

# (1 Corinthians) Overview to Chapter 14

by Brian Brodersen

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*Brian Brodersen's sermon provides an overview of 1 Corinthians 14, emphasizing the proper use of spiritual gifts, particularly the distinction between tongues and prophecy for the edification of the church.*

**Duration:** 57:20

**Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 6:4, 1 Corinthians 14:1, 1 Corinthians 14:22-23

**Topics:** "Spiritual Gifts", "Church Order"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of studying and applying 1 Corinthians 14, particularly for Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. The chapter provides practical advice on the ministry of spiritual gifts. The speaker highlights the need to pursue love and desire spiritual gifts, as well as the connection between chapters 12, 13, and 14 in discussing spiritual gifts. The chapter also addresses the proper use of gifts in the general assembly, and the speaker suggests that studying and applying this chapter can help eliminate strange practices in churches.

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## Transcript

12, 13, and 14 are really linked together because they're dealing with the subject of spiritual gifts. As we looked at the 12th chapter, you remember that there Paul discussed some of the gifts of the Spirit, and he showed us the priority of the various gifts. And then in chapter 13, he showed us the importance of love as a basis for the exercising of the gifts.

And now here as we come to this 14th chapter, it's here that Paul gives us some real practical instruction on the use of the gifts in the General Assembly. Now, this chapter is so essential if we're going to understand the proper use of the gifts. And I would go so far as to say that if churches would just simply study this chapter and apply what it says, half of the strange things that take place in their midst would immediately be eliminated.

It's quite unfortunate that the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches haven't really taken a serious study of this 14th chapter, because this chapter would correct the number of aberrations that you find in those types of environments. And so as we go through this 14th chapter, we'll see some real practical advice and counsel from the Apostle Paul on the ministry of the gifts of the Spirit. And so he says in the first verse, pursue love and desire spiritual gifts.

At the end of the 12th chapter, he said, earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way than he went into his whole exposition on the need for love in the fellowship. So now beginning chapter 14, he says, pursue love.

Remember, that's to be the foundation for everything we do and desire spiritual gifts. So he's once again encouraging us to desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. Especially that you may prophesy.

Now, it's going to become clear as we go through this 14th chapter and chapter 12, I think alluded to it to some degree also that these believers in Corinth, they had a misunderstanding of. The priority of the gifts and they had taken the gift that was the least significant in a congregational setting, and they had exalted it to being the most important gift, and that was the gift of tongues. Now, what Paul is going to show in this 14th chapter is that tongues is a wonderful gift if it's practiced in the proper setting.

But for the general assembly and in a congregational environment, it's the least important gift because tongues is primarily a self edifying gift. When the assemblies gather together, the goal is for everyone to be edified. So it's important for us to understand that the Corinthians had had elevated tongues to a place that God never intended it.

Actually, back in the 12th chapter, when Paul is giving to us sort of a list of the gifts and the priority of the gifts. He begins with apostles, God has appointed these in the church, first of all, apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, gifts of healing, helps administration and then finally varieties of tongues. So tongues was at the bottom of the list because it's more of a self edifying gift.

And again, the purpose of the general assembly is for everyone to be edified. But the Corinthians had reversed the order to some degree and tongues was the most important. Now, Paul, I think this is important to say also, Paul is not going to downplay the beauty of the gift of tongues.

He's not speaking negatively toward it as a gift. It's certainly a wonderful gift from God, but he's just showing that their exaltation of it was contrary to what God had desired in relation to the gift. So he says, desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy.

And he's going to go on to explain why. But first, he says, for he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God, for no one understands him. However, in the spirit, he speaks mysteries.

But he who prophesies speaks edification, exhortation and comfort to men. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets that the church may be edified.

You see, that's Paul's point. He says prophecy is superior to tongues simply because prophecy can edify everyone. Tongues can only edify if there's an interpretation.

And so apparently what they were doing is they were having a lot of exercising of the gift of tongues without any interpretation, and subsequently there was no edification taking place. Perhaps the people that were doing it themselves were getting a real blessing out of it, but it wasn't being imparted to anyone else. So so Paul says in the General Assembly, as as we gather together as Christians, prophecy is the primary gift that we ought to be seeking after.

