

INTRODUCTION

1. Once again we have the privilege to study the Word of God
2. So please take your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 14
3. We are picking up where we left off last week at verse 13
4. Paul is continuing his argument that "speech" is to be "clear" (v.9) and with meaning and for it to benefit anyone
5. We saw in verses 6 thru 12 that for the true gift of tongues to benefit anyone it must be interpreted
6. He then uses "lifeless things" to illustrate this in vv.7-8 by speaking of the flute, harp, and bugle
7. Each have distinctive tones or they would be useless
8. The same is true with language
9. Gibberish, which is not a language, benefits no one
10. It's just bar, bar, bar (from barbaron in verse 11)
11. So since they were zealous for spirituals, they must be deliberate in edifying the church
12. Now in verses 13-19 he continues to show why speech that is clear is essential
13. Listen to verses 13-19 as I read them:
14. (13) Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. (14) For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. (15) What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. (16) Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying?

(17) For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified. (18) I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; (19) however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

15. Speech isn't speech if no one understands it
16. The same is true with the gift of tongues
17. The true gift could be understood by the hearer who spoke that language
18. The example is Acts chapter 2
19. When the Apostles spoke with the true gift of tongues, Acts 2:6 says, "each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language."
20. This is not true with the false gift of tongues
21. It's gibberish
22. And gibberish is nonsensical
23. It has no meaning at all
24. Here are some examples of words that sound like speech but that are really gibberish nonsense with no meaning:
 1. Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious (made famous in the 1964 movie "Mary Poppins")
 2. Iggily biggily
 3. Gollygoops
 4. Ittly bittly
 5. Pasghetti
 6. Coochie coo
 7. Pigglywiggly
 8. Woospiedoo

9. Zowzy

10. Tispy tospy

11. Bazinga

25. The poem "Jabberwocky" in Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass* is perhaps the most famous example of gibberish.

26. Lewis Carroll, whose real name was actually Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, was famed for his love of nonsensical language and inventing new words. Here is an extract from the poem:

1. "Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
2. Did gyre and gimble in the wabe;
3. All mimsy were the borogoves,
4. And the mome raths outgrabe.
5. "Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
6. The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
7. Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
8. The frumious Bandersnatch!"

(<https://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-gibberish.html>)

27. Now did you understand any of this?

28. Of course not, it's not a language

29. But if I spoke, "Buenos días" (<https://translate.yandex.com/?lang=en-la>)

30. That's Spanish for "Good morning"

31. If I said, "Latina est lingua" (<https://translate.yandex.com/?lang=en-la>)

32. I said, "Latin is a language"

33. The point is gibberish is not a language

34. It's nonsensical and no one can understand it
35. There are 7,117 known languages in the world
36. And all are with understanding to the hearer who speaks it because it is a language
37. Now as we look at verses 13-19, we are going to hear Paul continue his sarcasm which originally began in verses 8-10
38. If Paul were not speaking sarcastically of counterfeited tongues he would be asking the Corinthians to seek the true gift of interpretation
39. But he has already made it clear that the Holy Spirit sovereignly distributes gifts "individually just as He wills" (12:11)
40. Gifts are not to be sought by individuals, but only accepted and properly used
41. Paul sarcastically reproaches carnal believers for their immaturity (cf. v. 20), saying in effect, "While you are jabbering away in your unintelligible pseudo-tongues, you could at least ask God to give you some means of making them beneficial to the church. As you now exercise them they are both pagan and pointless." (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [*1 Corinthians*](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)
42. Remember the singular use of the word "tongue" is referring to the false gift
43. And the plural "tongues" is the true gift
44. The singular occurs again in verses 13-14 with...

LESSON

I. THE PROBLEM OF SPEAKING IN A TONGUE (v.13)

Paul says, "Therefore, let one who speaks in a tongue (singular) pray that he may interpret."

1. "Therefore" refers us back to what he's been saying in verses 6-12 but more specifically to the edification of the church.

2. The issue of edification is central to all gifts

1. Paul said in 12:7, "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."
2. The Greek word for "common good" (sumphero) means to "be profitable," "to confer a benefit" (BDAD)
3. The "manifestation of the Spirit is given to profit all, for the profit of all, for the benefit of all.
4. So the purpose of true gifts is for others, never for yourself
5. The whole body is to be built up
6. The gift of languages was for manifesting the truth of God to others
7. It was for speaking the truth of God in a language the unbeliever would hear, and he would say, "My this is amazing! That person doesn't know my language, and yet he speaks it. God must be speaking through him."
8. Then, when the person went on to give the Gospel, or speak the truth as Peter did on the Day of Pentecost, there would be belief in their heart because they had seen that God was speaking by virtue of the wonders that attended the message. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [John MacArthur Sermon Archive](#). Panorama City, CA: Grace to You, 2014. Print.)

3. Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue (singular, the false gift, words that cannot be understood)

1. Pray that he may interpret
2. This is not teaching that an individual is to seek the gift of interpretation
3. Again 1 Corinthians 12:11 says, "But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills."
4. What Paul is saying, "While you're jabbering, why don't you pray something intelligent, like asking God for something that will mean something to us?" (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [John MacArthur Sermon Archive](#). Panorama City, CA: Grace to You, 2014. Print.)

Paul again puts himself in the text in verse 14. He did that in v.6 and he identifies...

