

## Proverbs 16:23-24 New International Version (NIV)

- <sup>23</sup> The hearts of the wise make their mouths prudent,  
and their lips promote instruction.
- <sup>24</sup> Gracious words are a honeycomb,  
sweet to the soul and healing to the bones.

## 1 Corinthians 14 New International Version (NIV)

### Intelligibility in Worship

**14** Follow the way of love and eagerly desire gifts of the Spirit, especially prophecy. <sup>2</sup> For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to people but to God. Indeed, no one understands them; they utter mysteries by the Spirit. <sup>3</sup> But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. <sup>4</sup> Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. <sup>5</sup> I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified.

<sup>6</sup> Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? <sup>7</sup> Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the pipe or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? <sup>8</sup> Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? <sup>9</sup> So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just be speaking into the air. <sup>10</sup> Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. <sup>11</sup> If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me. <sup>12</sup> So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.

<sup>13</sup> For this reason the one who speaks in a tongue should pray that they may interpret what they say.

<sup>14</sup> For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. <sup>15</sup> So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my understanding. <sup>16</sup> Otherwise when you are praising God in the Spirit, how can someone else, who is now put in the position of an inquirer, say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since they do not know what you are saying? <sup>17</sup> You are giving thanks well enough, but no one else is edified.

<sup>18</sup> I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. <sup>19</sup> But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.

<sup>20</sup> Brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children. In regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults. <sup>21</sup> In the Law it is written:

“With other tongues  
 and through the lips of foreigners  
 I will speak to this people,  
 but even then they will not listen to me,  
 says the Lord.”

<sup>22</sup> Tongues, then, are a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers; prophecy, however, is not for unbelievers but for believers. <sup>23</sup> So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind? <sup>24</sup> But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all, <sup>25</sup> as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, “God is really among you!”

## Good Order in Worship

<sup>26</sup> What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up. <sup>27</sup> If anyone speaks in a tongue, two—or at the most three—should speak, one at a time, and someone must interpret. <sup>28</sup> If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God.

<sup>29</sup> Two or three prophets should speak, and the others should weigh carefully what is said. <sup>30</sup> And if a revelation comes to someone who is sitting down, the first speaker should stop. <sup>31</sup> For you can all prophesy in turn so that everyone may be instructed and encouraged. <sup>32</sup> The spirits of prophets are subject to the control of prophets. <sup>33</sup> For God is not a God of disorder but of peace—as in all the congregations of the Lord’s people.

<sup>34</sup> Women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says. <sup>35</sup> If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

<sup>36</sup> Or did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? <sup>37</sup> If anyone thinks they are a prophet or otherwise gifted by the Spirit, let them acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord’s command. <sup>38</sup> But if anyone ignores this, they will themselves be ignored.

<sup>39</sup> Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

<sup>40</sup> But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

## Gifts that Build Up (Proverbs 16:23-24 & 1 Corinthians 14:1-40)

14-June-20

It would be **great** to have your **Bibles open** at **1 Cor chapter 14**

Let me ask God to give us understanding of His Word; **Let's pray...**

### Context

[PowerPoint 1-Context]

The **reason** the Apostle Paul is writing this **letter** in the first place is because of **conflict** and **disunity** in the church at **Corinth**

The area he is **addressing** in this **chapter (14)** is the **use of spiritual gifts** - a subject he began in **chapter 12**.

Just a **reminder** of those **spiritual gifts** from **chapter 12**: *Prophecy, teaching, miracles, healing, helping, guiding and speaking different kinds of tongues.*

Last week - Paul - took a slight detour in **chapter 13** - to say - when it comes to **using** those **spiritual gifts** - we need to use them with love.

Now he returns to the subject of using spiritual gifts here in chapter 14

### Intro/Speaking in Tongues & Prophecy

Because some **people** in **Corinth** are **getting all worked up** about **2 spiritual gifts** in particular - namely - Speaking in Tongues and Prophecy

Paul's does a **comparison** of these 2 spiritual gifts in this chapter

So, before we **go any further**, we'd better **define** what these 2 **spiritual gifts** are:

## [PowerPoint 2-Tongues]

### First - Speaking in Tongues

- 1<sup>st</sup> spiritual gift is - Speaking in Tongues: This is the spiritual gift of speaking in a language a person does not know or hasn't learnt - it could be an earthly or heavenly language.
- But one or more people listening to the language spoken should have the spiritual gift to interpret it and share it with everyone else.
- Whatever is spoken would generally bring some sort of revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction to the listeners (1 Cor 14:6)
- If the language spoken is not understood by anyone - then it's best not to speak to others and speak privately to God (1 Cor 14:27-28)
- Language must be spoken in an orderly manner as prescribed in chapter 14 here.
- The Apostles - in Acts 2 - on the Day of Pentecost - spoke in different tongues/languages as enabled by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4) and the people listening from many different nations, heard the Apostles in their own language (Acts 2:6). The effect of these different languages - was a sign for many unbelievers - 3000 in fact - who accepted the Good News of Jesus - repented - and believed in Jesus (Acts 2:41)
- From this we can deduce that speaking in tongues can only be useful to the church/listeners - if it can be understood

