

INTRODUCTION

1. We have just completed our study of 1 Corinthians chapter 13 on love
2. Chapter 12 gave a catalogue of gifts, chapter 13 gave the correct use of gifts (love), and now chapter 14 will set forth the **misuse** of gifts. This chapter shows the superiority of prophecy over tongues. (Richison, Grant. [Verse by Verse through the Book of 1 Corinthians](#). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, 2007. Print.)
3. Please take your Bible and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 14
4. Today we are looking at verses 1-5.
5. Listen as I read these verses:

(1) Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

(2) For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries.

(3) But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation.

(4) One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church.

(5) Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

1 Corinthians 14:1-5 - NASB

1. We are introduced once again to the subject of love and the mention of two gifts: prophecy and tongues
2. Prophecy is superior; tongues is inferior
3. Prophecy is primary; tongues are secondary
4. These gifts were to be desired but only if they edified the church
5. Prophecy has that ability; tongues do not
6. Prophecy speaks to men; tongues do not
7. The true gift of tongues were confused by the Corinthians
8. They counterfeited it and Satan used it to created chaos in the church
9. According to verse 40, Paul says, "all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner."
10. But that wasn't the case in the church at Corinth
11. Paul asks in chapter 12, verses 29-30, "(29) All are not apostles, are they? All are not prophets, are they? All are not teachers, are they? All are not workers of miracles, are they? (30) All do not have gifts of healings, do they? All do not speak with tongues, do they? All do not interpret, do they?"

12. In chapter 14, verse 26, he says, "What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification."
13. Everyone one doing the same thing at the same time
14. Everyone was pursuing the showy gifts and no one was edifying the church
15. Also, what dominated the church were the mysteries of Babylon
16. Since this was the culture, the church accepted it
17. They had developed all kinds of rites, and rituals, and vows, and baptisms, and animal sacrifices, and feasts, and fasts, and ablutions for sin, like dunking in a frozen river, or crawling on your knees for miles.
18. They had all kinds of things that were phony religious things, and ecstatic speeches and visions and prophecies were all a part of it.
19. When you went to assemble with the Corinthian Christians, you entered into a situation of absolute chaos, total chaos. (<https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/1871/the-truth-about-tongues-part-1>)
20. So coming off chapter 13 on love, Paul begins by giving the exhortation to...

LESSON

I. Pursue Love (v.1a)

"Pursue love"

The word that Paul uses for "pursue" is the Greek word *dioko* (pres.act.ind.)

It means "to put to flight, to pursue, to persecute" (VCEDONTW)

One lexicon says it is "to drive away, to do something with intense effort and with definite purpose or goal" (Louw-Nida)

The idea is with intense effort:

1. Like a hunter chasing his prey
2. Like persecuting someone

It is "to be so vehement, and so excited, and so energized, and so after something that you literally persecuted that thing. You dog its steps."

(John MacArthur, <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/1871/the-truth-about-tongues-part-1>)

Paul later told the Corinthians in 16:14 to "Let all that you do be done in love."

Pursuing love was not just for the Corinthians. He told Timothy to do that too when he said in 1 Timothy 6:11, "But flee from these things, you man of God, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness."

Did you see that was not the only thing he was to pursue?

Included in his pursuit of love, he was also to pursue "righteousness, godliness, faith, perseverance and gentleness."

Peter said to add love to your faith when he said in 2 Peter 1:5-7, "(5) Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, in your faith supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge, (6) and in your knowledge, self-control, and in your self-control, perseverance, and in your perseverance, godliness, (7) and in your godliness, brotherly kindness, and in your brotherly kindness, love."

Love is the great motivator, the only true motivator, of good works. It is also the great motivator of every spiritual ministry and of the proper use of every spiritual gift.

MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.

So transitioning from what he wrote in chapter 13 on love, the Corinthians were to chase after above all gifts even though they were still to...

II. Desire Spirituals (v.1b)

The word "gifts" is in italics which means it's not in the original but added by the translators.

The word means "to be or become marked by active interest, passion, and enthusiasm for something, often a cause or faith." (Logos)

In other words, they were to have a "passion" or "zeal" for spirituals

The entire phrase can be translated, "Pursue or chase after love, but continue desiring spirituals."

In other words, Paul is saying, "I'm not telling you to quit desiring gifts."

In 12:31, he already said, "You earnestly desire the greater gifts" or the "showy gifts."

