

6.3 Babel Comes to Corinth

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[0 : 0 0] And now we come to our Bible reading this morning, and today we're reading from 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verses 1 through to verse 19.

Josh Johnston, one of our ministers, has been preaching through the whole of 1 Corinthians for us, and we're looking forward to getting back in it this morning. So 1 Corinthians chapter 14, starting at verse 1.

1 Corinthians chapter 14, 1 Corinthians chapter 14, 1 Corinthians chapter 14, 1 Corinthians pursue love and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, or perhaps better read, as it was in chapter 12, desire the spirituals, especially that you may prophesy.

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. On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.

The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy.

[1 : 2 0] The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets or translates so that the church may be built up.

Now brothers, 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?

If even lifeless instruments such as the flute or the harp do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle?

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.

There are doubtless many different languages in the world and none is without meaning. But if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner, literally a barbarian to the speaker and the speaker a barbarian to me.

[2 : 3 3] So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the spirit, strive to excel in building up the church. Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may translate.

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. 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. Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider or more literally an unskilled person say amen to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you're saying?

For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. Nevertheless, in church, I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others than 10,000 words in a tongue.

Amen. Amen. The grass withers and the flower fades, but the word of our Lord endures forever. Amen. There is something of a fascination in the contemporary Christian world around tongues.

[4 : 09] Whether it's because a church practices something that they call tongues or because they decidedly don't. Either way, it has produced an intrigue around the whole issue.

And so I had various people indicate that they're particularly interested in this chapter of 1 Corinthians. And so before we get into this chapter, I think it's worth us taking a step back and seeing how the Bible more broadly speaks about tongues.

Because I'm not sure that a lot of what is practiced that calls itself tongues today mirrors what we actually see in the scriptures. I think there are at least three key things to understand about tongues from elsewhere in the Bible.

And two of these are most clearly seen at the beginning of Acts chapter 2. The first thing is that tongues were intelligible. Human languages that upon being spoken could be understood.

The word itself translated tongues just means language or talk. And what we see clearly in Acts chapter 2 verse 4 is God pouring out his spirit and people beginning to speak in tongues.

[5 : 25] And what we go on to read is that gathered together were people from every nation and each person could hear in his own language.

It was a miraculous event and it left people amazed. But most importantly, it left them having heard and understood the mighty works of God.

And the tongues mentioned in Acts chapter 10 and 19 follow on from this event. They're of a likeness with it. Tongues were not a mysterious language, but rather they were human languages that were intelligible.

That's the first thing. Second, tongues were revelation. Peter in Acts chapter 2 goes on to say that Joel's prophecy has been fulfilled in their hearing and all the language that Joel used and that Peter quotes was language about prophecy.

prophecy. He says, I will pour out my spirit on all flesh and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Shall see visions. Shall dream dreams.

[6 : 30] And the use of seeing visions and dreaming dreams is drawn from Numbers chapter 12, which is language that describes the origin of the prophetic office. Notice that Joel mentions nothing whatsoever about tongues.

But Peter's conclusion in Acts 2 is that Joel's prophecy has been fulfilled at Pentecost through the speaking of tongues. tongues. They have witnessed the pouring out of God's spirit that has brought forth prophecy.

And Peter equates prophecy in tongues as the same thing as revelation from God. And significantly here at Pentecost, this revelation was an undoing of the Tower of Babel.

The Tower of Babel signaled the scattering of peoples and the confusing of languages. But in salvation history, Pentecost signaled that Jesus's life, death, resurrection, and ascension was going to reverse Babel.

Babel scattered. Third, Pentecost makes plain that the gospel gathers. Pentecost signaled that the gospel promises were going to stretch out to every tribe and tongue and nation, drawing people from all over into God's kingdom.

[7 : 49] The era of primarily one people and one language being the recipients of God's promises was over. So that's the second thing.

Tongues were revelation. And third, tongues functioned as a covenant curse, as a means of judgment. There are at least three prophecies about tongues in the Old Testament, and each one of them speaks of judgment.

Deuteronomy 28 speaks of a nation from far away, swooping down as an eagle, a nation whose language, whose tongue, you do not understand. Jeremiah 5 speaks, likewise, an enduring and ancient nation would come upon Israel, a nation whose tongue, you do not understand.

And Isaiah 28, which Paul quotes later on in chapter 14, says likewise, that a people of strange tongue would speak to Israel on God's behalf.