Now, we're going to touch on all of this in detail in the future, but I want to just mention it briefly. Verse two is a very important statement about the gift of tongues, and if we take this verse for what it says, it would clear up so much confusion in relation to the subject of tongues. Notice what it says for he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God.

He who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God. So often when people do speak in tongues, or at least they are thinking that that's what they're doing, then they will come forth with what they believe to be an interpretation. But the interesting thing is the message is directed to people and not to God.

But you see, that's a contradiction of what the apostle says. He that speaks in an unknown tongue speaks to God, not to men. So tongues is really more than anything else.

It's a means of prayer and it's a means of praise. And it's really difficult to find any place in the scripture where we could get the idea that tongues is something with which you give a prophetic or sort of a preaching kind of a message with. But apparently the Corinthians had thought something similar, but Paul clarifies to them here, he who speaks in an unknown tongue speaks to God and not to men.

Now that practically speaking, that is the way really it would have to be. Because can you think of the potential danger that could exist if it were otherwise? Just think for a moment about what would happen if someone spoke in tongues. And then they interpreted it.

And the message was some sort of a prophetic type of a thing directing someone to do something that wasn't really something that they ought to do. But you see, there would be no way to challenge that. There would be no way to question it, because after all, the miraculous was evident.

The person spoke in tongues and then they interpreted. And the message was, you know, maybe to such and such a person. God is calling you to leave your wife.

God is calling you to be joined with this other sister who's more spiritual. Those kinds of things happen. I'm not just making this up as we go here.

Those kinds of things happen in churches and people come back and they've done things that are totally contrary to the scriptures. And they say, oh, but you know, the Lord told me, how did he tell me? Oh, he told me through a message in tongues and someone interpreted. And this was what was said.

No. Whenever tongues is spoken, when the interpretation comes forth, know this, if it's not directed to God in praise or prayer, then it's not a valid interpretation of tongues. Because Paul says here in no uncertain terms, he that speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God.

And as we go on in this 14th chapter, he's going to refer to tongues primarily as a means of prayer. And of course, we pray to God, not to other people. So that that's an important thing.

And we'll even talk about that further in the future. Now, as we proceed in verse six, Paul said, But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying or by teaching? He's just trying to get them to see how. Tongues.

Fails to edify anyone except the one who is actually doing it, he says, how am I going to profit you unless I'm speaking to you in a language that you can understand? That's what he's getting at here. He said, even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sound. How will it know how how will it be known what is piped or played, or if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? So likewise, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

There are it may be so many kinds of languages in the world and none of them is without significance. Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me. Even so, you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

You see, Paul says, when you're speaking in tongues, you might as well be speaking in a foreign language. And again, the edification is limited to just one individual. But the desire of God is that the whole congregation be edified now.

Just for illustration's sake, if I were to stand up here for the next 30 minutes and just speak in tongues. What would that profit any of you? That wouldn't profit you at all, I might be extremely edified by the experience and I might walk away from here today just going, oh, wasn't that a glorious time? Wasn't that wonderful? And yet you would be feeling left out to say the least. You see, that's what Paul's getting at.

You might as well have someone up preaching in a foreign language. You don't know what they're saying. You're not being blessed or edified.

So he says, you're zealous for spiritual gifts. I appreciate that and I encourage that. That's right.

That's good. Let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel. Therefore, let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. So there is a need for interpretation and Paul's going to go on to elaborate on this. If there is a time in the public assembly where tongues is exercised, then Paul says it's mandatory that there be an interpretation.

Therefore, if there is no interpreter, then tongues are never to be exercised in the general assembly. They can be reserved for personal devotions or for a more private type of a setting. And I think Paul refers to that as he goes on in.

The next verse, he says, what is the conclusion? What do I conclude regarding this whole matter? He said this, I will pray with the spirit, I will pray in tongues, in other words, and I will also pray with understanding. I will sing with the spirit and I will also sing with understanding. I think what Paul is saying here is that in my private devotional life, I'm going to pray with the spirit.

In my public life, I'm going to pray with understanding. In my private devotional life, I'm going to sing with the spirit. In my public life as a Christian among the general assembly, I'm going to sing with understanding.

