

## Edify the Church Outline

### *1st Corinthians 14:1-25*

- I. Tongues—A most controversial biblical subject.
  - A. The “cessationist”—the spiritual gifts have ceased.
  - B. The “continuationists”—the spiritual gifts are for today as they were in the 1<sup>st</sup> century.
  - C. The “semi-cessationist”—some of the spiritual gifts ceased: the “sign gifts”.
- II. The main purpose of chapters 12-14 of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians.
  - A. Is not to educate us on tongues.
  - B. The main point— ANY ACTIVITY THAT DOES NOT EDIFY...BUILD UP THE CHURCH... IS NOT AN ACTIVITY TO BE PRACTCED IN THE CHURCH.
  - C. The most important words in chapter 14—Verse 1, **Pursue love...**
- III. Spiritual gifts are good, especially the gift of prophesy.
  - A. Prophesy— *“expository preaching...the unfolding the mind of God and applying it to the daily struggles of life”* – Ray Stedman
- IV. Tongues.
  - A. “Tongues” refer to languages.
    1. Greek *glossa* used in three ways in the New Testament:
      - a. As the actual organ of the tongue as in James 3:5
      - b. Referring to “speech”—“My tongue was glad” (My speech was happy) Acts 2:26.
      - c. All other usages spoke of tongues as languages (as in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians).
  - B. The three basic views.
    1. **Traditional View**—One speaks in “known languages” but are unknown to the one speaking. The Holy Spirit enables the hearers to understand the language.
    2. **Charismatic View**—The speaker speaks in a known language or a “heavenly language” not known to man. The speaker does not know what he is saying.
    3. **Alternate View**—The speaker knows what he’s saying but the hearers do not know what he’s saying unless the Holy Spirit or an interpreter translates.

- a. Example—Acts 2:1-8
  - C. Tongues are not spoken to men but rather to God (verse 2)
  - D. Prophecy is superior to speaking in tongues.
    - 1. It edifies, builds people up, the Greek word is oikodomen.
    - 2. For exhortation—For support and comfort—*Paraklesis*—come alongside.
    - 3. For encouragement—God’s word is sufficient for all of life: 2 Peter 1:3
  - E. Tongues are beneficial to the church when interpreted (Verse 5).
    - 1. Tongues when interpreted become as prophecy is—edifying.
    - 2. The benefits of interpreted tongues or prophesying (Verse 6):
      - a. Revelation.
      - b. Knowledge
      - c. Prophecy
      - d. Teaching
    - 3. Examples
      - a. Musical instruments (Verses 7 & 8).
      - b. Words (Verse 9).
  - F. Tongues are not gibberish meaningless sounds, they are languages that have meaning.
    - 1. Tongues are meaningful unknown languages.
- V. The Key verse—Verse 12
- A. EVERYTHING WE DO IN CHURCH SHOULD BE FOR THE EDIFICATION OF THE CHURCH!

## Edify the Church Pastoral Notes

### *1st Corinthians 14:1-25*

There are a lot of controversial issues in the church today... more than any other time in church history—my opinion!... Most of the controversies are outside of the biblical context... what I mean by that is that now churches, denominations are arguing, splitting apart, dividing over issues that are actually very clear in the Bible... but they don't accept the Bible as absolute authority...

What I think, how I feel, what seems right to me.... that's how most issues are dealt with...

Today the big area of church conflicts are centered on issues of gender, sexual orientation... women pastors...race...but you don't have to go far back when most of the issues were inside the biblical context... a time in the not distant past where most of evangelical Christianity accepted God's Word as absolute truth and authority for all of life....

The arguments existed in areas that are not absolutely 100% clear in scripture... areas where God...I believe intentionally kept somewhat open for discussion and argument to grow us in His word...most of these arguments are not salvation issues...but none the less so controversial that denominations split and new ones were formed because of them.

Spiritual gifts contain some of the most controversial issues in the Bible... we've been discussing spiritual gifts for a few weeks now in that we have arrived at chapters 12 through 14 in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians...

