

“Understanding & Order”
1 Corinthians 14:1-40
8/8/21
Message 27

Introduction

- Title of the Message is: “Understanding & Order”

• Review

- **We have been in a Study in 1 Corinthians**
 - We have been asking What was wrong in the Church of Corinth?
 - But in Reality - We can ask –
 - What is wrong with the church of today?
 - So MANY Similarities
- **This is a CORRECTIVE letter...**
 - **The Corinthians Did not Like Being Corrected**
 - Tore up Paul’s first letter
 - Sadly –
 - There are “Christians” that don’t like being corrected
 - **Correction So far from Paul**
 - Division
 - Carnality
 - Immorality In The Church

- Serious Nature of Sexual Sins
- Marriage Issues
- Christian Liberties
- **Chapter 11 - Marks Another Transition**
 - This next section is All About
 - Correction in the church service
 - Their church service were a mess
- **Chapter 12 - Spiritual Gifts**
 - Use and Misuse of Gifts
 - **Paul Starts Out v. 1**

1 Corinthians 12:1 (NKJV)

1 Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant:

- Don't Ignore / Don't be Unaware
- **Diversities in the gifts vs. 4-6**

1 Corinthians 12:4–6 (NKJV)

4 There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.

5 There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord.

6 And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

- We learned there are diversity of gifts, but the same Spirit
- And differences of ministries...and diversities of activities

- In other words, many ways in which gifts can be used
- **Gave us the purpose for the gifts...the profit of all v. 7**
 - Gifts are to edify the body of Christ
- **Gave us a brief list of some of the gifts vs. 8-10**
 - There are some other lists (in Romans and Ephesians)
- **Holy Spirit is in control of the distribution of the gifts v. 11**
- **Reminder – We are ALL Part of the Body vs. 12-31**
 - Body that has many members / doing different / functions / still one body
- **A More Excellent WAY**
 - Finish 12 with a HUGE Reminder A More Excellent Way
 - Love / AGAPE
- **Chapter 13 – Agape**
 - What Agape IS
 - What Agape IS NOT

• **Now To Chapter 14 – Understanding & Order**

- **Chapter 14 - Summed UP**
 - Let me SUM up this Chapter

- 1st It's ALL About Order IN the Church Service
 - We must Not Get bogged down on Just the gift of Tongues & Prophecy
 - The MUST be Understanding and Order in the church service
- 2nd The PURPOSE of GIFTS is Edification
 - Now to illustrate the need for Understanding & Order
 - He uses Prophecy & Tongues to illustrate his point
- **3 Main Points**
 - The Priority Of Love 13:13-14:1a
 - The Practice Of Spiritual Gifts In The Church vs. 1b-25
 - The Principles Paul Gives To Them vs. 26-40

The Priority Of Love 13:13-14:1a

• First: Love Exceeds Other Spiritual Virtues 1 Cor. 13:13

1 Corinthians 13:13 (NKJV)

13 *And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love.*

- We won't need faith when we see God face to face.
- We won't need to hope in the coming of Jesus once He comes.
- But we will always love the Lord and each other, and grow in that love through eternity.

• Second: Pursue Love 14:1a

1 Corinthians 14:1 (NKJV)

1 **Pursue love**, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

- **1st Pursue LOVE**

- Now, since love is the greatest, we must pursue it
- Stop RIGHT There – Meditate of that for a minute
 - Pursue LOVE
 - How Many...
 - Church Splits, Power Struggles, Conflict Could have been AVOIDED
 - If we would have Pursue LOVE
 - Marriages could have been SAVED
 - If we would have Pursued LOVE
 - Friendships would still be in Place
 - If we would have Pursued LOVE

The Practice Of Spiritual Gifts In The Church vs. 1b-25

- **First: Paul's Encouragement To Them v. 1**

- **1st Respond With Enthusiasm For Spiritual Gifts v. 1b**

1 Corinthians 14:1 (NKJV)

1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

- **Context**

- The Corinthian Christians' did desire for spiritual gifts.
- Too Much SO - They made a godly desire into an obsessive pursuit
- When the main pursuit for Christians should be love

- **Lesson**

- It's Good To...
 - Be enthusiastic about God's Giftings
 - To desire the Lord to gift you and use you
- Just DON'T forget the Proper ORDER
 - LOVE First
 - GIFTS Second
- **2nd Recognize The Importance Of Prophecy v. 1c**

1 Corinthians 14:1 (NKJV)

1 Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophecy.

