

BECOMING THE CHURCH "The Language of Heaven"

(1 Corinthians 14:1-40; 2 Peter 1:16-21)

I do NOT want to purposefully offend anyone this morning. If You speak in tongues, private prayer lang. ??

***Main Point: God has created everything for a divine purpose. God is a God of order and order honors His created design. Even in the Church service, we honor the Lord through purposed order in worship.**

VS. 39-40: Therefore, my brothers *and sisters*, earnestly desire to prophesy (preach), and do not forbid speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰ **But all things must be done properly and in an orderly way**

*Paul distinguishes to the Corinthian Church those who speak **in a tongue** (individual/self-edifying, prayer?) & those who **speak in tongues** (Spiritual gift of Tongues) (=unknown/unlearned by speaker, known to others & purpose of tongues is to **clearly communicate** gospel truth to the hearers in their heart language).

- 1 Cor. 12: Vs. 10, 28 "Various kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues" = **plural**, "kinds" diff/ordered

- 1 Cor. 12:30 "All do not speak with tongues do they?" = implied NO! = **plural**, (**not everyone has this gift**)

- 1 Cor. 13:8 "If there are tongues, they will cease" – one day, all the earth will be evangelized (Mt. 24:14)

READ 1 Corinthians 14:1-40 = A **REBUKE**, a corrective, Paul was admonishing the practice of people in the church individually speaking a tongue (that **NO ONE ELSE** in the Church could understand, including the speaker themselves) = Fruitless, was distracting, was selfish, no gospel, & not a sp. help to those in the Ch.)

Vs. 1: "Pursue love, yet earnestly desire spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy."

Prophecy – as a spiritual gift, was the speaking of God's revelation to God's people. = God's voice thru servants

-In the O.T. God spoke to Israel and the Nations through His divinely ordained Prophets. = O.T. record

-In the N.T. God spoke to the Church through divinely ordained Apostles, Evangelists, Preachers who spoke God's revealed truth as it was culminated in the Person of Jesus Christ. *Heb. 12:1:1 "In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son."

-Prophecy in the N.T. pertained to the Revelation of God through the Person and Work of Jesus Christ:

-Jesus was the fulfillment of all prophecy. The N.T. written record by the Apostles (those who were **WITH** Jesus in His earthly ministry) was **ordained by the Holy Spirit** 1 Peter 1:10-12 "Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven."

2 Peter 1:16-21 "¹⁶ For we did not follow cleverly devised stories when we told you about the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in power, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. ¹⁷ He received honor and glory from God the Father when the voice came to him from the Majestic Glory, saying, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."^(a) ¹⁸ **We ourselves heard this voice that came from heaven when we were with him on the sacred mountain. ¹⁹ **We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable**, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts. ²⁰ Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation of things. ²¹ For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, **but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**"

Vs. 1: "Pursue love, yet earnestly desire spiritual *gifts*, but especially that you may prophesy." = For Prophecy (=proclaiming God's Revealed Truth =preaching) is helpful, edifying, encouraging, and enlightening.) **VS. the one who speaks in a private tongue:** = "**Tongues**" is NOT a private prayer language. "**BUT** "**a tongue**" *might be?*

Vs. 2: For the one who speaks **in a tongue** [singular] does not speak to people, but to God; for no one understands, but in *his* spirit he speaks mysteries. (even internally, he is unsure what is happening). ³ But the one who prophesies (preaches) speaks to people *for* edification, exhortation, and consolation. BUT... ⁴ The one who speaks **in a tongue** edifies himself; but the one who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵ Now I wish that you all **spoke in tongues**, (not spoke "in a tongue") but rather that you would prophesy; and greater is the one who

prophesies than the one who **speaks in tongues**, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edification. = Purpose of Authentic tongues is to communicate a clear message (sensible, points to gospel truth)

Vs. 6: But now, brothers *and sisters*, if I come to you **speaking in tongues**, how will I **benefit you** unless I speak to you either by way of revelation, or of knowledge, or of prophecy, or of teaching? [Tongues exist to clearly communicate God's Truth **to the intended hearers** = Revelation, Knowledge, Preaching, or Teaching]

Vs. 7: [as a rebuke to babbling, or mimicked sounds, nonsensical noises or utterances that pass for a heavenly language]: ⁷ Yet *even* lifeless *instruments*, whether flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? ⁸ For if the trumpet produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? ⁹ **So you too, unless you produce intelligible speech by the tongue, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will just be talking to the air.**

Vs. 10: There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, [Language: lit. *phone* = voices, sounds, sayings] and none is incapable of meaning. ¹¹ So if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be unintelligible to the one who speaks, and the one who speaks will be unintelligible to me.

Vs. 12: So you too, since you are eager to possess spiritual *gifts*, **strive to excel for the edification of the church**. The goal and purpose of Spiritual gifts once a church is established = is to edify/help the church

Vs. 13: Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue is to pray that he may interpret. (=to edify the church w/truth) ¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unproductive [disconnected]. ¹⁵ What is *the outcome* then? [confusion]. - Rather: I will pray with the spirit, [AND] but I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit, but I will sing with the mind also. Prayer is to be spirit-led, productive, (priv. or public), & intelligible.

*Goal of Sp. gift is edification: **Vs. 16:** For otherwise, if you bless *God* (pray or speak in a private tongue) in the spirit *only*, how will the one who occupies the place of the outsider (i.e. people in the ch.) *know to say the "Amen"* at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you are saying? ¹⁷ For you are giving thanks well *enough*, but the other person is not edified.

