

Orderly Worship pt. 1

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[0:00] Thank you, Cam. Please be seated. We took a three-week break from 1 Corinthians to observe the Ascension, Pentecost, and Trinity k-Sunday, but I'm glad to say we're back now in the first of the day.

And 1 Corinthians, we're back on their own stretch even to conclude our journey through this book. In the verses before us this morning, Paul gives some directives as to what follows in the proper use of gifts in the church.

By the way, I noticed that we had a woman who read the passage this morning in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verse 26 to 40.

And so I hope that already gives you a clue that there's more to that passage than meets the eye. We will, I'm sorry to say that there's going to be a cliff angle because we're not actually going to get to those lighter verses this morning.

We'll get to that next week. There's a two-part sermon. Orderly worship part one this week. And then next week, we'll get to the second part. Some people are shaking their heads. Sorry. But hey, that's why you need to come to church next Sunday to hear what God has to say for us in that second part of it.

[1:36] But I thought it was necessary that we read it in scope because we have all of that in scope. And it's actually what goes on in this first part of this latter half of chapter 14. Some of those emphases will be brought more home from verse 34 to 40.

But this morning, we're going to just be in verse 26 to 33. We're going to review some of the earlier verses of chapter 14 because it's been three weeks that we've been in it. So I do invite you to open your Bibles to 1 Corinthians.

It's on page 1141 of your pew Bible. The reason why it does need for us to focus on that latter part is because I know that when it's being read, this is one of the most countercultural things in our culture, this portion of Scripture.

And it runs against everything that we know and we think in our culture. And in fact, not surprisingly, it seems even in Paul's culture when he was writing it.

So we do need to spend some time in seeing what God has to say for us. So in the verses this morning, Paul again gives us some directive as to what follows in the proper use of gifts because that's what chapter 14 has been about, proper use of gifts in the church.

[2:57] And as we go through these verses, I want you to keep chapter 13 in mind. Do you remember? Do you remember that Paul said in chapter 13 that the most excellent way to use our spiritual gifts is in what in chapter 13?

Love. Love. We use our spiritual gifts. The most excellent way to use them is in love. Yes. And what will that look like? Well, Paul says it looks like love exercising gifts that does what?

That builds up the church. For this reason, Paul again then exhorts the Corinthians in verse 26. He says to them, when you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, and an interpretation.

Let all things be done for building up. By the way, the first half of verse 26 is not prescriptive. I think it's descriptive.

It's just saying, you guys, when you come together, each one of you come together with a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, and an interpretation. So I don't want you to read verse 26 and say, well, that's what church ought to look like.

[4:17] We all should come with our hymn. Sorry, worship team. For all the ad work you do during the week of comprising songs and practicing. But we should all come with our own hymn. We should all come with our lesson. We should all come with our revelation.

Let all that interpret. It's descriptive. Now, he's not saying necessarily that it's bad. It's just describing the nature of the Corinthian worship. In fact, he's probably going to edge on some orderliness.

So he's intimating that not all of it is good. But here's the key thing in verse 26. The key thing is that let all things be done for what purpose?

For the building up of the church. This should be our aim. When we exercise our gifts in the family of God. It should be for the building up of the people of God.

That is a aim. That is the goal. For Paul, order is the natural outworking of love. Order is the natural outworking of love.

[5:17] And we've seen in chapters 12 and 13 that what that looks like is self-discipline. Right? We have gifts. There's gifts. Many members in the body of Christ.

Various gifts. All given by God, the Holy Spirit. To be exercised for the building up of the church in love. But we do that by means of self-discipline.

And self-restraint even. Out of love. It is this love that governs our worship gathering. When we gather together to worship the Lord.

So that when we gather for corporate worship, it is not an exercise in individuality. It's not an exercise in self-expression.

So people can look at us and marvel at our gifts. That's not the purpose of gathering together in worship. That's not the purpose for which we use our gifts.

[6:14] Rather, we employ the gifts God the Holy Spirit has poured on us. To what aim? To the aim for which we have been given them. That's the reason we've been given them is so that these gifts may ultimately point not to us, but to Jesus Christ.

To exalt Him and not ourselves. To proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. That salvation can be found in no one else. For there is no other name under heaven given to man by which we may be saved.

That is the point of the gifts that God has given the church. Not to point to ourselves. Not to exalt ourselves. But to exalt Jesus Christ and to point to Him and to proclaim His gospel.

And so it is a very serious thing to do otherwise. When we make our gifts about ourselves. When we use them to burnish our own standing in people's eyes.

