

When Love Comes to Church (Part 4)  
1 Corinthians 14:1-25

**I. Where We've Been, Where We're Headed**

**A. Where We've Been**

1. Paul's purpose -
  - a. To develop Christ centered, gospel infused unity in the Corinthian church in order that the church will exist and experience the reality of the fully integrated people of God
    - (1) **1 Corinthians 1:10 (ESV)** *I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.*
    - (2) **1 Corinthians 3:16 (ESV)** *Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?*
  - b. To confront sinful pride in the Corinthian church in order to maximize grace and minimize judgment in the fully integrated people of God
  - c. To address spiritual deficiencies in the Corinthian church in order to maximize faithfulness and minimize falsehood in the fully integrated people of God
  - d. To promote love as the motive for all life in the Corinthian church in order to maximize Christ and minimize self in the fully integrated people of God
2. Paul's plan
  - a. Address issues reported
    - (1) Divisions
    - (2) Sexual immorality
    - (3) Lawsuits among believers attempting to gain advantage over one another
  - b. Address issues requested
    - (1) Marriage and the gospel
    - (2) Betrothal and the gospel
    - (3) Personal freedom and the gospel
    - (4) Propriety in worship and the gospel
    - (5) Spiritual gifts and the gospel
  - c. **The Gospel message is self-sacrificing love for others that honors God, exalts Christ, and engages the work of the Spirit**

**B. Where We're Headed**

1. To unity in the faith through the pursuit of love
2. To practicing in the Spirit through the application of the word the faithfulness of Jesus

**II. Where We Are Now: 1 Corinthians 14:1-25**

**A. The Role of Gifts and the Expression of Love in Corporate Worship**

1. Reveling in the revelation of love enacted in corporate worship through

the ministry of spiritual gifts.

- a. Love in action
- b. What does the pursuit of love and spiritual gifts look like in corporate worship?

2. **What does it look like when love comes to church?**

**B. When Love Comes to Church: Paul's Point in 1 Corinthians 14:1-25**

1. Not a tirade against the gift of tongues
  - a. The gift of tongues: verbal communication (spoken language) with God that spiritually benefits the speaker, though they may not actually know the meaning of what they are speaking
    - (1) **1 Corinthians 14:2 (ESV)** *For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.*
    - (2) **1 Corinthians 14:4 (ESV)** *The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.*
  - b. Paul affirms the personal but private value of the gift of tongues
    - (1) **1 Corinthians 14:4-5 (ESV)** <sup>4</sup> *The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.* <sup>5</sup> *Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.*
    - (2) **1 Corinthians 14:14-15 (ESV)** <sup>14</sup> *For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.* <sup>15</sup> *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.*
    - (3) **1 Corinthians 14:17 (ESV)** *For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up.*
    - (4) **1 Corinthians 14:21 (ESV)** *In the Law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord."*
2. **Paul's point is not that tongues are bad and should be avoided but that in corporate worship every expression of every spiritual gift should focus on the successful, intelligible communication of God's truth so everyone can see Jesus clearly through the eyes of faith and love Him dearly with their whole hearts.**
  - a. Prophecy is the gift of the Spirit that powerfully and clearly and accurately verbally communicates the heart and mind and will of God to the fully integrated people of God for God's glory and their abounding joy.
  - b. Paul turns to prophesy as a counterpoint to the gift of tongues

- because just as tongues is a verbal communication, so is prophesy.
- c. The difference between tongues and prophesy is not their intrinsic spiritual value but their usefulness in corporate worship to communicate the truth they both contain.
- (1) When the gift of tongues is rightly employed, unless there is an interpretation, only the spirit of the speaker is nurtured
  - (2) **When the gift of prophesy is rightly employed in corporate worship, everyone understands, and everyone is led to respond to God's truth**
    - (a) **1 Corinthians 14:3-4 (ESV)** <sup>3</sup> *On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. <sup>4</sup> The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.*
    - (b) **1 Corinthians 14:12 (ESV)** <sup>12</sup> *So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.*
    - (c) **1 Corinthians 14:19 (ESV)** *Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.*
    - (d) **1 Corinthians 14:24-25 (ESV)** <sup>24</sup> *But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, <sup>25</sup> the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.*
  - (3) **More than personal self-fulfilment, love wants others to know and love God for their eternal salvation and joy.**

### III. What Now

- A. What was your goal when you walked in the doors for worship this morning?**
1. Self-centered goals
    - a. I hope they sing songs I like?
    - b. I hope the sermon isn't boring?
    - c. I hope I get to the restaurant before everyone else?
    - d. I hope such and so doesn't sit near me or speak to me?
  2. Love-centered goals
    - a. Let my face reveal the joy of Jesus in my heart
    - b. Let every word that comes out of my mouth, and every thought that runs through my mind, be full of grace and bring God honor and glory
    - c. Let me have the opportunity to speak to someone about God as He reveals Himself to truly be
    - d. Give me every opportunity in the Spirit of God to speak the glory of God into someone's life

**B. Personal Examples (Criteria)**

1. Song selection
  - a. What are familiar, have an interesting emotional tune
  - b. Clearly communicate the reality of who God is and His love for us in Christ?
2. Hospitality
  - a. Will there be enough?
  - b. Will someone see in this simple act of providing God's willingness to fellowship with them in a real and personal way?
3. Sunday school
  - a. Spending time on personal agendas
  - b. Spending time exploring and applying God's self-revelation
4. Sermon response
  - a. Wondering how much longer
  - b. Pondering how you can explain what you've learned to a brother or sister who is floundering?
5. Fellowship
  - a. Will you talk about the Twins, the weather, and black flies
  - b. Will you talk about the heart and God's grace in Christ to us all?

**C. Final: Love seeks above all that others will come to know and love God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**