And he's talking about the impending Assyrian invasion. When God's voice is obscured for his people, that is a surefire sign of judgment, not blessing.

[9 : 03] Peter's sermon at Pentecost brought the gospel word to bear on all kinds of people, and the gospel word is both the word of salvation and judgment. And it was a word that was made clear.

Well, let's get back to Corinth. We do need to be mindful, as the Lord's people, that the things that are cherished and celebrated in the world that we live in will make their way into the church.

That's something for us to meditate on later, to think about what they are today, and how we might see them in the church today, the things that the world loves. Because whether we like it or not, it is a reality that we're best served being aware of.

And it was certainly true in Corinth. We see it very clearly in Corinth around speech. Remember, Corinth loved impressive orators.

We've seen that in chapters 1 to 4. Eloquence wins the day in Corinth. That's partly why Paul wasn't flavor of the month. He consciously displayed his weakness to them.

[10 : 07] Not his wit. That's also likely why Apollos is preferred and singled out in chapter 3. According to Acts, Apollos was an eloquent speaker.

And there are other examples throughout the letter of impressive speech being important in Corinth. And so what is cherished in the world makes its way into the church and takes on its own spiritualized language and form.

And there is one word or one idea that permeates chapters 12 to 14 of this letter more than anything else. Speech. It's everywhere in these chapters.

12 verse 2. Previously they were led to mute idols. 12 verse 3. By the spirit they can proclaim that Jesus is Lord. The various listed things in chapter 12 are all speech related.

Even the illustrations in chapter 12 are about speech. Notice 12 verse 15. 12 verse 13. If the foot should say. Or 12 verse 16.

[11 : 13] If the ear should say. 13 verse 1. If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels. And it's the same in chapter 14.

From verse 1. Be especially zealous about prophecy. Speaking. And on and on. The illustrations in chapter 14. The bugle. The flute. The harp.

They're sound making things. Illustrating speech. So that's the word that permeates these chapters. And we saw in our last study in this letter in chapter 13.

That the heart of this whole issue is love. How a church uses its mouth when it gathers. Is hugely important. And it reveals where their love is.

And what they love. And whether they love. And so here are some questions to think about. What do you want from and for church?

[12 : 10] What do you want this gathering that we're in to be about? That's the concern of this chapter. Love. Genuine cross-shaped love.

Is like the bumpers at a bowling alley. It stops what we say. And it stops our worship. From descending into the gutter. And off down the lane to no avail. Love directs our words.

And our worship. To be fruitful. On track. Fit for purpose. Building up the whole body. But Corinth was a church who's speaking.

And whose worship was caught up in me. And not them. It was loveless. And it was chaotic. And so Paul throughout this chapter lays prophecy and tongues side by side.

And shows a clear preference for prophecy. And so we see firstly. The great. Verses 1 to 5. The great. Gathered worship that builds up the church.

[13 : 14] That's greatness. Gathered worship that builds up the church. Our gathering together Sunday by Sunday. Is all about us growing together in love.

Through the gospel. Church is not about me. When our attitude to church centers on me. On I. Then we are delighting in Bebel.

And not Pentecost or the gospel. When we gather on a Sunday. We aren't here as hundreds of individuals. To express our unique spirituality. We aren't here as hundreds of individuals.

To get what we each want. No. We gather as one body. To be built up together. That's the metaphor that's been present throughout these chapters.

Chapter 12. The whole body. We're all a part of it. It's corporate language. And that truth shapes Paul's argument throughout chapter 14. Verses 1 to 5.

[14 : 10] Are a bit like the abstract for the rest of the chapter. Or the argument in miniature. And the difference between prophecy and tongues in Corinth. Once again exposes the same old Corinthian disease.

They're a mighty church. Or so they think. But the reality is. That they show themselves to lack the love. Paul so beautifully describes in chapter 13.

And it's love where Paul begins. Look at verse 1. Pursue love. Pursue the more excellent way. Pursue the great thing.

How's that done? Well Paul's answer is. It's done by being concerned. Particularly with prophecy. Over and against tongues. Not as individuals.

All longing to prophesy. But as a church. Cherishing it. Remember it's corporate language. And remember also from chapter 12. That spiritual gifts.

[15 : 11] Is not actually a category. That the Bible speaks about. These aren't spiritual gifts. For each person to work out. Which one they have. Spiritual gifts. Is not a Bible category.

