

1 Corinthians Series #37 “Gifts In Worship” - 1 Cor. 14

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Growing Up In A Charismatic Church

1. In high school, before started going to Calvary Chapel, went to a charismatic church with my mother
2. Typical of so many hyper-charismatic fellowships . . .
 - a. de-emphasized the teaching of the bible
 - b. elevated the use of gifts; experiential end of moving in the Spirit
 - c. a meeting wasn't complete until someone had given a message in tongues and four or five people had been slain in the Spirit
 - d. I spent 2 years in that church; didn't learn a thing about the bible the whole time
3. After reading what Paul says in this letter, I tend to think that that church was the spiritual heir to the church in ancient Corinth
4. As we'll see in our study today, the Corinthians were having a real problem knowing how to structure their church meetings so as to be faithful to their calling as a church
5. Paul gives straightforward, practical, and wise guidance for the ordering of church services

B. Chapter 14

1. This chapter is very important for our study today
2. As we seek to walk in a healthy balance between knowledge and experience, what we find here lays down solid guidance

II. TEXT

A. Vs. 1-5

1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

1. As we've seen, Corinth highly divided over spiritual gifts
2. In ch. 12, had written about the diversity of the gifts of the Spirit being a part of bringing about unity in the body of Christ
3. In Ch. 13, reminded them that love is more important than gifts
 - a. they were envious and fighting

- b. claiming spiritual maturity
- c. had forsaken the call to love above all
- 4. But now he turns to the specific subject of how to use the gifts when they meet together for worship
- 5. Bear in mind that the context that this entire chapter speaks directly to their church meetings
- 6. Keep pursuing love, and keep using the gifts, but when you gather together, prophecy is the chief gift to use
- 7. The reason Paul had to elevate the role of prophecy was because the Corinthians had elevated a different gift to the place of pre-eminence = tongues

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.

- 8. From the contrast that Paul makes in this ch., it seems clear that those who spoke in tongues dominated the service
- 9. Very simply, Paul says that the main goal of their gathering must be mutual edification
- 10. And tongues edifies no one but the speaker while prophecy edifies everyone
- 11. v. 2 = **“he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God”**
 - a. the spiritual gift of tongues is Spirit-inspired speech in a language unknown to the one speaking
 - b. **“no one understands him; in the spirit he speaks mysteries”**
 - c. the only one who understands is God Himself
 - d. In Romans 8 we read that the HS intercedes for us in words that are not understandable to us but are to Him
- 12. Prophecy, on the other hand, is from God to man
 - a. V. 3 = **“he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men”**
 - b. it brings edification; builds us up in the faith
 - c. exhortation; calls us to action
 - d. comfort; speaks of God’s great love and grace
- 13. The one who speaks in a tongue, because no one

understands it, edifies no one but him/herself

- a. how is it edifying even to the one who speaks?
 - b. their spirit is in direct communication with God
 - c. the HS is interceding for them
 - d. they are participating in what we might call perfect prayer and praise
14. But the one who prophesies, because he/she is speaking forth the mind and the counsel of God in words that are understood, is edifying everyone who hears and listens

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

15. There is a practice fairly common in charismatic circles that violates what Paul so clearly says here
- a. someone will “give a message in tongues”
 - b. and then either they, or someone else will give what is supposed to be the interpretation
 - c. but it usually begins, “Thus saith the LORD”
 - d. the message that then comes forth is from God to man
 - e. Paul very clearly says that tongues are TO God, NOT men
 - f. interpretation of a tongue, if it is a true interpretation, will be either prayer or praise; it will be TO GOD, NOT men
16. Because Paul is so clear here, and because there are those who do not want to admit that this practice of “giving a message in tongues” is wrong, they have come up with the idea that there are two different kinds of tongues
- a. one for personal use; to God
 - b. one for church meetings; to man
 - c. they point to the first time the disciples spoke in tongues; Acts 2 - Day of Pentecost
 - d. people from all over the world heard them speaking in their own dialects
 - e. yes they did; but what did they hear exactly
 - f. Acts 2:11 = “We hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.”
 - g. what they heard was the disciples praising God; they were speaking to God in adoration and thanksgiving
17. Also, to shoot down this idea that there is a tongue that can be interpreted as a message from God to man, notice

the context in which Paul writes THIS passage =

- a. corporate worship
 - b. there is no such thing as a message in tongues from God for man
18. The only time a tongue can edify the larger church gathering is if its interpretation is given
- a. in that case, we get to eavesdrop on the intercessory work of the HS
 - b. we get to hear what perfect prayer and praise is like
 - c. and since we largely grow in the faith by seeing the example of others who are more mature and experienced than we -
 - d. when we hear an interpretation of a tongue, it gives us great insight into how to worship and pray!

