

1 Corinthians 14:1-25, "Worship and the Church"

11.8.20

A few minutes ago, Madison was leading us as we sang, "Do What You Want To." She and the Praise Team did a great job singing it and playing it. But, you know, we can easily sing a familiar song and almost not realize the meaning of the words we're singing. I want you to see the lyrics.

Do What You Want To

**It's Your heart we're searching for
We want You and nothing more
Let Your glory fill this place
We're alive in Your presence**

**We surrender all to You
Do what You want to
Do what You want to
God we long to see You move
Do what You want to
Do what You want to**

**We are standing in Your light
And our hearts are open wide
Let us see more than before
Lord, come have Your way here**

Where? Here...in the church... In our meeting, our gathering, our worship, the "Worship Service?" In the NT it was called the Ecclesia, the Gathering, and it's okay to call it the Worship Service, but we almost get the idea that being in here is the only time we can worship the Lord. Is that true? No. Of course not! Worship is a lifestyle. Literally a "life to be lived."

In fact, to worship is to show "worth" or as some call it: "worth-ship." When we worship, we show how much that person or thing is WORTH to us. You see, when we come to church, we are to worship the Lord Jesus...we show how much He is worth to us by how we sing...how we give...how we participate in His work. And church family, when we do that...we edify Him... What does that mean? It means we "build up" the Body...His body...which is the Church...we, His bride. Listen, it's very simple. To worship Jesus means we are to build up one another and when we do that, we bring Him glory and that will be for our COMMON GOOD. And that's what we saw in:

1 Corinthians 12:7

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

The gifts of the Spirit are for the common good of the Church so that the church can be built up and edified.

And so, beginning today and over the next couple of Sundays we're going to learn how to build up, to edify and to worship the Lord as we come together as the family of God in HERE, but as we also go out there and live life... Thus, today, we begin a new series we're calling, "Worship and the Church."



As you know, if you have spent any time with us over the last several weeks, the church in Corinth was a mess. In my mind, you can boil down the main issue in that church to this: they were emphasizing their own personal selves, their own personal edification over that of the church. And that, church family, is not TRUE Worship. That's self-worship. They wanted to build themselves up, not their fellow believers. But I want to show you something...and we'll get to it next week...but it's the very last verse in this chapter...because it's the key. See it...

1 Corinthians 14:40

⁴⁰ But all things should be done decently and in order.

That's NOT what was happening in that church! It was just the opposite...total disorder! And so, chapter 14 is an accounting of the Lord's instructions, through the Apostle Paul on how to restore order in the church.

Now, we have 25 verses to get through today and so, I'm not going to try to read all of it at once...because it flows so well...so, we'll jump right with verses 1 and 2...and go...

1 Corinthians 14:1-2

¹ Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ² For 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.

Do you know what we can tell right off the bat? We can tell that Paul was scolding the Corinthian church for neglecting prophecy and giving a wrong emphasis to tongues. Now remember **what prophecy is**. It's one of the 19 spiritual gifts that we went over a few weeks ago and it is the ability to preach and teach the Word of God, or to give testimony about God. And you see, what their church services had turned into was everyone trying to show off their ability to speak in an unknown tongue or language and they were doing so...all at one time...and it was a chaotic mess.

Now, we most talk about what "tongues" are. You will, remember when we went over the list of spiritual gifts in chapter 12 that the word for "tongue" in the Greek is simply the word, "**glossa**," from which we get our word "glossary," which means:

Glossa: the language or dialect used by a particular people distinct from that of other nations.

me set the scene for what we're going to see. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, right after He rose from the dead, He told His disciples to return to Jerusalem, to the house with the upper room

where they had had the Lord's Supper and wait for the Holy Spirit to come upon them. They did just that and they waited 10 days. On day 50 after Jesus' resurrection...at Pentecost...penta means 5...so Pentecost signifies 50 days after Jesus' resurrection, the Holy Spirit came upon the followers of Jesus.

Acts 2:1-13

¹When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place.²And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.³And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested^[a] on each one of them.⁴And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.⁵Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven.⁶And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language.⁷And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?"⁸And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?⁹Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome,¹¹ both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."¹²And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"¹³But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

No, they weren't drunk! Peter went on to say that...no...this was an outward sign to the people that something miraculous had happened...that indeed, the Holy Spirit had come upon the believers and these people were hearing the message of the Gospel in their own language, even though Peter and the other men were speaking in Aramaic. It was a miracle...and this was a brief reversal for what had happened at the Tower of Babel, right? At the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, God confused the languages of the people so they would stop building the tower and go disperse across the earth, as God had told them.

