

When Love Comes to Church (Part 3)
1 Corinthians 14:1-26

I. When Love Comes to Church

A. Recent Observations

1. Love deals with sin
2. Love honors the fully integrated people of God

B. Love works intentionally to draw one another closer to Christ

II. Discerning Love in Church

A. To see that love in the church intentionally draws one another closer to Christ we must make three efforts

1. **Remove an Obstacle**

- a. The obstacle: The idea Paul is establishing one gift (prophesy) as being superior to another (tongues)
- b. The Objections that Remove the Obstacle
 - (1) Paul argues that all gifts are equal in chapter 12
 - (a) The gifts come from one God through one Spirit for one purpose: His
 - i) **1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (ESV) *Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; ⁵ and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; ⁶ and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone.***
 - ii) **1 Corinthians 12:7 (ESV) *To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.***
 - iii) **1 Corinthians 12:11 (ESV) *All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills.***
 - (b) **If Paul has just made the argument that all gifts have the same source and serve the same purpose, and has made that argument to correct Corinthian practice of esteeming one gift over another, then it is unreasonable to think he turns around a minute later and teaches the exact opposite!**
 - (2) The propensity of evil to counterfeit what is good calls for discernment not avoidance.
 - (a) **2 Corinthians 11:12-15 (ESV) ¹² *And what I am doing I will continue to do, in order to undermine the claim of those who would like to claim that in their boasted mission they work on the same terms as we do. ¹³ For such men are false apostles,***

deceitful workmen, disguising themselves as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ *And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.* ¹⁵ *So it is no surprise if his servants, also, disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. Their end will correspond to their deeds.*

- (b) **Knowing that Satan and the world often deceive by disguise should cause us to prayerfully “test the spirits to see whether they be from God.”**
 - (3) The Bible authoritatively interprets our experience, not the other way around.
 - (a) **James 4:13-15 (ESV)** ¹³ *Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit” — ¹⁴ yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. ¹⁵ Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”*
 - (b) **It is God who determines the meaning of our experience and who sets the course of our lives, so that we ought to strive to understand our lives through Him rather than attempt to understand Him through our lives**
 - (4) God retains sovereign control over all He creates for His purpose, including the Christian, the church, and spiritual gifts.
 - (a) **Psalm 90:2 (ESV)** ² *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*
 - (b) Having a spiritual gift may empower you, but it does not diminish God.
 - i) When we give something away, we have less
 - ii) When God gives something away, he retains all He has
 - iii) God gives and because He is God, He suffers no loss!
 - iv) **God does not require we protect Him from the abuse of His gifts by denying any of His gifts.**
 - c. On the basis of these insights, let’s remove the idea that Paul is preaching that the gift of tongues is inferior to the gift of prophesy
2. Uncover Paul’s clues:

- a. Clearly Paul makes a point from comparing tongues and prophesy.
- b. What is Paul's point in comparing tongues and prophesy?

(1) Phrases in 14:1-26

- (a) v. 2 "no one understands" the one who speaks in tongues
- (b) v. 3 "the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding"
- (c) v. 4 "the one who prophesies builds up the church"
- (d) v. 5 "so that the church may be built up"
- (e) v. 6 "how will I benefit you"
- (f) v. 7 "how will anyone know"
- (g) v. 9 "how will anyone know"
- (h) v. 12 "strive to excel in building up the church"
- (i) v. 17 "the other person is not being built up"
- (j) v. 19 "I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others"
- (k) v. 26 "Let all things be done for building up"

(2) Paul makes a comparison not between tongues and prophesy in essence but in outcome.

- (a) The gift of tongues encourages and edifies the speaker
 - i) **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.***
 - ii) **1 Corinthians 14:4 (ESV) *The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.***
 - iii) **1 Corinthians 14:13 (ESV) *Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret.***
 - iv) **1 Corinthians 14:28 (ESV) *But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.***
- (b) The gift of prophesy encourages and edifies the listener.
 - i) **1 Corinthians 14:3 (ESV) *On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.***
 - ii) **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.

iii) **1 Corinthians 14:24-25 (ESV)** *²⁴ But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, ²⁵ 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.*

(c) In the church gathered for worship, love dictates that we strive to benefit not ourselves but others

(d) **So, when the church is gathered as the fully integrated people of God in worship, love expressed through spiritual gifts works intentionally to draw one another closer to Christ.**

3. Ask some questions and define Paul's terms

a. Tongues and Prophecy

(1) What is the gift of tongues

(2) What is the gift of prophecy

b. What are the three outcomes love produces when the gift of prophecy is manifested in the church gathered for worship?

(1) **1 Corinthians 14:3 (ESV)** *On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.*

(2) Upbuilding

(3) Encouragement

(4) Consolation

c. What are some way Cornerstone can practice the gifts that result in the building up of the church, intentionally working to draw one another closer to Christ?

B. Final word

1. Ask yourself this morning why you are here

a. In relation to your own soul?

b. In relation to the spiritual condition of others

2. If in obedience to God's word you are here to pursue love with the fully integrated people of God, then love dictates that you are not here just for your own good but to intentionally apply your spiritual gift for the spiritual benefit of the entire body, that benefit being assisting one another to draw closer to Christ.

a. What are you doing in this hour to help the people sitting around you draw closer to Jesus?

b. What are you saying, what are you doing, what are you being that helps them see and know and love the Savior?

c. Conversely, what might you be doing, saying, being, that might have the opposite effect?