

INTRODUCTION

1. We are returning to our study of 1 Corinthians
2. Please take your Bibles and turn with me to chapter 14
3. Today we are looking at verses 26-40
4. For the past 4 weeks we have looked at the abuse of the gift of tongues
5. The Corinthians had abused this gift by:
 1. Using it as a personal private prayer language
 2. Using it for self-edification
 3. Using it for reasons not intended
 4. Using it to send a confusing message to unbelievers and those ungifted
6. This caused confusion and chaos
7. The passage that we're considering this morning reveals more problems
8. Everyone was doing the same thing at the same time
9. No one was following a particular procedure so the church could be edified
10. Even the prophets in the church were speaking at the same time
11. Paul says in verse 33 that "God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."
12. He begins in verse 26 with...

LESSON

I. THE PROBLEM WITH GIFTS (v.26)

Paul says, "What then brethren?"

1. This is the same phrase used in verse 15
2. Paul compares tongues and prophecy in verses 23-25 and their effect on the church
3. Tongues without interpretation produces madness among "ungifted men" and "unbelievers" (v.23)
4. Whereas prophecy produces conviction and discloses "the secrets of [the] heart" and causes "worship" (vv.24-25)
5. But verse 26 also shows us they were doing all the speaking gifts at the same time
6. "A psalm...teaching...revelation...tongue...interpretation" these are speaking gifts
7. And doing them at the same time only produces chaos and confusion
 1. A psalm referred to reading, or perhaps singing, one of the Old Testament psalms
 2. A teaching probably indicates a favorite doctrine or pet subject that was presented and expounded
 3. Other members had what they claimed was a new revelation from God
 4. Others spoke in a tongue, true or counterfeited, while still others gave an interpretation
 5. Except for the possibility of counterfeited tongues, all of those things were good and legitimate parts of worship
 6. The problem was that they were all done at the same time
 7. No one was left to listen, except for the few bewildered visitors, who no doubt thought the whole group was crazy (see v. 23) (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [I Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)
8. So Paul says, "What then brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation."

9. But what should have been the focus is the last phrase of verse 26, "Let all things be done for edification."
10. The primary responsibility of Christians to each other is to build each other up
11. Edification is a major responsibility of church leaders (Eph. 4:11–12), but it is also the responsibility of all other Christians
12. *Every* believer is called to be an edifier
13. "Therefore encourage one another, and build up one another, just as you also are doing" (1 Thess. 5:11)
14. "Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself" (Rom 15:2–3)
15. Jesus "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28).

Our Lord did not seek what was beneficial to Himself but what was beneficial to those He came to save.

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

The same is true for us as well as the Corinthians

To make sure there was the occasion for this to happen, Paul employs guidelines for the gifts

He gives in verses 27-28...

II. THE PROCEDURE OF TONGUES (vv.27-28)

Paul says, "(27) If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; (28) but if there is no interpreter, he must keep

silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God."

1. These are the regulations Paul gives for the true gift of tongues
2. The only regulation given for the counterfeit was for it to stop
 1. It benefits no one
 2. Your just speaking barbarios (v.11)
 3. It cannot be used for prayer because Jesus said in Matthew 6:7 "not to use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose they will be heard for their many words."
3. Even though he is using the singular "tongue" as previously, this refers to the singular subject "anyone" and is referring to the true gift not the counterfeit
4. So the regulation is 4 fold:
 1. "by two or at the most three"
 2. "each in turn"
 3. "one must interpret"
 4. "If...no interpreter...keep silent"
 1. Notice also there is "one" interpreter
 2. In the Greek construction, one is in the emphatic position, indicating that a single person is involved. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)
 3. Although speaking in languages and translating those languages were distinct gifts, they were not to be used apart from one another
 4. An interpreter *could not* exercise his gift unless there were speaking, and a speaker *should not* exercise his gift unless there were interpretation
 5. Paul's instruction presupposed that the congregation knew which believers had the gift of interpretation

6. If one of those persons was not present, there was to be no speaking in tongues
7. The rule was clear and simple: no interpreter, no speaking out loud
8. A person who still felt compelled to speak was to meditate and pray, to speak silently to himself and to God. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

Not only does Paul regulate the gift of tongues but he also gives in verses 29-33...