## [PowerPoint 3-Prophecy]

### Second - Prophecy

- 2<sup>nd</sup> Spiritual Gift compared is Prophecy - this is speaking words originating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God,

- whether by *disapproving and rebuking the wicked*
- *or comforting the afflicted,*
- *or revealing hidden things;*
- *or explaining obscure or difficult passages of Scripture;*
- *and including foretelling future events.*
- **Some parts of preaching would fall into this definition too!**
- *If prophecy is spoken today, it would have to be 100% in agreement with what God has already said in the Bible - God does not lie or contradict Himself (Num 23:19; Heb 6:18; 2 Tim 2:13).*
- *Prophecy would also have to be tested to see if it is from God and that it is true (as in 1 John 4:1 - Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.) [See also 1 Thes 5:20-21]*

By comparing these 2 spiritual gifts

Paul will **come up with** some **general principles** we can **adopt** when it comes to using our spiritual gifts and when conducting worship services.

But let's see what Paul says in his comparison of these 2 spiritual gifts first...

### Comparing the Gifts of Speaking in Tongues and Prophecy (vv1-25)

[PowerPoint 4-Comparing]

Comparing the spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues and prophecy.

Paul says:

- Speaking in **tongues** speaks to **God** not to **people** - because the **person speaking in tongues** is **speaking mysteries inspired by** the **Holy Spirit** - which no one else can understand (unless interpreted) - (that's in v2)
- Whereas speaking prophecies speaks to **people** (v3)
- Paul argues - speaking in **tongues** merely **edifies** (builds up) the **person who is speaking** - whereas speaking in **prophecy** **edifies** (builds up) the **church** (v4)
- **Prophecy** is better than **tongues** - Paul says - unless the **tongues** can be **interpreted** - so that church is **edified** (v5)
- **Speaking in tongues** won't be **much good** unless it brings some **revelation, knowledge, prophecy** or **word of instruction** to the listeners (v6).
- Otherwise - it will **just be like playing a musical instrument** without any **clear and distinctive notes** (v7) or a bit like playing a **trumpet** for **soldiers** to follow - without making it **clear** if to the **soldiers** whether they are **meant to advance** into battle or **retreat** (v8)
- Or it's like being in a **room** full of **people** speaking a **foreign language** and you don't have a **clue** what they're are **saying** (v11) - Paul says - you **might as well speak** into the **air** - **if no one can understand it** (v9) -
- So, Paul argues, the **person speaking tongues** should **pray** that they can be **interpreted** (v13) - and the **interpretation** needs to **make sense**
- By way of illustration - Don **Carson** quotes two **examples** of people misusing speaking in tongues in churches - & where the **interpretation** was **wrong**:
  - **1st example** was someone **cheekily reciting** John chapter 1 in **Greek** during a church **service** - and another **person** then **interpreted** this

passage entirely **differently to** what was said in **Greek- not realizing** the speaker was reciting the original Greek text of New Testament (NT) - and so **exposing the interpreter as a fraud.**

- **2nd example - a person spoke in tongues during a service - and 2 people gave 2 completely different interpretations - this is not possible - the tongue spoken can only mean one thing**
- Paul also says - **as someone prays in tongues - it must bear fruit by their mind being **engaged** (v14) - and having some **understanding** of what they are doing (v15)**
- **Otherwise as they praise God with these tongues - how can the people listening can say Amen (v16)**
- Paul says - **even though he can speak in tongues more than anyone else at Corinth (v18) - in the church (v19) he'd rather speak 5 words that are understandable - than 10,000 words in a tongue that no-one can understand**
- Paul makes the comparison that in Old Testament (OT) times - God used foreign tongues as a judgment on Israel - He quotes from Isaiah 28:11-12 (v21) - where the disobedient Israelites were not following Isaiah's instructions from God - so God said he would send foreign tongues in the form of the invading Assyrians as a sign of judgment on their disobedience and as a sign they need to repent - unfortunately they didn't repent and were exiled.
- **Paul's point is v22 - tongues are meant to be a sign for unbelievers whereas prophecy is meant for believers**
- How does this work?

