

Christ Community Covenant Church
Spirit Filled Living in a Broken and Fallen World
Glossolalia, Amen, Maranatha: Ordering public worship to the Glory of God
Pastor Dave Scherrer - March 26, 2017

1 Corinthians 14:3-5 On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their up building and encouragement and consolation. ⁴The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. ⁵Now 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.

What is this all about???

As you remember, this section of the book of 1 Corinthians 14 is teaching on corporate worship. It began in 12:1 and goes through the end of this chapter. The Christians of the church in Corinth had been worshiping together poorly. It was impacted by the way they were dressing and even how and whether there was appropriate hair coverings. Their pride and selfishness got in the way of their celebrating the Lord's supper. Last week we discovered that each of us is given a gift of the Spirit, not to keep but to give away to our fellow church family for their strengthening and encouragement. Too often there was pride and one-upmanship in the church and it was destroying their corporate worship.

Paul in this chapter wants to instruct the members of the church in Corinth about these spiritual gifts. I want to begin today by doing a bit of teaching on this too:

1. Every Christian has one or more spiritual gifts. To each person the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the benefit of the church (1 Cor. 12:7). It is one and the same Spirit, distributing as he decides to each person, who produces all these things (1 Cor. 12:11). To each one of us grace was given according to the measure of the gift of Christ (Eph. 4:7). The gifts are to be used to serve one another as good stewards of the varied graces (*charismata*, a word that relates to the grace or *charis* of God).
2. Most theologians believe that the spiritual gifts may be given at the moment of re-birth in Christ, but they may lie undiscovered and dormant for a long period of time. Multi-gifted Christians often discover their combination of gifts through a gradual process.
3. Spiritual gifts can be abused and neglected. The Corinthian church illustrates the fact that believers can be highly gifted but spiritually immature.
4. Spiritual gifts are not the same as the gift of the Spirit. The gift of the Spirit – the indwelling presence of Christ in us - has been bestowed on all believers (John 14:16; Acts 2:38). The gifts of the Spirit, on the other hand, are distributed as God decides for His purposes for the church (1 Cor. 12:11).
5. Spiritual gifts are not the same as the fruit of the Spirit. Spiritual fruit is produced from within through a disciple's increase in knowledge and obedience to the word; spiritual gifts are imparted from without. Fruit relates to Christ-like character; gifts relate to Christian service. The fruit of the Spirit, especially love, should be the context for the operation of the gifts of the Spirit. Paul made it clear in 1 Corinthians 13 that spiritual gifts without the spiritual fruit of love are worthless.

The bottom line is that gifts are God's spiritual equipment for effective service and edification of the body. They are not bestowed for the self-promotion of the recipient, or as an evidence of a special endowment of the Spirit, but for the profit and edification of the Body of Christ. The possessor is only the instrument and not the receiver of the glory. The emphasis must be on the gift giver not the gift.

In this passage Paul wants to look a bit more closely at one gift that was apparently being used poorly in the Corinthians church and another gift that was being underappreciated. One was called the gift of

tongues and another called the gift of prophecy. We should talk about these a bit so that we are all thinking the same way concerning these expressions. Let's begin by talking a bit about *glossolalia*.

Instruction concerning "*Glossolalia*"

Tongues:

Speaking in tongues means speaking in a way or in a language that is not normally understood by the speaker or the listeners. The Bible mentions two types of speaking in tongues:

- On the day of Pentecost Jesus' apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other tongues. Those who heard this speech each heard it in his own language, even though they were from many different countries (Acts 2:1-13). Even though the apostles were speaking in an unknown language, the listeners were able to understand, each in his own language. There is no other mention of this type of speaking in tongues in the Bible.
- Speaking in an ecstatic language was common among members of the early Christian churches, but no one could understand this form of speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:2). Sometimes the speaker or another person would interpret the meaning.

Both cases were the work of the Holy Spirit. The apostle Paul classified speaking in tongues as just one of the spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 12, Romans 12, Eph. 4). In this chapter we are studying, Paul noted that he was thankful for his own gift of speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:18-19), but Paul told his churches that it was better practiced in private than in church, unless someone could interpret the ecstatic speech (1 Corinthians 14:23, 27-28).

