

1 Corinthians 14:1-35

Prophecy, Tongues and the Church

Tonight we are continuing our study in the book of 1 Corinthians –

A) In this section where we have been looking at the gifts/operations of the HS in the life of the Church

B) This conversation began in Chapter 12 – I want to do some quick review

12:1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

A) Don't ignore {scared not for today} Don't be Unaware – need to know the importance, function of the gifts

B) V. 4-11 Give us a brief foundational introduction into gifts learn 3 key things

1st DIVERSITY OF GIFTS

V.4 Diversity of Gifts – Same spirit / v.5 Diversity of functions ... same Lord !

2nd PURPOSE OF GIFTS V. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all:

3rd THE SOVERNIGNTY OF THE SPIRIT IN THE DISTRUBUTING OF THE GIFTS V.11 But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.

V. 8-10 WE ARE GIVEN A BRIEF LIST OF SOME GIFTS / SIGN GIFTS

A) Romans 12 we have another list often called MINISTRY GIFTS

B) Then in v. 12-31 Paul goes into this brilliant Discussion of how the church has been formed by the Lord as a body

C) Body that has many members / doing diff. / functions / still one body

- 1) No part of the body is less important.
- 2) One part can't say to another We don't need you
- 3) One part can't claim to be insignificant

D) What is true of the human body is equally as true in the body of Christ.

1) All needed – all have a place and a significance

So that was the focus of Chapter 12 – We would have expected Paul to go right into Chapter 14 – start talking about the Order and function

A) But he pauses to discuss what he calls the more excellent way.

B) Because the goal of the gifts is the profit of all – in order for the gifts to function properly in the body of Christ – LOVE IS KEY

C) So last week we looked at chapter 13 – the Love Chapter from this context –

D) How love is KEY in the ministry of the gifts

1) WITHOUT LOVE all the knowledge and gifts in the world are not worth anything – just a big noise.

Remember what we call the book of 1 Corinthians is really a letter that Paul wrote – there are no chapter breaks – (translators)

A) Chapter 13 flows right into chapter 14 where Paul continues this thought with these words - *Pursue love, & desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy*

B) Pursue = Dioko = (to follow , hunt, chase after w/ intensity) Pursue love Go after it- w/ intensity – make it priority

1) Why? Because the goal of the gifts is the edification of the body of Christ –

2) The goal is the profit of all

C) Love is Agape – that love of God that loves and gives seeking nothing in return

1) Pursue that – I am wanting to be a blessing to others – not seeking anything in return

D) Not recognition or adoration – I am just wanting to be a blessing to others

1) That is what love does.

Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts

A) Many people do the opposite. They pursue the spiritual gift or a position of spiritual prominence – and they desire love

B) Paul says – reverse that – Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts

As we look at this tonight – Talking about the gifts and their place in the Church we discover that Paul wants us to Pursue 3 things

- ❖ Pursue Love
- ❖ Pursue Understanding
- ❖ Pursue Order

#1 Pursue Love

Pursue love, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy. ² For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands *him*; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries. ³ But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. ⁴ He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.

Contrast Tongues and Prophecy.

A) Huge Distinction:

- ❖ Prophecy is directed to men
- ❖ Tongues is directed to God

B) Prophecy edifies the Church

- ❖ Tongues edifies Self – individual

C) So if edification – building up the body of Christ and profiting others is the goal.

1) Which of these two gifts does that the best – Prophecy – it edifies the church?

The word PROPHECY derives from a Greek root which means "to cause to shine," & is linked with the prefix "pro" which means "before."

A) To cause God's word to shine before the people.

Aa) In the NT it is more forth telling or declaring God's truth –

1) More than fore telling – predictive – future...

B) V.3 is key: The Gift of Prophecy speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

1) **EDIFICATION = TO BUILD UP**

C) Word used in Architecture in referring to the establishing of a Building! Make Firm Solid

D) **EXHORTATION = TO STIR UP –**

1) parakaleo - (PARACLETE) primarily, "to call to ones side to help/ to admonish /

E) **COMFORT = TO LIFT UP!**

1) Console – stimulate – encourage

SO the ministry of Prophecy is for:

- Building up!
- Stirring up!
- Lifting up!

So when someone comes and says something weird – (**it happens**) "I had a dream last night you were killed in a plane Crash."