He says. The distinction is between your own personal devotion and the general assembly, and you can do things in your own personal devotional experience that would not really be edifying to others in the context of the general assembly. Now, for just a moment, let's touch on what Paul says regarding the

tongue here, he says.

If I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is this gift of tongues? Well, it's simply this. It's praying in a language that you do not actually know.

Praying in a language that you do not actually know, they're referred to as unknown tongues. The unknown is inserted by the spirit. The translators, it's simply tongues.

But the idea is accurate in that they are unknown tongues, not unknown entirely, necessarily. Not a tongue that never has existed in the course of human history, but an unknown tongue is a tongue that's unknown to you. You don't know the tongue.

We see that in Acts chapter two, you remember, on the day of Pentecost, when the spirit of God came upon those that were gathered there in the room and they began to speak in other tongues as the spirit gave them utterance. And what were they doing? They were speaking in the languages and in the dialects of all of the people that had gathered together in Jerusalem. And the thing that fascinated everybody was that they knew these men were Galileans and they knew that they had not learned the languages or the dialects, but they were suddenly able to speak in these languages that they did not know.

So that's what was going on now, even when you look at Acts chapter two, there's nothing there to indicate that what they were doing in tongues was anything more than praising God. Some people get the impression that, oh, they were preaching in tongues right there, and that's how this great outpouring of God's spirit took place. That isn't accurate.

If you study the text closely, you'll find that they were speaking in tongues. Yes. And it says that they were declaring the marvelous works of God.

They were praising God. And then Peter got up and he preached. And that's what brought about the conversion.

The three thousand souls were added to the church that day, not because of what was being said through the tongue, but because of the message that Peter preached. It was the ability that these people had to speak in languages that they didn't know that actually caught the attention of the others. But it was a message Peter preached that brought about the conversion.

So Paul says in verse 14, if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. So because I don't know the language yet, I'm praying in a language that I don't know. My spirit is actually praying.

But in a sense, at this moment, I'm bypassing my intellect. This is one of the difficult things on a practical level about exercising the gift of tongues. It really is something that requires faith.

Because immediately your mind says, I don't understand this. This sounds so strange to me. And of course, Satan is quick to capitalize on that and he comes in and says, oh, that's just gibberish.

You ought to stop that. Sometimes it is just gibberish, quite honestly. But even when it's the genuine work of the spirit and God has truly given you this ability to pray to him in a language that you don't know, yet your intellect at times still battles with that.

But we trust that in that spiritual realm, my spirit is praying, but my understanding is unfruitful. Now, I can have the gift of interpretation. If I'm given the gift of interpretation, then although I'm praying in a language that I don't know, I actually do know at the moment what I'm saying.

Or someone else might have the interpretation, might be able to interpret as I'm praying what it is that's being said. But that's really what tongues is, in essence. It's a it's a language that God gives to us through which we can communicate to him.

And there is this evident supernatural element to it in that it's a language that we do not know naturally. That's where we sense the the supernatural element of it. Now, Paul, again, in verse 15, he's he's making a distinction between personal devotions and public worship.

He says. He's going to. In private, pray with the spirit in public, pray with understanding in private, sing with the spirit in public, sing with the understanding, he says, otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say amen at your giving of things since he does not understand what you say, for you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

He said this is the dilemma. You're having a wonderful time speaking in tongues, but the other person's not able to participate. You're giving thanks well, and I like what Paul's doing here again, Paul is not.

He's not demeaning the gift of tongues, and I think that's important to see because. Because of the excesses among Pentecostal and charismatic groups, there's another group that reacts to that, the more conservative evangelical type of a person. And what they actually do is they go far beyond what the Bible allows in their criticism of tongues, Paul is not criticizing tongues, he's criticizing their misunderstanding of the gift of tongues.

But there are some people in their zeal for purity and doctrine that go to an extreme when it comes to the gift of tongues. And I've heard men who are otherwise excellent commentators even suggest that tongues. No longer exist today, and anyone who purports to be speaking in tongues is actually doing so by inspiration of the devil.

That is obviously an extreme position, and I think to some degree it's a dangerous position to take to attribute a genuine work of the spirit to Satan. And now I must, on the other hand, be honest, I think what goes on in some charismatic circles is probably more akin to satanic than divine. And so I can understand to some degree their position, but yet they swing too far to the other direction and they don't stop in the middle.

