

1Corinthians – Week 52

I. Review: 1Cor. 14:1-5

A. The superiority of prophecy to tongues

- i. Tongues -- by themselves -- does not benefit the congregation.
 1. He may be speaking great and encouraging things, but no one, except God, understands what is being said.
- ii. Prophecy, on the other hand, involves speaking God's Word in the language of the audience.
 1. Those who prophesy:
 - a. Uplift -- Build up!
 - i. The etymology of this word means to improve spiritually, to morally instruct.
 - b. Encourage -- Stir up!
 - i. The etymology of this word means to put in courage or to make strong.
 - c. Console – Bind up!
 - i. The etymology of this word means to offer solace, to comfort!

B. Continuation: A message must be understood

- i. 1Cor. 14:6 (ESV), *“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?”*
 1. Again, Paul stresses the important of understanding a message
 - a. Revelation – a disclosure of truth.
 - b. Knowledge – an insight into truths.
 - c. Prophecy – a prophetic word (whether of the past, present or future).
 - i. Moses was a prophet and he spoke regarding the beginning, that is, on Creation in Genesis.
 - d. Teaching – an instruction.
 2. Paul stresses the importance of understanding using three illustrations:
 - a. Illustration 1 - Music:
 - i. 1Cor. 14:8 (ESV), *“If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played?”*
 1. Music is designed to stimulate the listener's emotion.
 2. If an instrument did not have distinct notes, there would be no enjoyment, dancing, etc...
 - b. Illustration 2 - Military:
 - i. 1Cor. 14:8 (ESV), *“And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?”*
 1. The bugle was used as a type of military language in that time.
 2. Certain sounds called the soldiers to assemble; to march; to fight and to retreat.
 3. If a bugle blew one long blast in a monotone, it would be not spur the army into battle.
 - ii. 1Cor. 14:9 (ESV), *“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.”*
 1. Just as a flute or a bugle need distinct tones to communicate a message, speech needs to be intelligible if the hearer is to be edified, encouraged or consoled!

- c. **Illustration 3 – Languages (or literally, voices) in the world:**
 - i. 1Cor. 14:10-11 (ESV), *“There are doubtless many different languages (lit. voices) 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.”*
 - 1. Vs. 10 could lend itself to every voice in creation.
 - a. The various calls of the birds, the squeals and grunts used by animals, all have meaning.
 - b. There are mating calls, feeding calls, warning calls, etc.
 - 2. Vs. 11 – in the human realm, each language has meaning.
 - a. But if a person is not familiar with a language being spoken, he will not understand what is being said.
 - d. Therefore, he concludes by telling them...
 - i. 1Cor. 14:12 (ESV), *“So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.”*
 - 1. In other words, strive for that which builds, encourages and consoles those who hear you!
 - a. This is done through intelligible speech and the practice of love as spoken in chapter 13.
- ii. Paul now tells them the effect “tongues” has on believers gathered for worship...
 - 1. 1Cor. 14:13 (ESV), *“Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret.”*
 - a. Why? So that the congregation may understand what is being said and be built up, encouraged and consoled! (vv. 3, 5, 26b)
 - 2. 1Cor. 14:14 (ESV), *“For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.”*
 - a. Paul addresses leading in prayer in the assembly
 - i. If a person prays in a foreign language:
 - 1. His spirit is engaged in the prayer.
 - a. That is, he is edified within (cf. vs. 4)
 - b. Like beautiful music, his heart is stirred up.
 - c. And the Lord understands his words!
 - 2. But his mind (i.e., his understanding) is fruitless because he does not know what he is saying nor does the congregation.
 - 3. 1Cor. 14:15 (ESV), *“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.”*
 - a. In other words, when a prayer is being said or a song is being sung, it should involve our hearts, our affections, our emotions as well as our understanding!
 - b. Why? So that all may be built up, encouraged and consoled!
 - 4. 1Cor. 15:16-19 (ESV), *“Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider 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.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.”*
 - a. If foreign words are spoken, no one would be able to say “Amen,” that is, “let it be so” nor would anyone be built up or instructed!
 - b. When the mind is fruitful, others can be instructed!