



Message Series Guide

Imperfect Church – I Corinthians

Part 22 – Prophecy and Speaking in Tongues

I Corinthians 14:1-25

In I Corinthians 14, Paul addresses the issue of prophecy and speaking in tongues. Paul insists that without love, all spiritual gifts become worthless and even destructive. Paul encourages the Corinthians to especially desire the gift of prophecy. He explains why its use in the church service is superior to the use of the gift of tongues if nobody is available to interpret. Prophecy benefits everyone; praying in tongues benefits only the speaker if there is no interpretation. Paul explains that all things must be done properly and in order. Orderliness and building up the church are guiding principles for any worship gathering.

READ:

I Corinthians 14:1-25 • Acts 2:1-13 • 2 Peter 1:21 • Isaiah 28:11-12

- Why do you think Paul wanted the Corinthians to pursue love and desire the spiritual gifts? Why were the Corinthians to desire the gift of prophecy more than the other gifts? Why is the purpose of prophecy?
- According to Paul, which is greater, the one who prophesies or the one who speaks in tongues? What was happening in the Corinthians church to cause Paul to make this statement?
- In your opinion, what does it mean to speak in tongues? What must be combined with the gift of tongues to make it useful to the Church? What was/is the chief purpose of the tongues in the Body of Christ?
- Why did Paul use the example of musical instruments in talking about prophecy? What was his point?
- In which gifts did Paul encourage the Corinthians to excel? Which gifts of the Spirit build up the church?
- According to Paul, how should speaking in tongues be like praying and singing?
- Why is it crucial that a message in tongues be interpreted?
- How does the quotation from Isaiah 28:11-12 clarify the purpose of the spiritual gift of tongues?
- Why was speaking on tongues primarily for unbelievers? Why is it beneficial for unbelievers to hear prophesying in the church?
- For what reasons should we desire spiritual gifts?

DISCUSS:

- Why must love be an important pursuit of the Christian in regard to practicing spiritual gifts?
- Can you recall a time when prophesizing and/or speaking in tongues truly edified you and everyone present in a worship gathering?
- Many people today are fascinated with tongues, but how can we know if what we are experiencing is really Spirit-led tongues or something else?
- In what ways might we be guilty of meaningless or mindless worship today? How do we best balance "spiredness" and "intelligibility" in our worship gatherings?
- How have you built up the church through your gifts?

PRAY:

Pray that you would understand what it means to pursue love and truly desire the gifts of the Spirit.

RESPOND:

Identify one way this week you can use your spiritual gift(s) to serve others and build up the church.



Sermon Notes

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The gift of prophesying is the ability to receive a divinely inspired message and deliver it to others.

The word, *tongues*, literally means “languages.”

The gift of tongues is the ability to speak a divine message in a language unknown to the speaker that edifies the Church and glorifies God.

Prophesying accomplishes three important tasks in the church

- It builds up
- It encourages
- It consoles (comforts)

The primary purpose of both prophesying and speaking in tongues is to edify the Church.

The gift of speaking in tongues (and the interpretation of tongues) is for unbelievers. The gift of prophecy is for believers.