So, what is speaking in tongues? Well, in Acts chapter 2 it's the ability to speak or in the case of these people hear in a language that was not previously known to you a language that you could understand. All these different people groups were hearing the Gospel in their own language (glossa). Now think about the context of Corinth. Remember where Corinth is... See the map...



Corinth is at an intersection of the Aegean Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. It's a huge port city and a multicultural center of activity. All kinds of people were in and out of that city. It would be like a modern-day New York City...all kinds of languages and cultural differences embodied in the people who lived there and traveled there. And it seems the gift of tongues was especially prominent there.

Bible Scholars say, with this gift, that some Corinthian believers were better able to communicate the gospel and God's Word to all these different people groups. And what we're going to see as we go through chapter 14 is the fact that as the Corinthian believers spoke in a different tongue to proclaim God's truth to someone who spoke that language, another believer in the church would come alongside and translate or interpret what was being spoken so that the entire assembly could understand what was being said. But, there were other Corinthian Christians who seemed to some (now not all agree with this interpretation) to be speaking in a completely different tongue or language. And this understanding comes from verse 2.

1 Corinthians 14:2

²For 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.

You see, there are some who say there is a difference between the Acts 2 tongues and the 1 Corinthians 14:2 tongues. Some say, "The tongues of Acts 2," were actual languages, like we would say German, Chinese, Spanish, while the "tongues of 1 Corinthians 14:2" is the description of an ecstatic, or private, prayer language, which one speaks in an unknown tongue to God personally and privately for self-edification.

Now church, I'll always tell you when (IT'S ME, Kevin), talking and I'm giving you my personal opinion, versus trying to interpret the Scripture... Bottom line for me (and this is Kevin talking...regarding this entire concept of two separate languages), I personally don't know.

There are scholars who think verse 2 speaks (pardon the pun) TO THAT idea. But, here's what I do know... I personally, do NOT have the ability to speak in any other language. Ecstatic or not. I speak "poquito," just a little bit of Spanish...I speak a just little bit of Amharic... ("Jesus Getano,"

means “Jesus is Lord.”) the language of the Ethiopians. I speak a little Tagalog, the language of our Filipino brothers and sisters in the Philippines. “Magandang Umaga,” means: “Good Morning.”

But, I personally, do not speak or understand this “ecstatic or private or personal language” that some have the ability to speak. The truth is...I’ve never personally seen this type of language spoken in a church service in a way that the Scripture describes as accurate or acceptable within the church...because (the way I’ve seen it), it was done in a church service in a very chaotic and uncontrolled way...and that goes right to the issue of what was happening in Corinth. They were out of control. They were speaking over top of one another and they were being selfish about it.

Think with me about the Corinthian church and what we’ve seen in our study...this is a group of people who are worldly, divisive, cliquish, envious, argumentative, puffed up, immoral, compromising offensive, idolatrous, gluttonous and drunken during their communion services...need I go on? And we’re to think they were handling this gift of tongues correctly. No way! They were selfish and out of control...and yet the last description of the fruit of the Spirit is: self-control. Listen, when you see people who have no control over their faculties and are acting out of control...that’s not of the Spirit of God...because the Spirit of God manifests self-control, not chaos. And that’s back to the understanding of verse 40...the summary verse of the entire chapter:

1 Corinthians 14:40

⁴⁰ But all things should be done decently and in order.

Church family, I want to say this...speaking or praying in tongues, a private language is most definitely an issue which Christians can respectfully and lovingly agree to disagree. But, I do know praying in tongues is not what determines salvation. Praying in tongues is not what separates a mature Christian from an immature Christian. For me...I don’t have this gift, nor do I seek it. The only reason I would want the gift of “tongues” is not for the ability to pray in tongues...but, I’d love the ability to go to Ethiopia or the Philippines or Mexico and not need a translator...just like what was experienced at Pentecost. But, we don’t see that happening today. Missionaries have to learn foreign languages over many years...right?

Just imagine how much more productive missionaries could be if they did not have to go to language school and were instantly able to speak to people in their own language. However, God does not seem to be doing this today. Therefore, tongues do not seem to occur today in the manner it did in the New Testament, despite the fact that it would be immensely useful.

