

Orderly Worship pt.2

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Preacher: Ife Ojetayo

[0:00] The love that builds up and draws us closer to our Lord Jesus Christ. It is in His only name we pray. Amen.! Please be seated.

Okay. Please open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians 14. We will focus on the latter verses of that chapter this morning.

Verse 33b to verse 40. I know you must have noticed, going through this epistle of 1 Corinthians, that it contains many hard sayings.

Many hard sayings. Many things so far that we've been going through that has made us uncomfortable, at the edge of our seat. But perhaps verse 34 and 35 will be perhaps the most, some of the most difficult Bible passages and controversial sayings in the whole of the epistle of 1 Corinthians, and perhaps maybe even in the whole Bible.

So before we tackle this text this morning, I want to suggest that we set some guidelines for ourselves before we look at this passage.

[1:32] These guidelines will help us to read this passage rightly, to understand it rightly. And in fact, I think these guidelines will help us in our reading of the Bible in general, especially when we come across difficult passages that run counter to our cultural and preferential sensibilities.

So we see so far that the hymn and the context in which Paul is writing to the Corinthians, especially in this chapter, is that there will be people who pursue their spiritual gifts in love for the purpose of doing what?

Of building up. Building up. And we will see here that he's going to now come to the conclusion that people who are spiritual builders, which is what we ought to be, and we exercise our spiritual gifts, we ought to be spiritual builders.

People who are spiritual builders are people who submit to Scripture. And so that's one of the things that we ought to first get as the first guideline.

We ought to see when we come to God's Word, in fact, that's exactly what it is. This is God's Word. Scripture contains all things, our article tells us, article 6, Scripture contains all things that is necessary to salvation.

[2:56] And as we said last week, what's contained in this book, that is the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, what's contained in it, from Genesis to Revelation, is God breathed.

And therefore, it is binding on us. It commands our obedience. It demands our obedience. And so when we take our Bible, and we read something that is hard to understand, or it's not agreeable to us, we are not at liberty to ignore it, or chuck it aside, nor can we explain it away.

Instead, what we're to do is we're to wrestle with it. And wrestle with it, in confidence that as we do so, in confidence that as we do so, God, who is the best communicator, will help us to understand it. That we were confident that God will help us, that even if there is any misunderstanding on our part, do often, those misunderstandings are often due to our own nature, that is tarnished by sin.

We can be confident as we come to God's word, with God as our helper, that he will help us to overcome those misunderstandings, and he will make it plain to us. So we humbly ask the Holy Spirit, who is not only Holy Scripture's divine author, but he's also its interpreter.

[4:31] We ask God the Holy Spirit to make it plain to us. Secondly, so the first thing is, as we come to God's word, we recognize that it is, in fact, God's word.

Secondly, we're to understand that Scripture interprets Scripture. There's a wonderful hymn penned by William Cowper called, God Moves in a Mysterious Way.

And the last verse of that hymn says this, Blind unbelief is sure to err, and scan his work in vain. God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain.

Now, there is such wonderful instruction for us in these words, penned by William Cowper. Because when we sit over God's word in judgment, when we come to God's word, and we sit over it in judgment, what happens is that it only increases our blind unbelief.

And we read the word in vain. No matter how long we study, if we're bent on making our standard, or our own thoughts, our opinions, the measuring stick by which we judge God's word, whatever those standards may be, we are going to remain in error.

[5 : 49] And those standards may be our cultural norms, or our sinful bent. Whatever it may be that we sift God's word through, we are bound to stumble into error, or remain in our blindness.

And we will be as the blind, looking for blind guides to lead us. But if we remember that God is his own interpreter, trusting that his word is plain.

The theologian says, perspicuous, which just means God's word is plain. It's understandable. If we come to God's word, knowing that, knowing that God is an effective communicator, he is the most effective communicator in the world.

When we do that, then we can be assured, confident even, that God himself will lead us, and not leave us in our blindness. So, having these two guidelines, that it is God's word, that scripture interprets scripture, having these two guidelines now, let's look at verse 33, starting in verse 33b, and to 35.

So Paul writes to the Corinthian church, as in all the churches of the saints, the women should keep silent in churches, in the churches.

[7 : 20] Well, if you've been paying attention, and I hope you have, if you've been paying attention as we go through 1 Corinthians, it will sound to you, as you read this, those words, like Paul is contradicting himself.

Why? Why? Because after all, we've seen in 1 Corinthians 11, another section, about public worship, and gender roles, where Paul assumes, and implies, that women and men, are praying, and prophesying, in the guided assembly.

