

The Wreckage and the Fire Pt 22

FIRE WITHOUT CONFUSION

When the Spirit Moves and the Church Is Built

1 Corinthians 14:1 - Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

1 Corinthians 14:26 - Let all things be done for **EDIFICATION**.

1 Corinthians 14:40 - Let all things be done **DECENTLY AND IN ORDER**.

INTRODUCTION - There are two mistakes the Church has repeatedly made with the supernatural. **Some churches are afraid of the fire. Others have no fireplace.**

One side has seen abuse, excess, manipulation, counterfeit manifestations, and confusion, so they decided the safest thing to do was shut everything down.

- No prophecy.
- No tongues.
- No manifestations.
- No supernatural interruption.
- Everything controlled.

- Everything predictable.
- Everything explainable.

The other side made the opposite mistake.

- Anything spontaneous must be the Spirit.
- Anything emotional must be anointing.
- Anything supernatural must be God.
- Anything unusual must be revival.

Paul refuses both extremes.

He does not tell Corinth to **PUT OUT THE FIRE**. He tells them to **BUILD A FIREPLACE**.

- Because fire without boundaries can destroy a house. But a house without fire can become cold and lifeless.

The answer to wildfire is not no fire. The answer is holy fire.

There are moments when everything in the room can be moving, and nothing in the Kingdom is advancing.

- People can be shouting.
- People can be speaking.
- People can be prophesying.
- People can be responding.
- The atmosphere can be electric.

And heaven can still ask: **BUT DID ANYBODY GET BUILT?**

That is the uncomfortable question of 1 Corinthians 14. Because Corinth did not have a manifestation problem.

Corinth had a maturity problem.

- The gifts were real.
- The Spirit was moving.
- The supernatural was present.

Somewhere along the way, many began confusing **spiritual activity with spiritual effectiveness.** We don't want what God has given to **BUILD THE BODY** to becoming something that is **BREAKING THE BODY.**

- **NOT EVERYTHING THAT IS SPIRITUAL IS AUTOMATICALLY HELPFUL.**
- A gift can be genuine and still be used immaturely.
- A manifestation can be real and still be expressed wrongly.
- Something can originate with God and still be mishandled by people.

ANOINTING DOES NOT CANCEL ACCOUNTABILITY

The Progression:

- Chapter 12 says: **DESIRE THE GIFTS.**
- Chapter 13 says: **OPERATE THEM IN LOVE.**
- Chapter 14 says: **USE THEM TO BUILD PEOPLE.**

Paul is not trying to make Corinth less supernatural. He is trying to make their supernatural activity more useful. Because the evidence that something came from the Spirit is not merely that it was spectacular.

The question is: **DID IT BUILD SOMEBODY?**

- Did somebody encounter Jesus?
- Did somebody receive strength?
- Did somebody receive encouragement?
- Did somebody receive revelation?
- Did somebody leave stronger than they arrived?

The Holy Spirit does not manifest Himself merely to prove that He is in the room. **HE MANIFESTS HIMSELF TO CHANGE THE PEOPLE IN THE ROOM.**

1. PURSUE THE GIFTS

**Spiritual maturity does not eliminate supernatural desire
- It purifies it.**

1 Corinthians 14:1 - Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

Look carefully at Paul's language. After an entire chapter about love, **Paul does not say: "Now that you understand love, forget about the gifts."**

He says: **PURSUE LOVE AND DESIRE SPIRITUAL GIFTS.**

- **Those two things were never enemies.**
- Love does not replace spiritual gifts. Love regulates spiritual gifts. Love determines why I want them.

Paul uses two powerful verbs.

- **PURSUE love.**
- **DESIRE gifts.**

The Greek word translated "pursue" is *dioko* - It carries the idea of chasing something relentlessly.

Then "desire" is *zeloo* - To burn with zeal. To be intensely passionate. To earnestly desire.

Paul is not embarrassed by spiritual hunger. He commands it. **There is something wrong when believers have more appetite for natural ability than supernatural empowerment.**

- We train singers.

- We develop communicators.
- We build systems.
- We study leadership.
- We improve technology.
- We sharpen our natural abilities.

And we should. But none of those things can replace the supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit.

The Church was never designed and the Church cannot accomplish a supernatural assignment with natural ability alone.

- We need prophecy.
- We need discernment.
- We need healing.
- We need words of wisdom.
- We need words of knowledge.
- We need supernatural faith.
- We need the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

But now our motivation has changed. I do not want a gift so people can see me. I want a gift so people can encounter Him.

Love does not make me desire the gifts less. Love makes me desire them for the right reason.

2. PRIORITIZE THE PEOPLE

The purpose of manifestation is edification.

1 Corinthians 14:3-5 - But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church...that the church may receive edification.

There is a word that dominates this chapter - **EDIFICATION**. Paul keeps returning to it.

- **The Greek word is *oikodome*** - It comes from the language of construction. It means **to build a house**.
- Paul is giving them a measurement for everything happening in the room.

Not: "Was it spectacular?" Not: "Did people react?" Not: "Did everybody notice me?" Not even: "Was it genuinely supernatural?"

