

Speaking in Tongues

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning. It's been a good morning so far.! We stretched our lungs a little bit this morning in Sunday school,! Getting ready for the Christmas program.

! We go through and ultimately to die for our sins and to be raised to newness of life.

We have a risen Savior to worship. Before we get into the message this morning, one announcement that I do want to touch on, it wasn't in the bulletin this week, it is regarding baptism classes as well as membership classes.

We will be starting them here in the near future. I don't think we'll be starting them this coming week or this week, but I think for the first week of December, I will have a date to announce where we will make a start with that.

And so, if you're considering baptism or even just like to take those classes in, feel free to come and talk to me about that.

[1 : 3 0] And we'll definitely love to have you there. Or membership, if that is something you are considering, becoming a member in the local church, there too, come and talk to me.

And we will make a plan to start working through those classes. Alright.

This morning, we are diving into speaking in tongues. It's a challenging topic for myself, as I don't know a whole lot about it.

There is information out there, and I already have my hands on some, but there's a lot to read, and only so much time to be doing that. And so, yeah, I don't know it all when it comes to that.

But that is fine. We have God's Word here, and Paul is dealing with this issue in the Corinthian church, and he shares of his knowledge, of his wisdom with it, that God has given to him.

[2 : 5 2] And so, we will look at that this morning. And so, we're still on the topic of spiritual gifts that was brought up in chapter 12.

Where it was brought out, there's various different spiritual giftings. We don't all have the same giftings. In order for a body to function properly, we need some of all these different giftings.

Not that everyone has the same one, because then there'd be problems, right? And we had the imagery of the human body, how we need all of our body parts, all of our limbs, and just all the different organs.

All of them have a purpose. We need them all. And that was the parallel or the diagram, the imagery given for spiritual giftings within the church, that we need all of them.

And so, and then in chapter 13, Paul brought out, you know, the greatest gift, a gift that all of us should have, and that is the gift of love, and love for one another, and how it edifies and builds up, and so on.

[4 : 1 8] And so from there, he shifts back to the struggles in the Corinthian church, how they are focusing on one gift.

And so Paul, here in our text this morning, he will shed some light on the gift of tongues. And then he encourages them, you know, there's other giftings that are better than the giftings, gifting of tongues, and just because of the dangerous path that they were heading down.

So thank you, Willie, for reading the text for us this morning. So as we break down this portion, we'll look first of all at, let's kind of bring out both, or these two specific spiritual gifts, tongues and prophecy.

And we'll just touch into the examples that Paul gives of hearing uninterpreted tongues, what it does.

And he closes it off with, tongues have to be interpreted. Let's begin.

[5 : 44] In verses 1 through 5, Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God, for no one understands him. However, in the Spirit he speaks mysteries. But he who prophesies speaks edification and exhortation and comfort to men.

He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. I wish you all spoke with tongues, but even more that you prophesied.

For he who prophesies is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets that the church may receive edification. So he begins saying, Pursue love.

We're encouraged to pursue love. And that is the command to us, that is the command to the church, the command that Christ gave to love the Lord your God and to love your fellow man.

[6 : 56] And so we are, therefore, to love one another and to seek others' well-being above our own. And if we jump back to chapter 10 in 1 Corinthians, chapter 10, verse 24, it says, Let no one seek his own, but each the other's well-being.

And so, why? Why should I be my brother's keeper? Why should I be looking out for him more than myself?

Well, if we go back to Romans chapter 5. I think I have the wrong reference here.

I do have the wrong reference.

Yeah. All right. Well, we will move on. But it was the verse that talks about how love, how it edifies, how it builds up, how it encourages others.

[8 : 31] And so, as I mentioned, in chapter 13, 1 Corinthians, we had a whole chapter on love, on the qualities of having love, how it suffers long, how it is kind, does not seek its own, and does not envy, and the list goes on.

It's proving it to be the greatest gift. And so, we are to pursue love, to seek after it, to possess it, and ultimately, to show it to others for their good, which is then good for us also, as we edify one another, we build each other up.

And as we pursue love, we should desire spiritual gifts.