That's where the Bible is. See, Paul doesn't demean the gift of tongues. He doesn't he doesn't speak ill of the gift of tongues at all.

And I like what he does right here. He says, for you indeed give thanks. Well, so in a sense, he's commending them on it.

This is good. Tongues is a good thing. But the problem is the other is not edified.

So we always have to be careful. The gift of tongues is is a beautiful gift, just like any other gift. It's a gift of the Holy Spirit.

And we would never want to speak in a demeaning manner about anything that is of the Lord. Now, Paul says, and I'm sure this shocked them at this point, he said, I think my God, I speak with tongues more than you all. You see, they had elevated tongues far beyond God's intention, and because Paul didn't come to them speaking in tongues, they probably thought Paul's really not that spiritual, you know, he just gets up and gives us these Bible lessons.

He talks about justification by faith and he talks about sanctification and those things. Where's the spirit in Paul's life? How come he's not speaking in tongues? I wonder if he's really baptized in the Holy Spirit. They might have surmised.

But here the apostle shocks him, he says, I think, God, I speak with tongues more than you all. You know, generally speaking, whenever someone puts forth any criticism of the excesses and Pentecostalism or charismatic circles, they're immediately accused of being a cessationist. They're immediately accused of being someone who who denies the existence of the gifts and things like that.

But yet I personally, like with Paul here, I can stand in criticism of tongues, but I could turn around and say something similar. I speak in tongues, but yet I understand from the scriptures that there's a proper place and a proper time for it. And so, Paul, I think he shocked him with this, I think, God, I speak with tongues more than you all.

Yet in the church, I would rather speak five words with my understanding that I may teach than I may teach others than 10,000 words in a tongue. That's a serious rebuke, I'd rather speak five words of my understanding than 10,000 words with a tongue. Brethren.

Do not be children in understanding, however, in malice be babes, but in understanding, be mature. He's gently rebuking them for their immaturity. He says your excessive view on tongues is immature.

You're acting like babies. And he says, I want you to be mature. Do not be children in the area of understanding.

Now, from what Paul goes on to say in the next few verses, it appears to me. That their misunderstanding of tongues had led them to the conclusion. That tongues.

Was. It. That was the ultimate, the ultimate thing regarding every facet of ministry was tongues.

And even to the extent that I believe they were thinking that tongues was the most effective evangelistic tool. And so it seems from the context that what they would actually do is in their distorted view of tongues, they would gather together and everyone would speak in tongues. Assuming that when unbelievers came in, they were going to say, God is here.

God is here, you people are truly spiritual, I need to become a Christian, Paul says, but that's the exact opposite. And I believe by the context that that's the conclusion that they had come to in their misunderstanding of tongues, they had elevated it to the extent that they saw it as the most important gift. And I can't believe that the Pentecostal movement and many of the charismatic churches have also taken and done almost the same exact thing.

Now, the Pentecostal movement is notorious for tongues, the charismatic movement is is notorious for a lot of other things that are actually even worse. Than that, and we're going to discuss that at length in a few weeks, but but it's it seems that they've done the very thing that the Corinthians had done. You can go

into Pentecostal churches today and you will find that the emphasis is on tongues and they seem to believe that this is the end all of the ministry.

And if we could just get together for hours and speak and shout and sing and do everything else in tongues, boy, this is going to bring about the glory of God. Paul says the same thing to them today that he said to the Corinthians long ago, Brethren, do not be childish in your understanding. This is childishness.

This is absurdity. Now, listen to what he says. He says in the law, it is written with men of other tongues and other lips.

I will speak to this people. And yet for all that they will not hear me. See, I think and I'm this is my own exegesis of the text here, these are very difficult verses that we're entering into right here.

But but it seems to me and looking at the text that the reason Paul uses this quotation from Isaiah is to show them that tongues does not result in the conversion of unbelievers like they were falsely assuming. He said, remember, in the law, it's written with men of other tongues and other lips. I will speak to these people.

And yet for all that they will not hear me. And I think we can only understand that if they did indeed have that view, that tongues was even a superior evangelistic gift. Now, when we come to verse twenty two, verse twenty two is one of the most difficult verses to interpret in the entire Bible, one of the most difficult verses to interpret in the entire Bible.