Paul asks: **DID IT BUILD THE HOUSE?**

- **That changes everything. The purpose of prophecy is not to demonstrate how prophetic I am. It is to build somebody.**

- The purpose of revelation is not to demonstrate how deep I am. It is to build somebody.
- The purpose of the gifts is not to build my platform.

THE GIFTS WERE GIVEN TO BUILD HIS HOUSE.

Paul specifically says prophecy should produce: **(put all 3 up at same time)**

- **Edification** - It strengthens.
- **Exhortation** - It encourages and calls forward.
- **Comfort** - It comes alongside the hurting.

Look at the heart of God revealed in the gift. God wants His people stronger. God wants His people encouraged. God wants His people comforted.

Suddenly prophecy is not primarily about predicting somebody's future. It is about revealing the Father's heart.

If my gift makes me bigger while leaving everyone else smaller, I have misunderstood the gift.

This is why Paul cares about interpretation. If someone speaks publicly in tongues and nobody understands what is being said, Paul says there must be interpretation.

Why? Because love wants the other person included. Love asks: **"How does what God gave me help the person sitting beside me?"**

That is maturity:

- The immature believer asks: "Did I get to use my gift?"
- The mature believer asks: **"Did my gift build His people?"**

3. PROTECT THE ORDER

Spiritual freedom is not spiritual chaos.

1 Corinthians 14:26 - Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. **Let all things be done for edification.**

Paul begins establishing boundaries:

- Two or three.
- One at a time.
- Interpret what is spoken.
- Let the others judge.
- If another receives revelation, make room.

Prophets maintain control of themselves. Why? Because apparently Corinth had developed an idea that still survives in charismatic Christianity:

I COULDN'T HELP MYSELF - THE SPIRIT TOOK OVER.

Paul destroys that excuse:

1 Corinthians 14:32 - And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

In other words: The Holy Spirit does not require you to lose control in order for Him to take control.

- **God does not need chaos to demonstrate power.**

Paul then gives one of the most important statements in the chapter:

1 Corinthians 14:33 - For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

- That means disorder is not proof of anointing.
- Volume is not proof of anointing.
- Emotion is not proof of anointing.
- Spontaneity is not proof of anointing.
- Strangeness is not proof of anointing.

And neither is silence. **The question is whether the Holy Spirit is glorifying Jesus and building His Church.**

Then Paul closes the chapter with two commands that must never be separated:

1 Corinthians 14:39-40 - Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. **Let all things be done decently and in order.**

Two important commands for every church:

DO NOT FORBID and DO NOT ABUSE

- Don't quench it.
- Don't counterfeit it.
- Don't suppress it.
- Don't sensationalize it.
- Don't manufacture it.
- Don't manipulate it.

LET THE FIRE BURN BUT PROTECT THE FIRE.

Order is not the enemy of the Spirit. Order protects what the Spirit is doing.

- A river without banks becomes a flood. But banks without a river become a ditch.

We don't want a flood, and we don't want a ditch. We want a river.

CONCLUSION: Paul does not end 1 Corinthians 14 by telling Corinth to calm down and become less Pentecostal. He tells them to grow up and become more mature.

PURSUE THE GIFTS - Don't become so afraid of excess that you stop expecting the supernatural.

PRIORITIZE THE PEOPLE - Never forget why the gifts were given.

PROTECT THE ORDER - Never confuse chaos with anointing.

This is the tension a Spirit-filled church must learn to carry.

We refuse DEAD RELIGION, but we also refuse DISORDERED REVIVAL.

- We refuse a Christianity where nothing supernatural ever happens.
- But we also refuse a Christianity where everything strange gets blamed on the Holy Spirit.

We want the fire, but we want HIS FIRE. We want prophecy, but we want prophecy that builds the house.

We want tongues, but we want tongues operating according to Scripture.

- We want healing.
- We want miracles.
- We want revelation.
- We want supernatural faith.
- We want the manifestations of the Spirit.

But above everything else... **WE WANT JESUS TO BE GLORIFIED AND HIS PEOPLE TO BE BUILT.**

Because revival is not measured by how wild the room became. Revival is measured by what remains after the room becomes quiet.

- Were people strengthened?
- Were sinners convicted?
- Were broken hearts healed?
- Were believers encouraged?
- Was truth revealed?
- Was Jesus exalted?

That is the fire Paul is fighting for. Not manufactured fire. Not manipulated fire. Not uncontrolled fire. **HOLY FIRE.**

Fire carried by love - Fire governed by Scripture - Fire operating in order - Fire building the Church.

The greatest tragedy is that because some generations saw **wildfire**, the next generation decided to live without **fire at all**.

So where does this leave us?

- **DON'T QUENCH THE FIRE.**
- **DON'T WORSHIP THE FIRE.**
- **STEWARD THE FIRE.**

When love is the motive, people are the priority, and biblical order protects the manifestation...

WE DON'T HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN THE WRECKAGE AND THE FIRE. WE CAN HAVE A CHURCH THAT BURNS WITHOUT BURNING DOWN.