It isn't actually a phrase. That the Bible uses. We saw that in chapter 12. 1. Now concerning spiritual gifts. With a footnote. The spiritual things. Spiritual gifts.

Isn't there in the Greek at all. Paul literally says. The spirituals. Paul is addressing the church here. And he's teaching the Corinthian church.

What to prize. What to prioritize. In worship. In order to strengthen the whole body. And so he lays that out. In two different gifts. The first tongues.

Verse 2. Now we do have to be honest. And say that we can't be absolutely certain. That what the Corinthians are doing. Is exactly the same. As what we saw in Acts.

[16 : 09] For what it's worth. I would lean. Towards taking it. That tongues here. Are closely related. To what we see in Acts. But being used incorrectly. But look at what Paul does say.

Specifically about tongues. Here in verse 2. Tongues were not being spoken to men. No one understands them. So all that is being uttered.

Is for God's ears only. Notice that that's the opposite outcome. Of tongues in Acts. There is a way to speak in tongues. Which serves nobody.

Now some have taken. Verse 2. To mean that tongues are something. Given by God. To be used for private devotion. And perhaps that is akin. To what was happening in Corinth. But we do have to be honest.

And admit that there is a fair degree. Of speculation in that. However. Being as fair as we can. Such an understanding. Perhaps relates more to Romans 8.

[17 : 06] Than to Acts. Romans after all. Speaks of the spirit. Helping us to pray. Interceding for us. With groanings. Too deep for words. The spirit. Helping us in our weakness.

To utter something. To the Lord in faith. So perhaps that is. What's happening in Corinth. But there are at least two issues. If we take Corinthian tongues.

To be primarily a private thing. First. If you look at verse 19. Paul talks about. In the church. That is.

In the gathering. He'd rather say. Five words of prophecy. Than 10,000 words in a tongue. Paul is not. Talking exclusively.

About a private practice. Otherwise. It wouldn't matter at all. If people couldn't understand. What was being said. And second. Just like in Acts.

[18 : 01] Chapter 2. Tongues and prophecy. Are both treated. As the same thing. Prophecy. Only exceeds tongues. When tongues are untranslated. So look at verse 5.

As long as the tongues. Are interpreted. Or translated. I think is better. It's the same Greek word. For both. And it fits. Much. Much better. With what we know. About tongues from Acts.

So where tongues are translated. They're just like prophecy. Verse 2. Says something similar. Whilst. Nobody could understand. What was being said.

Nonetheless. What was being uttered. Were mysteries. In the spirit. And that word mystery. Is pretty much. Always used. In the New Testament. For meaning. Something that was hidden.

But has now been revealed. So the words being spoken. May not be questionable. They may actually be. Gracious revelation from God. Hence why. God understands.

[18 : 58] And even when men don't. But revelation. Is never. Something to be kept secret. God speaks. That his people. Hear him. And the whole point.

Is that the mysteries. Are no longer mysterious. But no. But as it is. In Corinth. Tongues. Were being spoken. So that nobody else.

Could understand them. The picture we have. Is of a gathering. For worship. With people. All doing their own thing. All speaking. In different languages. Whether people.

Can understand it or not. Whether people. Are able to participate. Or not. What we have. Is a picture. That is. Anti. Pentecost. Much more akin.

To be able. We'll see later. In the chapter. That their worship. Is in fact. Disordered. And chaotic. Self-expression. Was the order of the day.

[19 : 54] And so I suspect. That if a well-credentialed. Speaker. Was passing through. Corinth. They would definitely. Want him to speak. No matter if. He spoke the language. They could understand. But afterwards.

They'd be able to say. Well we benefited. Wonderfully. From Reverend. Calvin's ministry. Yes. Very profound. Well what did he say? Oh no idea. But he's wonderful. Isn't he?

Or perhaps. Another example. From. Church history. The Latin mass. It was such an issue. For the reformation. What good. Was it for folks. To gather.

And listen to something. They had no prospect. Whatsoever. Of understanding. Well that was. Tongues. The second gift. Prophecy.

Look at verse three. Prophecy. Is spoken. To people. Notice the language. That Paul uses here. It isn't something grand.

[20 : 50] It isn't described. In extravagant language. But instead. Prophecy. Is described. In a very simple language. Prophecy. Speaks to people. For their upbuilding. For their encouragement.

For consolation. Prophecy. Isn't about. Florid predictions. But about. Faithful pastoring. Words. Spoken. To strengthen.