B. Vs. 6-19

1. Paul is going to show how obvious and practical his teaching is now . . .

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?

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 himself 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.

2. This is precisely what was going on in Corinth
3. With their emphasis on tongues, there was so much gibberish no one could understand what anyone was saying
4. Paul is showing them the folly of a church meeting in which chaos reigns and their understanding of the ways and work of God is not deepened

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.

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.

5. Little comment is needed on these verses
6. Paul makes his case perfectly and clearly
7. The principle he establishes for church meetings is this:
8. The goal is mutual edification by speaking that which is understandable
9. And that is why, while Calvary Chapel believes in the gifts of the HS, we place the greatest emphasis in both our worship and our study on what is understandable
 - a. we study the Bible in a way that is simple and balanced
 - b. we worship and sing in songs with words we understand
10. Now, in the next 6 verses Paul throws us a curve that has proven to be an extremely difficult passage to understand

C. Vs. 20-25

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

1. Paul has already called them immature and selfish for the way they allowed envy and petty jealousy to split them into warring factions
2. Now he tells them to grow up
3. When it comes to understanding, they should be mature
4. When it comes to malice, to envy, to jealousy, they should be as innocent as babes

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.

5. Key to understanding what he is saying in this passage is knowing the context for this quote
6. From Isaiah 28
 - a. God is speaking of the judgment that will come of Israel for their rebellion against Him
 - b. He is saying that because the Jews have rejected Him, He will send the Assyrians and Babylonians to defeat them in battle and carry them away to

- other lands
 - c. hearing their conquerors speak in other languages they do not know will be a sign to them of their judgment
- 7. Now Paul applies this to the gift of tongues

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.

- 8. Tongues constitutes a sign to the unbeliever of his separation or distance from the people of God
 - a. it is a negative sign
 - b. in that, it is not one that proves anything to the unbeliever
 - c. rather, it is a sign that he cannot understand
 - d. just as the Jews could not understand the sign of their captives speech being proof of God's judgment
- 9. Prophecy, on the other hand, is a positive sign to believers that God is working in their midst
- 10. The real problem comes in the next verses where Paul appears to contradict what he has just said . . .

23 Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?

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.

- 11. If someone comes in and everyone is speaking in tongues, they will think you are mad!
- 12. But if someone comes in and hears the Spirit inspiring people to speak forth the mind and counsel of God, he/she will be convicted by the power of the truth
- 13. The reason that many people are confused by these verses is because they take Paul's words about tongues being a sign to unbelievers in v. 22 top mean a sign that brings them to faith, but in verse 23 says they will hear tongues and think you are mad.
- 14. The passage from Isaiah tips us off to the fact that Paul means the sign of tongues to be a negative one; one that stands as a witness not TO the unbeliever, but AGAINST

him/her

15. Also, keep Paul's context in mind
 - a. the whole passage speaks of the fact that when the church meets it is not to be given to a tonguesathon
 - b. it is to focus on what is understandable
 - c. and when the word of God is declared boldly, the lost will come to faith

D. Vs. 26-40

1. Now Paul is going to get real specific in laying down guidelines on how to operate in the gifts of prophecy and tongues in church meetings
2. I am so thankful for what we find here
 - a. because I have been a part of Christian groups whose attitude about their meetings was, "Hang loose and let the Spirit move, brother."
 - b. no order, no schedule
 - c. play it by ear
3. In laying down these guidelines, Paul was not speaking off the cuff
4. Nor was he an early version of John MacArthur who denied the gifts of the Spirit
5. No way!
6. What we read here is inspired by the HS Himself!

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.

7. Everyone in Corinth want a shot at the limelight
8. So everyone had an offering when they got together
9. But not everyone's contribution fit the rule of edifying others

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.

