

## Pursuing Love in the Worship of the Church – Part 2

1 Corinthians 14; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 1-21-2024

### Intro

- We are to passionately pursue the ‘agape’ love that is commanded in the Scriptures: To lay down our lives to please God and do good to others according to God’s Word. (1 John 3:13-22)
- Love for God that causes us to love like God loves is to rule all our other loves (family, friends, romantic love, etc). Our problem is not that we love people too much but that we love God too little.
- Love for God is to be pleased with God (as the gracious and good God who promises to meet all our needs and desires through His Son, Jesus) and to live to please God (in obedience to His commands in Scripture). (Matthew 6:9-10)
- The pursuit of this love is to govern the worship of the Church and Paul tells us what this looks like in 1 Corinthians 14 (with commands regarding what to do or what not to do in corporate worship).

### 1. Love seeks to edify. (1-5)

- Love for God is to rule love for (spiritual) gifts!
- Pursuing love does not mean *not* valuing and exercising spiritual gifts.
- But some gifts are more important than others in the worship of the Church.
- Paul contrasts the gift of tongues (which the Corinthians elevated to the most important position) and the gift of prophecy.
- The gift of tongues was a way of men speaking to God and a means of personal edification. Speaking in tongues without interpretation edifies the individual (see vv. 4,5,28). Speaking in tongues with interpretation edifies the church.
- The gift of prophesy was a way of speaking to men for God and a means of edifying others/the Church. Prophecy is meant to edify (build up in love; proclaim truth in the pursuit of love), exhort (encourage our hope in God) and console (encourage us to rest in Jesus). “[The gift of prophecy is] communicating revelation from God in a spontaneous utterance.” – Tom Schreiner
- The gift of tongues in the New Testament appears to be both a means of witness (Acts 2 – foreign languages) and a means of worship (1 Corinthians 14 – ecstatic speech).
- Paul indicates that there is a way of exercising the gift of tongues that makes it a private affair that does nothing for the church (which is what the spiritual gifts are actually for – the building up of others). The exercise of spiritual gifts is ‘greater’ when it is not a private affair.
- Paul doesn’t say that tongues are of no value (see vv. 5, 18) but that prophesy is more important.

“edification” or “edify” (3, 4, 5) = build up (ESV – ‘upbuilding’ or ‘builds up’) (Romans 15:2; Ephesians 4:29; Acts 20:32; Ephesians 4:15-16; Jude 1:20-21)

There are a number of different positions one could take on gifts like tongues and prophecy in this chapter:

- Cessationist*: the extraordinary gifts like tongues and prophecy and the ability to heal others have ceased.
- Non-Cessationist*: the extraordinary gifts like tongues and prophecy and the ability to heal others have *not* ceased.
- Open but Cautious*: this is a non-cessationist position that is careful to be discerning and does not affirm everything that claims to be from the Spirit but does not want to ‘quench the Spirit’ either.
- Closed and Resistant*: this is a cessationist position that rejects the idea of being ‘open but cautious’ and takes a more dogmatic stand against anything that claims to be from the Spirit in these areas.
- Situationalist*: this is a position that believes that the NT form of tongues and prophecy and the ability to heal are not normally given to believers today but is open to the possibility that God might do unique things in certain situations and with certain individuals that are contrary to what all believers should expect.
- Modified Giftings*: this is a position that believes that the Spirit still gives the gifts of prophecy and tongues (and maybe other gifts) but in a form that is different from what we see in the New Testament.

## **2. Love that edifies is clear. (6-19)**

- Paul uses some illustrations to make the point that understanding is crucial for speech to be beneficial. (6)
- The Preaching Illustration (6)
- The Music Illustration (7)
- The Military Illustration (8)
- The Barbarian Illustration (9-12)
- Language (literally, voices) is meant to be understood. (10-11)
- Edification of others requires clarity and understanding of speech. (12)
- Interestingly enough, it appears that interpretation and understanding is necessary for edification of others in the Church worship but that the one speaking in tongues may be individually edified whether he understands what he is saying or not.
- Paul spoke in tongues but recognized the greater importance of understanding and communicating truth in the worship service. (18-19)
- Understanding (engagement of the mind) is vital! (Romans 10:13-15; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:20-24)

### **Application:**

- Are you consciously and actively seeking to grow/be built up in loving God and others?
- Are you committed to the renewing of your mind?
- Do you evaluate all communication that comes to you (whether inside of you or outside of you) in light of the Scriptures and wisdom?