

A CONTRAST AND CONTEXT FOR TONGUES

1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-40

Recently, I bought a wood chipper. My house sits in a forest, and limbs are always falling in my yard, so it's convenient for me to gather up the sticks and run them through the chipper. It's a lot of fun **grinding stuff...** ***

Yet, I realize a wood chipper can be *abused and misused...* Folks have been known to put their hands down the chute to unclog the machine. Fingers have been injured... I read of a Oregonian woman who killed her husband; then disposed of his body by running him through a wood chipper... *In my instruction manual that is never once listed as a valid use for a wood chipper!*

If fact, if I don't show up one Sunday, and Kathy flees town on a flight to Tahiti... *check the chipper!* I was probably eating Doritos in bed, and it pushed the girl over the edge... But it's still an invalid use for a chipper!

Here's my point, just because a wood chipper can be *misused, even abused* - that doesn't mean we should outlaw wood chippers!... And just because the gift of tongues is often misused and abused, it doesn't mean we should run from it, or have nothing to do with it.

Yet this has happened to some Christians and their attitude toward this gift. They've seen "*bodies*" - *church bodies* - chipped up and divided over the gift of tongues, and now they want nothing to do with this very good gift.

If that's been your thinking, this morning I want to challenge you to reconsider... Jesus thought enough of this gift, to speak of it in Mark 16... Tongues frequently appear in Acts and in the early church... And here in 1 Corinthians, Paul devotes a whole chapter to its practice.

Obviously, if God considers the gift of tongues a vital subject, how can we avoid it? *And why would we want to?* All God's gifts are good, including the gift of tongues.

In 1 Corinthians 14 Paul explains this important gift. He provides us **a contrast** and **a context** for tongues.

To help us untangle tongues, he **contrasts** it with the gift of prophecy... Then he informs us that the proper **context** for the use of tongues is in our own private devotional life, or in small groups of informed believers...

Chapter 14 begins, **"Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts..."** The dove of the Holy Spirit flies on two wings. We need both the **fruits** and **gifts** of the Holy Spirit.

In Chapter 13 we learned that without the fruits of the Spirit, namely the chief fruit, **"love,"** *we're nothing.* And we also need the Spirit's gifts. **"Desire spiritual gifts."**

There is a Christian denomination that has adopted as its official policy toward spiritual gifts the phrase, **"Seek not, forbid not."** That's a middle of the road view.

And you know what's in the middle of the road? A long, fat yellow streak. And that's how I see that motto.

Adopt the attitude, **"Seek not, forbid not."** And you should add, **"and get not!"** **"Seek not, forbid not, and get not."** Paul

says, *“Pursue love, and **desire** spiritual gifts.”* If you don't desire them; then you want get them.

This morning, as we study the gifts of prophecy and tongues, let's remember these are not just matters we should **believe** - these are gifts we can **receive!**

And in verse 1, Paul adds, *“**especially that you may prophecy.**”* When Bear Bryant, the legendary Alabama football coach, was in his prime, the Bear observed the team's practices from a tower overlooking the field.

Bryant trusted his position coaches and the playbook to direct the team, but when he wanted to address a specific situation he'd shout down with a bullhorn.

And the gift of prophecy is God's bullhorn!

In a sense, God oversees us from heaven's tower and watches us live our lives. His general instruction is provided by *the playbook, the Bible, and the on-field coach, the Holy Spirit* - but on occasion there's a specific issue that God wants to address personally, so He picks up His bullhorn and speaks to us directly.

Prophecy is this *“**instant inspiration.**”* It's like spiritual *texting*. It comes straight from God's keypad to yours.

The Hebrew word translated *“**prophecy**”* means *“to bubble up like a fountain, or tumble forth.”* Rather than a preplanned speech, the gift of prophecy is a extemporaneous message prompted by the Holy Spirit.

It flows *from my spirit - into my mind and out of my mouth.* Prophecy is a spontaneous, ecstatic utterance.

God's Spirit puts His words into my mind, and I speak them.
My mouth becomes God's mouthpiece.

Amos 3:8 compares the gift of prophecy to a lion's growl. "A lion has roared! Who will not fear? The Lord GOD has spoken! Who can but prophesy?"

Most often God's Spirit speaks to us in a still, small voice - but prophecy is compared to a lion's roar!

Verse 2, "For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him; however, in the spirit he speaks mysteries." Now the next several verses **contrast** prophecy and tongues...

First notice, the gift of prophecy is a message *from God to man*, whereas the gift of tongues is a means by which *man speaks to God* in either prayer or praise.