And yet I believe that there is a simple solution to the problem. Now, if you read verse twenty two, twenty three and twenty four, just as they stand. It seems clear that the apostle.

Lost his train of thought and ended up contradicting himself. Let me read it to you, versus twenty two, twenty three and twenty four, therefore, tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers. Everybody said tongues are assigned to unbelievers, supposedly, but prophesying is not for unbelievers.

But for those who believe so prophesying is for those who believe, he says here, therefore, if the whole church comes together in one place and all speak with tongues and there come in those who are uninformed or were unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if all prophesy and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all. He is convicted by all and thus the secrets of his heart are revealed. And so falling down in this space, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.

So as you read the verses at face value, it seems that Paul from from verse twenty two to twenty three, he lost his train of thought. And he ended up saying the exact opposite of what he stated in twenty three, says the exact opposite of what he stated in twenty two. And that's why commentators themselves have struggled as listening to Pastor Chuck's teaching on this chapter yesterday.

And he concluded these verses by saying, I don't know. And if you have a good idea, please write me and let me know, because I'm open for instruction on this. Chuck went on to quote from a translation of the New Testament.

A translation by a man named J.B. Phillips and and J.B. Phillips feels. That. There was a scribal error.

And that one of the copyist who was copying. The scriptures at a later date made a mistake, and so J.B. Phillips takes the liberty to correct the mistake that the copyist seemed to have made. I understand this dilemma.

Because how do you explain this, but I personally think that there is a simple explanation to it. And the simple explanation is that verse 22, instead of being a statement, is actually a question. And Greek authorities.

Give allowance for that. That verse 22 is actually a question. Rather than a statement, sort of a sort of a tongue in cheek, satirical type of a question, actually.

Now, the Greek text does not have punctuation as we know it, and it's really left up to the translators to to punctuate the Greek text and the context gives you the idea of the punctuation. But there have been times when the translators have been wrong about the punctuation and newer versions will correct. The punctuation.

Now, back in chapter six, verse four of this epistle, there is an excellent example of the failure to punctuate properly by the. Translators of the authorized version now look for me, look with me for a moment at chapter six, verse four. Now I'm using the the New King James version.

Where the punctuation has been corrected. But with the authorized version, verse four, if any of you have the authorized version, you will note that verse four of chapter six in the authorized version is a statement. Verse four of chapter six in the New King James version is correctly a question.

If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life. Do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge? It's clearly a question. As a matter of fact, when I used to read the authorized version, I never could understand why Paul was making that is that statement.

It just seems so awkward if you if then you have judgment concerning things pertaining to this life, it seemed like he was saying appoint the least esteemed people in the church to take care of it. But that's not what he's saying at all. He's criticizing them in the context.

You see, he's criticizing them for going to the world to sort out their problems. And that's what he's saying, and that's why he poses the question to him. Do you appoint those those are those out in the world who are least esteemed by the church to judge? It's a question, but the translators of the authorized version missed it and.

Put it down as a statement, but the revision got it right and put it down as a question. I hope someday they revise this 22nd verse of the 14th chapter as well, because I think it is more properly a question. If you read it as a question, the problem is resolved.

And if you look at the context, as I've been pointing out to you, the Corinthians elevating tongues to the point that it is the supreme method of evangelism. Paul says, no, the law disagrees with you because right here it says I'll speak to them with other tongues and for all that they will not hear me. So now let's read it as a question.

Therefore, our tongues for a sign to those who believe. Therefore, our tongues, you can actually, according to the authorities, the sentence in the Greek is structured in such a way that you can move the words around and you could actually read it. Therefore, our tongues for a sign.

Not to those who believe, but to unbelievers. See what he's saying, they're saying tongues are a sign for unbelievers, that's why we need to get together and speak in tongues and the unbelievers will come and they'll all be converted. Paul says, are they for a sign to unbelievers? Not believers, and then, but prophesying is not for unbelievers, but for those who believe.

See, if we read it as a question, everything he goes on to say makes perfect sense. He shows him, he says, no, you're all wrong. Is it really that tongues are assigned for unbelievers? He says no.