II. THE PROBLEM OF PRAYING IN A TONGUE (v.14)

He says, "For if I pray in a tongue (singular, the false gift) or "if I pray in gibberish," "my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful."

1. In other words, "If I pray in gibberish my spirit (pneuma, can be translated "spirit, breath or wind")
2. It could be better to say, "If I pray in gibberish my breath or wind prays"
3. I'm doing nothing but blowing into the air
4. Charismatics says "my spirit" is referring to the Holy Spirit
5. But the problem is it is comparing it with my understanding
6. Also, the Holy Spirit could not be praying through a person while bypassing his mind
7. And he certainly was not saying that the mind of the Holy Spirit sometimes can be unfruitful" (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)
8. If I pray in gibberish, it's mindless
9. I don't understand what I'm saying, you don't understand what I'm saying
10. It has no mental benefit
11. It's "unfruitful" (akarpos, karpos is fruit, the negative particle "a" makes it akarpos, unfruitful or unproductive)
12. Beloved, you know as well as I do that there is never a time in the Word of God when God wants us to be mindless
13. God never sets a premium on your brain being turned off—never
14. There is never a time when God wants us to function on pure emotion without understanding, never

15. What was going on in Corinth, then, was wrong. It was a mindless, emotional experiences that had no meaning
16. In fact, in Matthew 22:37, Jesus said, “Thou shalt love the Lord, your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.”
17. To pray or sing in a tongue is useless—useless to you and useless to anybody else. It is mindless emotion. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [John MacArthur Sermon Archive](#). Panorama City, CA: Grace to You, 2014. Print.)

Paul asks in verses 15-16...

III. THE OUTCOME OF IT ALL (vv.15-17)

He says, "(15) What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. (16) Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the “Amen” at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying?"

1. "What is the outcome then" is literally "*What is it then?*"
2. It means, "What shall I do? What is the proper course for me to pursue? What is my practice and my desire"
3. It indicates the *conclusion* to which the reasoning had conducted him, or the course which he would pursue in view of all the circumstances of the case. (Barnes, Albert. [Notes on the New Testament: I Corinthians](#). Ed. Robert Frew. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885. Print.)
4. He then gives the reasoning to what he's been saying in verses 13 and 14:
 1. I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also
 2. In other words, "I will *unite* all the benefits which *can* result to myself and to others. I deem it of vast importance to pray with the spirit in such a way that the *heart* and the *affections* may be engaged, so that I may myself derive benefit from it; but I will also unite with that, utility to others; I will use such

language that they may understand it, and be profited."

3. *And I will pray with the understanding also*. So that others may understand me. I will make the appropriate use of the intellect, so that it may convey ideas, and make suitable impressions on the minds of others
4. *I will sing with the spirit*. It is evident that the same thing might take place in singing which occurred in prayer. It might be in a foreign language, and might be unintelligible to others
5. The affections of the man himself might be excited, and his heart engaged in the duty, but it would be profitless to others
6. Paul, therefore, says that he would so celebrate the praises of God as to excite the proper affections in his own mind, and so as to be intelligible and profitable to others." (Barnes, Albert. [*Notes on the New Testament: I Corinthians*](#). Ed. Robert Frew. London: Blackie & Son, 1884–1885. Print.)
5. In verses 16 and 17 he gives the alternative: (16) Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? (17) For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified.
6. In other words, you need to say something profitable so a brother can say "amen" to it. (McGee, J. Vernon. [*Thru the Bible Commentary*](#). electronic ed. Vol. 5. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997. Print.)
7. So, "Praying and singing with the spirit must be accompanied by praying and singing with the mind also. It is obvious that edification cannot exist apart from the mind." (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [*1 Corinthians*](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

Paul ends in verses 18-19 by interjecting himself again in the passage by saying...

IV. PAUL HAD THE TRUE GIFT (vv.18-19)

He says, "(18) I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; (19) however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue."

1. Paul had the true gift of tongues (v.18)

1. There is no record of him speaking in tongues nor does anyone know how many languages he could speak

2. The Scripture record Hebrew and Greek

2. There are people today we spoke many different languages

For example, "Cardinal Giuseppe Caspar Mezzofanti, born in 1774, spoke 38 languages and 40 dialects. The 10th-century Muslim polymath Al-Farabi was reputed to know 70 languages. The German Hans Conon von der Gabelentz, born in 1807, researched and published grammars of 80 languages. The record, though, probably belongs to Sir John Bowring, Governor of Hong Kong from 1854 to 1859, who was said to know 200 languages, and capable of speaking 100."
(<https://www.sciencefocus.com/science/what-is-the-record-for-the-most-languages-spoken-by-one-person>)

3. But in spite of his gift of tongues, he desired to understand what he was saying in the church so others would benefit (v.19)

4. This takes us back to verse 6 where he said, "But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching?"

5. He knew that was better than speaking in a foreign language when there were no foreigners in the church at Corinth

CONCLUSION

1. What can be said in all of this?

2. The false gift of tongues profits no one, so stop doing it!

3. Speak, pray and sing with the mind so you know what is going on and so others will be benefited

4. Remember the church is to be built up by your spiritual gift not you

5. Let's pray

6. If you're here today in need of salvation

7. It can only be found in Jesus Christ

8. He is the "way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father" except through Him

9. Come to Him now