- Well it's like Paul's saying to the Corinthians: "***If you insist on speaking in tongues in your church meetings, instead of in your own personal devotional life, the only good that comes from that use of tongues is that it's a sign of judgment to unbelievers. The unbeliever will either see that they have no idea what's going on in the meeting and will either want to learn more - or as Paul says in v23 - they'll think the tongue speakers are crazy and out of their mind. When they hear someone speaking in tongues, it will simply show they don't understand the things of God and are headed towards judgment. But how much better Paul says, if the Corinthians were to emphasize prophecy instead of tongues, then both the believer and unbeliever could be blessed together!***"

### **General Principles in using our Spiritual Gifts (vv1-25)**

So, from this comparison of speaking in tongues and prophecy - we can come up with some **general principles** about using our spiritual gifts.

[PowerPoint 5-Edify]

#### **Principle 1 - Edify (Build Up)**

1<sup>st</sup> principle is - **spiritual gifts** are meant to **edify the church** (mentioned in v4, v5, and v12)

**Edify in Greek** literally means build or build up

- It's a metaphor for promoting Christian wisdom, affection, grace, virtue, holiness and blessedness
- And **edify** always has the **idea** (as in English) of improving someone - **spiritually, morally and intellectually**

- With the **idea of edify** in mind we see in v3 the **use of our spiritual gifts should** - **strengthen, encourage and comfort** others
- Note **strengthen, encourage and comfort** are all **positive things** - so they fit the idea of improving the members of the church family
- Some scenarios for us to consider:
  - How would you **build up** (strengthen, encourage & comfort) a **new person** arriving at **church**? *Be welcoming, kind, introduce them to others, sit with them at morning tea.*
  - How would you build up (strengthen, encourage & comfort) a **new Christian**? *Read Bible with them, pray, disciple them, mentor them.*
  - How would you **build up someone** who is having surgery or recovering from surgery? *Phone call, visit, pray, hospitality and meals.*
  - How would you **build up someone** who has **lost a loved one**? *Listen to them, pray, visit - spend time with them*
  - *As our OT passage from Proverbs 16:24 says: **Gracious words are a honeycomb, sweet to the soul and healing to the bones***
  - How would you **build up someone** who has **lost a job, or possessions** (say in a fire, flood) - *pray, practical help, financial help?*

[PowerPoint 6-Understandable]

Principle 2 - Understandable

**2<sup>nd</sup> principle** is - whatever **spiritual gift** we use - should be **understandable** to the **other person** (v5 & v8)

- For **example** - if I went into the **schools** and **taught Scripture** - and **spoke** in **French** or **Gaelic** - how would that help any of the children?
- Or if when I **preach** - I **used** a lot of **jargon** or **big words** without **explaining** what the words **mean** - how would that **help people understand?**
- Or if I was to **preach** by saying: *bereshyt bara eloyhim et ha'shamyin ve et ha'aretz* - *how would that help any one unless they knew Hebrew*
- Or if **someone** does the **Children's talk** - the **basic requirement** is it's at a **level the children can follow?** Maybe use **props** or **visual aids** - to help the **children** understand the talk better?
- Or what if someone plays a **musical instrument** but **they're out of tune** - how does that benefit anyone?
- Of what if someone **prays** - and the **people listening can't understand** the prayer?
- Or say - I was **helping someone** with their **computer** or **phone** - I need to **explain things in simple terms** so they can do it for **themselves** next time.

[PowerPoint 7-Fruit]

Principle 3 - Bear Fruit

**The 3<sup>rd</sup> principle** of using our spiritual gifts is - it must **bear fruit** (v14)

- Our spiritual gifts should help unbelievers to be **convicted** of their sin (v25) and **repent & believe** in Jesus and worship God (v24-25)

- The **use** of all of our **spiritual** gifts has the **goal** of **showing** the **love** of **Jesus** - so **people** will want to **follow** **Jesus** too.
- For example, we need to **use** our **spiritual** gifts to **befriend** an **unbeliever**
  - in a **friendly**, **gentle**, **non-threatening** way - so they feel comfortable?
- We need to make sure our **behaviour** is consistent with being a **Christian**?
- Can we **explain** the **Gospel** **simply** to an unbeliever?
- Do we have a brief **summary** of how we **became** a **Christian** - that we can **share** with **them**?