Three consecutive chapters that deal specifically with spiritual gifts... this morning we look in more detail at one of the most controversial of all the spiritual gifts..... the speaking in tongues... just twenty or so years ago... the speaking in tongues would have trumped all other controversies in the evangelical church....

I was reading an article by Ray Stedman on the speaking of tongues, one of my favorite preachers of the past... back in 1990 he wrote *Surely the subject of tongues is one of the most, if not THE MOST, controversial issues in the church today. Without a doubt it is one of the major eye-brow raisers of modern times.*

Well... there are many more eyebrow raisers in the church today... tongues is down on the list... but no less controversial... since the Holy Spirit came down from heaven on that special day of Pentecost two thousand years ago... there has been a shroud of mystery and controversy over the practice of speaking in tongues.... The argument continues on.... The reason for that is... speaking in tongues is biblical!... we'll talk about that.

It would not be difficult to get an argument regarding the speaking of tongues going right here in this church...today!...I know first-hand that we are a body of believers with many different ideas and beliefs regarding the gift of tongues...

### **Read 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:1-12**

I have spoken with several of you who have voiced your opinion to me that spiritual gift of tongues has ceased and has no place in the church today... and some of you have shared with me you speak in tongues...to which I replied... *that's fine... please don't do it in here on a Sunday morning*... as you will see today that is a biblical response!... point... there are differing views on the gift of tongues among true believers in Christ...be careful what you say regarding these issues... you have to live in eternity with these people!

In this room right now there are at least these possibilities regarding the speaking of tongues... we mentioned these a few weeks ago...

**1.** Some of you do not believe that the speaking of tongues exist today... you are what we talked about a few weeks ago... "**cessationist**" who believe the spiritual gifts have ceased since the completion of the Bible and the apostolic age came to a close.

A purist creationist believes that ALL the spiritual gifts have ceased... including the "spiritual gift of preaching"... etc... not all cessationist are purist...that why I made the distinction calling some in this camp a word most of you have not hear.

**2.** Some of you are **semi-cessationist**...you believe that some of the gifts... the "sign gifts", the gifts that were signs to validate the apostles authority... such as healing and speaking in tongues have ceased... they are no longer needed.... The Word of God has been completed.... But the gifts like preaching, teaching and so forth still continue on.... You could call them semi-continuationist but some of them will be mad at you if you do!

A good example of one in this camp would be John MacArthur.

**3.** Some of you believe that speaking in tongues is for today... you are "**continuationists**" who believe that the spiritual gifts as described in chapter 12 are for today as they were 2000 years ago...

Like the cessationist... there are differing views in this camp as well... the **charismatics** who we will mention in a bit are in this group.... But not all continuationists are charismatic.... A good example of one who is a continuationist (not a charismatic) would be theologian Wayne Grudem (explain: 1. Tough to prove they have ceased using the Bible...embraces the idea that God can and does do anything He wants anytime He wants to... God uses different gifts at different times and different eras...).

The late Chuck Smith, founder of the Calvary Chapel church movement was charismatic light...I should mention there is another group that gives the charismatics a bad rap in that they are in this charismatic classification...

Chuck Smith referred to them as the Charismaniacs... these are the sensationalist you see on TBN late Saturday night...they exploit the gifts... sensationalize them...totally unbiblical.

*Charismatic or Charismania*

4. Some of you are not sure... every time you read through the bible in one year... you don't get past Leviticus so you've never had to deal with 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14...*it all sounds spooky.*

5. Some of you have never thought about or possibly even heard about this speaking in tongues...you may be new to Christianity... you may be still trying to understand **For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...now there's something called speaking in tongues?**

[Me... I'll be honest... this subject is hard for me... I've been really challenged over the years but especially these last weeks...

a skeptic by nature...anything supernatural... anything out of normal whatever that is...I'm a Thomas, I want to see the nail holes in His hands! ... tongues have always been a challenge for me...I've attended massive events ...*expound*]

I am skeptical...about most things... about aliens... vitamins...government (not sure it exists)... so this has been a challenge for me...]