- **Context**

- The church in Corinth was obsessed with the Sign Gifts
 - Healing, Tongues, Miracles, etc...
- Paul say –
 - Let me re-focus you!!!
 - Prophecy should be more important than Tongues

- **That you may - Prophecy:**

- What does it mean for someone to Prophecy?
- 1st Many Cessationist
 - Regard prophecy as simply “inspired preaching,” and not “inspired” in a direct way

- 2nd Continuationist
 - Prophecy is speaking forth the Word of God!
 - Primarily in N.T.
 - It's Forth Telling vs. Foretelling - Predictive
 - Forth - Telling
 - The Lord gives you His Word to share with others
 - Foretelling - Predictive
 - It may or may not contain a predictive element
 - Forth - Telling – More detail
 - The purpose of prophecy is
 - Edification
 - Exhortation
 - Comfort
 - So It builds up, stirs up, cheers up!
 - It Speaks INTO your life –
 - Illustrated
 - Ever think a Pastor knows what's going on in your life?
 - Like How did he know that –
 - He didn't – God Does

- God uses the Speaker to speak right to your HEARTY
- My Heart as your pastor
 - Is to have this gift to be able to speak into your heart and souls
 - *Stanley Voke; "When you preach don't aim at men's head but at their hearts"*
 - Some Times when this takes place God Convicts
 - How will we respond
- Foretelling - Predictive
 - A Predictive Part to it
 - Example: Chuck Smith
 - That he would be a pastor to pastors
 - Many churches would come from his ministry

• **Second: Paul's Explanation Of Tongues & Prophecy vs. 2-25**

- **1st His Instruction Concerning These Gifts vs. 2-5**
 - **1st Tongues Is Directed Towards God v. 2**

1 Corinthians 14:2 (NKJV)

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.

- Brief Definition on Tongues –

- The ability to pray in a language understood only by God
- Or by one who is given the gift of interpretation at that time.
- Is a personal language of prayer given by God, Whereby the believer can communicate with God beyond the limits of knowledge and understanding (1 Corinthians 14:14-15)
- The ability to pray in an unknown tongue is not a gift given to every believer (1 Corinthians 12:20)

Romans 8:26 (NKJV)

26 Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

- Tongues role in the Church
 - They Have an Important place in the devotional life of the believer
 - But a small place in the corporate life of the church
 - (1 Corinthians 14:18-19)
 - Especially in “public” meetings (1 Corinthians 14:23)
 - When tongues are practiced in the corporate life of the church, It is to be carefully controlled, and never without an interpretation given by the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 14:27-28)
- **2nd Prophecy Is Designed To Minister To Others vs. 3-5**
 - Verse 3

1 Corinthians 14:3 (NKJV)

3 *But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.*

- Tongues are addressed to God
- Prophecy is addressed to men
- Keep in MIND Paul is NOT putting down Tongues
- He is elevating Prophecy
- It's ALL about Edification – UNDERSTANDING

• **Verse 4**

1 Corinthians 14:4 (NKJV)

4 *He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.*

- If no one understands the tongue – or language - that's spoken; then it only benefits the person who exercises the gift
- Whereas, prophecy is God's message to the Church
- Everyone gets blessed through prophecy

• **Verse 5 explains that prophecy is superior to tongues**

1 Corinthians 14:5 (NKJV)

5 *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 wish You ALL Spoke in Tongues
 - Doesn't Sound like Paul is against tongues or mocking them

- Paul says the guy who speaks in tongues gets blessed, but it doesn't benefit the hearers unless it's accompanied by the gift of interpretation
- But even more that you prophesied:
 - As good as the gift of tongues is, Paul sees prophecy as better for the church as a whole.
 - Why?
 - Because He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church.
 - And the focus here is that the church may receive edification more than the individual.
 - It's ALL about Others First – Edification
- **2nd The Importance Of Understanding vs. 6-19**

- **Verses 6-12**

1 Corinthians 14:6–12 (NKJV)

6 *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?*

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?*

8 *For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle?*

9 *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.*

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

11 *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.*

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.

- Paul uses 3 simple illustrations to make his point
 - The POINT
 - That there needs to be understanding if there is to be edifying spiritual ministry taking place
 - Illustrations
 - Musical Instruments
 - If the Musical instrument does not give a clear distinct sound nobody will recognize the music being played (what is that)
 - Shelly Starts a well known song on the Key Board vs. me
 - Trumpet Calls to Battle
 - If it's Not clear
 - Does it mean Charge or Retreat
 - Daily Conversation!
 - Many languages in world...
 - But if I can't understand who cares it is no use to me
- **Verses 13**

1 Corinthians 14:13 (NKJV)

13 Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.