It's tantamount to blasphemy. Because we become the center of attention. Rather than God who deserves all glory and praise and worship.

[7:28] And it's a dangerous thing to do. And of course, as I say this, many of you might be thinking. Well, you know, you turn your TV on and you watch the charlatans. Not all of them, but many on TV.

Charlatan TV evangelists. These oxters. Right? That says, oh, I have these gifts. And what do you have to do for me to exercise my gifts for you?

Send me money. It's blasphemy. It's not, it's swindling. It's charlatans. It's wrong.

It's evil even. And it's blasphemy. Because they become often the center of attention. And often times, we lack discernment.

I don't necessarily mean us here. But the church lacks discernment. When we look to these mega men of God. And their giftings.

[8:29] And we exalt them more than we exalt Jesus Christ. Because when we see them pointing to themselves, it should be a warning sign. For us not to participate.

Or not to be swindled by them. But we must confess. We must confess that it's not just the TV evangelists that do this.

We must confess that it is quite easy for us, ourselves, to fall into the same trap. Perhaps in a smaller way. But it is very easy for us to fall into the same trap.

Because it is the tug of our sinful human hearts to make things about ourselves. Isn't it? To place ourselves at the center of things. And that's why honest humility before God is needed.

In this regard. As a pastor, I especially need it. As you do as well. As fellow members of the household of God. We must examine our hearts.

[9:36] Make sure that what we're doing when we gather in holy worship. On the Lord's Day. And even in our midweek services. In our prayer meetings.

In our Bible studies. Has Jesus Christ at the center. God the Father. God the Son. And God the Holy Spirit. In the center of it. That our gifts are being exercised.

For the building up of one another. Into Christ's likeness. Not to the image. My image. Or anyone else's image. We must repeat to ourselves.

John the Baptist's words. E must increase. And I must decrease. That should be our mantra. Our slogan. As the people of God.

We must ask for the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts. So that we might have the right mind. In using our gifts in the church of Christ. Christ. And when we must be on guard.

[10:31] Over our hearts. That our spiritual pursuits. Are not for our own vain glory. But for the glory of Jesus Christ. This is something we always have to be watchful for.

As Christians. As we exercise our gifts in the family of God. And so look what Paul then goes on from verse 26. He talks about. He categorizes. Again he's talking about two particular gifts. In relation to one another. Tongues and prophecy. In verse 27 to 28. 27 and 28. He talks about the kind of tongues.

That builds. So he says in verse 27. If anyone speaks in a tongue. Speak in a tongue. Let there be only two or three at most. And each in turn.

Let someone interpret. But if there is no one to interpret. Let each of them keep silent. In church. And speak to himself. And to God. Now remember that.

[11:29] Regarding the use of tongues. In guided worship. Paul had already instructed. Us in chapter 14 verse 13. That it should only be. Done.

If there is an interpretation of the tongue. Present. It is the interpretation that makes. What is. Unintelligible.

It is interpretation that makes it intelligible. Right. And so here. He said if that is the case. If there is someone to interpret. Then. It's not just now unintelligible. It becomes actually prophetic.

It becomes. It gets into the category of prophecy. Because it's now words that people can discern. With their mind. And take in. And it's meant.

It not. It can build up. Otherwise. It can build up. Because no one understands it. But even in that context. He says. Let it only be done. With two or three at most.

[12:25] And each in turn. So it's not a free for all. It's not a mad dash. It's not chaos. But it's orderly. And it is the interpretation.

That makes the word spoken prophecy. It's what builds up. And again. Remind. Just by way of reminder. Paul wants to emphasize. That.

Without intelligibility. Without being able to understand. What is spoken. Which is what the interpretation provides. We will be like foreigners. To one another in the church.

Let me tell you this. As someone who was recently in a country. Where English is not the primary language. I have a new. I have a vivid appreciation. For what Paul says here.

By being foreigners. To one another. We. Three. Three of us. At an event. Where we. During the. The free. One free weekend. That we had.

[13:22] We decided to go. To neighboring cities. In Germany. And we needed to rent a car. And none of us. One of us actually spoke. Like.

High school level. German. Which is. Really nothing. Because I speak. High school level. In Spanish. I don't know what that looks like. But. But. But we went to rent a car. And.

The lady. She was the only one there. At the office. And she didn't speak in English. And so. We're trying to. Have a conversation. About insurance. For the car.

And. And. We thought. She was saying. That we were going to be charged. An extra \$500. For insurance. 500 euros. And so. There was a panic. And there was.