Well... It will take us two weeks but... I hope you will all leave this building understanding more about this gift of tongues which is biblical!... but that is not the main purpose of these three chapters in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians.

These three chapters of 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians are the most definitive words in the Bible regarding the gift of tongues... chapter 14 being the most specific...*but the purpose of all three of these chapters was not to promote the gift of tongues*... Paul had a much greater purpose in writing these three chapters.

But tongues had to be dealt with...and they still do today...there is much confusion over tongues 2000 years later... unfortunately... even if we stayed in this chapter for the rest of the year...we would not be able to settle the controversy over tongues... but what we can do in this hour is to have a better understanding of tongues.... But more than that... understand what is way more important than this gift.

The reason the apostle Paul spends so much time on tongues is because of the problem this gift was having in the Corinthian church... the gift of tongues was being way over emphasized in the church.

Paul recognized that the idea of speaking in tongues existed before Christianity ever arrived in Corinth... this speaking in tongues was a prominent religious activity in the pagan temples in Corinth... This speaking in tongues would better be describes as “nonsensical utterances”... spiritual gibberish...

That is not foreign to us today...other pagan religions today practice nonsensical gibberish... the hope being taking the speaker of these tongues to a higher “spiritual level”... Back in the 70’s the Hare Krishna was having its heyday... I remember seeing these robed bald men and women parading around LAX airport parking lots chanting nonsensical words...tongues.

Eastern mysticism brought in a “spiritual yoga” where along with bending the body in different positions... one would chant nonsensical utterances... so it was in the pagan temples in Corinth... apparently not everyone was capable of speaking in tongues... so those who could became basically celebrities...the envy of the temple...so this speaking in tongues became very emphasized and highly valued...

Some of this carried over to the Christian church in Corinth... they came to Christianity already with that concept of tongues...so it was not a giant leap in understanding true speaking in tongues which was brought about and empowered by the Holy Spirit.... chapter 12.

But they held on to the over emphasis of the gift of tongues... and they desired this gift over all the other gifts... so Paul spends three chapters instructing them why this overemphasis is wrong....let me give you the point of chapter 14 right now.

**ANY ACTIVITY THAT DOES NOT EDIFY...BUILD UP THE CHURCH... IS NOT AN ACTIVITY TO BE PRACTCED IN THE CHURCH**

The church at Corinth was practicing tongues in church... and as we will see.... This practice does not edify the church... and still doesn’t today!

So... this is not just about the spiritual gift of tongues... it could apply to ANY activity... any practice that does not build up the saints.... so the application of this chapter to us is much broader than the subject of tongues... we must ask ourselves... are there any activities being over emphasized in the church that does not build the church up?

That activity for the Corinthian church was the speaking of tongues.... So lets learn about tongues but not forget what is important.... *What is most important are the first two words in verse 1 of chapter 14.... Pursue love.*

Those two words attach chapter 14 to chapter 13... we looked at that last week... the great love chapter of the Bible... remember that chapter was not a change of subject from spiritual gifts to

love... it was a declaration that love the vital ingredient of the practice of spiritual gifts....and... is far, far superior to all of the spiritual gifts.... That absolute truth is carried on now through chapter 14.

Love is the masthead for everything done in the church....edification is all about love for the body of Christ... Anything done in the church outside of love is like a noisy gong and a clanging cymbal...love is the key to edifying the church...spiritual gifts are tools God has provided us to build up the church... but love is the motivation.

### **Read verse 1**

Center everything on love... but... “**desire spiritual gifts**”... we’ve said that all Christians automatically receive at least one spiritual gift...Paul says... now desire that you have them!...you can have them without any desire to have them!... that desire is the desire to build up the body of Christ.... In love for one another.... The desire is not for yourself... the gift is a gift performed in love of others...**Spiritual gifts are to be selfless acts of love**

So.. desire spiritual gifts...and the Corinthian church is thinking... *we are!*... *TONGUES!*... but Paul says.... **Prophecy.**

We’ve seen... here prophecy is not simply predicting the future like the prophets of the Old Testament... mainly it is having insight into God’s word and the ability to share it with others IN LOVE.