Vs. 18: I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; nevertheless, in church I prefer to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

²⁰ Brothers *and sisters*, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil, be infants, but in your thinking be mature. = use wisdom and biblical sense to think this through. **Truth, Wisdom, trump experience/tradition**

²¹ In the Law it is written: "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me," says the Lord. Here, Paul quotes from Is. 28 as a rebuke to remind the Corinthian Ch. that when God speaks to His people it is clear, intelligible, and unmistakable. When God uses a foreign tongue with His people = unintelligible, confusing, and is a sign of judgment.

- Paul infers then that Speaking in tongues, or speaking in a tongue during a church **service is inappropriate** b/c the church cannot understand, it causes people to feel like they are foreigners in their own church, and b/c the gospel is NOT clearly understood through unintelligible speech. (= wisdom, mature thinking)
- **What is the sp. Gift of Speaking in Tongues?** =Known lang. to others, unknown/unlearned to the speaker

****Vs. 22:** So then, **tongues** are for a sign (miraculous sign), not to those who believe but to unbelievers;

=Speaking in tongues is a miraculous gift *to some* to preach the gospel w/power to the lost peoples of the world.

-but prophecy (preaching) is not for unbelievers, but for those who believe. ²³ Therefore if the whole church gathers together and all *the people* **speak in tongues**, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are insane?²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all;²⁵ the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

****Instructions for the Church in the Worship gathering: = so what now? = very clear direction (no gray)**

²⁶ What is *the outcome* then, brothers *and sisters*? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. **All things are to be done for edification**. ²⁷ If anyone speaks in a tongue, *it must be* by two or at the most three, and *each one* in turn, and one is to interpret; ²⁸ but if there is no interpreter, **he** is to keep silent in church; and have him speak to himself and to God. ²⁹ Have two or

three prophets speak, and have the others pass judgment.³⁰ But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, then the first one is to 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. = **in the service**, let the Word of God be central (prophecy), worship given (psalms), & encouragement

APPLICATION:

Tongues' Purpose: Miraculous Sign for Unbelievers to Hear the Truth of Gospel and Respond in Faith.

(Acts 1:8; Acts 2:8-11; 1 Corinthians 14:20-25)

Signs/wonders/miracles accompanied the Apostles with the gospel message: **Authority** (messengers) & **Authenticity** (message) = truly divine, genuinely God's message of salvation, attested by God's divine power. Hebrews 2:3-4 "How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will."

*Acts is a history book of the early Ch., not an instructional on Ch. services. = 1 Cor. is Doctrinal & Didactic.

1. Genuine Tongues = a known language to the hearers (yet unknown to giver, Acts 2); and are described as a *variety of tongues*, not just one type of tongue or a specific learned "prayer language." (1 Cor. 12:10)
2. Genuine Tongues = were a miraculous sign to give Truth to unbelievers for salvation. (1 Cor. 14:22)
3. Genuine Tongues = a spiritual gift given to certain people, not everyone. (Heb. 2:2-4; 1 Cor. 12:29-30)
4. Genuine Tongues validated, certified, authenticated God's message (Gospel) and His messengers (Apostles). (2 Cor. 12:12; Rom. 15:19; Paul = 1Cor.14:18)
5. Genuine Tongues became a sign for believers of other new believers. = Same Christ, gospel, & same salv. (Acts 2:8,11 = Jews; Acts 8:14-15 = Samaritans; Acts 10:44;47 = Gentiles; Act 11:18 i.e. Cornelius)
6. Genuine Tongues were never doubted that they were a sign from God. = Miraculous (Sign/Wonder) = AWE!
7. IF tongues are a private prayer language, NOT every Believer is gifted to speak in that tongue (1 Cor. 12:30)
 - Why would a private prayer (language) to God ever need to be interpreted? Vs. 13.
 - Why would Paul rebuke self-edifying behavior in the Ch. like private prayer in new tongue where one doesn't understand what is being said? & then commend praying like that? 1 Cor. 12:7

***Are there times when a miraculous tongue would need to be spoken in a Church service? Mixed Nationalities? Multicultural Community?**

Rules of Order in a Church Service: 1 Cor. 14: 26-40

1. All things done in order, proper manner, to edify Church (unbelievers).
2. Only 2 or 3 to speak in a tongue for whole service. Vs. 27
3. Each one must speak in turn. Vs. 27
4. Each one must have an interpreter (or an interpretation discerned) or he must remain silent. Vs. 28
5. Each interpretation (and prophecy) must be judged/discerned by the Spirit and Word of God. Vs. 29-32
6. Women are not permitted to speak in Tongues, nor Prophecy. Vs. 34
7. Do not forbid these things to take place (i.e. let God work), but all will be done in an orderly manner according to the Word of God. Vs. 37-40 **If these rules were immediately enforced in Churches, there might be very little, if ever, genuine speaking in Tongues in the Western Church.

Community Group Discussion Questions:

1. How does Paul describe the gift of prophecy? What is the process God used to speak His truth to people?
2. What is the importance that Peter distinguishes in 2 Pt. 1:16-21 concerning the role of the Holy Spirit in prophecy? Why does it matter? Why does it still matter today?
3. What is Paul's perspective concerning the difference and priority of Prophecy vs. Speaking in Tongues?
4. What is the significance in Paul distinguishing a person speaking "in a tongue" vs. Speaking in Tongues in this passage?
5. Have you ever had an experience when you spoke in tongues? When? Where? Do you think that speaking in a tongue is a private prayer language? Would a person connect deeper with God if/when speaking in a private prayer language? How could one biblically justify that tongues is a private prayer language when not everyone would have that specific gift? Are there biblical examples of tongues being a "private prayer language?"