III. THE PROCEDURE OF PROPHETS (vv.29-33)

He says, "(29) Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. (30) But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. (31) For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; (32) and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; (33) for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."

1. This unique office of prophet was functional in the church at this time but had ceased before the end of the apostolic era
2. We know that since Paul's pastoral epistles (1, 2 Timothy and Titus) do not mention prophets
3. When Paul wrote to the Corinthians, prophets were still central to the work of the church
4. Paul begins verse 29 with the first regulation:
 1. He says, "two or three prophets" may "speak" and "others (prophets) pass judgment" (v.29)
 2. Luther writes: "What is meant here by 'the others'? Is it the mob? By no means. This means the other prophets who help to preach in the church and to improve the congregation; they are to judge and to help see that preaching is rightly done." (Lenski, R. C. H. [The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing

House, 1963. Print.)

3. The other prophets were to exercise discernment in what was being said by the prophets
4. If while one was speaking, God gave a "revelation," the speaker was to stop speaking and defer to the one hearing from God
5. They were to "prophecy one by one, so that all may learn and be exhorted" (v.31)
 1. This statement shows the benefit of the gift over tongues
 2. With tongues, no one can learn or be exhorted unless there is an interpretation
 3. The purpose of prophecy is to benefit others by what is being said, "so that all may learn and be exhorted" (v.31)
6. Not only were the prophets to judge others with discernment, but they were also to have control over themselves
 1. God does not desire out-of-spirit or out-of-mind experiences
7. Those who received and proclaimed the truth were to have clear minds
8. There was nothing bizarre, ecstatic, trance-like, or wild about receiving and preaching God's Word, as with demonic experiences. (MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [*The MacArthur Study Bible*](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.)
9. God is "not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints"
 1. This is universal for "all the churches of the saints"
 2. The worship service is to reflect order, peace, harmony, clarity not strife and confusion
 3. It must reflect the character and nature of God

So verses 26-33 revealed the problem with gifts, the procedure of tongues and of prophets

Now Paul gives...

IV. THE PROHIBITION OF WOMEN (vv.34-35)

He says, "(34) The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. (35) If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church."

1. Women are to keep silent in the church
2. What does he mean by silent?
3. "They are not permitted to speak"
4. According to the context the word "speak" has reference to prophesying and tongue speaking
5. This exhortation is similar to that in 1 Timothy 2:11-15 which says, "(11) A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. (12) But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. (13) For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. (14) And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. (15) But women will be preserved through the bearing of children if they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint."
6. Paul gives two reasons why women are not to "speak" or "teach or exercise authority over a man" in the church:
 1. First is the created order: verse 13 says, "For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve"
 2. The second is the woman leading the human race into sin
7. She was "deceived" and "fell into transgression"
8. But she removes the stigma by raising godly children
9. Churches that allow tongue speaking usually allow women to prophesy and speak in tongues and hold leadership positions

10. Paul says that women are to "ask their own husbands at home" if they desire to learn anything
11. "It is improper for a woman to speak in church"
 1. The word "improper" (aischros) means "shameful or disgraceful"
 2. It is spoken of any thing which excites disgust. (Hodge, Charles. [An Exposition of the First Epistle to the Corinthians](#). New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, 1857. Print.)
12. Paul's appeal for this exhortation is "the Law" (v.34) and not personal opinion
13. The Word of God is the authority for faith and practice

Paul uses a touch of irony in verses 36-38 as he gives...

V. THE PATERNITY OF HIS ADMONITION (vv.36-38)

He says, "(36) Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? (37) If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. (38) But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized."