And verse 23, if the whole church comes together in one place and all speak with tongues and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? That's going to be the conclusion. They're not going to be evangelized through your speaking in tongues, they're going to be driven away. And you know what? I think from experiences I've had, I could vouch for what Paul is predicting here, and some of you probably could as well.

I remember as a young boy going into some Pentecostal assemblies. And when I left, I had not the slightest inclination that God loved me or that I needed to be saved. My thinking was these people are out of their minds.

That was my thinking, and I'm sure you've had perhaps similar experiences. So that's what the outcome of this type of thing is. They'll say you're out of your mind.

But if all prophesy and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all. He is convicted by all. And thus, the secrets of the heart are revealed.

And yes, indeed, that's what prophecy does. And prophecy in the entire context is also what we're doing today as we stand up and preach the word we're prophesying. But we can prophesy individually as well.

But either way, if it's through the word being proclaimed. Or if it's through you personally speaking prophetically to others, what happens, it's prophecy that brings about conversion. That's what Paul's saying.

They've elevated tongues. It's a superior gift. It's the supreme gift for evangelism.

Paul says, no, it's not true at all. So if you want to see evangelism take place, prophesy. Because when the word of God is being proclaimed, what it does is it convinces and convicts people and the secrets of their hearts are revealed and they fall down on their face and they say, God is with you.

Over the years, I've seen this fulfilled over and over and over again. People have come into the assembly. And through the teaching, they've become convicted of sin, they've become convinced that Christ is real and they've fallen down and given their lives to the Lord.

Over the years, I've had people come to me and say, tell me, did my wife tell you that I was coming today? How do you know me? I said, I've never met your wife. I don't know you, who are you? But they can't believe it. So you were describing me, I was the only person in this room you were speaking directly to me.

We see, that's what prophecy does, that's what the Holy Spirit does through the prophetic word. He isolates people and convicts them of sin. And it's wonderful to see this.

It's glorious. But tongues. Now, what are tongues for? Because tongues are prayer and praise, tongues are clearly for believers.

If all the believers are gathered together and people are speaking in tongues, we're not going to say, oh, they're insane because we know what's going on. See, the unbeliever doesn't know that. And he thinks these people have lost their mind.

That's what Paul's saying, I think clearly, and my personal opinion is that 22 is better understood as a question. And as I said, there are Greek authorities that make allowance for verse 22 being a question. And so Paul then says to them, how is it then, brethren, when you come together each of you as a psalm, as a teaching, as a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation.

Let all things be done for edification. Now, there's a division. Over what Paul is saying in verse 26, among commentators, some people say that Paul is commending them, some people say Paul is rebuking them.

Some say that Paul is saying this is a good thing, you know, you come together and you're all there to minister to one another and you're all ready to use your gifts, that's a good thing. Others say, look, it was utter pandemonium in the church was chaos. Look at one person wanted to do this.

Somebody else wanted to do that. This one had a tongue, this one had an interpretation. What's the actual answer to the question? I don't know.

I can see both, actually. I think it's a good thing to come together and to desire to use the gifts that God has given us. And I think we need to do that, and I think it's a good thing to assemble together in anticipation of being ministered to and of ministering to other people as well.

I hope you don't come just to be ministered to. I'm glad you come to be ministered to, but I hope you come with a desire to minister to others as well. You want to use the gifts that God has given you to encourage other people.

And of course, that's so vitally necessary. We need that in the body, but yet I can also see the other perspective on it. I can see that.

If everyone is vying for position and everyone wants to share their gift and there's confusion and those kinds of things going on. So whether or not Paul was commending them or correcting them, I can't say for sure, but it's good to anticipate God using us when we come together. But of course, we always want to make sure that our motives are pure.

We don't want to be driven by selfish ambition or the desire to be seen or any of those kinds of things that could have been the case there, because we know that they had those kinds of problems from the things we've already studied. But either way, Paul says this, let all things be done for edification. Whatever we're doing, this is the goal.

It's to build one another up in Christ. That's the goal. Let all things be done for edification.

Now, if anyone speaks in a tongue here, Paul's going to give real practical teaching on this subject. And this is where if the Pentecostal people would just take and begin to apply these things in their assembly. A lot of that which is offensive and hindering what God really wants to do would just be in a moment taken care of.