And so, the only instruction he gave, in chapter 11, of 1 Corinthians, is that men should do so, that is, prophesy, and pray, with their heads uncovered.

And women, should pray, and prophesy, with their heads covered. There is no mention, that women shouldn't prophesy, or pray, in the guided assembly. So, we come to these verses then, and we might think to us, as Paul changed his mind, in verse 34.

Or is there a specific, type of speaking, in view here, in chapter 14? Perhaps that's the question, we ought to ask.

[8 : 38] Is there a special, specific type of speaking, that Paul is referring to, in chapter 14? Let's first look, at the context, in which Paul is saying this.

Now, it wouldn't do, to take 34 and 35, verse 34 and 35, out of the context, of its surrounding verses. We should read them, in the context, of this chapter, and in the context, of the book in general.

So, what's the context, that we've been going through, so far? Remember last week, we said that the aim, that Paul writes this, is for orderly worship, for effective, spiritual building up, of the church of God.

spiritual builders, are orderly. That's the point, that Paul is making, in chapter 14. And he says, in verse 26 of chapter 14, that we saw last week, there's a pattern, for our gathering together.

It's not meant, to be disordered. And he says, also, in the earlier part, of verse 27 to 28, that tongues, build, the kind of tongues, that build, are those, that are, are being interpreted, in the gathered worship.

[9 : 46] And so, he forbids, tongues speaking, in the church, when there is no interpretation, because it doesn't build, anyone up. Right? And then he goes on, in verse 29 to 33, that, to emphasize, the supremacy, of prophecy, over tongues, because, prophecy, does build up.

But even in those, two categories, he says, there should be order. Right? He says, one to three, at most, in the gathered worship, should speak.

And, if one person speaks, they should give way, for another person, if they have to speak, in terms of prophecy. And so now, in verse 33 to 38, we come to, a continuation, of that order, in gathered worship.

And he's, Paul is emphasizing, in these verses, the weighing, of prophecy. So after considering, the building up of the church, in an orderly way, he now says, to the church in Corinth, you are to defer,

to one another in love.

You are to prioritize, prophecy, which builds, up the church, over tongues, which does not. And Paul now says, the prophecy themselves, even the prophecy, that builds, when they have been, when they have given, in the church, they must be weighed.

[11:06] That means, they must be judged, rightly. So regarding prophecy, in verse 29, remember that Paul, had already, placed constraints, it placed constraints, on its use, in the church.

Now, these are constraints, of love, we said last week. They're constraints, of love, for the common good, and the building up, of the members. But in the latter part, of verse 29, Paul instructs, that after prophecy, has been given, in the guided worship, he says, let others, weigh, what is said.

And now, it is that weighing, or judging, what is said, that is now, in view, in verse 33, to 38. Paul, in these latter verses, places again, constraints, on the judging, of the prophecy.

So if anyone says, in your assembly, thus says the Lord. Whatever comes, after that, statement, thus says the Lord, whatever comes, after that, must be sifted, through, God's word.

Must be judged, and to be examined, to see, if indeed, it is from the Lord. It is in the context, of weighing, the prophetic words, that Paul, now gives, the instruction, that he gives, in verse 34.

[12:39] He says, the women should keep silent, in the churches, for they are not permitted, to speak, but should be in submission, as the law, also says. Paul sees, the task, of judging prophecy, in the context, of guided worship, as an exercise, of authority.

As the law, also says, as he says, at the end of verse 34. And when he says that, in this, he's referring, to the created order, of male edgship, in the family, and in the church.

In the Corinthian church, part of the manifestation, of disordered worship, is not only that, their worship, is a free for all. It's also that, when it comes to, judging the prophecy, the women, in the Corinthian church, are overstepping, the creational order, prescribed, by God.

So, some commentators, conclude, that, the typical, self-serving nature, of the Corinthian church, is also at work.

Even when it comes to, prophesying, and interpreting, and judging the prophecy. So, they conclude that, perhaps some women, in the church, in the Corinthian church, were using, the weighing of prophecy, as an opportunity, to dishonor, their husbands.

[14:02] You can imagine, there's a prophecy, and then when, the prophet is being judged, maybe, this is conjecture, on my part now, we don't see that, in the text, but maybe conjecture, that some of the women, are then now, using that opportunity, to question, the judgment, of the prophecy, or to raise issues, with their husbands, within the, gathered assembly.

That's one of, some conjecture, that the commentators, have made. Some, have even argued, that this is a local, prohibition. So, they say that, when Paul says, that women should keep silent, in the, when it comes to, judging prophecy, he's only talking about, the Corinthian church.

because it's, it's, it's been abused. So, he's only making that, prohibition, for the Corinthian church. But, I don't think the text, bears that out. Because, notice that Paul says, as he did also, in chapter 11, that, this is the practice, in all the churches, of the saints.

