

1 Cor. 14 is primarily instruction to the church on the gift of tongues or 'glossalaleia' (?) with a real emphasis on the importance of prophecy. Or what I would call 'Inspired preaching or teaching of the Word of God'. When we speak on something like this, we're always concerned that we never discourage anybody who is seeking to go on with the Lord. There are so many people who stop and who are not hungry for more of God. And God forbid that I would ever discourage anyone in going forth with God, because the hope of the church or those people who dare to obey God and receive what He has, rather than stop and become stagnant. So let's keep this in mind but we certainly have to have the truth on a subject that's as volatile as the gift of tongues.

In this chapter, we need to keep two questions in mind, which were in the background of Paul's mind. 1. How does a gift build up the Body of Jes.? That's the way you test the importance of a gift. To what extent does it build up the entire body and

2. Does this gift spread the Gospel to unbelievers? And that is Paul's concern throughout this chapter. And if a gift does NOT help build the body, it's detrimental and some gifts help build the body of Christ more than others. If it hurts Evangelism or the winning of the lost, there is something wrong with it. So that's what Paul is saying in these verses. Let's look at this and try to get twenty verses in if we can and we'll finish it next time and then we'll go to the great resurrection chapter. Paul says in

V. 1 (read) 'follow' pursue - a strong word - 'after agape' and desire Spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.' AND there's no question that he is saying that prophesy is a tremendously important gift. That is, inspired preaching and teaching of the Word of the Lord. Paul says it's the major gift because it fills up the body. It brings people to Christ. It builds up the Saints of the Lord and it's a proven fact, that there's never been a work of God built that was not built on great preaching and great teaching.

I remember when we had our first E.E. Clinic. The men came from a good distance and they said 'how do you explain, how do you explain what's happened here?' I said 'well, listen, for years

we have preached nothing but the Bible and taught nothing but the Bible and the bottom line of everything in this church is the Word of The Lord, preached and taught. And this must always be. And a church is never greater than the teaching and the preaching of the Word and no matter what a church has, if it doesn't have this, it soon will be in trouble. This is fundamental and I have done this for eighteen years and before me, others did it.

V. 2 (read) 'unknown' is not in the original. You notice it is italicized. 'For he that speaketh in a tongue' - now, why would the KJV people put 'unknown'? Well, it's unknown, except to God, unless there be an interpretation. But actually, the unknown tongue is known to God and if there is interpretation, it certainly is a language. And tongues is a language. But they put the 'unknown', it certainly is not in the original. 'Speaketh not unto men, but unto God' and this immediately distinguishes it from Pentecostal tongue.

The Corinthian tongue is not the Pentecostal tongue. On the Day of Pentecost, they spoke indeed to men and they spoke known languages of the people of that day. Acts 2: 11 says the people said 'we hear in our own tongue or dialects, the wonderful works of God'. The Corinthian tongue is not the same as the Pentecostal tongue. There was no interpretation needed. Those disciples spoke those seventeen languages under the inspiration of the H. S. For he goes on to say 'no man understandeth him', however in the Spirit, he speaketh mysteries' or he speaks that which is hidden or that which is not obvious. That is, the one who speaks in tongues.

V. 3 (read) notice 'he that prophesieth speaketh unto men' and there's a three fold accomplishment in prophesying: 1. To EDIFICATION (that is to the building up of the Body) 2. To EXHORTATION (sometimes it's translated encouragement, I think it's admonition here). It builds up the Body, it admonishes the Body and it brings 3. COMFORT to the Body. Now V. 2 says 'he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God' and this would indicate prayer-praise. IN privacy unto God. There was this in the early church; there are manifestations of this today, undoubtedly. Maybe some of you have had this.

But he says 'he that prophesieth (or course openly and in a known language) speaketh unto men that they might be built up, or admonished or encouraged and that comfort might come to their hearts.

V. 4 (read) first part: you might say 'well, if he edifies himself; is that Xtn? Because we're supposed to edify others.' We need edifying. My father used to say to me 'if you're not blessed when you preach, you won't bless anybody else'. This does not rule out tongues because of self-edification. Now people need to be real careful that they are not exhaling themselves or edifying themselves. Tot he exclusinn of the Body and I think some people come into an experience - this has been my observation - and they get so excited that they try to get others to speak in tongues. This is unscriptural indeed! I do not want this in FBC.

This will create great problems in the Body. We are NOT to coach others in speaking tongues. You can't do it anyway, but you can get people to say sounds. But you will not teach them how to speak in this language unto God. And you're dealing in a dangerous realm, indeed, if you do it. I thought that what Bro. Whitten said, at the E. E. Renewal - Tom, I thought that was one of the finest words I've heard. He said if someone asked him if he spoke in tongues, he didn't answer them. He said because if I say no, there are some ^{people} ~~people~~ that would say 'well, you're not Spiritual'. And if I say yes, some bpeople would never want to hear me speak again and he says 'no one knows this'.

