

Order That Edifies

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[0:00] The sermon text for today is 1 Corinthians 14, verses 26-40. At the conclusion of the reading, I will declare, this is the word of the Lord, and the church, in joyful response to his revelation given to us, will together say, thanks be to God.

What then, brothers, when you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.

If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and 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.

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting there, 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. As in all the churches of the saints, 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.

[1:23] If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. Or was it from you that the word of God came?

Or are you the only one it has reached? If anyone thinks that he is a prophet or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.

If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues, but all things should be done decently and in order.

This is the word of the Lord. Speak to us now, Lord.

We have been hearing your word, read, sung, prayed, and now as we attend to the preaching of the word, God, I ask that it be your voice that we hear.

[2:29] God, what we're after is an encounter with the living God, not a word from a mere man. So, God, speak to us now, we pray, for the building up of this body, for the advancement of the gospel, for your glory.

In Jesus' name, amen. Well, good morning, church. It's good to see all you. We're getting more and more tan as we spend time out in the sun, it seems.

But my name's Mike, one of the pastors here at Shoreline. And as was just read for us, we are in 1 Corinthians chapter 14, verses 26 through 40 today.

So, if you haven't already turned there in your Bibles, please turn there in your Bibles. We want you in God's word in front of you. There are Bibles in the back table. If anyone does not have one, you're welcome to keep one of those as a gift to you.

Well, I remember as a young engineer at Electric Boat, one of my very first group meetings that I was a part of, my supervisor was going around the room, as supervisors do, getting status updates.

[3:33] And it was kind of a rowdy bunch. There was just side conversations going on, snarky comments being muttered, even by our veteran principal engineer.

And at one point, my supervisor pounded the table, looked up and said, one meeting. Disorder abounded in that room. He called for order.

Now, can any of the families in the room relate to that situation maybe? Maybe around the dinner table? Parents, do you sometimes have to, you know, strike the gavel and yell for order in the

courtroom?

Anybody? One conversation, please. Did anyone even hear what mom just said? We want order at the family meal.

Now, in reading 1 Corinthians chapter 14, it seems that disorder abounded at the church gatherings in Corinth. You know, you got one guy up front who's prophesying a word from the Lord.

[4:34] And meanwhile, there's the guy in the back who's speaking in a language that nobody understands. And then the wife of the first prophet gets up and starts asking her husband questions while he's prophesying.

And another guy's trying to speak at the same time, making the first guy even louder. I mean, that's like the picture that you get of the Corinthian church gatherings and reading through this chapter.

It was a cacophony of sound. It was a disorder. Now, the question I want to ask is, who was being served in the midst of such a disorderly church gathering?

Right? Who is being built up? Who is being edified in the midst of that disorder? Well, really, it's just the individuals who are speaking. Right?

They might be being built up. But what about the rest of the body? Because, you know, what Paul is after, what God is after, is the edification, the building up, the encouragement of the whole body, when the whole body gathers together.

[5:40] He wants order that edifies. Order that edifies. And that is the title of today's sermon. Let's see if this thing will work. Nope.

That's all right. Order that edifies. So we're concluding our time for now in 1 Corinthians. We're going to take a break and preach through the Psalms like we've been saying.

But we are not going to just end here because the next chapter is on the resurrection of Christ.

We're going to come back in the fall, and we're going to do a little bit more of a deep dive into the rest of the book.

But here in chapter 14, as Paul drives his discussion on spiritual gifts to a close, he says, look there in your Bibles, verse 26. He says, what then, brothers?

Or what does this imply? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation.

[6:37] So for two and a half chapters, right, from the beginning of chapter 12, Paul has been talking about the mature exercise of spiritual gifts within the body of Christ.

Now these grace gifts, as we learn, these grace gifts are apportioned out by the Spirit to every believer so that the body would be built up in love and under the lordship of Christ.

And last week, that meant that intelligibility, a clearly spoken word, speaking in a way that people understand, that must be prioritized in the gathering, right?

When words that people understand, that are clearly spoken, are uttered, God's presence is manifested. The saints are built up. The lost are saved.

Paul's about to get even more practical in his instructions. But first, he strikes the drumbeat that he was striking all throughout his discussion on the spiritual gifts. He says, let all things be done for building up.