10. Paul did not forbid tongues in corporate worship
11. What he did do is bring some order to it
12. No more than three could give and utterance
13. They had to go in turn

14. And after each one spoke, there was to be an interpretation
15. This means that a person had to either have the gift of interpretation themselves or they had to know an interpreter was present
16. If there was no one to interpret, they were to keep it to themselves
17. I have been given the gift of tongues
 - a. I use it in my personal prayer life
 - b. and also in worship
 - c. but I do not have the gift of interpretation
 - d. and I have never been confident enough in the knowledge someone would interpret to speak out
 - e. so I speak quietly, so as not to intrude on the worship of others

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,

18. Again, when the church gathers together and prophecy is given there is to be no more than three
19. They are to speak in turn
20. And no one person is to hog all the time
21. In v. 29, Paul says that after a prophecy is given “the others” are to judge
 - a. who are these “others?”
 - b. could mean other prophets
 - c. or, the rest of the church
 - d. I think he means the rest of the church
 - e. 1 Thess 5:19-21 **“Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good.”**
 - f. when a prophecy is given, believers are to consider it in light of the word of God
 - g. if it is true to both the letter and spirit of the word, then it is safe
 - h. if not, it is to be rejected
22. There is entirely too much prophecy that is given today in a dogmatic way
 - a. some charismatic personality will say, “Thus saith the LORD” and people will just blindly follow

- whatever comes next
 - b. we have seen the numerous TV evangelists who have supposedly had a word from God for their partners in ministry
 - c. one man had a vision of a 500 foot tall Jesus who told him if he didn't raise so many millions of dollars by a certain date, he would take his life
 - d. Jesus presented as terrorist
- 23. God's people are commanded to test the words of the prophets
- 24. So anytime someone demands that you follow their prophetic commands without question, you can take a good guess where they're coming from
- 25. There is one more thing we need to notice about tongues and prophecy here
 - a. Paul tells the one who speaks in a unknown tongue to keep silent if there is no interpretation
 - b. he also says that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets
 - c. I don't know how many times I've seen someone wig out the gifts of the Spirit
 - 1) while in worship, break out in tongues
 - 2) once in San Jose, during an especially powerful altar call, lady broke out in a prophecy = QUENCH!
 - d. God does not interrupt Himself!
- 26. You'll notice that I broke v. 33 in the middle
 - a. there is no punctuation in the Greek text
 - b. so knowing where a thought begins and ends is not always easy
 - c. it makes a lot more sense to put the last part of v. 33 with 34

as in all the churches of the saints.

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.

- 27. Here's a passage sure to raise the ire of every feminist within 10 miles
- 28. In fact, it may rub most of us the wrong way
- 29. Seems like a command drawn from pre-historic times

30. Sorting out what Paul is saying here requires looking at the larger context of the whole letter
 - a. as we saw in ch. 11, there were serious problems with order in the church and the homes of the Corinthian believers
 - b. there was a group of women who had defied the biblical revelation that a wife was to be in submission to her husband
 - c. this same group of women had also defied God's order for the leadership of the church
 - d. Paul wrote to explain that while women were equal to men in standing before God as human beings -
 - e. when it came to the relationships of the home and church, their roles were different
 - g. refer you to the tape on Ch. 11 for details
31. Here he is addressing the same problem but in the specific situation of judging prophecy
32. He doesn't mean that women are to shut up in church
 - a. in 11:5 & 13 he had said that women *could* pray and prophecy in church meetings
 - b. so that isn't what he means here
33. The immediate context is the judging of prophecy; that is what they were to keep silent about
34. Apparently the Corinthians had made some innovations in their worship that defied the traditions handed down to them by Paul and the other apostles
 - a. that is why Paul begins this passage by saying -
 - b. **as in all the churches of the saints, let your women keep silent in the churches**
 - c. notice what he goes on to say in vs. 36-38

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

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.

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

35. Paul is saying that when it comes to church meetings, prophecies are to be judged by the men and there is not to be a public debate over the meaning of a prophecy
36. If a wife doesn't understand a prophetic utterance, she is to wait until she gets home and then ask her husband
37. This will keep order in the church service and allow

people to continue to be edified

38. So, to summarize, Paul is not muzzling women in the church
39. What he is doing is honoring the God-ordained role of male leadership in the church and reminding the Corinthians that to upset this order is shameful

**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.**

40. Both prophecy and tongues are gifts of the Spirit that are not to be denied or neglected
41. But the gifts must never defy the rule of God-glorifying order in the church.

III. CONCLUSION

A. The Gifts At Calvary

1. One of the things I look forward to as our fellowship matures is a greater familiarity with the gifts of the HS
2. One of the best places to cultivate the ministry of the Spirit is in home groups where the manifestations of the Spirit just seem to be more effective
3. I look forward to the day when what we read about here in ch. 14 will be a part of our worship and church experience
4. If it happens that while we are in worship you receive what you believe to be a word from God to be shared with the congregation, seek out one of the elders and let them know
5. They will ask you a couple questions and we will very likely provide you an opportunity to share it

B.