

Text of messages delivered by Grant Harris at Windsor Park Baptist Church on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> June 2025.  
The written text may vary from the spoken/video version due to time and the need for flexibility.



## A Prophetic Homecoming

The prophetic books of the Bible may be small, but they carry big voices that still speak powerfully into our world today. In this series, *Prophetic Words: Ancient Voices, Modern Hope*, we explore the messages of prophets like Amos, Hosea, Micah, Joel, and others who spoke into seasons of injustice, spiritual drift, and national crisis—times not unlike our own. Their words call us not to religion, but to relationship; not to comfort, but to conviction; not just to hear, but to act. God hasn't gone silent. The prophets remind us: He's still speaking. Are we listening?

Picture yourself walking down Queen Street, wandering through Westfield Albany, or meandering past the cafes in Oneroa as you spend a day in the sun on Waiheke Island. As you go about your business, your attention is drawn to someone speaking directly to you...

### Come Back Home

*A modern prophetic reflection for Aotearoa*

People of Aotearoa,

You're busy.

Like, "I haven't had a proper dinner in three days" busy.

Like, "I'll reply to that email tomorrow" busy.

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Somewhere between the meetings, the activities, the Uber Eats orders, and the incessant doomscrolling,

You've forgotten that God's still speaking.

You wear crosses around your neck but forget the One who carried it.

You quote Bible verses on Insta stories, then cut someone off in traffic on the way to church (yes, even if they were going too slow).

You say "*bless you*" when someone sneezes - but blessing others when they think differently than you about Israel, or sexuality, or politics, is hard for you.

Person on the street,

God isn't waiting for your polished, Sunday-best version.

He's after the real you.

The Monday-you.

The coffee-stained, under-slept, "*Lord help me*" you.

He's calling - not with thunder or neon signs (though wouldn't that be helpful),

But with whispers.

A nudge in the quiet.

That sense that something's off.

That pull that says, "*you were made for more.*"

You want change?

It doesn't start with moving to Queenstown, or ... Aussie, or ... anywhere else.

Or switching jobs.

It starts *inside*.

God sees our land.

The kindness,

The silence,

The generosity,

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The gap,  
The haka ... and the heartache.

But here's the good news:  
He hasn't given up.  
He's not ghosting you.  
He's still here.  
Still waiting.  
Still calling you—not to rules, but to relationship.

Hoki mai ki te aroha noa, te kāinga tūturu o te ngākau.  
Hoki mai ki te tika, ahakoa te utu.  
Hoki mai ki te atawhai, ahakoa te āmaimai.  
Kāore te Atua i whakarērea koe. Kei te tūwhera tonu te kūaha.

Come back to grace that feels like home.  
Come back to justice that costs something.  
Come back to mercy that interrupts.  
God hasn't given up. The door is still open.

There's still hope.  
Still healing.  
Still time.  
Come back.

### **Introduction: Ancient Voices for Modern Auckland**

You might not expect God to speak this way in a Sunday service, but it captures something the biblical prophets understood perfectly: God interrupts the everyday with the voice of the eternal. The prophets didn't speak from pulpits, they spoke on street corners, in marketplaces, wherever people were walking by, in the hope that some would ... listen. Would you?

Today we begin a series called, **Prophetic Words: Ancient Voices, Modern Hope**. Over the coming weeks, we'll discover that prophets like Amos, Hosea, Micah, Joel, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Malachi spoke into times that feel uncomfortably familiar to ours, but just like then, God isn't silent. He's still calling, still correcting, still inviting us to come back home.

### **Understanding Biblical Prophecy**

But what do people today think about *prophecy* or *prophets*. Aidan went into Commercial Bay recently to ask some people who were willing to answer. Here's what they said:

**Video:** Responses from people at Commercial Bay

What's interesting is that most people think of prophecy and the prophets as being fortune-tellers or future-predictors, but here's what might surprise you: the biblical prophets weren't primarily fortune-tellers, they were truth-tellers. They weren't crystal ball gazers as much as they were confronters of present reality.

