

We Need to Hear from God

Teaching Time!

Overview of the passage

Paragraph 1 (vss. 1-5) – Introducing the contrast between prophecy and tongues.

Paragraph 2 (vss. 6-12) – A real question – “How will tongues benefit you?”

Paragraph 3 (vss. 13-19) – The answer: “There must be interpretation.”

Paragraph 4 (vss. 29-25) – A warning against the misuse of tongues from Israel’s history.

Deeper Dive

Vss. 1-5 *Prophecy vs. Tongues*

- No one understands tongues, everyone understands prophecy.
- Prophecy is for building up the church, while tongues is for personal upbuilding.
- Therefore, tongues must be used privately or interpreted; prophecy is preferred.

Vss. 6-12 Question: *How will tongues benefit the church?*

- Tongues are indistinct
 - Like a flute playing random notes.
 - Like a bugle that can’t sound the alarm.
- Tongues are unintelligible, like speaking to the air.
- Tongues turn should-be brothers into foreigners.
- Therefore, strive to build up the church.

Vss. 13-19 Answer: *Tongues benefit the church only when interpreted.*

- The person speaking in tongues should pray for its interpretation before speaking.
- Tongues bypass the mind – the mind does not know what the Spirit is saying.
 - Paul resolves that it is best to engage both mind and spirit if in public.
 - “I will pray with my spirit but pray with my mind also.”
 - “I will sing praise with my spirit but sing praise with my mind also.”
 - Or else how will the outsider say “Amen?”
- Conclusion: Five words with my mind (prophecy) are greater than 10,000 in tongues.

Vss. 20-25 A warning from Israel’s history. (Isaiah 28:1-13)

- Northern Israel would not listen to the prophet, Isaiah, but was proud.
- God therefore spoke to them through unintelligible (Assyrian) tongues in judgment.
- Therefore, uninterpreted tongues are a negative sign that confuses outsiders, while prophecy builds up believers and can convict unbelievers.

A yet even deeper dive

Paul himself was acting prophetically, patiently teaching a rebellious, proud, and divided church.

Paul has written intelligible, coherent and practical instruction!

Will the Corinthian church listen? Paul is legitimately concerned. (1 Cor. 4:21, 2 Cor. 10-12)

Isaiah’s prophecy is described in Isaiah 28:10

For it is precept upon precept, precept upon precept, line upon line, line upon line,
here a little, there a little.”

What is Prophecy, Anyway?

The different forms of prophecy

Prophecy: Clear, intelligible words delivered from God, through man to man, for our upbuilding.

Form 1 → Prophecy from Scripture: This is the main form, seen above from Isaiah’s own ministry! (And Moses, and David, and Jesus!)

2 Peter 19-20 “And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed... ²⁰ knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation.”

Form 2 → Special revelation from God: God may speak to a person to deliver a message from him. There is sincere debate over whether this form of the prophetic gift continues today.

1. Some say no, seeing that sense of the prophetic gift as a foundation for the church (Ephesians 2:20 ... the church built on “the foundation of the apostles and prophets.”)
2. Some say yes, since it’s a biblical gift, why should it be gone?

Pastor Brian’s warning: All prophecies are to be weighed against Scripture, tested for accuracy, and should be clear. They are not horoscopes. And if shown to be false, cease and desist.

Do You Want to Hear from God?

Pay attention to Scripture and speak and apply it to yourself and with other Christians! Prophesy to each other!

***It might seem boring!** Eutychus fell asleep from Paul’s teaching. Jeremiah’s ministry involved decades of rejection, was viewed as ordinary and ineffective. Jesus’ crowds often disappeared when the miracles stopped and he started preaching.*

***Fall in love with God’s Word.** (Psalm 119)*

Questions for Further Study and Application

1. According to 1 Cor. 14, what is the difference between tongues and prophecy?
2. Do you have any experiences with tongues and interpretation? How does that affect how you read this chapter?
3. Read Isaiah 28:1-13. Why is this such a stinging reference to get the Corinthians’ attention?
4. How are you cultivating a love for God’s word?