And so, Paul just finished telling us, in chapter 12, and in verse 7, that all believers, possess at least one spiritual gift.

We're all given a spiritual gift. So, what does he mean, when he says here, that we should desire, spiritual gifts?

[10 : 12] I think he is calling us, to seek out, what those giftings are. Often, we wonder, what is my gifting? What am I gifted at?

What kind of gifts, do I have? My question is then, how do you find out, what your giftings were, you know, in the workplace?

Whether it's, you know, leaving home and working, or for mothers, as at home as a housewife, you know, the different things, this is what I excel at, this is my gift, this is what I'm good at.

Wherever it is, how do we find out, what those giftings are? Is it not, in trying different things, trying different jobs, pursuing different interests, until you find, what it is that you're good at?

That exposes, the gifting, right? Should it be different, with spiritual giftings?

[11 : 21] Should it be, any different? How do we, seek out or find, our spiritual giftings?

Could you be, good at teaching? How will you know, unless, you try it? Maybe, as, summer rolls around, and, the sign-off sheet, for Sunday school teachers, goes up.

Should I try this? See, if the gifting is there. Or, you know, other gifts, that chapter 12 brought out, gift of administrations.

We've got it in the bulletin, we're looking for, a chairman, someone to fill, the chairman position. Maybe, maybe the giftings, are there. How will you know, unless, you try?

There's also, the gift of helps. As I thought about that one, a little bit, I thought of, the, the different boards, or committees, within, within the church family.

[12 : 38] Whether it's, property, or building maintenance, or the potluck committee, or ushers, scripture reading, janitors, you know, the list goes on.

The gift of helps, to make, make ourselves available, to approach those, on those committees, is there any way, that I can help? You know, just for yourself to see, does that flush out, any giftings?

So, we're here, we are, encouraged, to seek out, our giftings, not, to sit by idly, and say, well, I don't know, what my gifting is, I'll just, stay sitting here, until it shows itself.

No, we need to, to step out, and, to find it, to, to see, what it is. And so, from there, we hone in, on, two, specific giftings.

Prophesying, and speaking in tongues. And Paul gives, the recommendation, to desire, prophesying, over, speaking in tongues.

[13 : 53] And so, to begin with, the Corinthians, were getting caught up, in the tongue movement. Back then, in the very early church, it was already, a thing.

They were fast heading, toward being, a, what we today, we would call, a charismatic, or maybe the, the Pentecostal churches, where, the gifting of tongues, is, a big deal.

And so, Paul, though, is giving correction here. He says, be careful, what you're chasing after. Chapter 12, saying, there's, different giftings, there's one body, the many different members, or different giftings.

And so, for the whole church, to be flocking, to one, particular gifting, trying to possess, the one and same gifting, is a big red flag.

something is not right. How, will the church be healthy, and function properly, if, everybody is doing, one and the same thing?

[15 : 07] Who is going to take care, of the other things, that need to happen? So, speaking in tongues, is given, as a gifting, but, it was also clear, that we won't all, possess, the same gifting.

So, Paul says, he'd rather have them, all prophesy, than speak in tongues. So, why is that? He compares, the two giftings, in, in verses two, through four.

So, I'll just break it down, we'll take one at a, one at a time. So, for the, the gifting of tongues, we have, verse two, and the first part, of verse four.

So, he says, for he who speaks in a tongue, does not speak to men, but to God, for no one understands him. However, in the spirit, he speaks mysteries. He who speaks in a tongue, edifies himself.

So, the things that he is bringing out, he says, you're not speaking to men, because no one understands, but rather, to God. And at the end of verse two, he brings in, the word mysteries.

[16 : 25] In the spirit, he speaks mysteries. What are mysteries? Things, that are not known. They're unknowns. And, as we see in verse four, it edifies, self.

And, you know, what did Paul just finish explaining, in chapter 13? Gift of love. Love calls us, to put others, before ourselves.

And so, the first instance of tongues, in, in the church, is, in Acts chapter two.

But first, I would like to turn to, to Mark chapter 16, where, Jesus, prophesies, regarding tongues.

