

Ministry of The Holy Spirit
Private vs Public Worship
1 Cor 14

Last times...

- spiritual gifts, for spiritual people (Ch 12)
- the more excellent way (*agape*, Ch 13)

This time...concluding the instruction on spiritual gifts:

- tongues vs prophesying
- private vs public worship

Spiritual gifts are to be exercised with *agape* for orderliness in public worship
In their public worship gatherings, the Corinthians are earnestly desiring the spiritual gifts yet have no “boundaries” for their exercise, the gift of tongues in particular
We are in 1 Cor 14

v1 Follow...desire...but rather:

Follow charity – pursue after God’s supernatural love (Ch 13) revealed only in the Word of God

desire spiritual gifts – earnestly covet (Ch 12:31a)

Ask the Holy Spirit for the gift you and others need the most now

but rather that you may prophesy – desire especially the spiritual gift of the public proclamation of God’s Word...

knowing Jesus and making Him known,
knowing God’s heart and will,
the absolute unchanging truth of God

The Church in America today needs the spiritual gifts of

- faith
 - discerning of spirits
 - prophesying – proclaiming the Word of God vs the words of men
- in these days laced with deception, as foretold us by Jesus

Desire those gifts and exercise them with *agape*!

v2 not unto men but unto God:

He who speaks in an unknown tongue speaks to God and not man

- no man understands the language
- but communing in the spirit with God, not in a human language, speaks the mysteries/secrets of God

The Apostle Paul is addressing an issue with public worship in the church at Corinth, comparing the gift of speaking in tongues (Ch 13:1) with the gift of prophesying

Note: Ch 12:29-30

With *agape* love as the foundation and governance, desire spiritual gifts.

The first and foremost gift is prophesy

Prophesying, speaking the Word of God in a human language understood by the listeners, is superior to speaking in tongues in the church's public worship gatherings because: "understanding"

v3-4 he that prophesies...he that speaks in an unknown tongue:

He that prophesies...teaches/preaches the Word of God

2 Tim 3:16-17 All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

Rev 19:10b the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy speaks edification, exhortation, and comfort to the Church

Ministers of the Word of God are gifted to build up, stir up, and lift up the entire church...to strengthen all

But he that speaks in an unknown tongue/language edifies only himself

Gifted personal prayer and devotion to commune with God, to strengthen only himself

Prophesy is a corporate and public gift for the benefit of all

Speaking in tongues is a personal and private gift, for the benefit of Self
a personal prayer language, the Holy Spirit communicates with God on our behalf

gift
prophesy

target
Church

purpose
to edify, exhort, comfort, rebuke,
correct, teach others
self-edification

tongues

God

v5 I would that...but rather:

To be clear, Paul is not “bagging on” the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues
He wishes they all would to strengthen themselves in the Lord with this gift
But, more important, is to strengthen others in the Lord by the Word

Speaking the Word of God in a known human language strengthens the entire
Church...it is others-centered

The Word of God was given by God to bring

- Light to the darkness
- Order to the confusion
- Truth to the deception

All benefit from the Word of God being proclaimed in love!

Speaking in tongues strengthens only the individual...
Self-centered, unless there is an interpretation

v6 if I come unto you...what shall I profit you:

If I came here on Sunday morning and shared a powerful and compelling message
of salvation in Christ Jesus...in

- Russian or Arabic or...
- an unknown language

how could I possibly benefit you, since you would have no understanding of what
I said?

v7-8 distinction in the sounds:

Even lifeless things like musical instruments and trumpets have distinctive
sounds, sounds with meaning

Israel used trumpets to communicate...to call the people

- to worship
- to issue a warning
- to go to war

Each blast had a distinct sound in order to communicate the desired message.

If a trumpet was sounded in any other way, the people would not know what to
do...and would ignore the trumpet.

v9 So likewise:

So likewise there is understanding of what is spoken only if it is spoken in a
known human language

But speaking in an unknown language is like speaking into the air, and not into
the hearts and minds of people

Just a noise to others

v10-11 kinds of voices...none of them without signification:

There are many languages in the world...roughly 6500...and all of them have meaning to a certain group of people

Language is an agreed upon collection of sounds (words) that when combined, communicate ideas and feelings understood by a community

If one has not been educated in that language, no communication occurs between "foreigners"

When we go to Israel, I do not know what the people are saying when they talk in Hebrew

When I go to Egypt, I do not know that the people are saying when they speak in Arabic

During WWII, USA broke Nazi and Japanese codes and were able to use that info in victory.

The opposite was not true...because USA used Navajo soldiers speaking in their native language.