Stedman says the gift of prophecy is basically “*expository preaching...the unfolding the mind of God and applying it to the daily struggles of life...*” That’s great!... that’s what we are trying to do here every Sunday!...Prophecy is preaching God’s word... not just teaching... teaching facts and history.... But teaching for EDIFICATION of the body!...that’s prophesying.

### **Read verse 2**

Our first point regarding speaking in tongues...

**1. “Tongue” refers to a language...** not gibberish sounds...

The word glossa appears in the Greek New Testament not less than fifty times. It is used to refer to the physical organ of the tongue as in James 3:5... once in reference to the flames of fire shaped like tongues (Acts 2:3)...

At least once in a metaphorical sense when referring to speech as in the statement, “my tongue (speech) was glad (joyous)” (Acts 2:26). ...After a week of search... what I found was the remaining usages of the word it always means a language.

We could say then....something controversial but I’ll say it anyway... The gift of tongues is the gift of supernaturally... speaking languages...unknown languages... as we saw in chapter 12....not indistinguishable utterances... [the controversy].

There are at least three differing views on this which might be helpful to know...

**1. Traditional View**....One speaks in “known languages” but are unknown to the one speaking.... The Holy Spirit enables the hearers to hear what the speaker is saying in their own language....the speaker has no idea what he’s saying.

**2. The Charismatic View**...the speaker is speaking either a known language or a “heavenly language”... remember last week, “the tongues of angels” (13:1)... Which would not be a known language to man...the speaker doesn’t know what he is saying... but the Holy Spirit enables him to speak the heavenly language...

**3. “Alternate View”**...the speaker speaks a language... a local language that he knows... but the congregation does not.... This view says the tongues that were spoken in Acts 2... where the hearers of the tongues being spoken understood them...

Acts 2:1-8

**2** When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly a noise like a violent rushing wind came from heaven, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. **3** And tongues that looked like fire appeared to them, distributing themselves, and a tongue rested on each one of them. [the Holy Spirit arrives to all believers.] **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with different tongues [languages], as the Spirit was giving them the ability to speak out.

**5** Now there were Jews residing in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. every nation = many different languages... **6** And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together and they were bewildered, because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. **7** They were amazed and astonished, saying, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? **8** And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?

It's all supernatural!... the Holy Spirit enables the speaker to speak... the speaker it is implied knows what he is saying... but he is speaking in a foreign language... BUT... the Holy Spirit enables everyone to hear in their own language.... Speaking in tongues.

This “alternative view” sees the tongues spoken in Acts 2 and 1 Corinthians 14 are the same thing... I can see this... nowhere in the Bible are tongues not languages....

Something else interesting... in Acts 2 are “**devout men from every country**”...a conglomeration of languages.... And they needed the Holy Spirit to intercede and enable them to understand what was being said in their own language...

But what happens right after that?... Peter stands up in front of everyone and preaches a great sermon... and everyone understood what he was saying...he was not speaking in tongues...there



was no need of a supernatural translator!... that is because they all could speak Greek which is what Peter was preaching in.

**2. Tongues are not spoken to men... (2) for one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men...but to God.** He who speaks in a tongue... a language never learned... is not speaking to men.... only to God.... some have concluded that tongues is like prayer.

This is important for us to know... if someone around you is claiming to be speaking in tongues... one of the first things to check out is who is he speaking to?... men?... this affirms that the speaking of tongues is never preaching.

Some guys you often see on television say that the Holy Spirit descends and enables people to open their mouths and nonsensical words flow out they have no control of... the Holy Spirit preaches the gospel through their mouths,...not biblical tongues!

In Acts chapter 2 they were not preaching... they were praising God... (11) speaking in tongues **of the mighty deeds of God...** praising God.... Peter stands up and preaches to them and interprets all that to the crowd.