- If the tongue doesn't get interpreted no one can benefit from what's been said
- And the purpose for any church gathering is the mutual benefit of all
- When you are in church and feel led to speak out in tongues, then your prayer ought to be that someone will interpret.
- If you are simply at home in your own devotional time with God, you don't necessarily need to pray for interpretation.

▪ **Verse 14**

1 Corinthians 14:14 (NKJV)

14 *For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.*

- The gift of tongues is the Spirit-given capacity to PRAISE God, or to PRAY to God, in a language not known
- Through the gift of tongues the Holy Spirit liberates them to praise God in a free and uninhibited manner

▪ **Verses 15-19**

1 Corinthians 14:15–19 (NKJV)

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.*

16 *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?*

17 *For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.*

18 *I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;*

19 *yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.*

- Paul is basically saying there's a time and place for both

- BUT When in the church
 - The Primary focus is Edification of others
 - It's a place for UNDERSTAND
 - Everything in ORDER
- **Note Verse 18**
 - I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all
- **3rd The Intent Of Tongues & Prophecy vs. 20-25**
- **NOTE - One of the most difficult passage in scripture**

- Verse 20

1 Corinthians 14:20 (NKJV)

20 Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.

- Speaking in tongues is often promoted as a sign of Spiritual Maturity
 - The Corinthians certainly thought themselves mature in their exercise of the gift
 - Paul said that their understanding of the gift was childish
- He encouraged them to hear his instruction and in understanding be mature
 - Spiritual gifts and common sense go together
 - Being spiritual is being sensitive to the setting
- **In Malice be Babes**

- They ONLY time were told to be immature
 - Is about SIN

- **Verses 21-25**

- **1st In the law it is written v. 21**

1 Corinthians 14:21 (NKJV)

21 *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 quotes from Isaiah 28:11-12
- In Isaiah 28, the prophet Isaiah announces judgment to the people of Israel.
- Israel did not Receive the Words of God from the Prophet who spoke Hebrew
- So now they will hear the voice of men with other tongues and other lips.
- The Assyrian invaders spoke a language the Israelites could not understand, and it was an example of judgment to the Israelites. "And yet, for all that, they will not hear Me" says the Lord.

- **2nd Attempting to Understand Verses 22-25**

1 Corinthians 14:22–25 (NKJV)

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.*

23 *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?*

24 *But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all.*

25 *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.*

- So Let me get this Straight Paul
 - Verse 22 –
 - Tongues are a sign to the UNBELIEVER
 - Prophecy is For the Believer
 - Verse 23 –
 - Tongues Confuse UNBELIEVERS
 - They are OUT of their Minds
 - Verse 24
 - But Prophecy is For the UNBELIEVER
- Okay so what is IT?
 - All I could think about was that line in Princes Bride
 - The Dread Pirate Roberts; “You have a Dizzying Intellect”
- **3rd Possible Explanation**
 - Very Hard Passage
 - Again - The straight reading of the text presents one of the most difficult passages in the New Testament.
 - There seems to be a contradiction between
 - (1 Corinthians 14:22 and 1 Corinthians 14:23-25)
 - Possible Explanation
 - 1st Tongues are indeed a sign to unbelievers

- BUT not a positive sign.
 - They are a sign of judgment, as the unknown tongues of the Assyrians were in Isaiah's day.
 - In this way, tongues indeed are a sign to unbelievers, but it is a sign that condemns them as they regard tongues speakers as being out of their minds.
- 2nd An error made by someone who copied the verse very early in the history of the Bible
- Respected translator J.B. Phillips thinks an ancient scribe mixed up Paul's word order in 1 Corinthians 14:22, and the verse should read:
 - *That means that tongues are a sign of God's power, not for those who are unbelievers but to those who already believe. Preaching the word of God, on the other hand, is a sign of God's power to those who do not believe rather than to believers.*
 - It is important to note that Phillips does not believe the Holy Spirit made an error, but he believes that a copier of what the Holy Spirit inspired made the error.
 - *Guzik; "A good principle of understanding the Bible is always to interpret what is hard to understand in light of what is easier to understand. 1 Corinthians 14:23-25 seems easier to understand, because it is easy to see how an unbeliever hearing Christians speaking in tongues might say that you are out of your mind. It is also easy to see that prophecy could convict the heart of an unbeliever, causing them to repent, and to worship*

God and report that God is truly among you. So, while we may not exactly understand what Paul means by tongues are a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers, we know he does not mean tongues “minister” to or edify unbelievers. Tongues do nothing to bring the unbeliever closer to God; they may instead turn him off.”