Our enemies never figured out this strange tongue/language

v12 are zealous...seek...excel to the edifying:

Paul acknowledges that the Corinthians are zealous for spiritual gifts but he exhorts them to seek mostly to edify the entire church

Spiritual gifts exercised with the *agape* love of God are others-centered vs self-centered

Therefore, in the public gatherings of the Church, speaking in tongues is the least gift and prophesying is the greatest gift

v13-14 tongue...interpret...my understanding is unfruitful:

In the Church, if someone speaks in an unknown language, pray there is an interpretation to accompany it...so there is understanding by all and edification for all

Praying in tongues...praying in the Spirit...is a personal prayer that by-passes the intellect (wherein lies the understanding of the sounds/words)

The one praying does not know what he is praying and neither does anyone else, if there is no gift of interpretation

praying in the Spirit: tongues, groans, and Spirit-led

Rom 8:26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered

Eph 6:10-18 Spirit-led into a deeper communion

v15 pray...spirit...understanding:

Paul prayed in the Spirit...

privately, to be strengthened in his ministry

Paul also prayed with understanding, in a known human language...

publicly, to strengthen others in their walks

He worshipped in song both in the Spirit (privately)

and with understanding (publicly)

v16-17 unlearned say Amen:

If prayer and worship in a public gathering is not done with understanding... in a known human language...how can the unlearned/unbeliever say Amen...Let it be so, I agree!

If prayer and worship in a public gathering is in an unknown language

- you give thanks to God well...praying in the Spirit
- but the other is not edified since he does not understand what is being said...which is the whole point in a public gathering

v18-19 yet in the church I had rather:

Again, the Apostle Paul is not diminishing the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues. He did so more than any of them...privately, his personal prayer and devotion

Paul was highly educated

- he spoke multiple languages
- was very intelligent...had a great mind

yet human language restricted his ability to praise and worship the Lord so he spoke and prayed in tongues...for which his intellect was unfruitful and for which he was very thankful

(Paul cherished the gift of tongues so why should I not covet it?)

But in the Church, the witnesses of God's love and truth are to speak in known languages that others would learn of Jesus Christ

Paul would rather speak one short sentence in the common language than speak for hours in tongues because he desired to strengthen, comfort, and encourage all, not just himself

btw...the Apostle Paul was not inspired to write his Epistles in an unknown human language but in the most widely understood language – Greek

v20 be not children...be children:

Ch 13:11

In context: selfishly exercising the gift of tongues in public worship is not spiritual, not a mature understanding of the gift

Be not “simple” in understanding the Word of God but be simple/innocent regarding evil

Rom 16:19b I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil

Be very knowledgeable of the Light, be not very knowledgeable of the darkness
Study the Light, do not study the darkness

v21-22 In the law it is written:

Is 28:9-13

Jer 5:11-17

The Lord sent His prophets to His people, calling them to repentance, speaking their language (Hebrew)

They did not listen

So He sent others not speaking Hebrew...as a warning

Speaking in tongues

- edifies the individual
- a sign for the unbeliever

But prophesying...speaking the Word of God in a known language to the listener...serves (v3) the believer, not the unbeliever

Ch 2:7-14

e.g. Acts 2:1-13...in the streets were unbelievers
followed by Acts 2:14-18.ff

v23 the whole church...one place...ye are mad:

If the whole church were to gather in one place in public to worship the Lord Jesus Christ, and everybody spoke in an unknown language, would not the visitors/unlearned/unbelievers think you all are crazy?!

“Those people are bonkers, nothing but a bunch of weirdos!
I couldn’t get out of there fast enough and I’m never going back!”

A very bad witness of Jesus, God the Father, and the Gospel

v24-25 But if all prophesy:

On the other hand, this is a very good witness of Jesus, the Father, and the Gospel

All speak the Word of God in a language understood by the hearers, including the unbelievers

Whereby

- the Holy Spirit witnesses of the Lordship of Jesus Christ into the heart of the unbeliever
- the Holy Spirit softens the heart of the unbeliever
- the Holy Spirit convicts the unbeliever of his sin (John 16:7-11)
- the unbeliever discerns the Light piercing the darkness in his heart and realizes he is a sinner in desperate need of the Savior
- the unbeliever’s heart is laid bare by the Word of God
Heb 4:12 For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
- the unbeliever humbles himself before the Creator God Who so loves him
- the unbeliever testifies that God is in you and in this place

This is why we invite lost loved ones and friends to join us in our worship service

- to hear the Word of God proclaimed in love
- to be touched by God Whose nature is love...

Is 55:10-11 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it.
(His work of salvation)

Which is better – v23 or v24-25?

In the church, prophesying is superior to tongues

v26 every one of you has:

Why is it that when you gather together in one place, publicly, you think there is an “open mic” and anybody and everybody “needs to” get up and speak, whether in a known language or an unknown language?

