

Cornerstone Faith of West Liberty
1 Corinthians 14:6-25—Tongues or prophecy
11-17-24

I. Tongues are just noise if not understood (6-12)

Tongues:

1. The physical organ “tongue” is the first meaning.
 2. We then have “speech,” or “manner of speech,” or “language.”
 3. “An expression which is strange or obscure and needs explanation” is a third sense. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Abridged in One Volume.
- Paul’s concern with the gifts is again emphasized—that they edify or build up the church (14:6)
 - o Tongues without interpretation are not edifying to the whole church
 - o Revelation – to uncover, to lay bare or naked, a disclosure of truth or divine things, to reveal or manifest. Thayer’s - Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.
 - o Knowledge - *knowing* (the act), i.e. (by implication) *knowledge*: - knowledge, science. (Strongs)
 - o Prophesying - prophecy,” *i.e.* discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God, whether by reproving and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden; especially by foretelling future events. Thayer’s - Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.
 - o Teaching - *instruction* (the act or the matter):- doctrine, hath been taught. - Strong’s
 - The point the apostle is making is not about the nature of the gift, but the folly of how the Corinthian church was using it (maybe also us today?)
 - The literal translation of [14:12](#) is, “since zealots you are of spiritual things, be zealous that you may abound in the edification of the church.” ...No one should seek merely the personal experience. God does not give us gifts for private, selfish use. The gifts are for helping others. Life Application Bible Commentary - Life Application Bible Commentary – 1 & 2 Corinthians.
 - Paul emphasizes his basic rule again—what is done in the church must be able to edify the whole church

II. Speak what can be understood by all (13-19)

- Is praying in the spirit = to praying in tongues
 - o None of these texts (1 Cor. 14:15, Eph 6:18; Jude 1:20) where it talks about praying in the Spirit support that it is praying in tongues—so what does it mean?
 - By means of; with the help of; in the sphere of; in connection to
 - Praying in the Spirit is praying in the realm where He dwells and with His assistance and power—this might be in tongues and it might not be

Romans 8:26 (NKJV) *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*
- “Amen” was the standard Jewish response to an agreeable benediction.
- According to the National Center for Voice and Speech (<http://www.ncvs.org/ncvs/tutorial...>) the average rate for English speakers in the US is about 150 wpm. Publishers recommend books on tape to be voiced at 150-160 wpm, auctioneers are generally 250-400 wpm
 - o 10000 words at 150 words/min = 67 minutes; 5 words at 150 words per minute = 2 seconds
 - o This is how important speaking intelligibly in the Church is to Paul and ought also to be to us!

III. Prophecy is the better evangelistic tool (14:20-25)

- **In malice**—In wickedness, evil in a moral sense, wickedness of life, thought and character—be as infants, who neither speak, do, nor purpose evil.
 - o Do not seek to know the depths of satan or what he does
 - The goal is not to see how close we can get to sin and still be Christians—the goal is to see how close we can get to God and knowing Him

John 17:3 (NKJV) *And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.*
- But seek to know the depths of God → mature adults in understanding—how is this done

James 1:2-4 (NKJV) *My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, ³ knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. ⁴ But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*

 - o **Spiritual maturity involves becoming Christ-like in all we do** (John 15 the vine and branches is good example)
 - Maturity has to do with completeness—in other words how fully developed are we as believers
 - One sign of maturity is obedience - **John 14:15 (NKJV)** *"If you love Me, keep My commandments.*
 - A Second sign is fully develop fruit of spirit - **Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV)** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.*
 - A third sign of maturity is the ability to pass along faith, (especially in midst of suffering)
- Tongues are a sign to unbelievers—who are they?
 - o In Isaiah passage they are the Jewish people
 - o At Pentecost it was the Jews who were mocking the disciples who spoke in natural languages (tongues)
 - o Paul could be talking about Jewish unbelievers here since he uses the Isaiah passage as context for this statement
- *And so falling down on his face.* The usual posture of worship or reverence in eastern countries. Barnes' Notes on the New Testament.
 - o The usual posture for a Christian is face down—examples would be Abraham, Moses, the prophets, those worshipping Jesus (means to fall face down); John in Revelation
 - o In Isaiah 28:13 (the next verse after what Paul quotes) we find the unbelieving, unrepentant Jews falling down backwards.

Isaiah 28:13 (NKJV) *But the word of the LORD was to them, "Precept upon precept, precept upon precept, Line upon line, line upon line, Here a little, there a little," That they might go and fall backward, and be broken And snared and caught.*
 - o Same is true of those arresting Jesus in garden—they go over backwards (John 18:6)
- **secrets of his heart made manifest**—He sees his own inner character by the word prophecy
 - o We, like the Corinthians, like the gifts, preachers, and churches that do not reveal sin and call us to repentance