It'd just be taken care of so quickly. Listen to Paul's very practical advice, his instruction here. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three each in turn and let one interpret.

So in a general assembly, under any circumstance and not every general assembly ought to have. This kind of thing going on, I think we need to be sensitive to the right time and place for those things. But Paul says, even under the ideal circumstances, there's only to be two or at the most three people that speak in tongues.

And notice they're to do it each in turn. They're not to do it at the same time. Now, you see how so many churches have just completely ignored the biblical instruction on this.

There are pastors that get up and say, OK, everybody now let's speak in tongues. That's a violation of Paul's teaching. He says, no, two or three at the very most, and each in turn, one after the other, not all three at the same time.

I mean, one tongue would be confusing enough if you don't understand what's being said. Mix it with a couple of others and there's certainly no way anyone's going to know what is going on. But then he says this, let one interpret.

But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in the church and let him speak to himself and to God. So it's mandatory in a public assembly that interpretation be there. If there's no interpretation, then there's to be no exercising the gift of tongues.

Paul says, let him keep silent in the church. Let him speak to himself and to God. So being silent in the church, not speaking out.

Now, there are times when I have been in an assembly and I've heard someone near to me very, very quietly, sort of just speaking in tongues almost under their breath. You can barely hear them. You just sort of hear them praising and so forth.

Is that acceptable? Is that allowable? I think as long as it's not distracting to somebody else, it probably is OK. Keep silent in the church, don't don't speak it out. But speak to yourself and to God, so to do it silently and sort of a silent prayer, that would be acceptable.

Now it comes to prophecy, let two or three prophets speak. And let others judge all this is such an important aspect of prophecy, let others judge how often is that taking place today? Someone prophesies and then it's assumed that you can't even challenge what they said, but you see that. Right there is contrary to what Paul said, judge it, not everything people say is prophecy is actually prophecy.

And there are to be those who evaluate what's said. And those who could conclude and say, no, that that wasn't from the Lord. We don't receive that.

I've been in meetings where, you know, the spirit of the Lord is present and there's just a very. Comforting environment. It's just sort of a just a precious time.

And then someone would come forth with what they believe was a word of prophecy. And it would be a very severe word. It would be a word of of impending doom and judgment.

The wrath of God is going to fall. And, you know, it's just so quenches the spirit. It comes into this this precious environment of comfort.

And it just you know, when you hear it, you say, no. But you see, unfortunately, there are so often young Christians there and they don't know the difference and they're not able to discern and they think, oh, no. God's going to destroy us.

But you see, that's where someone has to say that. Is judged as contrary to what God is doing here presently, what God is saying. See, these things are so important, but others judge, but if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.

So, again, with prophecy, also there's to be one and then the other afterwards, for you can all prophesy one by one. That all may learn and all may be encouraged. For you can all prophesy now, that doesn't mean that everyone can prophesy, it means you can all prophesy who have the gift of prophecy.

All those with the gift of prophecy can prophesy, but one by one. But here again, Paul limits it to two or three in the public assembly. And then he says this, which is so vitally important in all of this, and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets, for God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

This verse needs to be hung over the door of every Pentecostal church in the country because this is the problem. People are interrupting God's message, people are going off and prophesying, supposedly, and going off speaking in tongues and so forth. And then when they're challenged as to why they disrupted, they say, oh, the spirit came upon me.

How could I resist the spirit of God? And then they rebuke you for seeking to quench the spirit in their life. But no, the spirit of the prophets is subject to the prophets. Anyone who says to you that I had no control over what I did, you know that that person wasn't under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Because the fruit of the Holy Spirit, according to Galatians 6, is self-control. Galatians 5, self-control. So if I lose self-control, then I'm not under the influence of the Holy Spirit, I'm under the influence of something else, maybe my own spirit could be under the influence of an evil spirit.

It's possible. But you see, I'm not going to lose control if I'm under the influence of the spirit of God, because the spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets. Why? Because if they're not in confusion as a result, Paul could see it.

It was clear. That's why the spirit of the prophets are subject to the prophets, because God is not the author of confusion. When you go into a place where confusion exists, know that the Lord is not present.