### General Principles for our Worship (vv26-40)

So far, we've seen that Paul's comparison of **speaking** in **tongues** and **prophecy** - leads to **general** **principles** in how we **use** our **spiritual** gifts -

Now in verses **26** to **40** we have **general** **principles** for our **worship** too

[PowerPoint 8-Orderly]

#### Principle 1 - Orderly

**1<sup>st</sup>** **principle** is - our **worship** should be **orderly** - see v26 -

- It seems like the **people** in **Corinth** were **coming** to **worship** - where **each** person had a **hymn** or **word** of **instruction** or a **revelation** or a **tongue** - or an **interpretation**
- **Imagine** what our **Sunday** **service** would be like if:
  - o We had **people** **saying** - I've got the hymn "**Amazing Grace**" - I've got the hymn "**What a friend we have in Jesus**" and another I've got "**Onward Christian soldiers**" and so on

- Or **each person came** saying - I have John 3:16, I have Phil 4:13; I have Jer 29:11 I have Rom 8:28 I have Matt 6:33
  - And what if - **people all speaking at the same time and in different languages**
  - It would be a **shambles** wouldn't it?
- Our **worship service** should be **simple enough** for a **stranger off the street** to come in and have a good idea of what's going on.
- I was **reminded** of when I was **6 years old** and going to a **RC mass** in **Yorkshire** - where the entire service - back then - was in **Latin** - I had no idea what was going on?
- Congregations are meant to be **orderly** and **peaceful** - not **dysfunctional**, **not disorderly**, **not disruptive** and **with no division**.
  - Paul also **briefly mentions** in v34 - that **women** should **remain silent** - not speaking - but **submitting** to the **male leadership** of the church - and if they have **questions** (v35) they should **ask** their **husbands** at home.
  - Paul's not saying **women** can't take part in the **worship service** - as he's already said they can in **chapter 11:1-16** - but rather that they don't disrupt the **speaking** of **prophecy** - with **chatter** or **questions**; which they can **ask** their **husbands**, at home.
  - Again, this boils down to **good order** - if **women** (or men for that matter) were **calling out** throughout the service, it would be **frustrating** and not edifying. This sometimes happens at **Café Church**, where I invite questions. However, if the **questions** and **comments** are **too frequent** or irrelevant or unnecessary or even wrong- it **does get frustrating** for everyone.

## [PowerPoint 9-Build up]

### Principle 2 - For Building Up

**2<sup>nd</sup> principle is - worship is for building up the church - see end of v26**

- So, Paul **sets limits on speaking in tongues** (vv27-28)
  - 2 or 3 tongue speakers
  - One at a time
  - Must be **interpreted** - otherwise its no use to the church
  - Otherwise keep quiet and just speak to God privately
- And Paul also **sets limits on prophecy speaking** (vv29-30)
  - 2 or 3 prophets
  - They must be **weighed** carefully - which literally means to judge or discern if the words are valid. This can be done by **checking** what has been said - **lines up with God's Word**
  - The words spoken must be words of **instruction** (v31)
  - And the words must be **encouraging** (v31)
  - **Remember building up always** has the idea of **improving someone spiritually, morally and intellectually**

## [PowerPoint 10-Word]

### Principle 3 - Carries the authority of God's Word

**3<sup>rd</sup> principle is - worship carries the authority of God's Word**

- Paul insists that the **instructions he's giving about using spiritual gifts and worship** in this chapter - **carry the authority of God's Word**
- See V36 - Paul argues - the **Word of God didn't come from the Corinthians themselves** - it **came** to them **through Paul**

- V37 - Paul's warning the **Corinthians** - that they can't stand up in the **next worship service** and say - 'I'm a prophet and I'm led by the Spirit - to say Paul is wrong' - because Paul's saying anyone who is **genuinely spiritual will agree with** him - because he's speaking **God's Commands!**
- So v38 - if they **disagree with** Paul and ignore him - they're **being ignorant** - and **God won't use them or their spiritual gifts.**
- From this we can **conclude** that the **worship service** - must have **God's Word** as its supreme standard and **God's Word must be front and centre in every worship service**
- Remember, what Paul says to Timothy about God's Word - in 2 Tim 3:15-17
- Holy Scriptures, which are able to **make you wise for salvation** through faith in Christ Jesus. <sup>16</sup> All Scripture is **God-breathed** and is useful for **teaching, rebuking, correcting** and **training** in **righteousness**, <sup>17</sup> so that the servant of God<sup>[a]</sup> may be thoroughly **equipped** for every **good work.**

### Conclusion

Paul's conclusion is - v39-40 - whether its **prophecy or speaking in tongues or any other spiritual gift for that matter** - **everything is done in a fitting and orderly way?**

Why?

[PowerPoint 11-Conclusion]

Because the bottom line is - **God is not a God of disorder but of peace** (v33)

And part of His **Order** of things is for spiritual gifts and worship to **build up**

**His Church.**

Let's pray...