[7:39] Let all things be done for building up. The first thing here we see is that he reiterates the main principle. Do all to build up the body. And I want to mention again, kids, in the room, we've got these worksheets on the back table.

Whoever comes up here is welcome to take this one right here. For anybody, you can follow along with the sermon. First point being, main principle reiterated, do all to build up the body.

Now, this has been Paul's point all throughout chapter 14. If you just look through chapter 14, you can see all of his language. Build up the church. Build up the body. Strive to excel in building up the church.

Do what builds up the body all over the place. This is what true Christ-like love, as described in chapter 13, actually looks like. Christ-like love.

Maturity. This is spiritual maturity. It's love. It always aims at the good, the building up, the edification of others.

[8:42] And this is to be the aim of the saints when they gather. When they come together. And there's that phrase again. When you come

together. Do you remember where we saw that phrase before?

When you come together. Paul said it five different times in chapter 11 when he was talking about the Lord's Supper. And you know, this is not just a convenient way to talk about the church service when they come together.

Of course. No, no. This is a spiritual reality. Made visible in corporate worship. Made visible in corporate worship. That we, the saints, though many, are one body in Christ.

We reflect that when we come together. And so, Paul is calling the Corinthians to reflect the supernatural oneness. The unity that they have in Christ by gathering.

Right? And specifically, by gathering in a posture of loving service. Ready to use their spiritual gifts to build up the saints. So, Shoreline.

[9:42] Once again, we are called here by God in his word to get our eyes off of ourselves and onto others. Right? We keep saying this.

Andrew said this in his sermon from chapter 11. We keep saying we're called to look upward and outward. Not anybody? Not inward. Upward, outward, not inward.

And I just want to say briefly, you know, this posture of heart, it doesn't just happen. It's something that we need to cultivate. It's something that we need to practice throughout the week as we immerse ourselves in the word of God.

In the gospel. As we commune with him in our own times of the word and prayer. And as we die to self. And let the life of Christ be manifested in us.

And that looks like self-giving love for others. So, this daily cultivation of an upward and outward heart posture. That prepares us for this.

[10:47] For this corporate gathering when we come together. So, let's also make it a habit. And we'll talk about this at the end of the service. But let's also make it a habit on Sunday morning to pray.

Lord, use me and lead me today. To edify my brothers and sisters in Christ for your glory. That's a good prayer to pray on Sunday morning. Okay, so Paul reiterates his overarching principle.

Let all things be done to build up the body. And then he gets real practical. Okay, look at verse 27. If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three.

And each in turn and 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. Okay, so last week we learned that building up requires intelligibility.

All right. This week we see that it also requires order. Building up the body requires order. That is the second point on those sheets, kids. Building up the body requires order.

[11:55] Here in verse 27 and 28, Paul lays out rules for orderly tongue speech. He's painting for the Corinthians a portrait of what their gathering should look like in light of everything else he said.

And it first looks like speaking in tongues in a way that is orderly. Now as I said last week in different words, the contrast between Paul's instructions here and the ecstatic and uncontrolled tongue speaking that we see in a lot of modern day Pentecostal churches is striking.

Apparently tongue speech is able to be controlled by the speaker. Okay. You know, Paul exhorts the church in Ephesians 5.18. Paul says this, And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but, what does he say?

Be filled with the Spirit. Okay, what's the point? Why does he put those two together? Whereas alcohol leads to the loss of self-control and all kinds of sin, the filling of the Spirit leads to greater self-control and all kinds of godly fruit.

Okay, so the Corinthians ought to exercise their tongue speaking gifts in an orderly, self-controlled fashion. He says one at a time, somebody needs to interpret so that the message can be intelligibly communicated to the body for its upbuilding.

[13:21] And he says, you know, if no gift of interpretation is granted by the Spirit, the tongue speaker is told to remain silent. So the tongue speaker is consciously choosing to prioritize the building up of the body over self.

Paul then offers rules for orderly prophetic speech in the next few verses. Rules for orderly prophetic speech. He says in verse 29, Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.

If a revelation is made to another sitting there, 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. So as with the tongue speakers in Corinth, those who prophesy, they're called to speak in an orderly, self-controlled fashion.

Right? One at a time, giving deference to others. And they're aiming at the instruction, the edification of the body. And so we see here that just as the tongue speaker absent in interpretation is called to silence, so a prophet, when a revelation is given to another, is likewise called to silence.