A) That is Not Prophecy – probably bad Pepperoni Pizza (that doesn't Build up stir up or lift up

B) Here is what the effect of the gift of prophecy. Ever been out of gas on the side of the road? – Pushing your car

1) Along comes – help – they help push – they bring gas – they get you going again.

C) A word of PROPHECY works in much the same way – You come to a Bible study – out of gas – worn out / defeated

1) And what is taught is exactly what you needed – filling up the tank

D) That is prophecy – Builds up, Stirs up and lifts up.

What about the Gift of tongues – What is it?

A) WHAT IT IS NOT! - It is NOT the ability to pick up a language quickly.

B) There are those that have the ability to pick up a language with great ease. Greg Silvulka – Nick Cady

1) But That is NOT the gift of tongues.

What It Is?

A) Speaking in tongues is speaking TO GOD in a language, that you don't know – do so by faith.

B) Words or phrases come to your mind that sound like gibberish – but you say them – you speak them

C) I have Known some people who thought their prayer language sounded like Japanese – they knew someone - they repeat that phrase –

1) Sure enough – you are saying I praise you Lord

D)Key thing Paul tells us here – Tongues is directed to God and not men

1)It is really a gift for **personal use in private**

E)If it is used in the church setting it needs to be accompanied with the gift of interpretation

Next point: Pursue Understanding

V. 5 *I wish you all spoke with tongues, (great for you) but even more that you prophesied; (great for the church) for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.*

A)So this is interesting: Not everyone speaks in tongues – why? Not sure

B)And in the church setting prophecy is better by far – because everyone is edified

C)The only way that tongues is beneficial in the group setting is there is someone is able to interpret.

1)Some who can give the understanding

Now here is an important thing to note about the interpretation.

A)When a person is speaking in tongues – who are they speaking to God or man?

B)God – so the interpretation is going to be directed to God – something about God

1)It will not be a “Oh my people thus says the Lord.... that might be a prophecy but it is not the gift of tongues being interpreted

C)That is one of the common mistakes that happen in relationship to the gifts of the Holy Spirit - Tongues – interpretation – “oh my people...”

D)The interpretation is going to be in the form of projecting praise to God

Example: First use: Turn to Acts 2 (KEEP PLACE IN 1 COR 14

⁵ And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. ⁷ Then they were all

amazed and marveled, saying to one another, “Look, are not all these who speak Galileans?”

⁸ And how *is it that* we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? ⁹ Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs—**we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”**

And we all hear these people speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done! NLT

Note that - They were Praising God! Declaring the greatness of God – the wonderful works of God – Back to 1 Corinthians 14

A)So Paul is telling us – proper understanding is key – the gifts are for the profit of all – build up the body

B)Prophecy – speaks to men – Tongues to God

1)Prophecy is for the entire body

2)Tongues is more personal – unless with interpretation because understanding is key if edification is to happen

C)Paul is going to use 3 illustrations here to make his point on the importance of understanding if edification is to take place V. 6

⁶ But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? **Understanding is Key** ⁷ Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? ⁸ For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? ⁹ So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them *is* without significance.

¹¹ Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks *will be* a foreigner to me.

Three illustrations Musical instruments / trumpet calls to battle / & daily conversation !

A) If the Musical instrument does not give a clear distinct sound nobody will recognize the music being played (what is that?)

B) If the Trumpet in battle is not clear the army will not know whether it is a call to charge or retreat !

C) And there are many Languages in world / but if I cannot understand, who cares, it is no use to me !

(Interpreters in Russia / Hungary)

D) Paul in using these 3 illustration Is basically stating that Tongues are great but

E) If there is no one who can interpret it is like being in a foreign country !

1) Very frustrating

Having said that He reminds them again of the purpose of the gifts v.12 *Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.*

A) As if to say – Let your growth in ministry & Desire for the gifts be not for you – but for the building up of the Body !!!!!

B) Therefore = For this reason / the importance of understanding

¹³ Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. ¹⁵ What is *the conclusion* then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. ¹⁶ Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? ¹⁷ For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

¹⁸ I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; ¹⁹ yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

C) THE GOAL IS EDIFICATION

²⁰ Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

²¹ In the law it is written:

“With men of other tongues and other lips

I will speak to this people;

And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me,” says the Lord.

²² Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.

A) Now verse 22 is interesting – almost think – Paul is contradicting Himself here / by saying tongues is a sign to unbeliever – prophesy to the Believer

B) This is where context is so important – The context is Paul has been talking about Tongues with interpretation

1) So that with interpretation is assumed in that sentence –

C) So how would tongues be a sign to the unbeliever How?

