

Study on the Holy Spirit
Study 18
Tongues/Interpretation of Tongues (2)

This week we will look at 1 Cor 14, but before we do let's have a little recap of last weeks study.

- **1 Cor 12:10** *to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues.*
- **1 Cor 12:30** *Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?*

As we saw last week, that not all have the gift of teaching, or healing, or giving, just as all do not have the gift of tongues. If all were to have the gift of tongues it would have been mentioned separately and as a special gift given to all believers and not together with the list of other gifts.

Even Paul says:

- **1 Cor 14:5** *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.*

If he said he wished all spoke in tongues, which means that all do NOT speak in tongues.

- **Mark 16:17** **And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues.**

Speaking in a new tongue is not talking about the gift of tongues, but more of speaking praises to God as opposed to when we were in the world and cursed God.

- **Romans 8:26-27** *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. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.*

One form of speaking in tongues is a groaning or sighing.

Let's start this week looking at 1 Cor. Chapter 14

- **1 Cor 14:1-5** *Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. 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. But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men. He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. 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.

There have been so many false teachings or misunderstandings on tongues, some say you have to speak in tongues, or that speaking in tongues is God talking to you or the church. Why then does Paul say here that prophesy is better than tongues?

If you had to speak in tongues, would not Paul say that it is the most important gift? That it was evidence of your belief in Jesus Christ?

Just like Baptism. Some say you have to be baptized to be saved.

Once again Paul says;

- **1 Cor 1:14-17** *I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect.*

If baptism were required for salvation, then Paul would have baptized as many as he could. Paul was not saying that baptism was not important, just like he's not saying that tongues is not important. Rather that you should focus on the more important things, like believing in Jesus and having a personal relationship with Him which is what gets you into heaven.

Prophecy is to edify the church as opposed to tongues, which only builds up yourself.

We know that we don't have all the other gifts, so why do we put so much into the gift of tongues? Why is there even division amongst believers because of the gift of tongues? I believe that Satan has taken what God has given, and pervert the mind of man to the point of causing division in the church.

Like the gift of healing. God intended for the gift to be used for others, but some use it for their own personal gain, to feed off of the sheep by charging them (in a sense by so called offerings) for God's healing. These things that are not from God turn off people. What God has given for the good of His people, man has tried to use for his own benefit. You can tell if a ministry is from God or not. How? Who is the focus turned to, man or God?

Much is it costing you?

When it's all over, who is glorified or who are you talking about? The man who healed, or God who healed?

Even when you finish the study each week, or leave church on Sunday. Are you remembering the pastor or me or are you thinking of Jesus?

I pray its Jesus!

Back to **I Cor. 14**, in verse 2 speaking in tongues is man speaking to God, not God speaking to man. So when you hear an interpretation of tongues, don't expect a "thus saith the Lord".

We see that tongues are for the believer, whereas prophecy is for the church. Even in verse 5 in the NLT says

- **1 Cor 14:5 (NLT)** *I wish you all had the gift of speaking in tongues, but even more I wish you were all able to prophesy. For prophecy is a greater and more useful gift than speaking in tongues, unless someone interprets what you are saying so that the whole church can get some good out of it.* (underlined for emphasis)

As we studied the gift of prophecy, we saw that prophecy was God speaking to the church or to an individual. It's God communicating to the believers.

I like the way the NLT puts verse 4

- **1 Cor 14:4 (NLT)** *A person who speaks in tongues is strengthened personally in the Lord, but one who speaks a word of prophecy strengthens the entire church.*

So don't seek the gift of tongues, but rather seek the gift of prophecy so that you may build up or edify the church instead of yourself.

- **1 Cor 14:12 (NLT)** *Since you are so eager to have spiritual gifts, ask God for those that will be of real help to the whole church.*

I have told you that I have the gift of tongues, and it is a very special time between the Lord and me. So I'm not saying not to desire to worship the Lord with the Gift of tongues, as Paul says, "*I wish you all had the gift of speaking in tongues*" why, so you to will glorify the Father from your hearts. So desire to have the gift to glorify the Lord, but also desire to have the gifts that will edify the church.