In Charismatic and Pentecostal circles often an utterance in tongues is followed by a supposed interpretation. *Something like, "Thus says the Lord, listen to me..."* As if the tongues were God speaking...

But again verse 2, "*He who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God...*" Tongues is not God speaking to man, it is a way for man to speak to God.

That means in the case I referenced, what follows the tongue is not its interpretation. It may be a prophecy that followed the tongue, but the utterance in tongues remained un-interpreted. **Tongues are never God speaking to man, but man speaking to God.**

Verse 3 continues, “**But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.**”

Most people when they hear the term “*prophecy*” think of *prognosticating* - “*the foretelling of the future.*”

But a prophecy may or may not contain a predictive element. The purpose of the gift is “**edification, exhortation, and comfort...**” A prophecy **builds up, it stirs up, or it cheers up** - whatever the need might be.

For two long years Kath and I struggled to have kids.

Things came to a head at a pastors conference on the last weekend of May, 1982. Kathy asked the ladies present to pray for her. As they prayed, one lady prophesied over my wife. The Lord spoke through her, “**By this time next year you will have a child.**”

To make a long story short, Zach was born on the same weekend, exactly one year later - on May 29, 1983. The prophecy was fulfilled to the very weekend.

And what kind of effect do you think that prophecy has had on our family? It’s certainly **built up** our faith.

And it’s **stirred up** Zach in his ministry. What a legacy, knowing your birth was foretold directly by God!

And when Zach gets discouraged I’m sure it **cheers him up** to know that God has always had a plan for His life! Here’s why we desire spiritual gifts, *especially the gift of prophecy*, for it **builds up, stirs up, cheers up!**

Verse 4 explains why Paul preferred prophecy over tongues. For “He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.”

If an unknown tongue is spoken in the church and no one understands it; then it only benefits the person who spoke... Whereas, prophecy is God’s message to the Church. Everyone gets blessed through prophecy.

Tongues is like a personal-pan pizza. It feeds only one. Whereas, prophecy is an extra-large pizza, where everyone sits around it, and eats off of the prophecy.

Paul continues, “I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied; for he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.” I personally speak in tongues. It’s a wonderful way to praise and worship God.

Yet I also know that the gift of tongues is the least of all the spiritual gifts; since it’s the only gift that doesn’t encourage or build up the whole Body of Christ.

The person who speaks in the tongue gets blessed, but the gift of tongues doesn't benefit the hearers unless it’s accompanied by the gift of interpretation.

He continues, “But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?” If you read Chapter 14 in the OKJV the term “*tongue*” is “unknown tongue.” This is because the tongue is a

praise or prayer to God in a language unknown to the speaker. It's supernatural.

In Acts 2 on the Day of Pentecost people had gathered to Jerusalem from all over the world. When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke with the gift of tongues, the crowds were amazed to hear God being praised in their own native language.

One believer spoke in Greek, so that the Greeks in the crowd heard him... Another spoke in Egyptian, or Latin, or in an Arabian dialect, and it was heard by people in the crowd from those places in the world.

The miracle of the gift, along with the multicultural demographic of the crowd, combined so that different language groups became privy to the church's praise.

But Pentecost was the exception in that regard.

I doubt if the Corinthian Church was a multilingual congregation. They all spoke the same language or languages, so to speak to each other in a foreign language in their own home church made no sense.

The goal when the local church gathered was to teach revelation - the Bible - to hear from God!

Verse 7, "Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played?" The point is, whenever people gather the reason is to *communicate* - by word or by sound!

And unintelligible sounds are nothing but noise.

"For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle?" Bugles were used in battle to direct an army's troops, but if the soldiers are unable to distinguish the sounds, what's the point?

Is the bugler *blowing a charge* or *signaling a retreat*? If soldiers can't tell; the army is destined for defeat!

"So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air."

When a church gathers the emphasis should always be on clear, easy-to-understand communication.

"There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance.

Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me."

Recall Genesis 11, and the tower of Babel, the world rebelled against God. He confused the people's language, driving them apart. But in the Church, Jesus' goal is to reverse the effects of Babel. He reconciles and unifies people, so they'll praise God in one voice.

The Church is all about clear communication.

Verse 12, "Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel." The Corinthians were enamored with spiritual gifts - *especially the gift of tongues* - but they'd forgotten the purpose of the gifts!

Think of a baby sucking on a set of car keys. The infant doesn't understand the purpose of the keys!

And Christians who use the gathering of the Church as a stage to speak in tongues don't understand the purpose of *the gathering* or *the gifts*. Church isn't about self-entertainment. It's about building up the saints.