Mark chapter 16, and verse 17. That is the, Mark's version, of the, the great commission.

[17 : 29] How, Jesus, speaking with his disciples, before he ascended, into heaven, and the commands, that he gave them. And so, in verse 17, of Mark 16, he says, and these signs, will follow those, who believe.

In my name, they will cast out demons, they will speak, with new tongues. And, it goes on, but he brings out, that they will speak, with new tongues.

And he's speaking, to his disciples, and so then, from there, if we turn, to Acts 2, we see, that fulfilled. So, on the day of Pentecost, and, I'll just, I'll read the first, four verses.

When the day of Pentecost, had fully come, they were all, with one accord, in one place. As the, the disciples, the number of, about 120 of them, as chapter 1 tells us.

And suddenly, there came, a sound from heaven, as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled, the whole house, where they were sitting. Then there appeared, to them, divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat, upon each of them.

[18 : 58] And they were all, filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak, with tongue, with other tongues, as the Spirit, gave them utterance. So, it is the Spirit, giving, the gifting, of tongues.

And they began, to speak, with other tongues. Now, verse 6, tells us, that this tongues, was languages, not random noises.

And so, if we read verse 6, and when this multitude, when this sound occurred, the multitude, came together, and were confused, because everyone, heard them speak, in his own language.

So, the multitudes, were hearing them speak, in their own language. And, as we go down, to, to verse 14, but even before that, as the multitude, is hearing them, speaking in tongues, they're hearing, in their own language.

And, what is it, that they are hearing? And, verse 11, brings that out. As they say, we hear them speaking, in our own tongues, the wonderful works, of God.

[20 : 12] So, they are, praising God. And it is, they themselves, that are edified, the disciples. It doesn't edify, the multitudes, as verse 12, brings out.

So, they were all amazed, and perplexed, saying to one another, whatever could this mean? And so, they are not, getting edification, out of it. And yet, you know, as the disciples, are filled with the Holy Spirit, and, given, being able to speak, with tongues, and, and so, they are rejoicing, they are praising God.

But, the multitude, is hearing this, and they're wondering, what's going on? So, they're coming together. It's God's way, of drawing them there. Then, in, in verse 14, once the multitude, is gathered, Peter, in verse 14, it says, that he, standing up with the 11, raised his voice, and said to them.

So, here, Peter stands up, together with the 11, and, but Peter, Peter addresses the multitude. And, I don't know if, if Peter had it within him, to speak more than one language, at once.

But, you know, I can't. It's one language, at a time, right? And so, I believe Peter, would have been doing, the same thing, right? But he stands up, and he addresses the multitude, and he speaks to them.

[21 : 40] And who is he speaking to? Who is this multitude? They are people from, all over the world, all over the known world. But who was, in Jerusalem, at this time, for this special occasion?

It was the Jews. The Gentiles had no reason, to be, to be flocking, to, to Jerusalem, for this, this feast ceremony. It was the Jews.

And though, they have picked up, other languages, in these different, surrounding countries, where they live, and they're hearing, the wonderful works of God, in their own language.

When Peter stands up, to, share, with them, about, Christ, he addresses them, in, Jewish language, something that, they still all understood, as well.

And he's calling, the multitude, to repentance. And as we see, that progress, how their hearts, are pricked, and they turn, to the Lord. And while they turn, to the disciples, what must we do?

[22 : 55] And, the, the message, is shared with them, to repent, and to turn, to the Lord.

And we know, that thousands, were added, to the church, on that day. There then, was edification, for them, as they too, found the Lord. And so, this speaking, in tongues, was given, as a sign.

It's not something, that they would, continually do. The sign, is given again, in Acts chapter 10. We won't turn there, but, where Peter, goes to, the house, of Cornelius, and he shares, the gospel, with Gentiles.

And there too, it speaks of, when the Holy, when they, Peter is, is teaching them, that the Holy Spirit, comes down, and indwells, them as well.

And, the sign, was given to them, as well, as had been given, to the disciples. And so, that was the, and they, and it, it talks about them, as well, speaking in tongues.