It is not edifying to the whole Body if everyone comes seeking the attention of others rather than seeking to edify others

The purpose of a public worship gathering is the edification of all present and speaking in tongues in that setting does not do that

v27-28 two...three...keep silence:

Context: the early Church did not meet in church buildings, they met in people's homes

“House churches” not mega-churches

In such a gathering there must be limitations placed on speaking in tongues, lest the gathering become disorderly and disruptive

- 2 or 3 at the most
- only if there is an interpretation
- if no interpretation,
 - keep silent in the church
 - speak privately to God

v29 two or three:

Likewise, for the sake of orderliness, let prophesying be limited to 2 or 3 speakers and let the others judge/discern what is shared

- all are to speak in a known language (with understanding of mind)
- 2 or 3 speak...all others judge it (Acts 17:11, 1 Thes 5:21)

v30-31 one by one:

While the Word of God is being shared, be orderly

Go one at a time

Don't interrupt each other

Wait your turn patiently, being considerate of others

So all may learn and comforted (2 Peter 3:18)

Law of Love: others vs self

v32 spirits...subject:

When the Holy Spirit moves in and thru us, we never lose control of Self

“The Holy Spirit took over and I had no control over what I was saying or doing!”

False!

Prov 25:28 He that *hath* no rule over his own spirit *is like* a city *that is* broken down, *and* without walls.

To “lose control” is disorderly and confusing and...

v33 not the author of confusion but of peace:

God is not the source of confusion, the devil is

God is the God of order, the devil is disorderly and disruptive

Confusion is unsettling in our hearts

God’s peace settles our “sheepish” heart

He has given us His Word and His Spirit to bring order to the confusion

v34-36 women keep silence: I

In the absence of context, this appears to be a gag order on women in the church

Yet [Ch 11:5](#)

Context: men and women were separated in the public gatherings
ala Jews at the Western Wailing wall (our heritage is Jewish)

So, during the public worship service, the woman was not to yell across the room to her husband, “Hey, Stephanus, what is this guy talking about? I do not understand this teaching!”

Instead, she is to wait until they get home to ask her questions, lest she disrupt the worship service

Nonetheless, it is not given by God for women to teach in the Church

[1 Tim 2:9-14](#)

However, [Titus 2:1-5](#)

Why?

God is the God of order

[Ch 11:3](#)

Eph 5:22-24, 32

Are we given a vote in the matter?

Are we given to pick-and-choose what we believe in the Word of God?

This whole chapter is about orderly worship of the God of order
Did the Word of God...inspired, infallible, inerrant...
come from us or to us from God?

Women pastors – unbiblical
And certainly not PC, is counter-culture
But what is the Church going to embrace – the Word of God or secular
humanism?

v37-38 let him acknowledge...let him be ignorant:
Whose words are these in Ch 14?
Who is the Author?

If you are spiritual, acknowledge the Holy Spirit's Authorship and
believe/obey/submit
If you do not believe/obey/submit, you are ignorant; ignorance is a choice
The Holy Spirit will speak to you

Phil 3:15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded:
and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall
reveal even this unto you

In these days of deception and confusion, there is much ignorance in the Church

v39-40 covet...forbid not...decently and in order:
Regarding these two gifts:

- covet prophesy...public, with understanding for edification of all
- do not forbid tongues...private, for self-edification

Bottom line in worship gathering and always:

- decently
- in order

to be a good witness of the God of order to those inside and outside the Church

Application

Jesus Christ was sent by God the Father as Light into the darkness of the world with a ministry of reconciliation and to call a people unto Himself

The Holy Spirit was sent by the Father and the Son

- to testify of Jesus Christ, not Himself
- to empower and equip the followers of Jesus to continue the work Jesus began
 - light in the darkness (Matt 5:14-16)
 - calling people out of the world into His Kingdom

The Holy Spirit comes bearing gifts so the Body of Christ is built up, stirred up, lifted up for that work

The Holy Spirit brings unity and order, not divisions and disorder

The Holy Spirit is our Teacher of the Word of God that brings

- order to the confusion in the world
- truth to the deceptions in the world

We live in days of confusion and deception...the days before Jesus returns

Note: The world is marching toward Ezk 38-39

The nations are fleeing Ukraine like scared sheep, leaving the wolf unopposed

Next: Syria, then Israel

Note: The world has been “prepped” for authoritarianism and a mark that is coming

The Living God is busy separating the sheep from the goats, in the world and in the Church

As stewards of the mysteries/truths of God (Ch 4:1-2), we are primarily to prophesy – speak the Truth in love (God’s very nature)

Pursue *agape*

Desire the spiritual gifts that benefits others

Be orderly in the worship of the God of order

Invitation: Laying on of hands for the Holy Spirit upon and a best gift for this week