Paul continues, "Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret." If you're in a small group of believers - and everyone is worshipping and waiting on God - and the Spirit prompts you to speak in tongues... *if no else in the group interprets what you utter*; then it's up to you to pray for the interpretation.

Again, the gifts should benefit the whole Church!

If your gift of tongues doesn't get interpreted then no one can be blessed by what you said. **And the purpose of any church gathering is the mutual benefit of all!**

Verse 14, "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful." Now, it's useless to be discussing a subject unless we understand what it is we're discussing. So... *what is the gift of tongues?*

The word "*tongues*" simply means "languages or dialects." But the gift is not a language I learn. No one can teach me to speak in tongues. It's not a technique.

It's language conveyed supernatural by God's Spirit.

Here's a definition, "The gift of tongues is a Spirit-given capacity to praise God, or pray to God, in a language other than my native tongue, or languages I may have learned." Through the gift of tongues the Holy Spirit liberates me to

praise God in a free and uninhibited manner. *I become fluent in worship!*

According to Ethnologue there are now 6,912 living languages in the world. And of those 6,912 languages, I know only one - English - and I know very little of it.

The English language consists of 800,000 words, excluding 500,000 technical terms. It's estimated that in the average person's lifetime he or she will only get around to using about 60,000 of those 800,000 words.

And even more limiting, the daily working vocabulary of the average person is only 7,000 words. That means I use less than 1% of the one language that I know.

This isn't a problem until I want to express a thought that's very meaningful to me, and I can't find the right words. It's a frustrating experience to *grope for words*.

There're moments when even the most eloquent person gets caught off guard... is at a loss for words!

This *awkward articulation* seems to occur most often in emotional moments - when our hearts are full of love and joy, or grief and sorrow. We're about to burst with pent-up emotion, but we can't find the right words to communicate what it is we're feeling deep, deep inside.

This happens at moments with my wife. I want to tell Kath how much I love her, but she's heard, "*I love you*" so often it's blasé. *I can't afford diamonds so I'm stuck.*

Besides, I also say "*I love ice cream,*" and "*I love my wood chipper,*" this diminishes the the term "*love.*"

And this is a problem in my relationship with God. At times I'm awed by His presence, amazed by His love, blown-away by His blessing, and suddenly *the speaker becomes speechless*. "*I love you*" just doesn't cut it!

Humans are like this funnel. The narrow neck is our intellect - the wide base is our spirit. On the spiritual level we're capable of experiencing deep emotions. Yet all those profound feelings have to be channeled through a constricted intellect and a limited vocabulary.

It's our own narrowness that chokes off the flow of our feelings, and in the end bottles up our emotions.

Yet the Holy Spirit knows every language that's ever been spoken. According to 13:1 the Holy Spirit is even fluent in the language of the angels. I am *linguistically limited*, but the Holy Spirit is not. He's omni-lingual.

That means He can plant words in my mind - words with which I'm unfamiliar - but words that accurately and articulately express the depths of my heart.

As these words enter my mind, if I just utter them by faith, believing them to be the Spirit's interpretation of my praise or my concern - then my speaking in tongues produces a fulfilling release of expression.

Suddenly, the person who was *fumbling and frustrated* with his words, becomes *free and fluent*.

The gift of tongues bypasses my narrow mind and meager vocabulary. Notice how Paul puts it in verse 14, "*My spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.*"

On the day of Pentecost when tongues was spoken it was an active human dialect. But it doesn't have to be. It can be a dead language, or an angelic language.

There're researchers who've recorded tongues, and concluded it's not human language at all, just gibberish. *But they miss the point.* When I pray in tongues, "*my spirit prays*" - my spirit isn't subject to rules of articulation. As long as God understands what I say, it doesn't have to conform to human linguistics.

Whatever the Holy Spirit gives me to say, I can trust that God in heaven will interpret it as the purest praise.

Bible teacher, Harold Horton, explains it this way, "The gift of tongues sinks a well into the dumb profundities of the rejoicing spirit, liberating a jet of long-pent ecstasy that gladdens the heart of God and man... Have you never in the presence of Jesus felt inarticulate on the very verge of eloquence?" If that's been true of you, then ask God for the gift of tongues!

Verse 15, "*What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.*" Paul prays - he even sings - with his spirit. But he also prays and sings in his own language. There is a time and place for both.

"*Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say? For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.*" Notice how Paul refers to tongues. He calls it, "*your giving of*

thanks." This is important, tongues is *our prayer or praise*, not *God's word to us*.

And notice an underlying concept in verse 15. Paul is interjecting the idea that **time and place is important**.

This idea is what helps us with the whole chapter!