Other people's faith. Words. Spoken. To comfort. Other people. In their struggles. In fact. Prophecy. Sounds a lot. Like telling people. The truth. Of God's word. Isn't it? And isn't that.

The very thing. That the prophets. Always did. The prophetic books. That we have. In the Old Testament. Are books. That are applying. The realities. Of God's covenant. With Moses. To the people.

Of God. Prophecy. Isn't centered. On visions. Of the future. And predictions. It's centered. On bringing. The word. Of the Lord. To bear. On people's lives.

[21 : 47] For their upbuilding. For their encouragement. And for their consolation. Words. That brought. Understanding. As to why. Things that had happened. Had happened.

Words. That spoke of hope. Despite. Present circumstances. Now of course. In the early church. In the immediate aftermath. Of Christ's ascension. The church needed.

Direct revelation. A new stage. In the unfolding story. Of salvation history. Had arrived. And God's people. Needed to know. The implications. Of Jesus's life.

And his death. Death. Of his resurrection. And his ascension. And so Paul tells us. In Ephesians. That prophets. Were a foundational gift. To the church. But that era.

Passed away. With the apostles. Who'd given their teaching. To the church. And so not everything. Is the same now. In Glasgow. In the 21st century.

[22 : 40] As it was. In first century. Corinth. They were at the dawn. Of the church. And they had apostles. And prophets. To speak with authority. From God. God. They didn't have. A complete Bible.

But we do. We have. The apostles teaching. Written down for us. We have all the implications. Of Christ's work. Clarified for us. And because Christ.

Is a finished work. He. Is the final word. We don't need. Any more. Than what we have. In fact. To want.

Revelation. Through prophecy. Our tongues. Today. Is to want. Less. Than we have. Because Jesus. Is the full. Final. And complete. Word. We don't need.

A prophet. To mediate. God's word. To us. Because we've got. Jesus himself. The living word. And so. Today. If we really want.

[23 : 36] To bless. And encourage. Someone. With great. Spiritual benefits. It doesn't require. Anything. That we don't. Already have. In the scriptures. We don't need. To hold.

Some prophetic. Office. To do so. Any one of us. Can point. Someone. To the wonders. Of the Lord Jesus. To the mighty. Works of God. And it certainly.

Doesn't help. To bamboozle. Someone. By speaking. Words. That they couldn't. Possibly. Understand. So. Tongues. Are not spoken. To men. But only to God.

And prophecy. Is spoken. To men. Two gifts. Well. What about the two outcomes. Of these gifts. The key word here. And indeed.

The key word. Throughout the chapter. Is the word. Build. Notice it there. In verse three. Up building. Verse four. Builds up himself. Builds up the church.

- [24 : 29] Verse five. The church. May be built up. Verse 12. Excel. In building up. The church. Verse 70. The other person.
- Is not being built up. Our corporate worship. Is designed. To build something. God has graciously. Provided. A real means.
- Of receiving grace. And a real means. Of being built up. Together. In the gospel. And so. Verse four. Is the heart. Of this whole chapter.
- Those who want. To speak in tongues. So that nobody. Can understand. What do they do? They build themselves up. They're focused on. And interested in themselves.
- Self. Centered. Worship. And isn't that. The same Corinthian disease. That we've seen. Again. And again. Me. Me. Me. I want it all.
- [25 : 28] And I want it now. It's the same attitude. That reared its ugly head. Around food offered to idols. My faith. My flourishing. That's what counts. If these others. Don't have the knowledge.
- To know that I can eat this. Well. Screw them. Those who can't feed themselves. And flourish themselves. Are left to themselves. But the reality is.
- That when a church. Chooses individualistic worship. When that which builds. The whole church. Goes out the window. Then that's a church. That's traveling back to Babel. The Tower of Babel.
- Was built. In order to make a name. For ourselves. To show the world. Our might. Well. Doesn't that capture Corinth? The mighty church.
- That they thought they were. And remember in Corinth. Nothing. Signaled might. Quite. Like dazzling speech. Corinth loved the fact.
- [26 : 23] That some could speak in words. In languages. That others couldn't understand. Wouldn't that burnish. Your spiritual credentials? Well. Again. Verse four. The one who prophesies.
- Builds up the church. Pentecost. Was the great undoing of Babel. The pouring out of God's spirit. Brought clarity. To all who were listening. Where Babel brought.
- Scattering of people. And confusion of language. Pentecost gathered. Babel was about. Sin. Self worship. And scattering. Pentecost.
- And the gospel. Are about gathering. And uniting together. In one gospel. And this great step forward. In God's redemptive plan. Was to bring.
- Multitudes. To faith in Jesus. By hearing. And responding. To the gospel. That happens. When people hear. When people hear clearly. That was the great miracle.
- [27 : 23] Of the spirit being poured out. So that people could understand. So that the gates were flung open. And the nations poured in. It's when the gospel is heard.
- And understood. That it can be responded to. And then it sets about. Transforming individuals. And churches. So in Corinth.
- Prophecy. God's word being spoken. Clearly to his people. That's what builds up the church. Christian worship. Is not to be characterized. By chaos. And confusion.
- It isn't to be marked. By ecstatic utterances. And being unintelligible. Christian worship. Isn't a free for all. It isn't to be new. And exciting each week. So that nobody knows.
- What's coming. No it's plain. It's ordered. It's straightforward. It's to benefit everyone. Maybe some people.
- [28 : 19] Feel that services. In reformed churches. Like ours. Are steel. Or repetitive. Because the order of service. Never changes. But it's simple. We hear.
- And respond. To God's word together. Anyone can join with us. There's nothing complex. Our service opens. With God's word. Calling us to worship. And we respond together.