C) Back to the Day of Pentecost – unbelievers heard & marveled how speak in our Language ? – They are touched

1) Courson at Bible school ! Arabic

B) Also the way that Tongues is a sign to the unbeliever is with interpretation

1) Tongues – pause – ask interpret – interpretation is given-

2) How did he know my language

²² Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe.

C) Now Prophecy is a sign to the Believer because He is declaring God’s Heart – Purpose is to Build up the believers

D) But that doesn’t mean that the unbeliever can not be touched & pricked in his heart – convicted by the word of God

Pursue Love – Key is to Edify

A) Pursue understanding – that is how people are edified – so I want to understand the format

B) Pursue order – what does this look like in a gathering V.23

²³ Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, (no interpreter – just a free for all) and there come in *those who are* uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

C) If you have been in this type of setting – it can be bizarre – even as a Christian – to any believer – really weird

²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. ²⁵ And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on *his* face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

D) Convicted & judged by Prophecy heart is pricked - why ?

E) Remember prophesy is speaking forth the word of God –

1) Word is Living & powerful / *sharper*.....

Faith comes by hearing & hearing by the word!

v. 26-28 Specific guidelines

²⁶ How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, *let there be* two or at the most three, *each* in turn, and let one interpret. ²⁸ But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God

So there is an order

A) Tongues V.27 – Two or at the most 3 w/ an Interpretation

B) The interpretation will be directed to God – NOT MEN! = gift of discernment comes in –

C) v. 28 No interpreter – keep silent in the Church

1) This would indicate that the person w/ the gift has control – not an uncontrollable urge – *couldn't help it the H.S. took control of my tongue*

Guidelines for Prophecy

²⁹ Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. ³⁰ But if *anything* is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. ³¹ For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. ³² And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. ³³ For God is not *the author* of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

Same let 2 or 3 prophets speak – words be given

A) Judge or Prove = test – How - By using the word

B) Does it match up - i.e. Build up encourage & comfort – or does it tear down !!!!

C) v.32 Prophets have control – Spirit of is subject to

D) V.33 Key verse 33 *For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.*

Final somewhat unrelated thought about order

³⁴ Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says. ³⁵ And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

Now, you recall that we pointed out when we were in the 11th Chapter, that Paul there speaks of a woman praying or prophesying w/ her head unveiled.

A) So when Paul is declaring here that a woman is not to speak but is to keep silent, he is not referring to women not praying in church

B) or not prophesying in church, because he already has made allowances for that back in the 11th Chapter.

C) Then what does he mean that "your women.." -- notice "*YOUR* women keep silence in the church."

V.35 gives insight 35 *And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.*

A) The early church followed the pattern of the Jewish synagogue. Men sat on one side, the women sat on the other side.

B) They did that because they felt that they might be distracted by women, so they kept them on one side separately –

1) The men on the other so they would not be distracted by them.

C) Now we don't do that – we sit together / and if you Wife has a question – whispers or note

D) But in that culture because their husband was on the other side, "*HONEY, WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?*"

And so Paul said, let the woman keep silent -- *your women keep silence* – i.e. *your wife, let her keep silent.*

A) If she wants to learn anything, if she has a problem, a question, let her ask you when you get it home.

1) It's a shame the way the women are calling out in church.

B) Remember This is still in the Context of those guidelines & in the idea of God not being the author of confusion – all things doneand in order

Now in v. 36-38 Paul anticipates their REACTION

36 Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?

A) Now this is clearly satire here –

B) He is recognizing that there was a tendency among some in Corinth to think they had unique Rev.

C) So Paul says rather sarcastically – *Did the word of God originate w/ you or are you the only ones who received it*

37 If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.

A) In other words the truly spiritual people are those who always recognize the authority of the scriptures

B) Important to note especially in our day & age where people claim all kinds of special Rev. that contradicts scripture

1) Paul is merely reestablishing that God's word is our Authority

C) Word is Superior to people's emotions / experiences / and Extra Biblical Revelation

D) Truth – Holy Spirit never operates or functions in a way Contrary to the written word

38 But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

A) Literally *If anyone be ignorant – Let him be ignored*

B) In other words don't pay attention to him / don't get caught up in needless conversations

1) or lengthy debates w/ someone who doesn't want to pay attention to the Word !

Paul closes Ch. W/ a couple of Key thoughts

39 Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.

40 Let all things be done decently and in order.

All things done / Decency & in Order

All things church

Decently and in order