(2) **...for the one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to man but to God... for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries....**no one understands unless the Holy Spirit enables them to understand...as He did in Acts 2 or there is an interpreter as we will see later.

In the Corinthian church people would stand up and speak ecstatic utterances... which induced some kind of religious experience... a babble of sounds... these sounds were “mysteries” to those hearing the sounds.

Remember... Paul said that prophesy was the gift to desire.... And so he contrasts the gift of prophesy to the gift of tongues:

### **Read verse 3**

Prophesy...speaks to men... expository preaching is directed to men... but glorifies God... Calvin called prophesy *the peculiar gift of explaining [God's]revelation [to man]....* One commentator said prophesy is *applying the world view of God to the circumstances of men, so that men begin to see what is happening in their lives in terms of what God desires and expects from them.*

Paul tells us that prophesying has a threefold effect:

**1. It edifies**... builds people up... the Greek word is *oiko-domen*...oiko means “house” and domen means “to build”... the idea is to build up a house on a solid foundation...the work of prophesying is building up the house... God’s house... you and me,... do we need Holy Spirit empowered prophesy today?

A word so over used today is “identity”... the world is obsessed with one’s identity... gender identity...identity politics... social identity...cultural identity... personal identity,...obviously one of the greatest struggles today is finding and developing one’s true identity.

Identity= *the fact of being who or what a person or thing is*...People don’t know who or what they are anymore!!!...People are being destroyed in their search for their identity... God’s word tells us that it doesn’t matter what you are or were.... You can be a “new creation”... new creatures in Christ...

In Christ you are no longer what you once were... you have a true... unchangeable... eternal perfect identity in Jesus Christ.... How do we know this?... how can others find out about this?.... that is what prophesying is all about!... it edifies... it builds up... as the world tears you down through confusion... prophesy builds up and leads you to and reveals the truth!

**2. For exhortation**... **But the one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation**...the Greek word is *paraklesis*... one of the titles of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is our comforter.... He is the strengthener for God’s people... He supports us... He comes alongside us... the literal meaning is “to come alongside”... to support, strengthen... that’s what prophesying... good solid expository preaching does for you.

**3. For encouragement**...*parathumia*...prophesy comforts us... God’s word is sufficient for all of life...2 Peter 1:3... **His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness**.... How do we get God’s word?... through prophesy!... do you see the superiority of prophesy over the speaking of tongues?

#### **Read verse 4**

The speaking of tongues IS beneficial.... To one person... the speaker...but he who has the gift of prophesying... is beneficial to the entire church... the body of Christ!... by the way... I think this is another proof that the speaker of tongues knows what he’s saying when he speaks in tongues... how would it be beneficial to him if he doesn’t know what he’s saying?

#### **Read verse 5**

Paul does not depreciate speaking in tongues... those of us who tend toward the cessationist view that the gifts have ceased would have preferred Paul to say something like...Don’t bother trying to speak in tongues... they no longer exist.... But he doesn’t.

***I want you to speak in tongues... it’s a good gift!... nothing wrong with that!... but it would be better if it did something for others***... the whole reason Paul spent an entire chapter on love was to get our minds off ourselves... and on to others...

Speaking in tongues doesn't do ANYTHING for anyone else but you.... EXCEPT... if they are interpreted... in other words... even speaking in tongues can be used as prophesy... if they are interpreted so others can understand them.... basically tongues turn into prophesy when they are understood by the church.

- Either the Holy Spirit interprets....as in Acts 2
- Or someone else is gifted to interpret....

So add to the list:

### **3. Tongues are beneficial to the church when interpreted.**

#### **Read verse 6**

*If all I do is stand up here and begin speaking a language none of you can understand... I might get something out of it... but it doesn't help you in any way!... But if tongues are interpreted... or if I prophesy...this is what will profit you if I stand up here and open up God's word and reveal it to you....he lists four things I could profit you with:*

**1. Revelation**—Paul was an apostle...so he could have spoken to them actual revelation from God... Once God's word was complete... the Old and the New Testament... apostles were no longer needed.... But I can stand up here and deliver to you God's revealed revelation in this book... and that could edify you.

