

## **Sermon 68: Introducing the Case of Tongues vs. Prophecy: 1 Corinthians 14:1-19**

### **Text: 1 Corinthians 14:1-19**

- **14:1** "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy..."
- **14:12** "Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church..."
- **14:19-20** "In the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men..."

### **Introduction:**

#### **Part 1: Breaking Down the Following Section: 14:1-40**

- **Part 1: Paul contrasts the value of tongues and prophecies in corporate worship: 14:1-19** "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy..."
- **Part 2: He explains why prophecy is more valuable to the body than tongues: 14:20-25** "Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men..."
- **Part 3: He dictates regulations for corporate worship: 14:26-40** "How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying..."

#### **Part 2: The importance of case law and Biblical principle:**

- **How should we study OT Laws?**
  - **Dispensational framework:**
    - **OT Israel: Exodus 19:6** "Ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel..."
    - **The local church in non-Christian cultures: 1 Peter 2:11-14** "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors,

as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well..."

○ **Cultural examples:**

- **Specific cultural practices: Leviticus 19:26-28** "Ye shall not eat any thing with the blood: neither shall ye use enchantment, nor observe times. Ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard. Ye shall not make any cuttings in your flesh for the dead, nor print any marks upon you: I am the LORD..."
- **Specific cultural problems: Number 27:8-11** "If a man die, and have no son, then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter. And if he have no daughter, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren. And if he have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren. And if his father have no brethren, then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it: and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses..."
- **Marriage customs:**
  - **Deuteronomy 25:5-10** "If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed..."

- **Jeremiah 29:6** "Take ye wives, and beget sons and daughters; and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters; that ye may be increased there, and not diminished..."
  - **Servant master scenarios:**
    - **Proverbs 22:7** "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender..."
    - **Leviticus 25:10** "Ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof: it shall be a jubile unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family..."
- **God's unchanging character:**
  - **God is immutable: Malachi 3:6** "I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed..."
  - He meets people where they are
  - He never compromises who He is when He meets them where they are.
- **Unchanging principles:**
  - **The value He ascribes to human life: Genesis 9:6** "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man..."
    - Abuse is sinful because people should be treated with dignity.
    - Theft is sinful because God gives resources to be managed and that productivity should be protected.
    - Murder is sinful because humans are created in God's image.
  - **His purpose for male and female and the institution of marriage:**
    - **Genesis 1:26-28** "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion..."



- **A day laborer: Leviticus 19:13** "Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning..."
  - **Many potential applications of that principle:**
    - **Itinerant preachers: Luke 10:7** "And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house..."
    - **Church Planters: 1 Corinthians 9:9-10** "It is written in the law of Moses, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn. Doth God take care for oxen? Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?"
    - **Pastors: 1 Timothy 5:17** "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward..."
- **How should we study examples in Scripture that we are not specifically facing?**
  - We need to understand the example:
  - We need to understand the underlying principles that affect that example:
  - We need to carefully obey directly correlating situations.
  - We need to carefully apply these principles in similar scenarios.

### **Part 3: Five facts concerning the cases of prophecy and tongues:**

- **Fact 1: Tongues is never addressed in another epistle.**
  - It is mentioned in Acts at key moments in the progression of the gospel from one people to another.
  - It is discussed at great length in **1 Corinthians 12-14.**
  - It is never addressed in another epistle.
- **Fact 2: This is very different from other issues mentioned in 1 Corinthians:**
  - **Sexual ethics:**
    - **1 Thessalonians 4**
    - **Ephesians 5**
    - **Colossians 3**
  - **Church unity:**
    - **Philippians 2**

- **Ephesians 4**
  - **Romans 12**
- **Issues of liberty and conscience:**
  - **Romans 14**
  - **Galatians 5**
- **The resurrection:**
  - **1 Thessalonians 4**
  - **2 Timothy 2**
- **Spiritual gifts:**
  - **Romans**
  - **Ephesians**
  - **1 Peter**
- **Roles of women in corporate worship:**
  - **1 Timothy 2**
  - **Titus 2**
- **Fact 3: The applications given in 1 Corinthians relating to corporate worship are mirrored in other epistles but in the absence of a reference to tongues.**
- **Fact 4: Prophecy is addressed in five other epistles:**
  - **Romans 12**
  - **Ephesians 2,3,4**
  - **1 Thessalonians 5**
  - **1 Timothy 1,4**
  - **2 Peter 1**
- **Fact 5: There is a dramatic shift in the way the apostles instruct their disciples at the end of their ministries:**
  - In the **Pastoral Epistles, 2 Peter, and Jude**, prophecy was never referenced as an active gift in the church or a gift that should be expected to be an active gift in the church.
  - These same books, reference preaching and teaching sound doctrine as a faithful minister's responsibility **33 times**.
  - **2 Timothy 3:16-4:2** "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word..."
  - **Jude 1:3-4** "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares..."

- **2 Peter 1:15-2:1** "I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance...For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty...We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost...But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies..."
- **Some considerations:** Since tongues is not mentioned in other epistles, we could conclude one of more of the following:
  - There is clearly a shift within the lifetime of the apostles.
  - If tongues was active in all other churches, then it was only being practiced in a problematic way in the church at Corinth.
  - The fact that it was never mentioned in 2 Corinthians means it either ceased to be a problem because they ceased to practice the gift or it ceased to be a problem because they embraced Paul's teaching.
  - I am skeptical of the second option when I consider how they handled other issues he addressed.
  - That fact that it is not even mentioned in other books, makes me suspicious that even in the lifetime of the apostles, it was rarely witnessed in other churches.

#### **Part 4: How we will approach this section**

- If tongues and prophecies are active in the church, this instruction is absolutely and directly binding.
- The underlying principles that shaped this instruction are universally applicable and need to be understood.
- We will break down the situation, so we understand it to the best of our ability.
- We will try to observe the underlying principles that drove to those applications.
- We will present some practical ways to apply these principles to our immediate situation.