

The Gift of Tongues Contrasted with Prophecy

1 Corinthians 14: 01–25

1 *Gifts are to be coveted*
— *especially prophecy*

2 *The difference between tongues and prophecy*

a. Tongues are addressed to God;
prophecy is addressed to men

b. Tongues edify self;
prophecy edifies the church

c. Tongues are commendable;
but prophecy is more commendable

3 *The problem with tongues*

a. Tongues do not communicate
in the church
— apart from some other gift

1) Paul,
if he were to visit the church,
would not speak with tongues

2) Musical instruments:
Communicate
or else the music is unknown

3) A military trumpet:
Communicates
or else an army is unprepared

4) Your own speech:
Communicates
or else it is meaningless

1 Follow the way of love
and eagerly desire spiritual gifts,
especially the gift of prophecy.

2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue
does not speak to men but to God.
Indeed, no one understands him;
he utters mysteries with his spirit.

3 But everyone who prophesies speaks to men
for their strengthening,
encouragement and comfort.

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

5 I would like every one of you to speak in tongues,
but I would rather have you prophesy.
He who prophesies is greater
than one who speaks in tongues,
unless he interprets,
so that the church may be edified.

6 Now, brothers,
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?

7 Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds,
such as the flute or harp,
how will anyone know what tune is being played
unless there is a distinction in the notes?

8 Again,
if the trumpet does not sound a clear call,
who will get ready for battle?

9 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.

5) Different foreign tongues:
Communicate
or else the speakers are like
foreigners to one another

6) The point:
Seek gifts that communicate,
that edify the church

b. Tongues do not communicate
even in prayer
— apart from some other gift
(interpretation)

- 1) Must be interpreted
- 2) Or else unfruitful

4 *The gift of tongues and Paul's personal worship*

a. Paul prays and sings
both with the Spirit
and with the mind

- 1) So that others may understand
and confirm
what is prayed and sung

- 2) So that others may be edified

b. Paul speaks in tongues often;
but in church
he always uses another gift

c. Paul urges one thing:
Maturity,
edification

10 Undoubtedly
there are all sorts of languages in the world,
yet none of them is without meaning.

11 If then
I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying,
I am a foreigner to the speaker,
and he is a foreigner to me.

12 So it is with you.
Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts,
try to excel in gifts that build up the church.

13 For this reason
anyone who speaks in a tongue
should pray that he may interpret what he says.

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

15 So what shall I do?
I will pray with my spirit,
but I will also pray with my mind;
I will sing with my spirit,
but I will also sing with my mind.

16 If you are praising God with your spirit,
how can one who finds himself
among those who do not understand
say "Amen" to your thanksgiving,
since he does not know what you are saying?

17 You may be giving thanks well enough,
but the other man is not edified.

18 I thank God
that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

19 But in the church
I would rather speak five intelligible words
to instruct others
than ten thousand words in a tongue.

20 Brothers,
stop thinking like children.
In regard to evil be infants,
but in your thinking be adults.

5 *The purpose of tongues and prophecy*

a. Tongues are a sign to warn unbelievers;
prophecy is a gift to edify believers

b. Tongues within the church
confuse and harden unbelievers

c. Prophecy within the church
convicts unbelievers

1) It convicts him of sin

2) It calls him to judgment

3) It reveals the secrets of his heart

4) It drives him to his knees

21 In the Law it is written:

“Through men of strange 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.

22 Tongues, then, are a sign,
not for believers but for unbelievers;
prophecy, however, is for believers,
not for unbelievers.

23 So if the whole church comes together
and everyone speaks in tongues,
and some who do not understand
or some unbelievers come in,
will they not say that you are out of your mind?

24 But if an unbeliever
or someone who does not understand
comes in while everybody is prophesying,
he will be convinced by all
that he is a sinner and will be judged by all,

25 And the secrets of his heart will be laid bare.
So he will fall down and worship God,
exclaiming, “God is really among you!” prophets.