[14:36] So the other person can speak. Now my understanding of verse 32 has helped last week in study, or helped this week, I mean. Last week I saw, and I even said something in the sermon, I thought that that verse, the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets, was sort of synonymous with Paul saying, let the others weigh what is said.

But actually, Paul is saying that, and some of you guys are much smarter than me, so you already knew this. Paul is saying that the prophets are able to, and called to, control their own speech. The spiritual gift does not take over the prophet. It is subject to the will of the prophets. I think that's what Paul's actually trying to say. So unlike the ecstatic speech of the pagan worship services down the street, right, at the temple of Apollo or whoever, Christian worship is orderly.

It is controlled. Now we're going to circle back later and talk about that phrase, to weigh what is said. And we're also going to more specifically apply Paul's emphasis on orderly worship to us. But before we do that, I want to just address a couple questions that are raised by this text. As we compare what Paul says, which sounds very foreign to us, to our own corporate gatherings.

[15:55] So the first question I think arises when we read what Paul is saying is, why do our worship services look so different from what Paul seems to be describing here?

Anybody have that question in reading through? You know, Paul's description, it seems to infer that a Corinthian worship service involves no single person, you know, getting up and speaking for a long time, like our modern, well, like worship services that we have, that we're used to, right? It seems like there was just this spontaneous movement from one person to the next. So the question is, are we off base, right? Are we off base by having these planned services and in our emphasis on the preaching of the word?

Now, I only have time for a brief answer. I would be happy to talk to somebody longer if someone has more questions. The first thing that I think it's really important to understand here is, Paul is not actually giving a prescription for what an entire worship service should look like.

For example, Paul does not talk about prayer in these verses. Surely the Corinthians were praying, right? We see that in chapter 11, the women were praying. Paul does not talk about the Lord's Supper, though surely they were practicing the Lord's Supper while they were abusing it, as we saw also in chapter 11.

[17:15] Paul does not talk about what the elders of the church are supposed to be doing. Paul went through in his missionary journeys appointing elders in all of the churches. So there's a lot of things that are not talked about here.

Paul is addressing a specific problem in the church. And we keep saying this because in every section of this letter, we have to read it in context. Paul's addressing a specific problem in the Corinthian church, namely their distorted understanding of the spiritual gifts.

So that's important to recognize. Now the second thing, and I mentioned this last week, as we read through even the entirety of 1 Corinthians, but especially of the whole New Testament, there is a heavy, heavy emphasis on the preaching and teaching, the proclamation of the word.

Indeed, even from the beginning, we find the early church, Acts 2.24, devoting themselves to, it doesn't say to the spiritual gifts, it says devoting themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Near the end of Paul's life, he exhorts Timothy to preach the word in every season, 2 Timothy 4.2. He instructs that what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.

[18:38] So right there we see four generations, Paul, Timothy, other men, other men. There's a generational transfer of what? The word. That's what he's been talking about, guarding the gospel, the good deposit.

And so there are certainly ways that we can improve our own corporate gatherings, but we believe firmly that the preaching of the word needs to remain at the center of what we do here.

Second question I want to address. As Paul discusses the orderly use of prophecy and tongues, we have to wonder, are these spiritual gifts operational today?

And then if so, should we be seeking to use them? I don't think you can get away from a question like this when we're reading about Paul's description here. Now again, we actually touched on this four weeks ago.

We looked at chapter 12, verses 1 through 11. So we talked about then how there are those referred to as cessationists who believe that the miraculous gifts, which includes prophecy and tongues, have ceased.

[19:42] Okay, they're cessationists. There are others known as continuationists who believe that these gifts have not ceased. And I want to say there are faithful Christians on both sides.

Okay, faithful Christians on both sides of that topic. Now the elders here do not believe that the miraculous gifts have ceased because we don't see a compelling biblical case for this position. I don't have time to get into that. But again, if somebody wants to talk to me, I'd be happy to talk. Yet we respect those who are cessationists greatly. Okay? And I also want to say while we do not believe the miraculous gifts have ceased, we also uphold the fact that as we looked at a few weeks ago, the Spirit reserves the right to apportion to the saints, to each saint, spiritual gifts according to his will.

He decides who gets what spiritual gifts. And even as Paul calls us to desire the higher gifts, he qualifies that by talking about how the higher gifts are the gifts that build up the body the most. And that is the emphasis of Paul. And that is the emphasis of the New Testament. It's not on the gifts. Those aren't the point. The point is love. The point is unity. The point is growing in holiness.