[24 : 07] But it says, that there is a sign, the sign, of tongues. And they too, magnified God. And so, it was edification, for themselves.

In, first Corinthians, chapter 13, we read, that tongues, would cease. There would be, instances, of speaking in tongues, but, it wouldn't be, something that would, be continually happening.

And it wasn't, for the edifying, of the church. It only edified self. So, that is what, Paul shares here, on, on the gift of tongues.

Well then, prophesying. What is, prophesying? We look at, verse 3, and the second part, of verse 4.

But he who prophesies, speaks edification, and exhortation, and comfort, to men. He who prophesies, edifies the church.

[25 : 19] So, it says, and it speaks, edification, which is to build up, exhortation, which is to, incite, or to encourage, to do good, and comfort.

And to whom? To men. To others. It edifies, the church. But what is it, to prophesy, or to be a prophet?

We think of prophets, you know, our mind goes back, to the Old Testament, where, in those days, prophets, would receive, direct revelation, from God, and usually, for specific, occasions.

Christians. Just one quick example, would be, Jonah. Jonah received, a direct revelation, from God, about, Nineveh, that he was to go there, and to, to warn them, of their lifestyle, and where they were heading, in that, and to turn from that.

So, it was a direct, revelation. And then, two, we see that, you know, the outcome, of that revelation, of the prophecy, that Jonah was going to share, with them, was dependent, on how they responded.

[26 : 44] And so, when Jonah, after he, decides to run away, but then is brought back, and he goes to Nineveh, he shares that prophecy, with them, and, they do repent, and they turn, from their ways.

And, you know, they were okay, for a while. Eventually, they did turn back. They did fall, astray again. And in, in Nahum, there is further prophecy, about Nineveh, being destroyed, and later on, it was.

Often, as well, we read, of a prophet, that would come, and warn Israel, of sin, that they were committing, and what would happen, if they didn't turn, from their sinful ways.

And then, as well, there is prophecy, of prediction, of future events. Things that, are even today, are yet to come, with end times, and so on.

And so, regarding prophecy, 1 Corinthians 13, just as it told us, that tongues would cease, it tells us, as well, that prophecies, will fail, meaning, that they will, have an end.

[28 : 02] And so, overall, with the, the canon of scripture, being complete, the old, old testament, type of prophet, has come, and gone. There is no need, for, for further revelation, in that regard.

God, God has revealed, all he needs to, within his word. It is all, recorded, for us. And so then, you know, what is, Paul talking about?

That he would rather, have them prophesy. What kind of prophet, is Paul talking about, in our text? One definition, of prophecy, that I came across, is, to declare, what cannot be known, by natural means.

And on that note, I would like for us, to turn to, 1st Peter. 1st Peter, chapter 1. 1st Peter 1, and in verse 20.

Sorry, I believe that's 2nd Peter. I've mixed up all of them, I know it seems like. Yes, 2nd Peter. 2nd Peter, chapter 1.

[29 : 26] 2nd Peter 1, verses 20, and 21. Knowing this first, that no prophecy, of scripture, is of any, private interpretation. For prophecy, will never, for prophecy, never came, by the will of man.

But holy men, of God, spoke, as they were moved, by the Holy Spirit. So this is speaking, of the prophets, that were, before, in Old Testament times, how, it wasn't, something that they, had thought up, as they read the scripture, and they thought this up, for themselves.

You know, it was God, revealing it to them. And in the same way, God, as we read scripture, today, it is the Lord, that reveals, truth from his word.

It is not something, that, that we, think up, ourselves. Scripture cannot, be interpreted, by anyone, naturally.

It is by God, revealing that truth, through his Holy Spirit, which indwells, his children. And so then, to transition from, the Old Testament prophet, to the church age, Peter writes, chapter 2, verse 1, but there, were also, false prophets, among the people.

[30 : 49] And we read of them, in the Old Testament, the, the false prophets, that would come to the kings, and say, yes, do this, do this, and they were going, against the Lord. But they were, false prophets, with false prophecies.

