

## **CLEAR UP THE CONFUSION**

### **TEXT 1COR.14:26-40**

No Church is without its problems. Some have more problems than others. Some rarely have problems while some churches are always having problems.

Recently someone told me about a fellow marooned on a deserted island. After several years of living alone on the island he was rescued. When his rescuers came ashore they noticed that there were three huts on the island. He was asked, "What is that hut?" He said, "Oh, that is my house." He was asked about the second hut. "That is where I go to church." Then he was asked about the third hut and he said, "That is where I used to go to church."

There was much confusion about spiritual gifts so Paul devotes 3 chapters to the subject. They were especially confused when it came to the matter of speaking in tongues.

- 1. They were confused about the purpose of speaking in tongues,**
- 2. They were confused about practice of speaking in tongues,**
- 3. They were confused about procedure for speaking in tongues.**

In the passage before us Paul ends his discussion of spiritual gifts and does so by giving the Corinthian's certain regulations to be observed in their churches when it came to spiritual gifts and in particular, speaking in tongues.

**We read in verse 40, "Let all things be done decently and in order." In other words, things were to be done right and according to Biblical truth.**

### **I. THE SILENCE THAT THE SCRIPTURE DEMANDED!**

**(VS.26) ... How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying.**

Paul takes us on a visit to the services at the Church of Corinth. Paul uses a series of words to describe several practices in their services.

**1. The word "Psalms"** speaks of reading or singing a Psalm. No doubt the Psalms were the hymnbook of the Corinthian Church. Most of the Psalms were actually songs that were sung by the Jewish people. It is possible that the Corinthians sang the Psalms in their services or read when the people gathered for worship.

**2. The word "doctrine"** no doubt indicates that in the service some Bible doctrine or Biblical subject was discussed and declared. Doctrine should always be a part of our worship. The preaching of God's Word and the teaching of God's Word should always be a part of our services.

**3. The words "tongues, revelation, interpretation"** all speak of the common practice of spiritual gifts in their services. In every service people used their gifts to minister to those present.

But the unusual thing about the services at Corinth is that all of this was being done by several people and all at the same time. Paul usage of the phrase **"every one of you"** indicates that all these things were being done at the same time.

**"Let all things be done unto edifying."**

It was this confusion and chaos that Paul addresses and it largely had to do with speaking in tongues (the false practice of speaking on tongues).

Twice we find that Paul encourages "**silence**" (**Vs.28,34**). The word is very strong meaning absolute silence. As you look at what Paul said it is clear there were a couple of things Paul wanted stopped in their services.

**A. A SILENCE THAT RELATED TO GIFTS.**

**(VS.27-28) 1Co 14:27 If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.**

**28 But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.**

Paul first speaks to the matter of speaking in tongues. In the Corinthian Church, as is often the case today, many were speaking in tongues at the same time. As we have seen, it was to the Corinthian's, a exercise of worship. I can see the congregation standing to their feet with their hands lifted, their eyes closed, praying and praising in tongues.

**First,** Paul declares such a practice is out of order. He tells us in **verse 27** that the most that could speak in tongues in a service was three, preferably two. Even then, it was not to be at the same time but in "**course.**" The word describes speaking in turn, one following another.

**SECOND** there was to be the interpretation of what was said by those speaking in tongues. It is interesting that Paul says, "**let one interpret.**" His statement suggests that there was only one interpreter.

**THIRD** Paul adds in **verse 28** that if there is no interpreter there was to be no speaking in tongues.

An interpreter could not exercise his gift unless there was a speaker, and a speaker should not exercise his gift without an interpreter.

**In verse 29** he deals with a real gift and that of the prophets, the one's who delivered God's revealed word to them. Basically the same regulations applied. Two or three, no more, could speak in a service. The implication is that they spoke by course as described in **verse 27.**

**BARNES SAID** In the case of speaking in tongues where there was an interpreter, when it came to the prophets there was a judge. This was the divine gift of discernment that enabled one to know if the word was really from God or not. You could not just get up and say, "God told me to tell you this."