When we examine all the prophetic passages in Scripture, here's what we find:

- **65-75%** of the words that came from the mouths of the prophets focus on calling people back to God - addressing repentance, authentic worship, and heart over ritual.
- **20-25%** of the words that came from the mouths of the prophets warn of immediate consequences for rebellion, but always with restoration as the goal
- **Only 5-10%** of the words that came from the mouths of the prophets point to future hope, including Messianic promises and the new creation.

The prophets weren't just talking about what would happen, they were pleading with people to come home in the middle of what was happening.

## The Prophetic Books: A Quick Overview

It's enlightening when we look at the weight that the prophetic books have in the overall narrative of the Bible. The prophetic books comprise roughly one-quarter of the entire Bible. That's significant real estate in God's Word. Through the Old Testament we have five **Major Prophets** (called major because they're the long ones):

1. **Isaiah** speaks of judgment, hope, and is probably mostly known for what we read in Chapter 7:14, *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel.* Messianic prophecy is strong in Isaiah.
2. **Jeremiah** is often called the *weeping prophet* as he calls for repentance but is most known for the hope he gives to people trapped in exile that somehow gets translated into the most popular Scripture to read at baptisms – Jeremiah 29:11, *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*
3. **Lamentations** is a book of poetic grief over Jerusalem's destruction.
4. **Ezekiel** is full of vivid visions during the Babylonian exile, and
5. **Daniel** is deep in the reality of God's faithfulness in exile and graphic in apocalyptic hope.

And then there's the twelve **Minor Prophets** (minor in length, but not in importance):

- **Hosea** shows God's faithful love despite unfaithfulness.
- **Joel** speaks of the Day of the Lord and the promise of the Spirit.
- **Amos** is a call to justice and righteousness.
- **Obadiah** speaks into judgment on pride and violence.
- **Jonah** shows a reluctant prophet and God's mercy on our enemies.
- **Micah** of course is famous for Chapter 6:8, *Act justly, love mercy, walk humbly.*
- **Nahum** is a story of God's judgment on oppression.
- **Habakkuk** wrestles with God's justice.
- **Zephaniah** is a warning of judgment but with the promise of renewal.
- **Haggai** is a prophetic encouragement to rebuild the temple.
- **Zechariah** has visions of restoration and Messianic hope, and

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- **Malachi** is a final call to covenant faithfulness before 400 years of silence.

### Why These Ancient Voices Matter Today

King Solomon wrote in Ecclesiastes 1:9, *What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun*, and if you were to scroll through your news feed or social media, you'll see what Solomon meant. Corruption, greed, conflict, spiritual apathy, injustice, environmental crisis, rampant consumerism - it's like humanity's been stuck on repeat since the prophets spoke on Starbucks corners 2,500 years ago.

### That's exactly why we need the prophets.

These prophets were people, they weren't superhuman figures. They were farmers, poets, priests, and nobodies. Ordinary people with extraordinary burdens, speaking into broken systems and broken hearts. They lived in times marked by injustice, spiritual drift, corruption, and national crisis.

Sound familiar?

### The Prophetic Pattern

Here's what you'll notice in every prophetic book because the prophets follow a consistent pattern:

First, they diagnose the problem:

- *"The Israelites are stubborn, like stubborn heifers"* Hosea says (4:16).
- *"Wake up, you drunkards, and weep"* Joel shouts (1:5).
- *"Hear this word, you cows of Bashan"* Amos proclaims (4:1), and
- *"Woe to you who are complacent"* Amos declares (6:1).

All these words repeatedly describe the consequences of turning away from God.

But here's the crucial part - they always end with hope:

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- Joel implores (2:13), ***"Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate."***
- Amos declares what God will do (9:11-12), ***"In that day I will restore...I will repair...I will heal."***

Perhaps the most famous prophetic summary is one that I've already mentioned from Micah 6:8, ***"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."***

### **The Prophetic Word for Auckland 2025**

These ancient voices speak directly into our contemporary cultural context:

- **They speak into our spiritual drift:** In a city where Sunday sport competes with Sunday worship, where spiritual conversations feel awkward, the prophets ask: *"What does authentic relationship with God actually look like?"*
- **They speak to our inequality:** In a city struggling with housing affordability, where the gap between rich and poor widens, Amos still thunders: ***"Let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"***
- **They speak to our institutional distrust:** When politicians disappoint, when churches fail, when systems seem broken, Habakkuk shows us it's okay to wrestle with God about injustice and still trust Him.
- **They speak to our anxiety about the future:** In uncertain times, Jeremiah reminds us that God has ***"plans ... to give you hope and a future."***

### **What This Series Will Do**

Over the coming weeks, these ancient voices will:

- Comfort us when we need hope.
- Challenge us when we need correction.
- Call us back when we've drifted, and
- Remind us that God hasn't given up on us, on our city, or on our world.