This is a pretty great approach to this thing, if you want to know what I really believe about it. ONe of the most Godly women I've ever known in my life, said to me recently 'I - some years ago, experienced a language with God, but I've never told anybody, till I told you'. I was amazed! We had a Seminar several years ago on 'The Gifts of The Spirit' and we had a fine pastor in the city - he's not here now - he came and gave a testimony of a prayer language' but he said 'I have never even told my wife'. You see, it's unto God and when it's evangelized it becomes devisive, it gets people into areas they should not be.

But many people get so excited. I remember we had a couple in Speedway Terrace in Memphis, Tn

where I was pastor before I came here. Man and his wife, very earnest; they were just formal, they were mechanical people; they had a child with a deformity. They came in to some experience (I think they claimed they had prayer language) they were very dear friends of mine and they got so excited they thought they should go everywhere. As a matter of fact, she came to our church about '68 or '69, went into the S. S. department, just so excited. Often this happens to individuals, they feel everyone should speak in tongues, though Paul plainly says 'not everyone will'.

When it's evangelized, demons can get into it - very great excessives can get into it and great harm can be done to people and the family of God. 'He that speaketh in a tongue builds up himself but he that prophesieth edifieth the church'.

V. 5 (read) now you can take the Scrip., if you just take part of the Scrip., and prove anything. Those who promote tongues, unscripturally, would just quote the first part of V. 5: 'I would that ye all spoke with tongues'. But that is not the thrust of V. 5. Now Paul is saying 'I would desire you to have a rich experience; I have nothing against you speaking unto God, if this helps your devotional life' but that isn't the ~~XXXXXX~~ thrust of the verse at all. 'I would that ye all spoke with tongues (he's already said 'you all don't' in 12: 28, in the Greek it says 'all do NOT speak' but he says it would be alright with me if you did.

BUT, and the thrust of the argument, is in the last part of the sentence: but rather that ye prophesy. You see, that would be great dishonesty, but you see someone carried away with glossolalia and be promoting it ~~XXXXXX~~ would say 'now, look here, Paul says I would that you all spoke with tongues'. That would be wrong; that would be false teaching. Paul is saying 'it's alright with me if you do it, but what I'm stressing with you is that prophesy is more important because it builds up the Church'.

Latter part of this verse: 'for greater'-'greater' seems strange - for greater - well, the Bible doesn't speak of little and greater in the Body - that really means 'more useful'. Always understand what the Scrip. is saying. For greater (or more useful) is he that prophesi-

eth (or more important) but more important because of the gift doesn't mean that he himself is a big shot or anything like that but I'd say 'more useful is he that prophesieth than he that speaks with tongues, 'except he interpret' and of course, if he speaks a tongue and he interprets, there, indeed, is an intelligible message to the church and in the latter part of the chapter, he will give the rules for speaking publically, by interpretation.

Now some would say 'well, but this means, really, if you have an interpretation of tongues, that tongues would be on the level of prophesy. That is not taught in the Bible. On the Day of Pentecost, Peter spoke in tongues, but when it came to giving the message of God, he spoke in languages he could understand. We have no record of a major message being delivered in tongues in the N. T. The history of the church knows NOTHING of this. The interpreted message is generally relatively brief and the ones I've heard were relatively simple, indeed.

Even interpretation of tongues is not a substitute of what I teach on S. morning and what you teachers do at all. The Word of God is to be preached in the language of the people; it's to be spoken at length and tongues is not a substitute for this.

V. 6 (read) 'except I shall speak to you' and that means 'in a known language'. Paul is not denying that there is a gift, but he, indeed, is minimizing it and he is giving them a strong word that they not get it out of it's right place.

V. 7 (read) or how shall you know the tunes that's being played?

V. 8 (read) and he's just using musical instruments to say that you've got to have clarity, if you're gonna have any direction in the trumpet and he's showing how this relates to language
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V. 9 (read) 'words easy to understand' and that is intelligible to be understood. You can imagine the great harm that would be done -say, you had a large congregation of People, especially if you had lost people, and someone were to get up and speak in an unknown tongue. In the charismatic Pentecostal churches, this is not generally even permitted. I've talked to

these; to one of the finest churches in Memphis, TN, the First Assembly of God, on Highland. I was a good friend of the Pastor. I said 'let me ask you, dō you permit others to speak in a tongue?' He said 'oh no. We speak in tongues in the prayer room but not publically'. I said 'why not?' He said 'we'd run off half the congregation. We're interested in Evangelism. We'd just frighten people, indeed'. I asked Clark Whitten, 'Clark, did you permit tongues to be spoken in your church publically?' He said 'absolutely not. Never was there any tongue spoken'.