You should pursue love, but don't stop pursuing gifts," or the spiritual realm literally.

In other words, "I don't want you to quit, because you should want the ministry of the Holy Spirit through the gifts of the Spirit.

I'm not saying don't have anything to do with gifts.

But rather pursue love and continue to seek the spiritual realm, the realm of the operation of the Holy Spirit, the true things that the Spirit of God is doing. (MacArthur)

He continues in verse 1 "but especially (mallon)" or "more than that" that you prophesy"

And now he shows how prophesying is superior to speaking in tongues beginning in verse 2

Each time he says, "for one who speaks in a tongue" and "But one who prophesies" and lists the benefits of both

He does this in vv.2-4 and concludes in verse 5 with desiring those speak the true gift of tongues but even more that they prophesy

So, chase after love, be zealous for spirituals, but more than that prophesy

III. Prophecy (vv.1c-5)

1. The Problem with Tongues (vv.2-4)

(2) For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. (3) But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. (4) One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church." 1 Corinthians 14:2-4 - NASB

1. Tongues do not speak to men (v.2)

1. Paul uses the Greek participle "speak" 6 times in verses 2-5

2. The participle is referring to speaking words

3. It's used to express in speech

1. John 8:12 says, "Then Jesus spoke."

4. It's used to convey the gospel

1. Paul said in Philippians 1:14, "And that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to

speak the word of God without fear."

5. It's used in the LXX for speech or words spoken (Gen.27:6)

2. Tongues speak to a god (v.2)

"For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God."

1. "Not to men"

1. Tongues as it is used here cannot speak to men, only prophesying does that
2. The word for "tongue" is singular and is referring to gibberish, ecstatic speech
3. The translators of the KJV have inserted "unknown" to help identify this
4. When glossa is used in the NT it is always referring to human language
5. It always biblically means "human language" both in the New Testament Greek and the LXX
6. Its meaning is "normal, bona fide human language."
 1. Only two times in the Septuagint does the word *glōssa* appear when it doesn't mean normal human language and those two times, Isaiah 29:24 and Isaiah 32:4, it doesn't mean ecstatic speech, it doesn't mean pagan babble, it simply means a stammering or a stuttering.

2. But the normative except for those two occasions is intelligent, normal human language. That's the way it appears in Acts 2, *glōssa*" because that's what its normal meaning is. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [John MacArthur Sermon Archive](#). Panorama City, CA: Grace to You, 2014. Print.)

3. This kind of ecstatic speech only speaks...

2. "But to God"

1. A better translation is "to a god."

2. The Greek has no definite article, and such anarthrous constructions usually are translated with an indefinite article

3. Acts 17:23 has the same form of *theō* [god] and is used in reference to "an unknown god". (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

4. No where in Scripture does it record using ecstatic speech or gibberish when speaking to God

1. In fact we are commanded not to in Matthew 6:7, "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words."

2. John 17 records Jesus praying in His high priestly prayer to the Father. It's all in an intelligible language

3. Tongues are not understood (v.2)

"for no one understands"

1. The word "understands" is the Greek word *akouo*, which means "to hear"
2. When gibberish or ecstatic speech is spoken no one can hear or understand what is being said. That's why it must be interpreted
3. Verse 28 says, "But if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church, and let him speak to himself and to God"
4. In other words, "Without those conditions, one was to meditate and pray silently." (MacArthur)

4. Tongues are pagan mysteries (v.2)

"but in his spirit he speaks mysteries"

1. The spirit by which they spoke was not the Holy Spirit, but their own human spirit or some demon; and the mysteries they declared were the type associated with the pagan mystery religions, which was espoused to be the depths that only the initiated few were privileged to know and understand.
2. Those mysteries were totally unlike the ones mentioned in Scripture (e.g., Matt. 13:11; Eph. 3:9), which are divine revelations of truths previously hidden (*see notes on 12:7; Eph. 3:3–6*) (MacArthur)

5. Tongues do not edify (v.4)

"One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself"

1. Paul is using sarcasm to mark its selfishness as some kind of self-edification.
2. This illicit building up of self comes from pride-induced emotion which only produces more pride. (MacArthur)

2. The Priority of Prophesying (vv.3, 5)

Verse 3 says, "But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation"