You see, we don’t ever see the mention of tongues in any other teaching Epistle in the NT except here in Corinth. It’s never mentioned in the letter the Thessalonians, or Ephesians, Romans, Philippians, or any of the Galatian churches. Peter doesn’t mention it, Jude doesn’t mention it, James doesn’t mention it. Furthermore, tongues, is not listed in the Gift Lists found in Romans or Ephesians. Just here... so...that tells me this gift of tongues was mainly an issue for this church in Corinth and it was killing their ability to worship.

So, let’s look now at how Paul addressed it...and this is pretty straight-forward...remember the contrast now...**prophecy versus tongues**...and remember, scholars tell us that the Apostle Paul traveled with a scroll of Matthew’s Gospel...and so the people had access to written Gospel, to study, to preach, (prophecy) and proclaim.

1 Corinthians 14:3-8

³ On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding 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. ⁶ Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? ⁷ If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? ⁸ And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?

Folks, we're going to play something and I want you to tell me what it is.

You hear that at ballgames and it's actually the Bugle call for an army to what? CHARGE! What if the bugler only played every third note or played a different note...every third note...Would the army know what to do? NOPE! That's Paul's point. Watch verse 9...

1 Corinthians 14:9-12

⁹ So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, ¹¹ but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. ¹² So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

Are you getting this...the goal is to build up the church...not ourselves. Again... Paul contrasts the "selfish" objective versus the "benefit of all" objective when it comes to tongues. Remember Church, the purpose of the Spiritual Gifts...given to believers by the Holy Spirit is for the common good of the whole congregation, so that each believer would be edified and Jesus glorified in our common worship. Unity... ONE. That's what worship is...we are one and unified in our giving glory to Jesus!

And so, this brings us to Paul's next point...if you are going to speak in another language that nobody knows...you need an interpreter (I know I do when I go to these foreign countries).

1 Corinthians 14:13

¹³ Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret.

You know, I've never personally seen "tongues" exhibited in a church service where this was done...no interpretation...and therefore, it was out of order and I believe that's what was happening in Corinth... Everyone was just speaking over top of one another... They were all talking at once and it was absolutely out of control, and totally unedifying to the body or to Jesus. And Paul says as much in verse 14:

1 Corinthians 14:14-18

¹⁴ For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. ¹⁵ What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. ¹⁶ Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider^[b] say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? ¹⁷ For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. ¹⁸ I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

Did Paul have a secret or private language? Perhaps...but, I believe the Apostle Paul could speak in different languages as he traveled through Asia Minor and Achaia and among the different

people groups. I believe he was given the ability to share the Gospel in many languages. That's my opinion. We're not told that in Scripture...but, I believe that's what is intimated here.

Now, let's keep reading...Paul says in verse 19...(he's still talking about himself)...

1 Corinthians 14:19-25

¹⁹ Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue. ²⁰ Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. ²¹ In the Law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." ²² Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign^[c] not for unbelievers but for believers. ²³ If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? ²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, ²⁵ the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

Isn't that what we want? We want people to come in here and see what and say, "God is really among these people." You know it's a wonderful thing when the Spirit of God and His presence falls on us and we see lives changed... Isn't that what we want? Isn't that what we were singing. See the words again...

Do What You Want To

It's Your heart we're searching for

We want You and nothing more

Let Your glory fill this place

We're alive in Your presence

We surrender all to You

Do what You want to

Do what You want to

God we long to see You move

Do what You want to

Do what You want to

Can I ask you: What do you want more than anything? (***We want you and nothing more***). What do you want? For Him to do what He wants to or for what you want Him to? That was the problem in Corinth. Oh, it's so easy to become a selfish Christian and so much of life has little to do with Him.

(Let your glory fill this place)...Yes...THIS PLACE...but more than just this place, because worship doesn't JUST happen in here...it happens out there too... Worship is a lifestyle...

(That last line says: **We're alive in your presence**). Are you alive today or beaten down. Lord knows all that we've been through this week, we can feel beaten down. We can feel pretty, lifeless, empty!

What did the song say that we needed to do? **"WE SURRENDER ALL TO YOU!"**

That's the remedy? SURRENDER. Did you know there's a bugle call for that too. It's called: **"Retreat"**...listen to it....

Will you surrender today? To whom? Jesus. "Come unto me all who are burdened and heavy laden and I'll give you rest." **We surrender all to You. Do what You want to God we long to see You move.**

So, much of this life is about surrendering...that's what it means to "take up your cross daily." What do you need to surrender to the Lord today? Will you do it? If you will, then Jesus will give you marching orders...because we're his soldiers. I think I can hear the bugler...

It's time to Charge...let's go worship!