**2. or of Knowledge**—many believe he's referring to the vast lessons found in the Old Testament... the New Testament hadn't been put together yet... so biblical knowledge would have been from the Old Testament.

**3. or of prophesy**—we've detailed what prophesy is...

**4. or of teaching**—explaining the doctrines of the Bible... giving out the details... the facts.... All four are profitable for the church.... Oiko-domen... they all build up God's people... but speaking in tongues.... Nothing!...Nothing for others... illustration?... he gives us two:

#### **Read verses 7-8**

Suppose I went over to that beautiful piano of ours and begin playing for you... you would all say... *what in the world is that awful noise?... that isn't music!*

The indistinct and uncoordinated notes that I would pound out would give no one in this building any enjoyment!... and certainly be of no benefit!...

Worse than that... if I was handed a bugle... and was told I was the new bugler of a military camp... and I was told to blow reveille or that call to attack.... The whole place would be in chaos!...That's what Paul is getting at!

If you are going to be the bugler... you had better be able to play it so everyone understands what you're playing!... if you are wanting them to attack but you blow out taps and they all go to sleep... what good are you?.... the same goes for words:

### **Read verse 9**

*If you are speaking to a crowd and are using unintelligible words... how will anyone know what you said... worthless to everyone listening!*

Then Paul narrows it down to languages:

### **Read 10**

Sounds here are referring to voices... specifically referring to the many voices of the many nations of the world.... Languages.... ALL LANGUAGES HAVE MEANING!... I think Paul is referring here not only to all known languages of different nations.... But also to the spiritual gift of tongues...

### **4. Tongues are not gibberish meaningless sounds, they are languages that have meaning.**

Pretty plain isn't it?... **There are many languages...** tongues are meaningful languages!... and if I hear a tongue and don't understand it?

### **Read verse 11**

Both the Greeks and the Romans considered people they could not understand to be barbarians... foreigners... remember Corinth was a sea port... there would be many "barbarians"... immigrants... transient laborers... traders... none of which spoke Greek as their main language...

They all knew just enough Greek or Latin words to be able to conduct their trade business... but that was it... they could not understand any real conversation.... that's the way it was for the Corinthian "tongue speakers"... Unless their tongue was translated, those speaking are like foreigners.... Barbarians.

The language barrier had to be broken so as not to be treated like barbarians.... So all of this... everything Paul is leading to is summed up in our final verse for this morning.... Paul zeroes in on the issue in verse 12....this is our key verse:

### **Read verse 12**

This is a verse for us...there is a propensity within the modern church to engage in activity that is for OUR own experiences...The Corinthian church was obsessed with certain spiritual gifts because they were sensational.... They provided a "wow"

The Corinthians were obsessed with tongues... they were mysterious... intriguing... entertaining...made them feel good.... Body detached from the brain... there are church's today

obsessed with the spiritual gifts and have elevated them to the highest status in the church... but this isn't just about the wrong elevation of spiritual gifts in the church... this is about any activity we elevate that doesn't spiritually build up the church...

Some of them good things... some of them religious things...

The modern church sings songs... songs are an important part of corporate worship.... But so many sing songs that make us feel good rather than elevate God to highest status. sermons are vital... prophesy right?.... but so many... deliver sermons to entertain so we will come back next week... short sermons.... Talking to my Canadian Son-In-Law about the recent times he delivered two sermons in his church... the elders in his church all were to deliver sermons... he is an elder.

I asked how long he preached... I was proud... 40 minutes or so.... The church was not proud... the other elders were between 5 and 10 minutes... they didn't just get out before lunch.... They got out before breakfast!... I can't do my introduction in 10 minutes!

The point is... everything we do here... everything!.... should be for the edification of the church body... edification means what?... the building up the church on its solid foundation the gospel of Jesus Christ.... The good news of Jesus Christ.