▪ **4th And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed: v25**

1 Corinthians 14:25 (NKJV)

25 *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.*

- Many come to a unique conviction from the Holy Spirit in this manner.

The Principles Paul Gives To Them vs. 26-40

• **First: The Issue At Hand v. 26**

1 Corinthians 14:26 (NKJV)

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.*

- **Let us remind ourselves why Paul is writing all of this**
 - Their meetings were in disarray and disorder
 - They were not edifying anyone!

• **Second: The Instructions Paul Gives Then vs. 27-33**

○ **Verses 27-28 – Tongues**

1 Corinthians 14:27–28 (NKJV)

27 *If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret.*
28 *But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.*

- Paul is Bring Order to their service
 - Each in turn
 - Limits
 - If tongues are allowed in the gathering, there should be no more than three people speaking out in tongues, and taking turns.
 - Interpretation
 - Speaking out in tongues in a public service should only be done if someone has the gift of interpretation.

- **Verse 29**

1 Corinthians 14:29 (NKJV)

29 Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge.

- Test ALL THINGS
 - The gift of prophecy, as with all the spiritual gifts, is subject to human error
 - This is why all prophecies should be judged
 - People have made major life decisions on what they thought was a word of prophecy
 - But had they been wise to put it to a test it would've proved to be false

- **Verses 30-33**

1 Corinthians 14:30–33 (NKJV)

30 But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent.

31 For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

32 *And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.*

33 *For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.*

- Here, Paul makes it plain that no one is “overwhelmed” by prophecy.
 - They are still in control of the exercise of the gift, even when the Holy Spirit is moving upon them.
 - The Holy Spirit does not take control like a demon does in demonic possession!
- That ALL MY LEARN
 - Again, the goal Edification
 - Understanding & Order

• **Third: The Involvement Of Women vs. 34-35**

1 Corinthians 14:34–35 (NKJV)

34 *Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says.*

35 *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.*

- **1st Is Paul Teaching that Women Cant Talk in Church? NO!**

1 Corinthians 11:5 (NKJV)

5 *But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one and the same as if her head were shaved.*

- He did not say that it was wrong for them to pray or to prophesy...period
- What was wrong is that they weren't wearing their veils and in Corinth

- It was an important thing for a woman to wear a veil, so she be thought to be one of the many prostitutes from the temple of Aphrodite

○ **2nd So What is Paul say?**

- So what is he saying here?
- The early church, like the Jewish synagogue, had the men sit on one side up against the wall, the women sit on the other side, up against the wall
- There was the space in the middle where the teacher would stand and would instruct
- Now, evidently as the instruction was being given, sometimes the wife would call across the room to her husband
- She might say
 - What's he talking about?
 - What's does he mean by that?
 - Or how this one – You need to start doing what the pastor is saying
- Paul said - Wait until you get home
 - Stop interrupting the Service

• **Fourth: The Impact Of His Teaching vs. 36-40**

1 Corinthians 14:36–38 (NKJV)

36 *Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached?*

37 *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.*

38 *But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.*

○ **1st Or did the word of God come originally from you?**

- The Corinthian Christians were Contentious

- They did NOT want to hear Paul – so they UNDERMINED Paul
- Paul Challenged It...
 - The word of God did not come from the Corinthian Christians; it came to them from Paul.
 - They need to sit and listen and be teachable instead of contending with the apostle Paul.
- **2nd If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual:**
 - Some Christians think that if they are really spiritual
 - They don't have to obey God's word on these matters.
 - In their own minds, they are so spiritual that the rules don't apply to them.
 - But if we are really spiritual, we will stick to the Word of God, and not go "beyond" it.
- **3rd But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant:**
 - Paul pretty much describes how he regards those Corinthian Christians who must contend with him on these matters
 - They are ignorant.
- 4th Finally, Paul sums up in the last two verses

1 Corinthians 14:39–40 (NKJV)

39 *Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues.*

40 *Let all things be done decently and in order.*

- Ss

Closing

- May We ALL GROW in Maturity – In The Gifts God has Given