1. Prophesying edifies (v.3)

1. The word "edification" (oikodome, noun) refers to building a house and is used metaphorically to "the act of bringing something closer to fullness or completion"
2. In Ephesians 4:11-12, Paul says, "(11) And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, (12) for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ."
3. Paul says in verse 12 to "seek to abound for the edification of the church."
4. In verse 26, he says, "Let all things be done for edification."
5. William MacDonald says, "The man who prophesies...builds people up, encourages them, and comforts them. The reason for this is that he is speaking in the language of the people; that is what makes the difference. When Paul says that the prophet builds up, stirs up, and binds up, he is not giving a definition. He is simply saying that these results follow when the message is given in a language the people know. (MacDonald, William. [*Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*](#). Ed. Arthur Farstad. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995. Print.)

2. Prophesying exhorts (v.3)

1. The Greek word "exhortation" (paraklesis, noun) is "a calling to one's side" (*para*, "beside," *kaleo*, "to call") (Vine, W. E., Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr. [*Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New*](#)

[Testament Words](#) 1996 : 110. Print.)

2. It means “to exhort” or “encourage” (Fritz Rienecker, *The Linguistic Key to the Greek NT*, 530).
3. It carries the “idea of wanting to help or be helped” (MacArthur).
4. It is “used of every kind of calling to a person which is meant to produce a particular effect” (WE Vine, *Vine’s Expository Dictionary*, 112).
5. Paul used this word in Romans 12:1 when he urged the believers at Rome to “present [their] bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God.”
6. He used it when he wrote to the Corinthians urging them to unity in 1:10: “Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment.”
7. Each time he used this word, he was exhorting them to a proper behavior — a behavior not apart from knowledge but because of knowledge.
8. Only prophesying can do this; tongues cannot

3. Prophesying comforts (v.3)

1. The Greek word for "consolation" (*paramuthia* (παράμυθία, 3889), primarily “a speaking closely to anyone” (*para*, “near,” *muthos*, “speech”), hence denotes “consolation, comfort,” with a greater degree of tenderness. (Vine, W. E., Merrill F. Unger, and William White Jr. [Vine’s Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words](#) 1996 : 111. Print.) and is "the act of giving relief in affliction" (Logos)
2. Consolation is to lovingly address those who are suffering, afflicted, sad (such as the poor), abandoned, imprisoned, impoverished—especially for the sake of Christ—and to offer them such encouragement that they

receive consolation and are strengthened in a spirit of endurance.

3. This practice of *paramythia* is the responsibility of all Christians, but especially of prophets, the ministers of the Word of God. (Manetsch, Scott M., Timothy George, and David W. McNutt, eds. [1 Corinthians: New Testament](#). IXa. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017. Print. Reformation Commentary on Scripture.)
 4. The gift of prophecy is thus given to the church so that the ignorant might be instructed, the idle might be warned, and the downhearted might receive consolation. (Manetsch)
4. Prophecy is greater than tongues unless there is an interpreter (v.5)
1. Martin Luther said, "To prophecy is to take the sense [of the passage] from God and to offer it to others. To exegete is to hand on the meaning to others. Thus St. Paul means that to speak with tongues does not improve the congregation; however, to prophecy and to exegete improve the congregation.
 2. So interpretation of tongues is as important as prophecy when there is an interpreter
 3. Paul desired that they spoke the true gift "but even more that they prophecy"
 4. But if there was one who interpreted the true gift of tongues, then "the church may receive edifying"

CONCLUSION

1. All of us are to chase after love because it is the greatest and it is eternal

2. We are to also be zealous for spirituals but pursue that which builds up the church
3. Preaching does just that over tongues
4. Preaching produces conviction according to verse 25, tongues only produce confusion and chaos
5. Gifts are important but so is love and so is preaching over tongues
6. That's why tongues was a sign to unbelievers and preaching was a sign to believers
7. We don't need tongues today because according to verse 21 their purpose has been met and according to the middle voice used of the Greek word pauo in 13:8 they ceased
8. Church history records this and so should we
9. But preaching or prophesying hasn't and will continue into the millennium period
10. Only when the perfect comes or the eternal state will it be set aside
11. Now I realize this may be new teaching to you
12. In other words, you knew we didn't speak in tongues but may have wondered why
13. Well this is why
14. They ceased and preaching the gospel is greater
15. Let's preach the good news to everyone we meet as we leave here today
16. If you have never surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, he offers you eternal life if you repent of your sin and turn to Him

17. Let's pray