When you know some of these meetings that have been going on where supposedly the Holy Spirit is moving and you walk in and you find confusion, you find people groaning and people laughing and people making animal noises and you find people shaking and convulsing and falling over and it's pandemonium. Now, all you've got to do is open up to first Corinthians 14, verse 33, and you can assess the whole thing. Right there, God is not the author of confusion, but a peace when the Lord is moving truly by his spirit, it's not a massive confusion.

It's a peaceful environment now, it's certainly possible that Satan would try to disrupt what God is doing and bring confusion in, but we would acknowledge it as satanic and deal with it. We would never say, oh, well, this is just another facet of the Holy Spirit's work. The amazing thing about what's gone on in this thing that was called Toronto and what's going on in some of this thing that's being referred to now by the name of Pensacola is that the very things that are happening at one time by the very people that are doing

them was designated as satanic interference into what God was doing.

Now, they've changed their minds and decided, oh, no, it's the Holy Spirit. That's ridiculous. So God is not the author of confusion, but a peace.

And this is so important. And I address this especially to you that have come out of the charismatic or Pentecostal background. The thing that you have to guard yourself against is going to the other extreme.

You see, because you've seen the excesses and you've seen the foolishness and you've seen the confusion, and I know that what generally happens is that after that experience, the person says, I don't want anything to do with any of that. But you see, in doing so, you can then go to the other extreme and miss out on the real work of the Holy Spirit. And that's where you have to be on your guard, because there is a real work of the Holy Spirit.

There is a real gift of tongues. There is a real gift of prophecy. There are real miracles.

These things are real. What you've experienced is a counterfeit. And God wants you to be open to experiencing the real thing.

But the real thing is always going to be so couched in the peace of God. The peace of God is there. There's just that sense of the presence of the Lord.

And there's the absence of confusion. Now. Wrapping up this 14th chapter, Paul says, Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak, but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.

Now, when we studied some of the earlier chapters, we saw some of the problems that had developed with the women failing to conform to certain cultural things and so forth. And here again, Paul's touching on the same problem in a sense. Some of the women in the fellowship were just simply rebellious and they were wanting to sort of lead.

They were wanting to take charge of the thing. Now, I don't want to get into trouble with you ladies, and I respect all of you, but, you know, quite often. In these these confusing environments, you find that it has to do with women seizing control or even behind the scenes leading.

You read the testimonies of men like John Wimber or John Arnott and some of these men who are, well, John Wimber, of course, is no longer with us. But John Arnott, you know, some of these men who are leading these movements, you read their testimonies closely and you find that the inspiration behind them is their wife. Their wife had the vision, their wife had the experience, their wife.

I know one man who pastored a vineyard fellowship and his wife actually prepared his sermons. She prepared his sermons for him, told him what to say. That's a contradiction of the biblical order.

So let the women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak, but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. So it doesn't mean that you can't speak here in the church. It was a thing where these ladies were usurping authority over men in the fellowship and wanting to take over and just bursting out during the midst of the services and so forth.

So Paul says, if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home. For it is shameful for women to speak in church. Speak, understand it in the sense of interrupt.

That's what he's saying. He's not saying women can't speak at church. You must come and tape your mouth before you arrive and then you can remove the tape when you've left.

We'll be passing out a roll of tape next week. That's not what Paul is saying. Understand, speak as interrupt.

That's what they were doing. They were interrupting the service. And then he says to them, and remember, this whole epistle is corrective.

And Paul is he's he's rebuking them on the one hand, he's coming back and he's being gentle and he's trying to work them through these things. But but now he says them in verse 36, because he knows that the things he's saying are going to be received with some degree of resistance. And so he says to them, or did the word of God originally.

Come from you, or was it you only that it reached, he's saying to them, does it all begin and end with you? Is that what you think you have cornered the market on spirituality? He's challenging them on that because that's sort of the place that they had come to. They had apparently from both the epistles to the Corinthians, they had come to a place where they thought that they were more spiritual than the apostle. And so he brings it back around to that there.

Did the word of God come originally from you? And then he says this, if anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual. Let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord, he said, this is how we'll test the true spiritual people in the congregation. They'll acknowledge that what I'm writing is from God, but if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

Therefore, brethren. Desire earnestly to prophesy and do not forbid to speak with tongues, but all things be done decently and in order. That's the way God would have it.

All things being done decently and in order.

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