

Charismatic with a Seatbelt - 1 Corinthians 14:1-12
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

OK, let's be honest for a minute. Many of us from conservative churches would prefer if 1 Corinthians 14 were not in the Bible. The idea of tongues and prophecy are just, well, weird and dangerous. We would reject the idea of a person speaking as if his or her words were equal with Scripture and to be received as the very words of God. Yet, isn't this what prophecy in the Bible actually is, people speaking on behalf of God?

To interact with this question is honestly a deep Bible study that would take us to many passages in the Old and New Testament. There are these people in the Old Testament who are called the Prophets who do speak the very Word of God. They have a life-long record of speaking on behalf of Yahweh with a record of prophetic predictions that came true and a consistent message that is faithful to what God had revealed about Himself in the Torah. And yes, when they spoke and wrote their words carried the full authority of God Himself. So to disbelieve was really to disbelieve God, and to obey was to obey God Himself. On the other hand we find that the Prophets are not the only people in the Old Testament to prophecy. There are others who received messages from God for a moment in time, the voice of God for people in a specific situation. When we get to the New Testament the role of Prophet is actually replaced with that of Apostle. The people who pass on the authoritative Word to us are the people who received it directly from Jesus Himself. On this level, there are no more Apostles, Scripture is complete, without error, and sufficient. And anything we hear from God in the present must be informed and consistent with the Word of God revealed in Scripture. Yet, it is these Scriptures given to us by the Apostles (specifically Paul here, but he is not the only one to speak of the current gifts of prophecy and speaking in tongues) that point us to the current gift of the spirit of prophecy and speaking in tongues.

It appears that in the Corinthian congregation these gifts were operating at a sort of hyper level. Furthermore those with these gifts were creating division in the corporate gathering as they were exalting their gifts over and against the other. So at times there are people shouting out prophetic words while others are singing in tongues. It was, well, chaotic and weird. But notice that Paul's response is not to say, "Shut it all down, you all are nuts. So no more prophecy, no more tongues." Rather Paul corrects the abused use of gifts rather than tabling them. I believe the reason is because there is something wonderful and glorious about the present voice of the Spirit in and among a people. Yes, we have the finished Word of God in the Scriptures and these are our final authority for faith and practice. But that does not mean that God has said all that He has to say and has decided to go on vacation to return at the Second Coming. The God who spoke is still speaking through His church, and this text reminds us that we are to seek His present word and presence in the Spiritual Gifts. Tongues and Prophecy represent categories of the present speech of the Spirit in His people.

Speaking in tongues is the Spirit-empowered utterance of syllables and phrases completely non-understood by the speaker. The tongue is the muscle that allows speech, but in this context and culture speaking in a tongue was speaking in a language. It would be simple to say then that what Paul is talking about is what happened in Acts 2 when they spoke in tongues among people who then heard witness of the power of God in their own languages. And yes, this is one clear purpose for tongues. But it is not the only purpose found here and in other references in the Scriptures. In 1 Corinthians 13:1 Paul referred to speaking in tongues of men and angels. Paul is declaring clearly that the one who speaks in tongues speaks directly to God in a language that only their spirit and God understands (see verses 14-15). Tongues, then, is primarily a private prayer language that drives the present voice of the Spirit deep into some individuals. In my experience, those who function in this gift have deep and very relational prayer lives.

Prophecy on the other hand represents the present voice of God spoken out loud by individuals to others or in the context of the church. The language of these prophesies really

needs to shift from “Thus saith the Lord” to “This is what I believe the Spirit is saying”, as we should not believe our understanding of God’s voice to be infallible and absolutely authoritative. This Spiritual Gift becomes the present voice of the Spirit speaking His word in a wide sense, as God speaks to the church and those in the church in the present moment. 1 Thessalonians 5:20-22 are helpful here as Paul reminds the church not to despise prophecies, but to test them by the Word of God, and to hold on to that which is good and reject that is not.

The beauty of these two gifts is that they both remind us that the God who has spoken is still speaking. And the God who appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai is still present in our gatherings today. These two gifts are equally important (I know, you can read that prophecy is greater, right). Paul is not arguing that prophecy is more important than tongues. He is saying that in the corporate gathering prophecy does more to build up the body when it is gathered because people can understand what is actually being said. But Paul argues for the exercise and joyful pursuit of both gifts because when the Spirit does speak among us it is a very good thing.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
2 Chronicles 11	2 Chron 12	2 Chron 13	2 Chron 14	2 Chron 15	2 Chron 16	2 Chron 17

Reading from this past week: 1 Corinthians 14:1-12

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: 1 Corinthians 14:13-25

Family Worship

Song - *His Mercy is More*

<https://youtu.be/I1GiZL60c80>

Gospel Project

Story: Jesus was arrested.

Story Point: Jesus allowed his enemies to arrest Him.

Big Picture Question: What did Jesus do to save us?

Answer: Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

Scripture: Matthew 26-27

New City Catechism

Question #44: What is baptism?

Answer: Baptism is the washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Verse: Matthew 28:19

Scripture

1 Corinthians 14:1-12

*What is speaking in tongues? What is prophecy? What is the purpose of both?

*It is interesting that in a church where these gifts are being misused and causing division, Paul does not argue for them to end but explains their proper use. Why might this be helpful for us as we think about these things?

*How could we pursue and desire these gifts? Is that a good idea?

*According to verse 12, what is the ultimate goal of all gifts?

Prayer

*Pray for all the planning as we prepare for our move back to Blevins.

*Pray that we would learn to hear the voice of the Spirit in our church.