If God had told a person to say something, the one with the gift of discernment would know it.

**(VS.30 If any thing be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. ...**

His word was the priority for the moment but you did not speak until the orther is done.

**(VS.31) For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted....**

Paul gives a reason for the regulations he has just described. When everyone was singing, preaching, talking at the same time no one was able to learn and be helped. But when there was only one speaking at a time, then people were able to hear, thus learn and be helped by what was said.

**(VS.32) And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets....**

The Corinthian practice of speaking in tongues was nothing more than being out of control emotionally. Paul speaking of the prophets indicates that they were to have control of their spirits.

**Why? (CP. VS.33 For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.)** ... God is not behind the kind of

confusion going on their services, neither does He approve of it or the One responsible for it.

**A. A SILENCE THAT RELATED TO GIFTS.**

**B. A SILENCE THAT RELATED TO GENDER.**

**(NOTICE VS.34 Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law.)**

**Considering the context, Paul is saying that when it comes to speaking in tongues and prophesying, such gifts did not belong to women for they were gifts that did not fall into their role. Paul is not prohibiting women from speaking in church, but prohibiting them from speaking in a certain capacity that had been established by the word.**

From as early as Genesis the role of the woman was one of submission that is implied in the statement "**under obedience.**" Paul is speaking directly to a woman usurping authority over man in spiritual things.

Both the gift of speaking in tongues and prophecy involved the proclaiming of God's revelation of truth, therefore gifts limited to men for if given to women would involve them exercising authority over men in spiritual matters.

Paul is not saying that a woman cannot teach or be a gifted leader but such gifts and abilities are not to be exercised over men in the services.

Paul is clear that when it came to prophesying or speaking in tongues the women were not permitted to practice such gifts, thus were to be absolutely silent in these areas.

**(VS.35 And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.) ...**

It would seem that in the Corinthian church there were some women that were not only abuser of these gifts but also blatant in their questioning of those who prophesied and what they were teaching. Paul says that if they have a question they should ask their husbands at home. **Why? It was disgraceful (shame) for them to behave in such a matter.**

Again, it was a matter of roles. Paul discussed the different roles in chapter 11.

Furthermore, if the instructions of **verses 34-35** we followed it would practically bring most charismatic groups to a halt for the majority of those who practice speaking in tongues are women.



## **I. THE SILENCE THAT THE SCRIPTURE DEMANDED!**

## **II. THE STRUCTURE THE SCRIPTURE**

**DECLARED!** As Paul concludes his discussion of spiritual gifts he gives them some firm instructions.

### **A. OBEY GOD'S WORD.**

**(VS.36-38 1Co 14:36 What? came the word of God out from you? or came it unto you only? 37 If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. 38 But if any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant.**

It is almost like Paul recognizes that some are going to object to what he has said. He says in effect, "What? I can't believe that you would rebel against what I have told you." He then asks, "Did God's Word come from you or did it come to you?" The answer is obvious. They were not the author of God's Word. God was! God's word had come to them. Therefore, it was not a word for them to argue with but to obey.

**(VS.37)** ... Paul tells them that if they think they are a prophet or a spiritual person then realize that what he has said it more than his opinion. **It is "the commandments of the Lord."**

What Paul has declared is what God commanded. Settled! Final! No argument! Obey it!

**(VS.38)** ... Paul speaks to them that refuse to hear, listen, and learn from what he has said. In effect he says, "If you choose to remain ignorant, then remain ignorant." The implication is that the church should not recognize such a person as a spiritual leader to be listened to or followed.

**A. OBEY GOD'S WORD.**

**B. OBSERVE GOD'S WAYS.**

**(VS.39 1Co 14:39 Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues.**

**covet to prophesy,** Let it be your endeavour and prayer to be able to teach the way of God to the ignorant; this is the most valuable, because the most useful gift of the Spirit.

**and forbid not to speak with tongues.**

Let every gift have its own place and operation; let none prevent him from doing his part of the work of the God,

**vrs.40 Let all things be done decently and in order.**

Let all things be done in an appropriate and becoming manner when it comes to the worship of God.