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Some of these messages will make us uncomfortable. Others will lift us with hope. But all of them will help us hear what God is saying to us - right here, right now, in Auckland, in our homes, and in our hearts.

### **The Heart of the Prophetic Message**

So, what does it matter to us? Well, here's the question that every prophet was asking, the same question we need to still ask ourselves: *Are we prepared to listen to the voice of God drawing us closer to Him, enabling us to draw upon the richness of His forgiveness and freedom so that we can wholeheartedly participate in His mission in our world?*

The prophets weren't just calling for religious reformation, they were calling for life transformation. They weren't asking people to be more religious; they were calling them to authentic relationship. Like loving parents who sometimes have to say hard things, the prophets stood up for truth even when it made them unpopular. But their motivation was always love - calling God's people back home.

### **Our Response**

The door is still open. The voice of the prophets continues to call us to come home. In a world that often feels spiritually adrift, where headlines are filled with injustice, where we're tempted to settle for shallow religion, these ancient voices still ask the most important question: "What does it mean to truly follow God?"

As we listen to these voices over the coming weeks, may we hear not just the echo of history, but the voice of the Spirit calling us today. The question isn't whether God is speaking. The question is, are we listening? If we are, then maybe we need to take a step today, maybe it's prayer, a conversation, an intent to engage deeper in this series, or perhaps it's simply saying, "God, I want to listen again."

**Small books. Big voices. Still speaking.**

Amen.



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These questions are intended to help you think more about this message. We hope they might enable conversation, encouraging you to wrestle with how God might be challenging us to apply what we have heard/read.

**Reflecting on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2025:** Last Sunday Pastor Aidan focussed on Matariki, encouraging us to look at the Creator of the stars. What opportunities have you had to "look up" in wonder at creation this week? What did you see and experience?

Questions from this week's teaching:

1. Where in your life do you feel spiritually distracted or distant - and what might it look like to "come back home" to God in that area?
2. The prophets often spoke hard truths out of love. When was the last time God challenged you, and how did you respond?
3. What's one whisper or nudge you've sensed from God recently? Have you acted on it, or ignored it? Why?
4. Micah 6:8 calls us to 'act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly.' Which of those is most challenging for you right now - and why?

If you'd like to chat with someone about your spiritual journey or anything else going on in your life, please contact us at [care@windsorpark.org.nz](mailto:care@windsorpark.org.nz); **we're better together and no perfect people are allowed.**

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Below are some further resources that may take the message further and deeper and enable you to explore other viewpoints on the same theme. We also encourage you to engage with the preacher if there are further questions you have or if you'd like clarification on anything. Email [info@windsorpark.org.nz](mailto:info@windsorpark.org.nz) and we'll direct your query to the appropriate person.

1. The Bible Project has an excellent video that introduces **The Prophets**; it comes with some study notes at the bottom of the page. See it here: <https://bibleproject.com/videos/the-prophets/>.
2. Windsor Park provides free access to **RightNow Media** who serve the global Christian church with a mission to provide high-quality, Bible-based video content for the purpose of discipling people on their faith journey. To access RightNow Media and to create a free login go to the Windsor Park website here, <https://windsorpark.org.nz/resources>, and scroll down to the bottom. When you have a login, you'll see a curated library called **Prophetic Words: Ancient Voices, Modern Hope** with several resources you may want to browse.
3. If you'd like to read a longer and more in-depth article, click the below link for an article called, **Making Theological Sense of the Prophetic Books of the Old Testament Canon** by Gregory Goswell. [https://etsjets.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/files\\_JETS-PDFs\\_64\\_64-1\\_JETS\\_64.1\\_77-94\\_Goswell.pdf](https://etsjets.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/files_JETS-PDFs_64_64-1_JETS_64.1_77-94_Goswell.pdf)