I asked Jack Taylor and he said 'we do not permit this'. Very few churches can handle this indeed. When we get on down, it'll give the rules for the public proclamation of tongues.

V. 10 (read) 'voices' or languages. Well, I've already talked about that.

V. 11 (read) 'barbarian' (foreigner). Now he comes to his real thrust, in

V. 12 (read) if we believe V. 12, you can handle the gift, including tongues, healing or any of the controversial gifts. 'Zealous of spiritual gifts (and the church at Corinth WAS zealous--but they were overly zealous of tongues, of glossalalia, of speaking in tongues). He says 'now you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excell to the edifying of the church'. Says 'this should be the question that you ought to ask 'are you edifying the church?' Not are you enjoying yourself? But what is this doing to the Body of Christ? What is this doing to the work of the Lord? What is this doing to Evangelism? What's this doing to the image of the Church, to reach a world that's lost?

See that which edifies and builds up the whole Body.

V. 13(read) 'wherefore' reads as therefore. And V. 14 (read) and V. 15(read) now you have to read it correctly: 'I pray with the spirit (that would be in tongues) and I will pray with the understanding also'. Now the thrust here is - not praying in the spirit, he says I WILL pray in the spirit, but I'm not just gonna pray in the spirit, but I will pray with the

understanding also. I will sing with the spirit and will sing with the understanding also'. Evidently the Corinthians were just praying in the spirit, basically. Paul says 'I am going to add the other. I'm just not gonna get side-tracked in speaking in tongues'.

V. 16 (read) 'else (otherwise) when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned' and indeed, that is very, very awkward in English. 'How shall he that's in the place (or in the position of an outsider) how shall he that is an outsider say 'amen' at thy giving of thanks, see that he understandeth not what thou sayest'?

V. 17 (read) you give thanks, it's good but the person didn't understand it, so he can't say 'amen' because it's of no value to him whatsoever'. It's foolishness to him.

V. 18 & 19 (read) here are two verses which we ought to read both of them. Now V. 18: those who would promote tongues and get them out of their place, they will quote that verse. But they don't quote V. 19. Now what I say is: V. 18 ought to be read by those who are afraid of tongues. V. 19 ought to be read by those who are out of balance on tongues. Look at V. 18 - you know what someone against tongues might ~~XXX~~ say: well, there's never been any such thing as this, it's all of the devil, it's all gone, there can never be a tongue.

They'd say 'well, that doesn't mean a thing in the world but Paul was a great linguist: he knew Hebrew, Greek, Latin. That isn't true at all. That isn't what that is talking about. Paul spoke in tongues. Let's be honest: Paul spoke tongues. He spoke tongues unto God. He spoke tongues like they did at Corinth. We have no message where he delivered a message, but in the 9th Chapter of Acts, where he speaks considerably, in the 17th chapter when he preached at Mars Hill, he certainly did not speak in tongues. In Chap. 22, 24, 26, he certainly did not preach un tongues. But in his prayer time, and I'm kinda lead to believe, that it was primarily unto God, that he exercised the gift. We do not have a record, of his exercising in the public assembly but he certainly said that he had the supernatural gift of tongues.

He is NOT saying that I've studied Hebrew; I've studied Greek; I know language at the Univer-

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sity. Yet, I've read that kind of interpretation. People who/know the Bible; somebody could get up and explain that way, but it's not saying that. And we don't get anywhere by denying what the Bible says. He says, V. 18: I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all. V. 19: yet in the church (notice 'the church') I had rather speak five words with my understanding that by my language, I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue'. So he's putting prophesy, or just speaking in the language that people can understand, two thousand to one in value, in public proclamation.

Yet, there are people who get caught up in tongues and they think a message in tongues or just speaking in tongues, is greater than any sermon that was ever preached! When you come to that place you, indeed, have departed from Scrip. and that's what has happened at the church at Corinth. They were just carried away with this gift and Paul didn't say that it was false - I think maybe some of it was false - but they had got it so out of balance and that's where the devil wants to get us in the gift of tongues or healing. Is get it so out of balance until it just hurts people and divides the church, destroys Evangelism and creates tremendous problems, for EVERYONE that's concerned. Now look what he says in

V. 20(read) 'be not children in understanding' - what's that related to? Speaking in tongues. Just in the context. Don't he says, act like children, in the use of gifts, especially the gift of tongues. Don't be immature; don't play with it like a toy; don't worship it like God; don't magnify it - be a child, in your attitude and in your heart and in your spirit, but when it comes to the gifts of the Spirit, be mature and when we're mature, we can handle it. When we become immature, and start magnifying that which God doesn't and trying to sell others on it, that's just childish. That's not Spiritual maturity at all. That hurts us and it hurts others.