There was confusion. And we thought. That the trip. That we had planned. Was going to. Sort of. Stop. Before it even started. Well.

[14:17] That's really. The example. That Paul gives. Until. You know. Eventually. We. Thank God. For Google Translate. And came to. To our hate. But that's what.

Imagine. The church looking like that. Gathered worship. When we are all foreigners. To one another. Because we can't understand. Each other. Paul says. That does not work.

That does not build up. And this is why Paul said. I would rather say. Five. Intelligible words. Such as. Jesus Christ.

Is. Lord. And Savior. It's actually six words. But. But. I would rather say. Five. Intelligible words. Than. Ten. Ten. Thousand words.

In an unintelligible. Tongue. Because. The former. Builds up. Even though. It's just five words. While the latter. Is useless. Paul gives.

[15:17] Further directive here. He says. Even if there are tongues. With interpretation. Note that. He said. Even if there are tongues. With interpretation. It should be done. In an orderly fashion. He says.

Take turns. In speaking. Don't speak over each other. Otherwise. You might as well. Be speaking. Even if. Even if there is interpretation. If you're speaking over each other. You might as well. Be unintelligible. Because the mind cannot.

The mind cannot. Discipher. Such. Disorderliness. You just have to be a mom. And having your kids come to you. And all of them talking at once. What do you often say?

Be quiet. One at a time. Right. So. So. So. Paul says. There should be orderliness. Speak one at a time. And notice the if.

There. Notice the if. If any speak in a tongue. It's conditional. It's not required. That's important. In verse 27.

[16:12] Because. Often. Many have read this. And says. Well. Every gathered worship. It's not really. It's not worship yet. Or it's not gathered worship. Or the Holy Spirit is not present.

Unless there is someone who speaks in tongue. But it's conditional. It's if. That were the case. In your worship. If there is one. There should be an interpretation. Paul is not saying. That there needs to be someone.

Who speaks in tongue. At every gathering. But if there is still be one. It should be done. With interpretation. And it should be done. In an orderly fashion.

And Paul has already emphasized. To us. The superiority of prophecy. Over tongues. And so. In verse 29 to 33. He now talks about. Prophecy. The bills.

And so. Verse 29. He says. Let two or three prophets speak. And let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made. To another sitting there.

[17:09] Let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy. One by one. So that all may learn. And all be encouraged. And the spirits of prophets.

Are subject to prophets. For God is not a God of confusion. But of peace. If you remember. Last time in chapter. We were in chapter 14.

We said. The prophecy. That Paul is speaking of here. Is not the kind. In the Old Testament. Of the Old Testament prophets. Or even the New Testament apostles.

It's not. That kind of prophecy. Those kind. The Old Testament prophets. The New Testament apostles. Those. Their words. Are authoritative. They're divinely inspired.

And they demand. Our immediate obedience. So. It's not. In that order. This prophecy. That Paul is speaking. And in fact. That kind of prophecy.

[18:07] Old Testament prophecy. Prophecy that we see. In the Old Testament. And the New Testament. Apostles. That kind of authoritative. Word from God. The church is meant. Not to sit over them.

And judge them. Rather. We're to sit under them. And be judged. And formed. By them. Rather. So. So you see here. That. That's not the kind of prophecy. That Paul is talking about. In here. In chapter 14. Because. This prophecy. We're called to weigh. And to judge. So. Look.

Prophecy. The Paul's piece of here. Is. Is the kind of speech. That flows. From scripture. Which takes. What is read. And what. What is heard.

And now. And applies it. To our lives. In this regard. As the people of God. Who have the mind of Christ. We.

[19:03] As we said previously. We are all equipped. In fact. And empowered. In fact. To prophesy. One to another. In the family of God.

For the building up. Of the church. We've said. That. What does that look like? That looks like. Words of encouragement. That looks like. When we gather. In Bible study. And we study God's word.

And then we. Apply it. One to our. Each. To our lives. So if. We're in a Bible study. And. And a brother. A sister says to me. Well. You know. You shared something. About your life.

Well. Look at what God's word. Says here. I think. And. Words of encouragement. I think. This might be what God is. Might be leading you to do. That's.

That's prophecy. Because you're applying God's word. Into our lives. And. That's one way. In which it can. Happen. It can happen. In various other ways.

[19:57] In the church. But. As we do that. We're called. And. We're meant to do it. First of all. We're meant to do it. In what context? In love. And for what purpose?