In praise and prayer. We read the scriptures. And we respond together. In praise and prayer. And we prepare. To hear God's word. Speak to us. And then we respond.

In prayer. And in praise. Having heard it. All the way through. It is opening up. The scriptures. For all who gather. Inviting any. And all in.

It's designed for the many. Not the few. And so Paul says. Verse five. If all of you can speak in tongues. In different languages. That's great.

[29 : 17] But even better. Is that Corinth. Is a church. That cherishes the thing. That builds up the whole body. Great speech. Verse five.

Is speech. That makes clear. God's word. So that God's people. Can be built up. In him. Great speech.

Is speech. Driven by love. And isn't that so freeing. For us. So very often. These chapters. Leave us. Feeling. That we're missing out. On the real.

Spiritual opportunities. To speak. Like we're missing. Something. So very often. They snatch. From our grasp. The ability. To be truly spiritual. With our mouths. But the reality.

Is that great speaking. Truly spiritual speaking. Is telling people. The truth of God's word. So they can understand it. So that it up builds.

[30 : 12] Or encourages. Or consoles. Truly the scriptures. Are the greatest treasure. That this world affords. Well Paul moves.

From the great. To the grating. From the great. To the grating. And the grating. Is gathered worship. That builds up. Only certain individuals. Verses 6 to 19.

A church. That is full of people. Who want their voices. To be heard. And who are desperate. To display. Their own spiritual might. Is a church longing. For people.

The rest of our section. This morning. Is taken with. The implications. Of self-centered worship. Worship. The truth is. That our worship. As a church. The words spoken.

As a church. Really do matter. It's striking. How the Bible. Talks about the human tongue. It's the part of our body.

[31 : 09] That reveals our heart. Look at verse 9. If with your tongue. You utter speech. That is not intelligible. You're speaking.

Into the air. Literally. A waste of breath. But Paul says. More than that. You see. Verse 9. Follows. What he's just said. In verses 7 and 8.

And the illustrations. In those verses. Are of instruments. Playing notes. And the whole point. Is that unless an instrument. Makes a clear sound. Then it's useless.

The bugle. To call people. To battle. Well the troops. Need to know. When to go. They need to know. When to advance. When to charge. If that isn't clear.

It's game over. It's the same with a musical instrument. The flute or the harp. Need to play something distinct. Something that people can understand. Otherwise it's just noise. I wonder what would happen.

[32 : 07] If a bunch of us. Were to go to a recital. Of a couple of our. Music students. At the conservatoire. And we sat down. In eager anticipation. And out comes the harp. For one of them.

And a flute for the other. And just as we settle down. To have our senses tingled. And to relax. And be lost in beauty. For half an hour. Well they start playing. And it's screeching.

White noise. Without any form. I think politeness. Would soon go out the window. As we excuse ourselves. From the shower of awfulness. And look at what Paul calls.

These instruments. Lifeless. If even lifeless. Instruments. Need to make a clear sound. How much more so. The living people of God.

How much more God's church. Is people who are full of life. If we are given to self-centered worship. Then that reveals a lifeless church.