In the life of the early church there were different types of meetings... At times the church met publicly. The meeting was open to all comers... But there were also smaller gatherings of informed believers, where unbelievers were not anticipated... This gave room for different types of experiences. And Paul is saying that the public gathering is not the venue for tongues.

If the point of our meetings is to love and minister to all people present; then why use a gift we know some folks won't understand, and can't really appreciate?

This is why at CC our Sunday public gatherings are reserved for two things - worship and Bible teaching.

At a prayer meeting or a small group, that mostly believers attend, it's no big deal if someone speaks in tongues. Most of the folks in attendance are familiar.

But if it happens on Sunday - we have unbelievers and seekers in the crowd - and it could leave them confused or scared. At the very least, it might give the impression that we're weird - and they don't belong.

This is why Paul writes in verse 18, **"I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all yet in the church (or in the public gathering) I would rather speak five words with my**

understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue."

Over the years, Pentecostal-leaning folks have tried to pressure me into making room for the vocal gifts in our public services. But I've opted to be biblical.

I'm not against tongues, and neither is Paul. He used the gift more than any of the Corinthians, but the church's public meetings were not the time or place.

Apparently, the most charismatic apostle understood that tongues are best practiced in a person's private devotional life, or in a small group of informed believers; not in the public gatherings of the church.

Verse 20 sums it up, "Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature." In other words, *spiritual gifts and common sense go together. Being spiritual is being sensitive to the setting*, there is a time and place.

Verse 21 is where our text gets a little tricky. Paul writes, "In the law it is written: "With men of other tongues and other lips I will speak to this people; and yet, for all that, they will not hear Me," says the Lord."

Paul is quoting the OT, *Isaiah 28:11*... Then he says in verse 22, "Therefore tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophesying is not for unbelievers but for those who believe."

At first, this seems contradictory. In verse 21 Paul says God tried to get the attention of His people, Israel, through "*other*

tongues” - but then in verse 22 he says that tongues are a sign to unbelievers, not believers.

The key to unraveling this, is to understand Isaiah 28. The Prophet Isaiah had predicted an invading army would sack Jerusalem. The Assyrian invaders spoke a foreign language. Thus, when the Jews heard these unknown tongues being spoken in their streets, it would be a sign to them that judgment had come!

Thus, tongues is a sign, but it's a sign of judgment!

So when an unbeliever enters a public assembly of the church, you don't want to heap God's judgment on the poor guy before he's even had an opportunity to hear of God's love. Don't condemn him, before you try to reach him... But that's what'll happen if someone speaks in tongues and it immediately turns the guy off.

His uncomfortable reaction to the strange tongues is a sign of his judgment. *Why would you even go there!*

Verse 23 continues, **"Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind?"** The fact that they freak out over the tongues is proof that they're unfamiliar with the things of the Spirit.

But is that the first impression you want to give an unbeliever who comes to church for the very first time?

Do you want to highlight his or her ignorance, or try to build a bridge to reach out to them with God's love?

Don't scare them off, before you try to bring them in!

"But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you."

Though tongues is confusing to an unbeliever, prophecy is *clear, and compelling, and convicting*.

When a word of prophecy is spoken they're amazed.

"That's me he's talking about! How did he know that? God must know what I'm going through - perhaps He cares about me and even has a plan for my life?"

This is why in the public settings of the local church the gift of prophecy is preferable to tongues.

If everyone gets carried away and speaks in tongues it'll bless those with the gift, but everyone else will either be confused, or scared silly - and want to leave.

But prophecy *builds up, stirs up, cheers up*. And this is why in our public times we place our emphasis on Bible teaching, *for the Bible is a book of prophecy*.

When a service is dominated by tongues a few folks get blessed, but when we teach the Scripture - *God's prophetic Word* - everyone walks away encouraged!

Verse 26, "How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification."

Apparently the Church at Corinth loved to meet in smaller groups that were informal and unstructured.

And everyone participated in these meetings...

They were kind of a spiritual free for all - and that would've been okay if it had really been **"for all"** - but these meetings were being used by a few haughty believers as a platform for them to show-off spiritually.

The small group meetings in Corinth needed *some structure, some discernment, some restraint, and a whole lot of love!*... First, Paul provides them structure, **"If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret."**

I've attended Charismatic meetings where everyone spoke and sang in tongues at once. It was a concert of tongues. But according to Paul this isn't a proper use.

Paul instruct the Corinthians that those who speak in tongues should take their turn. And each use of the gift of tongues should be followed by an interpretation.

Verse 28, **"But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God."** Note, assumed here is that the person speaking with tongues has an *on/off switch*. When you speak in tongues God's Spirit gives you utterance, *but you still control the volume, and the reverb, and mute button*.

