

Call to Worship—Psalm 130:1-5

Sermon Text— 1 Corinthians 14:20-25

Benediction— Isaiah 40:28-29

## Text — 1 Corinthians 14:20-25 ESV

[1] Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. [2] For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. [3] On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. [4] The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. [5] Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up. [6] Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? [7] If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? [8] And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? [9] So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. [10] There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, [11] but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. [12] So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

[13] Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. [14] For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. [15] What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. [16] Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? [17] For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. [18] I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. [19] Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

[20] Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. [21] In the Law it is written, “By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.” [22] Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. [23] If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? [24] But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, [25] the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you. (ESV)

**NEXT WEEK: “Decently” 1 Corinthians 14:26-40**

## Outline: “Mature ”

- **INTRO**— READ 14:1-19

QUOTE: “Before going further, let us sum up the course of this discussion: Paul began with proving, that in respect of usefulness, the gift of tongues is inferior to prophecy (vers. 1-5). Then, advancing a step, he showed that without interpretation this gift becomes even entirely useless (vers. 6-15). He went still further; he proved, in the third place, that to exercise it in this way, is to commit a real impropriety against the Church (vers. 16-19); finally, he concluded, ver. 20, with an appeal to the good sense of his readers.

Throughout this whole exposition, the apostle has considered the exercise of gifts only from the standpoint of their usefulness to the members of the Church; but in their assemblies for worship, there was another element requiring to be taken into account; this was the strangers, not yet gained or only half gained for the faith, and whom it was necessary to avoid alienating by giving them offence. It is with a view to such persons that the apostle treats the question in the sequel. Ver. 20 is at once the preface to this new development and the conclusion of the foregoing.”

[F. Godet (2013). Godet's Commentary on Corinthians. T & T Clark.]

- v20 Brothers, ...
  - DO NOT [BE NOT] children in your thinking
  - BE [DO] infants in evil
    - BUT in your thinking be mature
      - Cf: V14-15 tongues = unfruitful mind; “I will pray with my mind... I will sing with my mind...”
  
- v21-22 In the law it is written... [tongues as judgment]. Thus tongues are a sign [for unbelievers]... prophecy is a sign [for believers].
  - Reference Isaiah 28:11 “strange tongues... lips of foreigners...” as a judgment
    - the judgment is basically this gift is proof of God’s reality & work, and distinctly established insider/outsider
  - Tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers
    - This is contextual re: the judgment theme of this section, the further explanation of the tongues/prophecy differences, and the overarching theme of decent & orderly worship.
      - In ACTS tongues is a sign gift showing continuity between jew and gentile conversion
      - It was an authenticator from falsified conversion (preserving safety, unity, 7 assurance)
      - Again the text says SIGN referring to a distinct marking, and in context is saying (and has already established) that as a grace/spirit gift unbelievers/outsideers DO NOT and CAN NOT participate or even be edified (the collateral effect of tongues on an unbeliever is WHAT IS HAPPENING?; addressed in v23)
  - Prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers, but for believers.
    - This is contextual in the same vain as tongues. Prophecy builds up a supernatural assembly (ekklesia), it is recognized and responded to by spirit filled blood bought Christians (insiders), it is the essence of decent & orderly contribution to the worship service (although turns must be taken, and tongues are not forbidden- especially when interpreted see v13)

- v23-25 If... [EXAMPLES]

23 If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? 24 But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, 25 the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

- Will they not say that you are out of your minds?
- Convicted, accountable, laid bare
- SO THAT they will fall on their face (submit)
  - AND declare GOD IS REAL!

**CONCLUSION: “Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.”**

Convicted? Are you ready to...

- give an account (and embrace accountability)
- have the secrets of your heart disclosed (and to confess your sins in order to be healed)
- fall on your face in worship (and to live with Jesus as Lord)
- declare that God is really among us (and to train to be a witness for him)