[33 : 04] And it certainly reveals a church. That won't bring life to the dead. This isn't just a case of. We are living. Where instruments are lifeless.

We are also a royal priesthood. Who have been given the words of life. To speak to our world. Who are dead. It is as the church speaks. That the dead are roused.

To spiritual life. It is as the church speaks. That souls are nourished. The broken find healing. The struggling find strength. The weak find perseverance. The guilty find forgiveness.

And it's as the church speaks. That light dispels darkness. A church given to self-centered worship. Where the only person who can understand. What's going on is God.

Is a church wasting what God has given to it. It is possible for us. In our various gatherings. As a church.

[33 : 59] To use them as a way. To establish our own credentials. Can't we easily do that. In the church prayer meeting. In terms of the sounds spiritual.

We heap up phrases. That sounds so unlike us. Pulling in language. That we don't really understand. Never mind others. Is if our usual means of talking. Would expose us as some kind of spiritual infant.

Or in Bible study. Where we take to only. Speaking in words. That require most people. To pull out a theological dictionary. Or where the rest of the group. Are scratching their heads.

Thinking what's this guy on about. But don't want to say that. In case they feel like spiritual infants. Or even just in how we speak to others. Whether it be. Using language from past centuries.

That we adopt as a kind of spiritual badge. Or Christianese. That only people from certain traditions. Can understand. That isn't a sign of spirituality.

[34 : 59] It's lifeless. It certainly doesn't encourage. And build up those. Who aren't privy. To the niche talk. Well Paul bookends. Verses 6 to 19.

With his own approach. And look at what he says. Verse 6. What if I had come speaking in tongues? What if I'd come. Without something clear.

For you to understand. How would that have benefited them? Well it wouldn't. But look at verse 18. What an unexpected thing that is.

Paul says. I speak in tongues. More than all of you. But as the apostle. But as the apostle to the Gentiles. That makes complete sense.

Doesn't it? Paul has the thing. That Corinth respects. And loves above all. He can do. What the mightiest do.

[35 : 57] He could have had the Corinthians. Adulation and affection. Instead of their antagonism. But he didn't. Instead choosing to pattern. The way of the cross.

And proclaim the word of the cross. Clearly. And undeniably. How tempting it could have been. For Paul to burnish his credentials. To drop in just a touch.

Of what would see him revered. In Corinth. But he didn't. Paul was a crucified one. He'd taken up his cross.

He was happy to give up his rightful place. For the benefit of the church. He didn't play his tongue cards. Because it wasn't about him. If he'd come.

Verse 6. Speaking in tongues. If he'd come impressing them. Then he would have brought no benefit. There would have been no church. His words would have been. That indistinct bugle. Or the noisy gong.

[36 : 57] He says. Verse 19. In church. I would rather speak. Five words with my mind. Five words that can speak clearly. To instruct. And build up others. Than 10,000 words.

In a tongue. Five lowly words. Blessed are those who mourn. Christ died for the ungodly.

The Lord is our shepherd. Trust in Jesus as Lord. Five words. Can say a little or a lot. But even five words.

That speak life. To someone. Are far. Far better. Than limitless words. That obscure. And confuse. Or bypass. Five words.

Spoken plainly. To upbills. Are far better. Than a Sunday service. Which is confusing. And chaotic. And complicated. And completely. Unaccessible. Paul illustrates.

[38 : 00] What he's saying. With other examples. Notice verse 10. There are many tongues. Or many languages. In the world. And none. Is without meaning. But if I do not know.

The meaning. I will be a foreigner. Or a barbarian. To them. And then a barbarian. To me. We can use that word. Foreigner. To mean simply.

Someone from another country. But isn't it also. Used sometimes. Is a derogatory word. The classic. Kind of. Oh these foreigners. Are coming in. Stealing our jobs. Kind of meaning.

That's very not. That's very much. Not a neutral use. Is it? And I don't think. Paul's use of foreigner. Here is neutral. Simply factual. He's saying. That if our worship.

Is self-centered. And the priority. Isn't building. The whole church. Up in love. Then that will only. Serve to highlight. Division. And separation. It makes people.

[38 : 55] Feel like foreigners. Amongst brothers. If worship. Is a collaboration. Of all the bits and pieces. That certain people like.

Then that doesn't actually. Build up the whole body. It casts off some brothers. As barbarians. Or look at verse 16. Paul says.

