

Message #62

I Corinthians 14:13-22

The Word of God is a specific map. It is a divinely inspired guide that can give meaning and direction to life. It can give a person depth and can continually guide them in the direction of pleasing God.

I am convinced that most people who come to church are people who have enough problems and pressures, doubts and frustrations. The one place that should send a strong, secure, accurate message is the church. If ever there is to be a place of decency and orderliness (14:40), a place of clarity and instruction, it is to be the church of God.

In I Corinthians 14, the word “church” shows up nine times (14:4, 5, 12, 19, 23, 28, 33-35). Both God and Paul are very much interested in what is happening in church. If people are not being clearly instructed in God’s Word so they can be built up in the faith, whatever is happening is not pleasing God or powerfully changing the lives of God’s people.

NO ONE SHOULD SEEK TO SPEAK IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN THE CHURCH, BUT ALL SHOULD SEEK TO CLEARLY UNDERSTAND THE WORD OF GOD AND ALL THINGS THAT OCCUR IN THE CHURCH SERVICE.

Paul was so dead set against someone speaking in tongues in the church that he actually said that if one had this gift, he should pray for another gift, the gift of interpretation or translation (14:13). That word “interpret,” as we have already discussed is a word that means to interpret or to explain by translation. In church, Paul wanted everything understood so God’s people could be built up in the faith.

REASON #1 – Because speaking in tongues does not edify the Church. **14:12-13**

The conjunction “therefore” (14:13) is one that means because of or on account of the fact that the ultimate objective of the church is to build up (edify) the body of Christ, the tongues speaker should pray that he gets a new gift, the ability to translate a foreign language.

Speaking in foreign languages does not in any way build up the church; in fact, it is meaningless in a church service. One who speaks a foreign language in a church service does so to build up himself, not the church (14:4).

REASON #2 – Because speaking in tongues is not understood by the speaker. **14:14-15**

The ONLY time worship is acceptable to God is when both the spirit and mind are participating. Both the heart and the mind must be involved in any true worship of God. True Biblical spirituality NEVER excludes the mind (Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10; Matt. 22:37).

The word “mind,” which shows up three times in two verses (14:14-15) means to turn one’s mind toward something. According to Paul, worship is only fruitful when one’s mind clearly understands and is turned toward God.

Understanding with the mind is a critical part of a spiritual life; in fact, it is the focus of the mind that is a key to a transformed life (Rom. 12:2).

REASON #3 – Because speaking in tongues does not benefit the hearer. **14:16-17**

Result #1 - The hearers cannot respond. **14:16b**

If you don’t know what has just been said, you have no idea as to how to respond.

Result #2 - The hearers are not built up. **14:17**

One Biblical purpose of church is to build up people in the faith. Tongues speaking cannot possibly accomplish this objective because people have no idea what is being said.

REASON #4 – Because speaking in tongues was not the primary objective of Paul. **14:18-19**

Paul was God’s apostle to the Gentile. He founded the church in Corinth and he was a pioneer church planting missionary, the likes of which the world has never seen since his departure. He spoke in more places and in more languages than anyone else in the N.T. world, including the other apostles.

Notice carefully, however, Paul’s philosophy of ministry (14:19). In the church, Paul would rather speak five words that could be understood rather than ten thousand words that could not be understood.

The word “instruct” (14:19) is a word from which we get our English word catechism. The word does seem to suggest that there was supposed to be systematic instruction taking place in the early church. Paul believed that systematic, understandable instruction and teaching was 2000 times greater than speaking in a foreign language.

REASON #5 – Because speaking in tongues is not the mark of maturity. **14:20**

Little children want immature things; they have an immature ignorance about things. Little children do not want evil things; they do have an innocence about them.

Tongues speakers are spiritually immature.

There is no question that it is a clear feeding on the Word of God that produces maturity in the life of the believer (I Pet. 2:1-2). It is also a feeding on God’s Word that produces purity in the life of the believer (Ps. 119:11).

REASON #6 – Because speaking in tongues in the N.T. church is not the purpose of tongues.
14:21-22

Paul quotes from Is. 28:9-12 to establish the purpose of tongues.

According to this quote, then, tongues was a sign of divine displeasure. It signaled to the Jew that God had removed His protective blessings. The purpose of tongues was to signal to the unbelieving Jew that God was now using another foreign nation to make a statement for Him.

Five words clearly understood from God's Word can change your life like no foreign language ever could.

- 1) All have sinned against God.
- 2) God still loves the sinner.
- 3) God's Son died for sinners.
- 4) You must accept Jesus Christ.
- 5) Believe and you are saved.
- 6) Reject and you are damned.