I recall a misguided friend who was standing next to a co-worker at the grocery store where he worked. He said suddenly he got the urge to speak in tongues, and just blurted out. It scared his poor co-worker to death...

And then my friend had the audacity to blame his lack of discretion and impulsiveness on God's Spirit. He said, "*I just couldn't help it! The Spirit made me!*"

That's not what Paul says! Jump ahead to verse 32, and he says of the gift of prophecy, "*the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.*" Apparently, this also applies to the gift of tongues. The person speaking remains in control of their physical faculties.

It's sad, but how often has a beautiful meeting of the church been interrupted by an errant burst of tongues?

In verse 29 Paul provides the Corinthians more structure for small group gatherings in the church, "*Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.*"

The gift of prophecy, as with all the spiritual gifts, is subject to outright counterfeits and human error.

In Jeremiah 14:14, the prophet tells us, "*The LORD said to me, 'The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.'*" There are deliberately deceptive people, *false prophets*.. but they're also well-meaning folks who are just deceived.

People can get worked up into an emotional lather, and mistake their own imagination for a message from God... This is why ***all*** prophecies need to be judged!

I've known folks who made major life decisions on what they thought was a word of prophecy. They would've been wise to

put it to a test. Was it confirmed by God's Word and was it in harmony with God's Son?

If they had tested it, they would've seen it was false.

1 Thessalonians 5 provides us the proper balance on this issue, "Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good."

Verse 30, "But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." When someone speaks in a small group - it should be done in an orderly manner. Not all at once, but one at a time. *Some restraint is needed.*

"For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints." The very first time we see the Holy Spirit in the Bible is in Genesis 1, *and what is He doing?* He's hovering over the deep, bringing *light out of darkness*, and *order out of chaos!*

God is a God of order, not confusion! *And here's why...* where there's no order, people tend to get hurt!

From time to time you hear of a European soccer match where folks were stampeded and crushed. There was no crowd control. This happens in church.

If gatherings aren't conducted in an orderly manner needs go unmet, and people get overlooked, and folks get hurt. God is into order, not for order sake. God isn't OCD. He likes orderliness, because He loves people!

And speaking of order... Verse 34 tells us, "Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak..." As if speaking in tongues wasn't controversial enough, here's a thought - *women, shhh!*

First, 1 Corinthians 11:5 qualifies this statement...

There Paul talked of ladies praying and prophesying in church. That means this can't be an absolute prohibition against a woman ever opening her mouth. What it does mean is that she should know her place.

It could be that in regards to the vocal gifts the ladies in Corinth were getting carried away, and were usurping the authority of the church's male leadership.

The Corinthian women needed to be reminded what Paul had emphasized to them in Chapter 11 - that *in the church* and *in the home* the men were called by God to *lovingly lead* and the women to *faithfully follow*.

This is why Paul adds in verse 34, "but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church."

Rather than be submissive, the Corinthian women had gotten loud and rowdy in the public assembly. It was a poor witness. They needed to let their husbands lead. *It was advice I'm sure they all willingly received!*

Verse 36, "Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?" Paul figures some of his readers will buck his instructions, so here he backs them down ahead of their arguments.

The Corinthian Church didn't hold an exclusive claim on the truth. Corinth wasn't the birthplace of the Bible, or its only intended audience. The Church in Corinth, as well as all other churches, *are to obey this book!*

And that's true, not only of the first century churches in Asia and Greece - it's true of the modern church, as well. **No church is exempt from biblical authority!**

The Bible teaches us that before Jesus returns perilous times will come. Our society will grow increasingly pagan. It's a mistake for the church to think it needs to emulate the world to reach it. As this world gets more pagan, the church needs to be more biblical! *That's why we're sticking with this Book, even when it addresses issues that make us uncomfortable!*

Paul was fully aware he was writing sacred Scripture. He challenges the Corinthians to recognize his authority, **"If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord."**

And in verse 38, he exercises his authority by dismisses his detractors in a bold and matter-of-fact fashion, **"But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant."**

Finally, in the last two verses, Paul sums up the big themes in the chapter, **"Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order."**

In the church all things should be done decently and in order, *but first... all things should be done!* Let's receive the power of the Spirit and use spiritual gifts.

Before we worry about doing things decently and in order, let's first **do some things!** Let's step out in faith.

In Chapter 14 Paul has corrected some *abuses* and *misuses*, but at least the Corinthians had some *uses*...

There was a lot right in Corinth! They were seeking the Holy Spirit. They were open to spiritual gifts. They had faith to use those gifts. Let's follow that example, and then we'll have reason to apply Paul's instructions.