

Title: Hearing the True Voice: Prophets, Witnesses, and the Call to Discernment

Sermon Summary: Drawing from 1 Kings 18, Deuteronomy 18, and Deuteronomy 19, this sermon calls believers to move beyond familiarity with well-known biblical narratives and to examine their own hearts in light of what God reveals through them. The pastor challenges the congregation to consider how easily we can witness the mighty works of God and then turn away unchanged, as King Ahab did after the dramatic events on Mount Carmel. The sermon weaves together three pressing concerns: the danger of spiritual indifference in the face of God's power, the critical importance of discerning true prophets from false ones, and the destructive nature of false witness and gossip within the church. Throughout, the pastor emphasizes that genuine faith requires knowing the voice of God through His Word, submitting to the correction and direction of the Holy Spirit, and holding one another accountable with both truth and grace.

Key Points:

- King Ahab's response to the extraordinary events on Mount Carmel, returning to eat and drink without repentance, serves as a warning against spiritual indifference and the danger of witnessing God's power without allowing it to produce genuine change
- Familiarity with well-known biblical stories can breed a kind of contempt or complacency that causes believers to miss what God is saying personally through those accounts
- Deuteronomy 18 draws a sharp distinction between those who practice divination and sorcery, whom Israel was commanded not to listen to, and the prophet God raises up, whom the people were commanded to hear and obey
- The occult, including modern expressions such as AI-generated simulations of deceased loved ones, exploits grief and spiritual vulnerability and must be rejected by believers
- God's standard for a true prophet is clear: if what the prophet declares does not come to pass, that prophet has not spoken for God and should not be feared or followed

- Deuteronomy 19 establishes that no accusation against a person can stand on the testimony of a single witness; a matter must be confirmed by two or three witnesses, a principle that directly confronts the culture of gossip
- Gossip is identified as one of the most spiritually damaging sins within the church, capable of destroying character and unity, and believers should actively refuse to receive or repeat unverified reports about others
- The church is called to function as a body, not as isolated individuals, where members both serve and allow themselves to be served, and where truth is studied, discussed, and applied together
- Knowing the voice of the Good Shepherd through consistent engagement with Scripture is the primary defense against being led astray by false teachers, false prophets, or misleading information

Scripture Reference:

- 1 Kings 18:40-42, covering the execution of the prophets of Baal and Elijah's announcement of coming rain
- Deuteronomy 18:14-22, addressing the prohibition of divination, the promise of a prophet like Moses, and the test for distinguishing true from false prophecy
- Deuteronomy 19:15-21, establishing the requirement of multiple witnesses and the consequences for false testimony

Stories:

- The events on Mount Carmel from 1 Kings 18 are revisited, with particular focus on King Ahab's dismissive response after witnessing the defeat of 850 false prophets and the fire of God, choosing to eat and drink rather than seek repentance or counsel from Elijah
- The parable of the Prodigal Son is referenced to illustrate genuine repentance as more than acknowledging a mistake, but rather a full turning back toward the father with humility, expecting nothing and receiving everything
- The Transfiguration is briefly referenced to illustrate that the appearance of Moses and Elijah was not an endorsement of seeking communication with the dead, but rather a divine affirmation to Jesus that He was fulfilling the law and the prophets
- The Bereans from the book of Acts are cited as a model for how believers

should respond to teaching, going back to Scripture after hearing a message to verify whether what was taught is true

- The image of a parent and child is used to illustrate how people manipulate situations by going from one authority to another to get the answer they want, mirroring how people selectively listen to voices that tell them what they wish to hear