Our singing. Our praying. Our speaking. And our thanksgiving. Are to be inclusive. Not exclusive. They should allow others. To respond. With an amen. Because they bring.

Others along with you. Verse 17. It may be. All well and good. That you are giving thanks. But other people. Aren't being built up. And what's very telling.

Is the word. That Paul uses here. In our. Here. In our translation. He says. Outsiders. That's not. Paul talking about. Non-Christians. He talks.

[39 : 52] Separately. Separately. About unbelievers. In verse 22. If you look at the footnotes. That helps us. Somewhat. What he means. By outsiders. We're unskilled.

Ungifted. People. The Greek word. Is actually the word. That we get. Idiot. From. The Corinthians. Approach to worship. Was me. Centered.

And it fostered. The dividing line. That Corinth held. That in the church. There are mighty. Christians. Like the wonderful. Corinthians. With all their speaking gifts.

And there are also. Sadly. In the church. Weak Christians. That we have to put up with. Like Paul. And many others. The idiots. The unskilled. The weak.

Corinthian worship. Was geared around. The mighty. Those who had the standout. Speech gifts. And so. Corinthian worship. Was a perversion. Of worship. Our gathering like this.

- [40 : 49] On Sunday. Sunday by Sunday. Isn't for each of us. To have our say. It's not for each of us. To put on a show. Of ourselves. We gather together. Like this. To be shaped. Together.
- This is a gathering. That fosters. And builds. Our unity. This is a gathering. That builds us up. Into a stronger church. A more loving church.
- This isn't a gathering. About every individual. Having something. That's for them. The way they like it. Our gathered. Worship together. Is primarily. About being formed.
- Not performing. It's about us being formed. Not performing. And so. Instead of being excluded.
- The formers. And the outsiders. Ought to be at the heart. Of things. Remember chapter 12. No part of the body. Is indispensable. In fact. Those with the least.
- [41 : 45] Honor. Are most revered. Paul says. Better five words. Spoken clearly. To build up. Than 10,000. That can only pass away.
- Unfruitfully. And so. Doesn't that shape. The way we are involved together. Doesn't that shape. Our worship. It's out of love. That we approach. Our corporate worship.
- As a. Not about me. Thing. But as an. All about them. Thing. It's out of love. That we. Do what we can. As we gather. To include.
- And to build up. Other people. It's out of love. That we look to sit. Sit next to people. On their own. Who are new. Who are unknown. Helping them get a bible. If they don't have one.
- It's out of love. It's out of love. That we. Arrive before the service. Starts. To encourage others. To be well prepared. For worship. To feast. On God's words. That we can encourage others.
- [42 : 39] It's out of love. That we speak to any. And all of the church family. After our gatherings. To encourage them. With what we've just heard. It's out of love. That we participate. In the service.
- Singing heartily. For that. Is a means of thinking of others. Not just ourselves. It is worth us. Noting that our. Our singing of psalms.
- And hymns. And spiritual songs. Is to one another. Prayer. And singing heartily. Is a real encouragement. To others. So very often.
- When people talk. About worship. In a church. It centers. On one of two things. Are there. The so-called. Spiritual gifts. At play. Or how is the music.
- Perhaps. If you find. Worship. A struggle. Maybe. It's because. You're thinking. More about me. Than them. I. Not us.
- [43 : 38] Be able. Not Pentecost. Paul's message. To the Corinthians. And to us. Is this. When it comes.
- To worship. The cross. Says. Crucify your tongue. Let it be used. Not for the furthering. Of your brand. For the betterment.
- Of yourself. But let your tongue. Follow the pattern. Of the cross. And lay down. Its rights. And its freedom. For the sake of others. Truly fruitful.
- Truly life-giving. Inclusive worship. Is worship. That builds up. The whole body. In love. As God's word. Is made clear. Father. That's what the pouring out.
- Of God's spirit. Was for. And so a truly spiritual. Loving church. Longs for the Bible. To be open. And made plain. Let's pray.
- [44 : 44] Father. Help us. We pray. Help us. To delight. In your church. And so. In our hearts. A distaste. For anything.

That would see us. Twist our precious times. Together. As a church family. Into something. That deprives. Or diminishes. One another. Foster. Ever growing.

Bonds of love. Between us. And grant us. Great grace. That we would be satisfied. In all that you have revealed. And so.

Spare us the pain. Of chasing after the novel. Or the trivial. And we ask for your help. In these things. In Jesus name. Amen.