You see it there. So, the command, is not limited, to Corinth, alone. Nor is it limited, to the first century, world, or first century, context.

The command, that Paul gives here, applies today, as it did then, because, it is God's word. And God's word, and God's truth, is unchanging.

[15:30] And so, Paul emphasizes, that men and women, in the church, and in the family, have different roles. I hope you noticed, and I encourage you, to go back to, when we were in chapter 11, of first Corinthians.

We said there, that men and women, have different roles, complementary roles, mutually dependent. Right? Paul, in chapter 11, of first Corinthians, talks about how, we are made, and this is what, he's referencing, when he says, the law, also says, is that, he has in view, creation, Genesis 1, 26.

We're created, in who's image? God's image. Male and female. Equal. Equal worth, equal dignity, but different roles, as prescribed, and ordained, and intended, by God.

And so, that's what Paul is emphasizing here. Even in the church, and in the family, there's a mutual dependency, but different roles. So it says in verse 35, if there is anything that they desire, that is the women, they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is shameful for a woman, to speak in church.

Again, I want to emphasize here, that there is a particular scope, and context of speaking, that Paul has in mind here. He's talking about, when it comes to judging prophecy.

[17:04] I know some people have read this passage, and they've, they've, they've taken the, verse 34 and 35, out of the context, of the book itself. And they've made a law, that women are not allowed to talk at all in church.

And even those people who have those rules, and churches that have those rules, I wonder how effective that is. When you have men and women, and women are not allowed to talk at all. If they really, if they really, if they really, carry that sentiment through, then, you know, women should just, abductives over their mouth, when they come to church.

Because they're not, because that law, that rule will have to be total. But here, Paul has in mind, again, only in terms of judging prophecy, which Paul sees, as an act of exercising authority. And, and verse 35, I think actually, gives support, to the possibility, that there is, in the Corinthian church, domestic disputes, that are being aired out, in the church service, during the weighing of prophecy.

And so that's why Paul instructs them, to ask their husband at home, for it is shameful for a woman, to sit in judgment, of prophecy. Again, that's, speaking in, that's what's, what's in view here.

[18:23] Now this doesn't mean that, for women who are not married, or widowed, that they cannot have, their questions addressed, if they don't have a husband, at home.

That's not what Paul is implying here. Because, Jesus Christ, in his sovereign wisdom, has appointed, for the church, elders and teachers, in his church, hasn't he?

Elders and teachers, in the church, have been given, a God-ordained task, to be under shepherds, over the flock of God. And this requires, of them, leading the flock, in the path, of truth.

Judging, error, leading them, away from error, which involves, answering questions, about faith, and godliness, from the flock. So, practically, if there is questions, both from men and women, God has ordained, teachers and elders, in the church, to exercise authority, in answering, and helping, in answering those questions.

But, notice here, that Paul also, gives responsibilities, to husbands, to men, who are husbands, who are heads of families. This means, in the Christian family, men, are to take seriously, their role, as spiritual shepherds, of their family.

[19:53] Here again, we look at the whole, counsel of God. And so, remember Ephesians 5. What does Paul say, in Ephesians 5? Paul paints, a vivid picture, of what it, of what it looks like, for a man, to be, a spiritual shepherd, of his family.

It is, a cruciform, leadership. It is a Christ-like, leading. It is, active, not passive.

It is, sacrificial, like Christ, loved for the, for the churches, husbands, husbands are to love, their wives, and their family, in the same manner.

As Christ loved the church, and gave himself, up for her, Paul says in Ephesians, that he might, sanctify her, having cleansed her, by the washing of water, with the word. Husbands are called, to do the same.

And elders in the church, are also called, to lead in the same way, within the church. church. Now, it's a tragic symptom. We must, we must address this. It's a tragic symptom, of our modern age.

[21:04] That men, and, and I think, what the whole culture, in general, have equated, passivity, with gentleness. And I think, men in the church, need to recover, servant leadership, modeled, by Jesus Christ himself.

And there is, no passivity, with our Lord, in the way, he leads his church. Christ, was proactive. He went out, seeking the lost.

He went out, as a shepherd, a good shepherd, leading his flock, from danger, and from harm. He was sacrificial, in his leadership. He does, he did not lord it, over others, for self gain.

But, he was willing. And indeed, in fact, he died, so that he might save, and redeem, the church, his bride.

And so, men, brothers, in Christ, this is our model, for Christ-like, cruciform leadership.