I just counsel you as your pastor always to be careful when it comes to miraculous healing. Paul is saying 'be real careful'. Now later on in the chapter, he's gonna say if tongues are exercised publically, no more than three should ever speak; two preferably and no woman should (in V. 34). When you take the restrictions of Paul that he lays on them and they are followed,

tongues would never be divided. But you see, immature people and often it's people with great problems. Not always, but quite often, immature people will come into an experience, which may be of God - I'm not saying it's not. But they just get 'gung-ho' on this thing and they often forget Evangelism; sometimes try to get off in little groups, thinking they are Holier than others and try to lead others in to it - let's never be a part of that.

I do not want this in the FBC. Having said that, if you have a prayer language that you feel is of God and it's meaningful to you in devotional, I would never tell you not to exercise it. And I would not take the stand that some Bible people have and say that there is no such gift. I do not believe, on the basis of 1 Cor. 14: 10 that we can say that. Now that's why some people - the way some people try to handle it; they say 'well, we don't even need to discuss 1 Cor. 14 because this passed away(?). I do not interpret the Bible that way.

But having said it, we need to be careful indeed and to magnify those gifts that build up the Body, not ourselves. Not ourselves.

Alright, in Summary, he says to be wise and mature. Not be a child. I would just like to summarize here tonight what the Bible would say:

#1. The Bible Recognizes Tongues as a Gift. Tongues is a gift.

#2. The Bible Definitely Indicates It Is A Secondary Gift. Not a primary gift. It is always listed at the end. Some churches put it at the front. I've had some people tell me they just couldn't be a Deacon in their church unless they spoke in tongues. That simply is not Scriptural.

#3. It is NEVER a Sign of Spirituality. Paul NEVER indicates it is a sign of spirituality. It is not for everyone at all. Paul says that in 1 Cor. 12: 30 - tongues is not for all. Anyone who tells you that you're filled with the H. S., that denies the Bible and the witness of the historic church for two thousand years. The Pentecostals are not even teaching this today, in the main. They've learned better. The Charismatics are

not teaching it at all - the enlightened Charismatics. I've talked to them. I even asked Oral Roberts; he didn't press the point at all. He said 'I wouldn't want to press the point on N. T. ground'. And then

#4. They Must Be Exercised Under the Guidelines of the Bible. And if they are, they will never divide the church and they will never create problems, my friends.

Long before I ever heard the word 'Charismatic' I was seeking the Truth in my own heart and in my own experience on the H. Spirit. Fifteen years before I ever heard the word and God told me something the first ten years of my ministry. He said 'balance your ministry and don't go off on extremes, not even in prophesy, but build your ministry on the Lordship of Jes., on Evangelism and let the other things be minor and be basically in the background and never at the forefront. That's what God has led me to do and that's what I have tried to do for eighteen years and I hereby say that's still the leading of God, through the years.

And through these years, there have been some that have wanted to get off here, but I just wouldn't go with them. I do not want, in any way, to hinder the work of God, but I'm responsible that this Body move with God and not move into the extreme. We simply cannot do that. This church would be divided had we gone into an extreme.

Angel Martinez is in more churches than anyone I know. He said 'I've travelled all over America, said I've never witnessed anything like this ~~XXXXX~~ church.' He said 'most churches that say they are Evangelistic, they're just shallow and have no teaching on the Spirit or the deep things of God. On the other hand, there are the deeper life churches; they have no Evangelism. What I'm seeing today is an extremeism: on one hand, just a shallow Evangelism, no emphasis on Lordship, deeper things of God. OR others have gone off into this deeper life and they have ignored Evangelism'. He said 'God has enabled us to do something, in our church, that I've not seen anywhere. To combine Evangelism and the Lordship of Jes. To combine the Word and the Spirit. To keep the undergirding of everything with the Word of God, with the teaching of the Bible'. When we do this, God will keep us together and united. If

I've offended anybody, I'm sorry, I would not do it for the world. I want you to move with God, but I DON'T want you to get into an extreme. And, especially, in the area of tongues. I see some people nodding their heads who saw the error. And once you see the error, once you're in a fellowship where there's been an extreme and the Biblical lines, guidelines, have not been followed, let me tell you: you will NEVER want to go that way again.

ONce you see what can happen to a misuse of the gift of tongues, or anything, you will - you are so burnt, you will never go back to that again. Let's stay within the orb of the Scripture. Let's respect one another in our gifts and let's promote those things which build the Body. Let's listen to Paul. Let's be wise, and not be children. Not be immature.

Alright, let's stand and pray.