid. Resolve also that you will run from anything God warns against. You will run from whatever he warns against. Resolve also to imitate every good example. There are more good examples in the scriptures than just the life of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the ultimate example. He is the perfect God-man. But you cannot get in this weird narrow view and think, well, because David was a sinner just like us or Elijah was a

sinner just like us, we cannot learn from their good examples. No, there are plenty of good examples in the scripture above and beyond even the Lord Jesus Christ and his earthly ministry that we absolutely should learn from. So every good example resolve to learn from it. This is why Hebrews chapter 11 exists. It shows all these amazing things that were accomplished by the Spirit of God working through these people through faith. They did all these amazing things. And pretty much everyone in there, you can go, "Yeah, but he was a murderer. Yeah, but he was an adulterer. Yeah, but that dude killed his own daughter." It is like, "Yeah, the point is do not imitate the bad examples, but imitate the good examples." And even the guys who some of them ended up doing ridiculously wicked things, there are still portions to where it is presented as a good example. So resolve, I am going to imitate every good example and not fall into the trap that the only example I will follow is Jesus in his earthly ministry. Like yeah, definitely. But in addition, there are others. Resolve to not be a hearer only but also a doer. Put into practice what you hear.

Twelfth. Talk about what you have heard. If you would benefit from the word preached and not despise prophecies, talk to others after the sermon about what you have heard. Psalm 119:172. My tongue shall speak of your word. My tongue shall speak of your word.

Watson says, "Discourse on what you have heard when you come home." One reason why some people get no more good by what they hear is that they never speak to one another of what they have heard. As if sermons were such secrets that they must not be spoken of again or as if it were a shame to speak of matters of salvation. Here is a great way to be benefited by the preached word is that you are going to talk about it later that day, later that week. Talk about it when we are standing around fellowshiping. Talk about it with your community group. Talk about it with your family later that day. Recall things that stood out to you or things that convicted you or things that comforted you or things that shocked you or things that bothered you. Whatever it may be, talk about what you have heard and that will help you most benefit as well.

Lastly, thirteenth, praise God for sending Christ into the world to save sinners. After you hear God's word preached, whatever is dealt with, we should respond. You should respond by praising the Lord. This God who speaks to us from the scriptures, praise him that he sent Christ into the world to save sinners. If you will not praise God for Christ Jesus, I do not think you can properly benefit from the word being preached to you. This saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. And remember as we listen to the word preached, remember that Christ says in John 5:39, "You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life and it is they that bear witness about me." Meaning the whole Bible is ultimately about Jesus. So, even when we are dealing with the spiritual gift of prophecy, well, the point of the spiritual gift of prophecy is to build up the body of Christ for the glory of Christ because Christ bought these people with his own blood and he wants them to be healthy and happy. So, all of it always goes back to Jesus. What is the

point of the gift of miracles? Well, it was to show the glory of God as the miracle workers were affirmed showing signs that they are speaking from God. So they can say the gospel of Christ and the law of Christ and the people of Christ will come to Christ. It is all it is always all about the glory of God in Christ Jesus. The whole Bible is about Jesus. This is why in Luke 24:27, Jesus on the road to Emmaus is walking with some of his disciples who do not recognize him. It was so shocking that he would rise from the dead. To them, they do not recognize him. And it says, "Beginning with Moses and all the prophets, Jesus interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." The whole Bible is about Jesus. Therefore, if we really want to benefit from the word preached and not despise prophecies, all of our listening to the Bible must culminate in praising God for Christ Jesus, our Savior and King.

Christians, you and I must take care how we hear the word preached so that we may benefit from and not despise prophecies for the glory of God in Christ Jesus who shed his precious blood to redeem us. Let us do that. Pray with me.

Our Father, we thank you for your word. We ask you to help us. Help us understand. Help us to properly apply. Help us to be not hearers only, but doers. We ask you to comfort those who need to be comforted. To rebuke and correct those who need to be rebuked and corrected. Convict us of sin where we need to be convicted. Grant us repentance. Grant us faith in Christ Jesus. We ask you to save sinners and sanctify your saints in Christ's name. Amen.