

Church Gone Wild: Week 14
Tongues & Prophecy

1 Corinthians 14
Pastor Derek Vreeland

1 Corinthians 14:1

We pursue love. We desire spiritual gifts.

WARNING: Don't pursue the gifts, pursue the Giver!

1 Corinthians 14:2-4

The gift of prophecy: *"telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind."*

Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, pg. 408

In one sense, anytime we speak on God's behalf we are speaking prophetically, but the gift of prophecy is something specific.

The gift of tongues has two distinct functions

Public use: *speaking in a language you don't know and followed by interpretation.* We referred to the public use as "the gift of tongues."

Private use: *"prayer or praise spoken in syllables not understood by the speaker."*

Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, pg. 421

We refer to the private use as "the prayer language."

Acts 2:11b ESV

We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.

1 Corinthians 14:3-4 The Message Bible

[2] *If you praise him in the private language of tongues, God understands you but no one else does, for you are sharing intimacies just between you and him.*

[3] *But when you proclaim his truth in everyday speech, you're letting others in on the truth so that they can grow and be strong and experience his presence with you.*

[4] *The one who prays using a private "prayer language" certainly gets a lot out of it, but proclaiming God's truth to the church in its common language brings the whole church into growth and strength.*

Three Positive Things about the Prayer Language of the Spirit

- 1) It allows you to pray when you run out of words. (1 Cor. 14:2)
- 2) It allows you to pray in an intimate and powerful way. (1 Cor. 14:2)
- 3) It builds you up spiritually. (1 Cor. 14:4)

1 Corinthians 14:5

I echo Paul's statement: "I want you all to experience the prayer language of the Spirit." Nevertheless, prophecy is a greater gift, because it builds up the church.

The gift of interpretation: *"reporting to the church the general meaning of something spoken in tongues."*

Wayne Grudem, *Bible Doctrine*, pg. 423

The gift of tongues working in tandem with the gift of interpretation is of equal value to the gift of prophecy.

If we make the prayer language too big of a deal and if all we do in our worship services is speak in tongues, then individuals may be better off, but the collective community is not strengthened.

1 Corinthians 14:6-9

Worship services have a two-fold purpose: to promote a love for God and a love for other people. If other people hear you praying in the prayer language of the Spirit, they will not understand what you are saying and how does that benefit them? It doesn't. So you are showing love to God, but not to other people.

1 Corinthians 14:10-12

If you are so eager for the Holy Spirit to make himself known in our worship gatherings then expect the gifts that will build up the church.

The gift of tongues & the prayer language are important, but not foundational. The foundations are a healthy local church are:

- The centrality of Jesus
- The authority of Scripture
- The worship of the Trinity

1 Corinthians 14:13

How do you determine if what you are experiencing is the gift of tongues or the prayer language of the Spirit?

- 1) Start privately
- 2) Pray
- 3) Discern
- 4) Ask others

1 Corinthians 14:14-15

The prayer language of the Spirit is non-rational, but it is not irrational.

1 Corinthians 14:16

Saying "Amen" is an ancient tradition in the church. It allows us to participate in worship together. It is good to say "Amen" as we sing and as the Bible is being preached.

1 Corinthians 14:17-20

Paul prayed using the prayer language of the Spirit, but in the church he chose to speak words that people would understand. "The church" is both the people and the gathering of the people. Here Paul is referring to the gathering of the people in weekly worship.

1 Corinthians 14:21-22

Tongues are not a sign for believers, so quit using it as the sign of Christian spirituality. Tongues are a sign to unbelievers, in that non-Christians reject tongues as gibberish, furthering their rejection of the Christian faith.

1 Corinthians 14:23-25

Prophecy both builds up Christians and convicts non-Christians of God's power and presence. Notice that the Bible calls us to be aware of what non-Christians think about the church.

1 Corinthians 14:26

This is not a prescription for worship, but a reflection of the diversity of spiritual gifts in a local church.

1 Corinthians 14:27-32

Gifts should be done in an orderly way. Don't become legalists with this.

A few thoughts concerning prophecy...

- 1) It must be judged.
- 2) It is best experienced in community rather than one-on-one.
- 3) The gift of prophecy should be used with humility. (Not "thus saith the Lord," but "I think God is saying...")
- 4) Prophecy is more instructional and conformational than directional.

1 Corinthians 14:33-36

This refers to a local problem in the church and is not a definitive statement on the role of women in the church.

1 Corinthians 11:4 talks about how women should dress when they prophesy in the church. The Bible does not say that some spiritual gifts are for men and some are for women.

1 Corinthians 14:37-38

Paul was trying to establish his authority as an apostle.

1 Corinthians 14:39-40

No matter what your thoughts are concerning the gift of tongues and the prayer language of the Spirit, we simply cannot forbid them in the life of the church.



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