And, God would send, true prophets, to warn the king. And we hear, of the persecution, that they suffered, because, it was usually, not so good news.

It says, there were also, false prophets, among the people, even as there will be, false teachers, among you, who will secretly, bring in, destructive heresies, even denying the Lord, who bought them, and bring on themselves, swift destruction.

There were false prophets, in times past, and there will be, false teachers, plaguing the church. And so he exchanges, prophet, with teacher. And so, teachers, who share, truth, from scripture, as the Lord, reveals it to them, do so, to edify, the listener, to encourage them, to lift them up, to exhort them, to walk, as God, God's word, teaches them to.

And in that, is love. Love for God, love for his people. It shows, selflessness, that others, well-being, is a priority.

[32 : 24] Going back, to our text, therefore, Paul writes, verse 5, I wish you all spoke with tongues, speaking to God in that sense, you know, that self too is edified, but even more, that you prophesied, for he who prophesies, is greater than he who speaks with tongues, unless indeed he interprets, that the church may receive edification.

Giftings of tongues, is good, but, it needs to be interpreted, it needs to be, that, people, others will understand it, that they too, will be edified.

And so, this is maybe even targeting more, you know, in, in church settings, where the, the people gather together, that, you know, as in, as in these, these charismatic churches, where, you know, blurting out in tongues, or in, in, in, in, sounds, and so on, that we can't understand, you know, how is that edifying, to the others?

No one else knows, what they're saying. And it just, it leads to, to confusion. It doesn't edify, it doesn't build up. How do others, you know, how do we know, what this person may think, they'll be praising God for, or what they themselves, should then praise God for?

There is no, no clarity there, right? And, where, you know, prophesying, where, you know, speaking, what God has revealed.

[34 : 07] So, as God reveals truth from His Word, to be sharing that, with one another, that others too, can see, get to a point of a deeper understanding.

That, brings edification, and it brings worship, to God. And so, as Corinth wrestled, with desiring, to be speaking in tongues, Paul, he continues to highlight, the dangerous territory, that they were getting into.

And so, yeah, the tongue movement, that, that they were attracted to, it was very obviously, the same sort, that plagues, churches today.

the gift, that they, they feel they have, it was not proclaimed, in words, it was unintelligible. Stay, a series of sounds, or something that, no one else, could understand.

And, Paul is, giving warning on this then. You know, what kind of profit, what kind of value, is there, in unintelligible, murmurs, or groanings, or shoutings, can't be interpreted, in any way, how is anyone else, going to get anything, out of it?

[35 : 34] And so, Paul, is like, I'll give you some examples, to help this make sense, to you. And he gives, examples, of lifeless instruments.

Verse 6, to 9, But now, brethren, if I come to you, speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you, either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?

Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction, in the sounds, how will it be known, what is piped, or played?

For if the trumpet, makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare, for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue, words easy to understand, how will it be known, what is spoken?

For you will be speaking, into the air. She brings up, lifeless instruments. How can you identify the song, if not by the tune?

[36 : 45] Even this morning, as Sierra begins playing the piano, you know, we recognize the song, as she plays those first notes, you know, if we're familiar with the song, it pops in her head, we know, we know the song, right?

And we know, we too, can join in, in worship, and singing, right? You know, if you would sit down, and pick one key, and just continually be hitting, on that same one key, we'd have confusion, you know?

What are they playing? What song is this? What am I supposed to be singing? Right? Unless, they make a distinction, in the sounds, how will it be known, what is piped, or played?

The second example, would have been familiar to, you know, with armies, of their day, as they use trumpets, to signal the soldiers, to advance in battle, or to retreat, different things as well, but, so if the soldiers, couldn't recognize, the signal, they would have been confused, and it could be, fatal for them.

And so, it was important, that when, the trumpet would be played, that it would make, distinct sounds, that the soldiers recognized, as in order to advance, or to retreat, or whatever the order was.

[38 : 19] it is important, that when a sound is made, that it is understood, that we, we get the meaning of it.

