

SPEAK TO BE UNDERSTOOD

TEXT:1 Corinthians 14:13–25

Paul continues his argument against the charismatic Corinthian's tongues movement by pointing out the effect unintelligible speech has on those who are gathered for worship. We must keep in mind that tongues is a known language. Though not understood by the one speaking, it was always understood by someone hearing. The gift of tongues is never unintelligent chatter that cannot be understood. The context of this chapter indicates that real known languages are in view here, not some ecstatic, unintelligible utterance.

I. THE RULE

(1 Corinthians 14:13) Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.

A. NOTICE THE CLARITY

Here is a clear rule that is not practiced by the tongue talkers of today. When speaking in tongues, there must be an interpreter present who understands the language spoken.

The tongues must be interpreted, so that others may benefit from what is being said.

If one is going to speak in German, he needs an interpreter who understands German. If someone is going to speak in French, there must be someone present who can understand French to tell the others what is being said. This is a rule of Scripture. Therefore, it must be followed when tongues are exercised.

A. NOTICE THE CLARITY

B. NOTICE THE CHAOS

However, the services where tongues are practiced today are full of unruly chaos and confusion.

(1 Corinthians 14:14) For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful.

This is a very practical thought. The idea is that it's pointless to speak in some sort of gibberish that the speaker can't understand. **Paul said my understanding is unfruitful.**

What good is the speaking if it can't be understood? There is no benefit to oneself or to others.

IT IS BARREN/NEGATIVE/IT RPOPHITS
NOTHING

I. THE RULE

II. THE RECKONING

(1 Corinthians 14:15) What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.

A. NOTICE THE QUESTION

If a man prays in an unknown tongue, then no one is blessed or encouraged by his prayer. Paul asks, **What is it then?** In other words, “What is the benefit of such speaking?” If a man prays in an unknown tongue, no one is edified. Praying and singing are to be done for the edification of the whole congregation.

A. NOTICE THE QUESTION

B. NOTICE THE QUEST

(1 Corinthians 14:16–17) Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. It is clear Paul is speaking of the public worship service here. The point is that if someone speaks, prays, or sings in some unknown utterance, others will not be able to agree with the message.

The word Amen means “truly and so be it.” It speaks of agreement with truth.

I. THE RULE

II. THE RECKONING

III. THE REALITY

(1 Corinthians 14:18) I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:

In the Hebrew, Syriac, Greek, and Latin, he was undoubtedly well skilled from his education; The Apostle Paul obviously was given an abundance of the sign gifts. He said I speak with tongues more than ye all. Paul is speaking of the true gift of tongues here. Paul was more experienced in the exercise of this gift than all the members of the Corinthian assembly.

(1 Corinthians 14:19) Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

A. NOTICE THE LOCATION

Paul wasn't merely looking for venue to exhibit his gift. He wasn't seeking glory for himself. He wasn't interested in putting on a religious show. What he sought was the edification of the Church. He would rather speak five words that the assembly could understand, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.

A. NOTICE THE LOCATION

B. NOTICE THE LOGIC

(1 Corinthians 14:20a) Brethren, be not children in understanding: The Apostle is admonishing the Corinthians believers not to think like a child. He wants them to think like mature believers. A child likes to be noticed. He likes to be the center of attention. Children desire praise and approval. The childish immaturity and carnality of the Corinthians was the cause of their misuse of spiritual gifts. In essence Paul was saying, "It's time to grow up!"

(1 Corinthians 14:20b) ... howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men. Children are quick to forgive and go on. It is unusual to see children holding grudges against one against another. Children will argue one moment and play happily together the next. Paul admonished, in malice be ye children. Like children we must forgive immediately and go on.

I. THE RULE

II. THE RECKONING

III. THE REALITY

IV. THE REASONING

(1 Corinthians 14:21–22) In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. Paul goes back to the law to reason with them concerning the purpose for tongues. Paul quotes from the book of Isaiah here.

A. THEY WERE FOR A SIGN

(Isaiah 28:11) For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

Isaiah warned the people of Judah that if they refused to heed the plain words that he was speaking, God would speak to them through the languages of others. As we learned earlier, this prophecy was fulfilled at Pentecost. God intended tongues (a foreign language) to be a sign to this people. The gift of tongues was a sign gift to the unbelieving Jew.

(1 Corinthians 14:23) If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

If an unbeliever or immature believers came into a service where everyone was speaking in tongues, it would be nothing but gibberish and babbling to them. Their conclusion would be that the entire congregation was mad. In other words, “This place is full of nuts.”

A. THEY WERE FOR A SIGN

B. THEY WERE FOR SILENCED

(1 Corinthians 14:24) But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is

judged of all: If someone comes into the service and the truth is spoken in his language, he can understand what is being said and therefore, **he is convinced of all, he is judged of all.**

The word **convinced** means “to be admonished, convicted, reproved.” This word carries the idea of “bringing to light.”

When sinners understand what is being preached, they are convicted of their sin. In other words, if he can understand what is being preached, the Word of God will influence his heart.

(1 Corinthians 14:25) And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Hearing the Word of God gives the unbeliever and understanding of his lost condition. Hence, the secrets of his heart made manifest. In the book of In Hebrews Paul said:

(Hebrews 4:12) For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Not only does the clear preaching of God's Word bring conviction, but also conversion. The Word of God exposes our heart and things that others can't see are laid bare. Having been brought to face his sin, he falls in repentance on his face to worship the True and living God.