1. Lenski says, "Both questions are preposterous in a way and even absurd. No congregation is expected to entertain them." (Lenski, R. C. H. [The Interpretation of St. Paul's First and Second Epistle to the Corinthians](#). Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1963. Print.)
2. Was it from them that the Word of God first went forth? No
3. Did the Word of God come only to them? No
4. He said, in effect, "If you didn't write Scripture, then obey it. If you are not the sole receivers of God's Word, then subject yourselves to it as faithful children of God, as Christians everywhere else are obliged to do." No believer has a right to overrule, ignore, alter, or disobey the Word of God. To do so is to put himself above God's Word. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

5. Paul's message from God is equated with the OT (Mark 7:13)
6. It was the message taught by the apostles (Acts 4:31; 6:2)
7. Peter preached it to the Gentiles (Acts 11:1)
8. It was the word Paul preached on his first missionary journey (Acts 13:5, 7, 44, 48, 49), his second (Acts 16:32; 17:13; 18:11), and his third (Acts 19:10) (MacArthur, John, Jr., ed. [The MacArthur Study Bible](#). electronic ed. Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997. Print.)
9. The source is God
 1. 1 Timothy 3:16 says, "(16) All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness."
 2. 2 Peter 1:20-21 says, "(20) But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, (21) for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God."
10. This is His Word, "the Lord's commandment"
11. "If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized" (v.38)
12. In other words, he is rejected as legitimate servants of God
13. Because it was the revelation of God as Scripture, Paul's teaching was absolutely authoritative

Paul concludes with...

VI. TWO FINAL EXHORTATIONS (vv.39-40)

He says, "(39) Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. (40) But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner."

The words "desire earnestly" (zeloo, pres.act.imp.). This is the same Greek word and construction found in 12:31 though the English words are reversed. There it says to

"earnestly desire"

It is translated "covet" in the KJV

It means "to be or become marked by active interest, passion, and enthusiasm for something, often a cause or faith." (Brannan, Rick, ed. [Lexham Research Lexicon of the Greek New Testament](#) 2020 : n. pag. Print. Lexham Research Lexicons.)

1. Because prophecy is to be desired, desire it earnestly
2. Because prophecy "speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation" (v.3), desire it earnestly
3. Because prophecy "edifies the church" (v.4), desire it earnestly
4. Because prophecy is "greater than one who speaks in tongues" (v.5), desire it earnestly
5. Because prophecy profits over tongues (v.6), desire it earnestly
6. Because prophecy utters "speech that is clear" (v.9), desire it earnestly
7. Because prophecy gives "the meaning of language" (v.11), desire it earnestly
8. Because prophecy allows the "ungifted say the 'Amen' at your giving of thanks" (v.16), desire it earnestly
9. Because prophecy "instructs others" (v.19), desire it earnestly
10. Because prophecy "is a sign...to those who believe" (v.22), desire it earnestly
11. Because prophecy convicts and discloses "the secrets of [the] heart" (v.25), desire it earnestly
12. Because prophecy causes one to "fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you" (v.25), desire it earnestly
13. Because prophecy produces order rather than confusion (v.33), desire it earnestly
14. *Prophecy* is to be preferred to other gifts, because it is the most useful gift of all, while at the same time other gifts ought not to be despised. (Calvin, John. [1](#)

[Corinthians](#). electronic ed. Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998. Print. Calvin's Commentaries.)

15. When Paul says, "Do not forbid to speak in tongues" (v.39), as long as it was active, it was not to be despised or hindered
16. "But all things must be done properly (euschemonos, gracefully, becomingly, harmoniously, beautifully) and in an orderly manner"
17. "orderly" means "in turn" or "one at a time" (c.f. v.27)
18. God is a God of beauty and harmony, of propriety and order, and all things that His children do should reflect those divine characteristics. (MacArthur, John F., Jr. [1 Corinthians](#). Chicago: Moody Press, 1984. Print. MacArthur New Testament Commentary.)

CONCLUSION

1. What we do in here matters to God, believers and unbelievers
2. Either we are mad or used mightily by God to disclose the hearts of men
3. It's important to use the gifts in the right way
4. Just as it is important to know what your gift is and what gifts are in operation today
5. Tongues is inferior to prophecy even during this time in the church when they were in full use
6. But today tongues have ceased
7. We should earnestly desire to preach and expound the Word of God so those hearing can be instructed and saved
8. That's my desire
9. I will preach and teach God's Word and seek to be faithful in this one endeavor in the church
10. And at the same time "pursue love"

11. Will you join me?
12. If you're here today without Christ, you are still in your sins and stand in danger of hell fire
13. As I told someone this week, you are one breath and one heart beat away from hell unless you repent and come to Jesus
14. Let's pray