And so, he follows that up, in verse 9, you know, in the same way, our tongues, must speak words, that are easy to understand. Someone comes up to me, and begins speaking, in a language, that I don't understand, what does that profit, either one of us?

They are speaking, into the air, because it's going over my head, they're wasting their breath, right? And I'm only confused, at what they're trying to say, and they're getting frustrated, as well, because I'm not getting, what they're trying to explain.

And so, the verdict is, that tongues, must be interpreted. In verse 10, there are, it may be, so many kinds of languages, in the world, and none of them, is without significance.

Therefore, if I do not know, the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner, to him who speaks, and he who speaks, will be a foreigner, to me. Even so you, since you are zealous, for spiritual gifts, let it be, for the edification, of the church, that you seek, to excel.

[39 : 54] Tongues, must be interpreted. If the listener, is unable to understand, it is of no value, to speak, in the first place. Paul says, there's many languages, in the world, there's none, more important, than the other, that the other person, know you need, to understand, this language.

God created, all languages, according to his purpose. There's no, superior language.

Paul, tucks that in there, that, that none of them, is without significance, or without meaning.

You know, in Old Testament times, the Israelites, God's chosen people, right? And if a Gentile, wanted, to convert to, Judaism, to become a Jew, they had to, conform to their laws, to their customs.

And I would think, that they would have had, to learn the language, as well. Because as they came together, in the synagogue, and to read, from the, from the scrolls, the word of God, they wouldn't have been, translating it, into different languages.

[41 : 09] So, you know, you better, learn, the Hebrew language. I think, we can, most of us, can identify with that as well.

We're, it's a healthy, Mennonite population here. How many of us, you know, have, have family members, maybe, who think that, German is, low German, make that correction, low German is, superior language.

And that they're, keeping themselves, apart from, from other people groups, from other languages, in this sense, where, you know, this language is superior, we're sticking to this, and, and not, if anyone, just wanted to come in, they better, learn the language.

And yet, for God, there is no language, greater than another. It's not something, that we can hold, over the next person. And so, in, in verse 11, Paul states, that, if he doesn't understand, the language, both he, and the speakers, are foreigners, to each other.

Neither one, is at home there. They're both, foreigners. Interesting thought there. And it is due to, a lack of understanding.

[42 : 38] One isn't better, than the others. Both of them, are strangers. Both of them, are at a loss. There's no room, for us, to think ourselves, even the slightest bit, better than someone else.

For then, love, has gone, out of the window. It is, a good thing, to be zealous, as verse 12, talks about, to be zealous, or eager, for spiritual gifts.

And as, we seek them out, there's always, one thing, to keep in mind.

Who will be, edified in this? Will it be me, or will it be, the church? The greatest gift, is love.

It is what, God gifted us, when he sent, his son from heaven, to die for our sins. It is, abundant, in his grace, and his mercy, toward us.

[43 : 53] And it is, his love, for us, that has him, returning soon, to take us, to be with him, for all eternity. And we, are called, to show, such love, for our fellow man, to seek, to edify others, before ourselves.

So the best way, to do that, is by exercising, the gifts, that God has given us. Using them, in a way, to, edify, to exhort, and to comfort others, that the church, might be edified, built up, and encouraged, to keep serving, the Lord that they love.

Let's pray. Lord, we bow again, before you this morning, and we thank you, for this day. And we thank you, for your church.

And we thank you, for the spiritual gifts, that you have given, that you have given, to each, and every one, who is your child, and belongs, to the family, of God.

And so Lord, help us to, to seek out, our giftings, to step out, and to try, different things, to see where our giftings, might lie.

[45 : 26] But Lord, as we do this, help us, to be mindful, to be mindful, of our motives, of our goals. Who are we, seeking to edify?

Lord, may we always, put others, before ourselves, and even that, as we exercise, the gifts, that you give us, they are given to us, to edify others, to build them up, to encourage them, to exhort them, to continue, serving you, to also, step out in faith, and to exercise, their gifts.

That edification, goes on, and it goes on, and it goes on. And that, through all of this, you are worshipped. Father, may you, go with us, as we part, from here.

In Jesus name, Amen.