[22:16] It's our Lord, Jesus Christ himself. There is no room, for passivity. There is no room, for idleness. We must, follow the example, of our Lord.

Being proactive, being sacrificial, not lording it, over others, for self gain, but willing to die, to ourselves, every day, for the good, of the building up, of our family, and of the church, of Christ.

And women, are to encourage men, to do this, by praying for them, and by allowing them, to lead, in the way, God has designed it. Now, everything we've said so far, runs counter, to the gospel, of our age.

Patriarchy, formerly, a descriptive word, is now, used as a pejorative, a curse word, in our culture. Godly male, edgship, and godly female, submission, are seen, as oppressive, rather than, the image, and the picture, of God's design.

We have rejected, the mutual dependency, and beauty, of God's, creational design. We've rejected it, and exchanged it, for a false autonomy, and freedom, that has done nothing, but great violence, to the fabric, of the family, and the fabric, of our society.

[23 : 55] The church, which is meant, to be a contrasting, mirror, to the world, in its pitifulness, to God's word, as capitulated, to the culture, and has joined the world, in this, edlong descent, into ruin.

Instead of, showing the world, the fruitfulness, and wisdom, of God's design, both in the family, and in the church, in many ways, unfortunately, the church, is parroting, in the world, in its conclusion, that, we know better, than God.

And so, I don't deny, that, all of this, runs canto, to the gospel, of our age. But I can only, submit to you, people of God, that, this is God's word.

And spiritual builders, which we are called to be, are people who acknowledge, and submit, to God's word. Submit to the, the apostolic word.

And that's what Paul is emphasizing, in verse 36, to 38. As he says to them, he says to those in current, to those who feel, like, they can determine, the rules for themselves.

[25 : 20] Paul says to those, such people, or was it from you, that the word of God came? Or are you, the only ones, that has reached? If anyone thinks, that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge, the things I am writing to you, are a command, of the Lord.

Here is, what Paul says, is a fruit, of true spirituality, godly spirituality. It's submission, to the word of God.

And he says in verse 38, if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. Those are stark words, by Apostle Paul here. But he says it to us, to help us to see, that, this is God's word, and it demands, our obedience, and our submission.

Both men and women, we are to come to God's word, and submit to it. We are to see it, as God's design, for the flourishing, and the building up, of the church, and our families, and our homes.

Before we go, to the last two verses, I just want to emphasize, to us, when we do, what God says here, in these verses, we will stand, starkly, in opposition, to our culture.

[26 : 47] It might mean, as in other areas, when we stand, squarely in God's word, that we will be called, all sorts of names, we'll be called, primitive, backwards, it is, of men, men, but, we are not to be, men pleasers.

We are to please, and obey God, rather than men. That's been, part of the, underlying theme, of first Corinthians. A church, that is more concerned, with mirroring, the world around them, than a church, that is willing, to submit to God's word, and to operate, according to God's standard.

So the question for us, or the Trinity, the question for us, in the 21st century, is what kind of church, will we be? Paul concludes, in verse 39 to 40, and he says, a church, we are to be a church, that is building, for the day.

And he concludes, with an encouragement, to the church of Christ. In verse 39, he says, so my brothers, and by brothers here, he's talking about, siblings in Christ, we've said this before, right? Brothers and sisters. So, earnestly desire, to prophesy, and do not forbid, speaking in tongues, but all things, should be done, decently, and in order.

[28 : 15] So, Paul having established, the supremacy, of prophecy, over tongues, in the building up, of the church, he now encourages us, to desire prophecy.

He also, enjoins the church, not to forbid, the exercise, of the gifts of tongues, within the parameters, that he has already, set out for it, to be used. And the whole, hymn of Paul, the old, the, all he has in mind, the goal, of apostle Paul, is that all things, should be done, decently, and in order, for the glory of Christ, and the edification, of the church.

That is the point, that is the goal, for which this is done. It isn't done, so that we can, lord it over one another, whether in the, whether in the exercise, of our gifts, look at my gifts, it's superior to yours, or to lord it over others, because, look at me, I'm a man, you need to submit to me.

But to serve one another, I want to say, one more quick word, before, and perhaps, talk about the implications, for this, for us.

The implications, for us, as a local church, early trinity, and the implications, for us, as a diocese, and the diocese, the living word. One of the things, that's distinctive, of our diocese, is that we are male only, we only ordained male, men, to the priesthood, in keeping with the, God ordained design, of edgiship, in the church.

[29 : 53] So that's, that's our practice, here at Holy Trinity, as a practice, in our diocese. But we also believe, that men and women, are equal. Genesis 1.26, made in God's image.

Male and female, he created them. And, not only that, we are mutually, dependent, on one another. that, that needs to be, constantly emphasized, as the people of God.