- **1 Cor 14:6-12** *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? 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? For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle? 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. 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. Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.*

Verse 6 reads like this in the NLT

- **1 Cor 14:6 (NLT)** *Dear brothers and sisters, if I should come to you talking in an unknown language, how would that help you? But if I bring you some revelation or some special knowledge or some prophecy or some teaching--that is what will help you.*

Some of you may have the gift of tongues or have heard someone speaking in tongues. When you speak it or hear it, do you understand it?

It would be like if I were to teach you in Chinese, you wouldn't get one thing out of it unless you spoke Chinese. You wouldn't learn anything; you would be fed with something you can't chew on or even swallow. It would be useless.

The example Paul gives is that of a musical instrument. Being a musician I understand what he's talking about. When we practice or play, I can hear any bad notes that are played or that I play, it kind of throws you off, or if it's really bad, it's like fingernails on a chalk board.

Either one is very distracting.

It would be hard for you to sing if I played in a different key than what you were singing in, or played a different song than what you were singing.

That's what Paul is talking about here, God is a God of order,

- **1 Cor 14:40** *Let all things be done decently and in order.*

And when God is speaking, don't interrupt Him with your gift of tongues.

When I say God is speaking, I mean that when the pastor or a teacher is teaching, to interrupt would be talking over God, or even saying that the Holy Spirit is not using that person.

- **1 Cor 14:13-20** *Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. 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. 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. I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; 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. Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.*

Verse 17 says **"For you indeed give thanks well"** I am not saying that tongues is bad, in fact the scripture even says when you pray in tongues that you are doing well.

What the scripture is also saying is, do it in the privacy of your own prayer closet, and if you desire to speak it in the church or with believers, pray for the interpretation so that others will be blessed to.

Paul knew this very well, notice he says that he speaks in tongues more than any other, but when in the church he knows that speaking in a known language edifies or builds up others more than speaking in tongues.

Even five words would be more useful than ten thousand words heard in an unknown language.

- **1 Cor 14:21-28** *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. 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. 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? 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. 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. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God.*

Verse 21- 28 was hard for me to understand. It appears to be contradicting itself, until the Holy Spirit gave me the understanding.

Tongues is a sign for unbelievers because they have hardened hearts refusing the things of God, even when we praise God in a known language, they mock us and make fun of us.

But then when a prophecy is told, and they see a change in people's lives, God opens the ears of their understanding and they are convicted and repent of their ways.

Just like we did when we heard the Lord speaking to us.

Have you ever heard a teaching and sense that the teacher or pastor knew everything about you? You think, "someone must have told him everything" before you went to that Bible Study or Church. No, it is the gift of prophecy; God is speaking through the teacher or pastor to you.

What about in this study? Have you felt like I am speaking right to you personally, like we were speaking one on one? Right now I am. I'm here to tell you that there's a better way of life for you than what you have been living as a non-Christian. And that way is Jesus. You may have heard it a thousand times already, well make this a thousand and one.

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the Life, NO MAN comes to the Father except through Jesus. Will you come to Him now? Just pray to Jesus asking for His salvation.

We will skip verses 29-38, because they don't speak of the gift of tongues.

- **1 Cor 14:39-40** *Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.*

So as we end this week, desire the things that will edify or build up the church, and go ahead and speak in tongues if you have the gift. But have the gift of interpretation or do it in your prayer closet in secret.

- **1 Cor 14:40 (NLT)** *But be sure that everything is done properly and in order.*

Wait your turn, speak what the Lord has you to speak, not from your head but from your heart, not wanting to be noticed, but to minister to others.

Take our eyes off ourselves and put them on others,

- **Eph 5:19-20 (NLT)** *Then you will sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, making music to the Lord in your hearts. And you will always give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Speak to others the goodness of the Lord, and praise the Lord together. We so often talk about ourselves, let's speak in English to one another, Glorifying GOD!