"Those who know that glossolalia is not God's path for them and those for whom it is a proven enrichment should neither try to impose their own way on others, nor judge others inferior for being different, nor stagger if someone in their camp transfers to the other, believing that God has led him or her to do so. Those who pray with tongues and those who pray without tongues do it to the Lord; they stand or fall to their own master, not their fellow-servants; and in the same sense that there is in Christ neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female, so in Christ there is neither glossolalist nor non-glossolalist."
~ J.I. Packer, *Keep in Step with the Spirit: Finding Fullness in Our Walk with God*

Prophecy: The Superiority of "Truth Telling"

This gift is not so much about the Hollywood idea of looking into a crystal ball and telling the future. That is not what is being referred to as prophecy. Most think of this as the ability to receive and proclaim a message from God. Some think that this could involve the **foretelling** of future events, though its primary purpose as seen in our passage is **forth-telling**: one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouragement, and consolation. Wayne Gruden says that this is God bringing to mind words of truth that apply to the moment or situation or concern.

Paul says in verse 1 of this chapter to "**Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy.**" This gift is a blessing to the church and should not be quenched or despised (1 Thessalonians 5:20). Those who have the gift of prophecy differ from the Old Testament Prophets who spoke the authoritative Word of God directly. Their words were recorded as Scripture as they proclaimed, "Thus says The Lord," whereas the messages from those with the spiritual gift of prophecy must be tested (1 Corinthians 14:29-33; 1 Thessalonians 5:20-21; 1 John 4:1-3). In the New Testament the Apostles, not the prophets, took over the role of Scriptural proclamation from the Old Testament Prophets. When a person today exercises this gift these messages can take the form of exhortation, correction, disclosure of secret sins, prediction of future events, comfort, inspiration, or other revelations given to equip and edify the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 14:3-4, 24-25).

Have you sometimes said to yourself when you have prayerfully been in a difficult conversation – "I don't know where those words came from. It felt like God gave me the right thing to say for that moment." This is a part of this gift. It is the gift of providing a word (small w) from God to a specific group, not the normative Word of God (Capital W) to all believers. They are spoken in human words through a human

mind which is why they must be tested against the Scriptures (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21). Some say that the nearest current equivalent is Spirit-empowered preaching.

It's clear in the Corinthian church that there was confusion over these gifts and Paul wanted to make sure the churches knew that it was the telling of truth, the holding to sound doctrine and making sure it was applied to our lives that was critical for the church.

1 Corinthians 14:22-25 ²² Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers. ²³ So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers (or seekers) or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? ²⁴ But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying (speaking of Christ's love and forgiveness and glory), they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, ²⁵ as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"

So you can see that Paul is raising the 'telling of truth' to a place of superiority.

1 Corinthians 14:2-5 helps us see this . . .

1 Corinthians 14:2-5 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 up building 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.

The full, but orderly, participation of believers in worship – Can I get an “AMEN?”

1 Corinthians 14:13, 16-17 For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say. ¹⁶ Otherwise ***when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer say “Amen” to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying?*** ¹⁷ ***You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified.***

He is saying that if you speak in tongues, but no one knows what you are saying we the church, cannot respond in agreement. Then the attention is drawn to the utterer not the messenger. Do you see that all are contributing and all are participating in the worship and teaching, even if it's only to say 'Amen.'

Some of us have a hard time praying in public or with another person. I understand that to a degree. It's just not our style. On the other hand some like to pray outloud so much that we do not give others a chance. I have a word for you – a truth telling for the church – if you are the shy one consider taking a risk for the encouragement of the church. Don't say to yourself I can't or I don't, but rather, "Do you Lord have something or someone you want me to pray for?" Then go to them and pray for them. Your silent prayers are good, your prayers before the needy demonstrate your love publically, and that can move a heart toward healing and hope. Your prayers will be especially meaningful. Praying out loud encourages the church and your friends.

And conversely, if you are the one quick to speak advice and quick to offer prayer such that others have difficulty entering in, be careful that you are not speaking or praying out of your personal history and experience rather than out of the Spirit's direction.

It is interesting that Amen is the one word that is almost never translated (Let it be) but simply transliterated no matter the language. When I traveled in Africa or Asia or South America, no matter whether the language of prayer was Swahili or Chinese or Spanish, each always closed the prayer with the Greek word "Amen." I love it when I get an **Amen** from the congregation. It is not impolite or self-seeking. It lets me know you are listening and that you care.

Paul wraps up this section of his letter with the big idea that he circles back around to from where he began . . .

1 Corinthians 14:39-40 ³⁹ Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰ But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

1 Corinthians 16:22 “**Even so, Lord Come**” – “**Marana tha!**” (The only other word transliterated in this case from the Aramaic) (Our Lord has come)

When it is all said and done this is all that has to be said and done. ***Come Lord Jesus please. Soon!***