God, has created us, in the way, has created us, designed us, in the way, has designed us, to be mutually, dependent, on one another. As we, as we image, God, our creator, and as we do the work, of being, co, co, rulers, in the world, that he's made.

We are mutually, dependent, but we are different, from one another. So, this difference, that we have, is chiefly, expressed, particularly, in marriage, as, men, taking the position, of leadership. And in the church, as men, taking the position, of leadership. And here again, I want to speak, to my brothers, in Christ. The model, for that leadership, is Jesus Christ himself.

[31 : 20] There is a history, of, disobedience, of God's word, and moving away, from the, the model, that Christ has given us. And when we do this, we live, under the curse.

We read Genesis, by God's, providence, our Old Testament reading, our first reading, lesson this morning, was, was the curse. We are redeemed, in Christ, made new creatures.

And so, brothers, you need not fear, to expend yourself, and your energy, to sacrifice, your strength, and your, and your, your mental, capabilities, and your physical, capabilities, in the service, of, your family.

And in the service, of the church of Christ. You are to, expend yourself, in the way, Christ has shown, and modeled for us.

You are to, step out, in service. Oftentimes, the modern church, is, is marked, by, and this is not just, this is, this is, almost universal, across the board.

[32 : 41] Women, often, serve more, and lead more, and are, in service, in the church of Christ, than men. Perhaps, men just think, if they do come to church, they just think, well, we should just come, and I've come, maybe drag along, by your wife, and you've come, and then you leave.

But what is the model, that Christ gives us? What is Paul saying here? Male and ship, requires, leading, and intentionality, and sacrifice. As I, as I, prepare this, I, I, I must have, I'm convicted, about how I lead, in my home, and how I lead, in the family of God.

The model, is Christ Jesus. And, the reality, is that, we cannot do it. Brothers, in our own strength, we need to rely, on God, the Holy Spirit.

In the same mind, sisters in Christ, we cannot, submit, as God, requires, and commands us, in his word, to do, without the help, of the Holy Spirit.

Everything, in our culture, even in our own, sinful bent, says, rebels, and resists, this, sort of submission.

[34 : 11] But again, the same truth, for the man, is true for us. We have been, recreated, in Christ's image. We have been, redeemed, and given the Holy Spirit, to help us, to submit, in godly submission, in the family, and in the home, as the church, submits to Christ.

And we need to ask, God the Holy Spirit, to help us, in that regard. And as we both do that, men and women, serve Christ, lead, and worship, and gather together, we, image, God's, design, for the world, and for his church.

So this is an encouragement, for us. And I want to, I want to, repeat the encouraging note, that Paul ends in, in verse 39 to 40. It's an encouragement, that the gifts, that God the Holy Spirit, has poured out, upon his church, is in fact, for all of us.

And it's only God, the Holy Spirit, who distributes, to all. But even as God, the Holy Spirit, distributes, God, has ordained, and designed, an order, within his church.

And roles, by which those, under which those gifts, are exercised. And so we must look to him, for wisdom, in the exercise of our gifts.

[35 : 37] And we must, exercise our gifts. That's our implication. We must not let, those gifts lie dormant. If you're a member, of this church, you, and you are in Christ Jesus, you have the Holy

Spirit, in you, you have gifts, given to you, by God the Holy Spirit.

For the building up, of his church. And the advancement, of his gospel. you must be, at work, exercising those gifts.

Not for your own, selfish gain, but for the building up, of the church. And that requires, fidelity to God's word, and it requires, faithfulness, to the church of Christ. Our spiritual gifts, are to be used, in love, to build up.

They're not the rights, they're not rights, that we have, to be demanded, for self-promotion. They're meant to be, other focused. Sacrificially, employed. For the glory of Christ, and for the advancement, of the gospel.

And in all this, we need God, the Holy Spirit, to help us. So let us go, to him in prayer, and ask for his aid. Let us pray. Lord, we confess that, everything in us, rebels, and resist, your word often.

[37 : 04] We confess that, we are, bent, in our sinful nature, against your word. But we thank you, that you've given us, the Holy Spirit.

And that, you've promised, that he will lead us, and guide us, and convict us of sins, and, mold us, into the image, of Christ Jesus.

And so we submit, ourselves, all together, as your people, to his, his sanctifying work. We ask that you will, continue to use us, in this church, for your glory, for the building up, of the saints, and for the advancement, of your kingdom.

And that you will, help us Lord, in doing so, to look to Jesus Christ, who perfectly, exemplifies, Godly submission, and Godly leadership. We pray this, in Jesus name.

Amen.