To build up. Right? Again. Those. Those priorities are there. So when you say. When you. You admonish your brother in Christ. Or when you encourage them. You are prophesying to them. You don't do it. To lord it over them. And we. Remember. In. I don't know. It's three weeks ago now. Or a month ago. But we said that. Oftentimes. This is sometimes abused. In the church. Because somebody will come to you. And say. Well I have the prophetic word. From the Lord. And they might say. To the church. I have a prophetic word. From the Lord. To this church.

Or to you. And what do you expect it to do? To take that word. And to run with it. Well actually. Paul says. No. You have to take that word.

[20:56] And say. Thank you brother. Or sister in Christ. And then you have to weigh it. To judge it. And know that. What Paul wants. Again. Paul wants there to be order.

Even in prophecy. Even in the use of this gift. He wants there to be order. So even as we exercise words. To build up another. We have to do it. In an orderly manner. By the way.

He's already said. That tongues. Should have interpreters. But now he says. Concerning prophecy. That even that. Should be measured. Again. The same criteria.

Follows. Let there just be two or three. No more than two or three. When there is prophecy. In gathered worship. And then. It needs to be weighed.

Let two or three prophets speak. Let the others. The others. Weigh. What is said. Weighing there. Means to judge.

[21:52] To examine. What is said. And to determine. Whether what is said. Is indeed. God given words. Which. Agrees with God's word.

The holy scriptures. Or just mere human opinion. And this is why. Orderliness. You can see now. Why orderliness. Is needed. Even in. When prophecies.

Is being given. In the church. Because if all of them. Are talking at once. There's no opportunity. To weigh. What is being said. And to judge rightly. For this. In keeping. With God's word.

And note. The goal of orderliness. In verse 31. Again. It's so that. All may learn. That's the goal. All may learn. And all be.

May be encouraged. Again. I know that. We're. Emphasizing this. Over and over again. But. It's true.

[22:46] And it's something. That we must. We must grasp. The aim. Of the exercising. Of our gifts. Even gifts. Like prophecy. Which Paul says. Is important. And the church. Should do more and more of.

The goal. And the aim of it. Is not for our own. Self gratification. Is to build up. The church. And the constraints. That are given. Around them.

Are the constraints. Of love. So when Paul says. Let just two or three. Speak. Let there be orderliness. Those are constraints. Of love. For the common good.

So therefore. If there is resentment. Towards these constraints. Of love. If we have resentment. In our hearts. Towards them. I think it may betray. In us.

Self-centeredness. Rather than the mind of Christ. That flows out of love. If we. Want there to be. If we want.

[23:42] Just freedom to say. Whatever we want to say. When we want to say it. Without any sort of. Orderliness. Around it. It might betray. That it's more about us.

Than in fact. Building up the church. It might betray. That we actually. Don't have what Paul says. Is essential. In any exercise. Of our gifts. Love.

Love that is patient. And kind. That is not arrogant. Or rude. That does not insist. On its own way. And Paul thinks. This will look.

Paul thinks. This will look. Like a church. In which people readily. Defer to one another. Out of love. When we exercise our gifts. Right. It's not about. Oh it's my turn. I need to go.

Move out of the way. Rather. That we defer to one another. In love. And some would say. That the Holy Spirit. Must not be quenched. I've heard that before. And you might have heard it too.

[24 : 37] Right. Don't quench the Holy Spirit. But once. When they say that. They are wrongly. They are quoting. First of the soul. In verse 519. And that's a wrong application. Of that verse.

That verse has to do. With not following. Worthily. Desires. And the desires. Of the flesh. In our own heart. And in our own life. Christian walk. Which.

If we do that. It inhibits. The spirit's power. In the believer's life. By following the world. Rather than the spirit of God. We're quenching the spirit. That's what that verse. Has to do with.

So when you hear somebody say that. Tell them. They're misapplying. And take them back to. First Corinthians 519. And read the scriptures. The passages around it. And if someone.

Were to say that to Paul. Don't quench the spirit. Well Paul will respond. And say to them. As he does. Here. The spirit of prophets. Are subject. To whom?

[25 : 35] Prophets. What Paul means here. Is that the spiritual utterance. Of prophecy. Is that something. That happens. And you know. Something just happens to you.

And you have no control. And it just takes over your mouth. And your tongue. And your mind. And your intellect. No. Paul says. That's not how the Holy Spirit works. Paul is emphasizing here.

That the Holy Spirit. Does not take over your mind. It works through you. But you are free. And you are able. Even when you are being.

Led by the Holy Spirit. To exercise. Self control. And therefore. You are invited to do so. In the context.

Of corporate worship. Exercise self control. Be orderly. In the way. That builds up. Out of love. For your fellow brothers. And sisters. In Christ. In a way. I think Paul is saying.

[26 : 31] To the Corinthians. And us as well. That the test. That we are indeed. To be ruled by. The test. We are to be ruled by. Is. Is.

Is. Is. That. Are we being ruled. By the Holy Spirit. In the exercise. Of our gifts. And as we are being ruled. By the Holy Spirit. Does it promote. Orderliness.

In the church. That's the test. Does that exercise. Of our. Gifts. In the power of the Holy Spirit. Promote orderliness. In the church. Or does it lead.

To disorder. Which is what's going on. In the Corinthian church. Does it lead. To greater unity. Among the brethren. Or does it bring.

Disunity. Which is what's going on. In the Corinthian church. They have gifts. Indeed. They do. Paul doesn't deny that. But in the exercise of it. Because.

[27 : 24] They're doing it. For selfish ends. It brings. Disunity. And disorderliness. And God isn't glorified. The church isn't being built up. And that's the test.

Paul is reminding us here. God is a God of order. And unity. And often times. In the church. What we've done. Is that we've rendered.

The Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit. Into a chaos agent. You might be familiar. With what I'm saying. When the Holy Spirit comes.

We expect there to be chaos. And disruption. And I say this humbly.

But I say it. I think. This mindset. Bothers. Borders. On blasphemy. Because. In fact. God the Holy Spirit. Is not a chaos agent.

[28 : 20] The opposite is true about him. He is the God. Who brings order. Out of disorder. He's the God. Who comes. Into the world.

The power. The agent of creation. Into the void. And the disorder. And brings. Orderliness. He's the God. Who comes.

Even in redemption. And regenerates. Those who are dead. In sin. Mired. In sin. Against God. And regenerates them.

And points them. Reorients their minds. And their hearts. Towards God. That is how the Holy Spirit. Functions. And the hymn of the Holy Spirit. In his ministry. As the spirit of.

That proceeds from the Father. And the Son. Is to do what? Always. The Holy Spirit's aim. And ministry. Is always. To point to Jesus Christ. As the means of our salvation.

[29 : 16] So. When it's been. When it's happening. In a church. Where. Our exercise of our gifts. Stops to be about. God. The Son. We ought to be.

Cautious. And examine our motives. And our hearts. And so. Paul concludes here. In verse 33. For God is not a God of confusion.

But a God of peace. So. When there is. As was the case. In the Corinthian church. When there is disturbance. When there is disorderliness.

When there is opposition. To establish authority. In the church. Paul is in fact saying. That that is not the work. Of the Holy Spirit. Because he is the God of peace.

He brings order. In the midst of chaos. He brings peace. In the midst. Of calamity. And he brings wholeness. And unity. From diverse.

[30:14] And divergent individuals. As he gathers them. As one family. As he's done. Those of us. Who are gathered here now. From every tongue.

And tribe. And nations. The Holy Spirit brings us. Into an orderly family of God. It is his work in us. That does that. And brings order. Out of disorder. And therefore.

Let us not attribute to him. That which is against his serving purpose. And work in the church. More importantly. We must look to him. We must look to God.

The Holy Spirit. And ask for his help. In ordering our lives together. We do this rightly. When we come together. Every Lord's day. And we're reminded of it.

As we say it. Every day. When we gather on Sundays. In the College for Purity. When we pray. Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts. By the inspiration of your Holy Spirit.

[31:16] To what end? That we may perfectly love you. And worthily. Magnify. Your holy name. That is the purpose. For which we gather.

And only God the Holy Spirit. Can help us to that end. So. We're going to stop here this week. Next week. We'll look at part two. Of orderly worship. As we come to.

The more controversial aspects. Of Paul's directives. But before. Before we pray. I want to remind us. That there are. These are not mere suggestions.

Brothers and sisters in Christ. These are not mere suggestions. That we can afford to take or leave. This is God's word. That we must wrestle with.

We must wrestle with it. Paul subconsciously. Note this. For us. In verse 37. Briefly. Just look at verse 37. He says there.

[32:10] That the things I am writing to you. Are. What? A command. Of the Lord. So humbly. We wrestle with God's word.

And we seek to conform our lives. And our worship. In accordance to it. In this. Is God glorified. And Christ exalted. In the power of the Holy Spirit.

Amen. Amen. Amen.