[21:00] The point is the proclamation and advancement of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ. So we should desire the gifts that most build up the body, and we should use whatever gifts it is that the Spirit has given us to do just that.

Now the last thing I want to say on this topic, and I think this is really important too, that whether you are a continuationist, whether you're a cessationist, we should not, as a reaction to charismatic excess that we have seen, abandon the New Testament emphasis on the reality and power of the Holy Spirit.

Okay? The New Testament, church, the New Testament's clear. Jesus Christ has ushered in an age, a new age, in which the Spirit has been unleashed in power. So we need to continually seek His empowerment, right?

And to do the things I talked about earlier, to grow in holiness, His power to build up the body in love, His power to advance the cause and the mission of Christ in this world.

The Spirit has been unleashed. We need to seek continually for a fresh filling of the Spirit. So wherever you stand on the spiritual gifts, let us not abandon that because we see excess over here.

[22:17] We can learn from the side of charismatic excess in good ways that are consistent with Scripture. The last thing I want to say, I know I'm talking for a while here.

We don't need to be afraid of the Spirit's work. Did y'all hear that? We do not need to be afraid of the Holy Spirit's work.

Because wherever the Spirit is at work, He is at work in a way that affirms the Lordship of Jesus Christ. And He is at work in a way that is 100% consistent with His own breathed out Word.

Like, He's the author of this Word. He's not going to act in a way that is inconsistent with His Word.

That means, church, that we don't have to be afraid of the Holy Spirit. Okay? Let us seek the Spirit. And every time we see a working, a supposed working of the Spirit, we look at the Word and we say, Is that actually consistent with the Word of God? If it is, praise God. He's at work in power.

[23:19] And He is at work in power. Amen? All right. So this leads us actually right into verse 33. When thinking about God's Word and God's ways.

Because Paul connects his instructions with the very nature of God. All right. So look at verse 33. Paul says, For God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.

All right. Here's the next fill-in-the-blank, kids. Order reflects the ways of God. Order reflects the ways of God. Building up requires order.

Order reflects the ways of God. God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. Now, Paul provides here a theological anchor for his instructions. That word confusion means disorder.

It means a disturbance. It means a tumult or a mob riot, even. God, the living God, the God that we worship and serve and were made to reflect, is not a God of confusion and disorder.

[24:28] All right. He's a God of peace. And, you know, this statement, this statement really, it sweeps us up into the grand narrative of redemption. Because, you know, in the beginning, we learn in Genesis chapter 1, verse 2, that the earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep.

That's chaos. That's disorder. And into that disordered state, what happened? The creator God spoke, and a beautiful, ordered universe came to be.

Right? That's what we believe. God is the one who spoke that into existence. And then he gave humanity as his image bearers, the noble task of maintaining and then of propagating, spreading that ordered beauty throughout the world.

God is not a God of confusion, but of peace. Did you actually know this is totally not related, but side comment, in your vocation, because I've heard talk about this lately, in your vocation, everybody, you are reflecting God by bringing order to chaos.

Your secular vocation is doing spiritual things and reflecting God. I just wanted to say that. Side comment. So we're given that task, maintaining, spreading God's ordered beauty.

[25:42] But then what happened? God's order was corrupted. Right? It was corrupted by Satan. It was corrupted by the sin of man. And what resulted? Disorder.

In every sense. And you know, it only took humans a few thousand years, this is for the nerds in the room like myself, to recognize this as a law of nature.

This is the second law of thermodynamics. It is that entropy, which is disorder, will always increase over time. It's actually a law. Right? This happened at the fall of man in Genesis 3.

But God didn't leave the world in that state, did he? He didn't leave the world or his image bearers to eternally fall apart in disorder. No. What did he do? He sent himself in the person of Jesus Christ to enter our disordered world, to experience all the things that we experience, and to die on the cross for our sins.

The sins of a disordered people. And so with sins forgiven and through faith in his name, we are reconciled to God. That means we're made to be at peace with God.

[26:52] We're remade into a new humanity. Paul says, Created after the likeness of God and true righteousness and holiness. Ephesians 4.24 God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.

And you know, not only humanity, but the whole world is going to be reordered in fullness. You know, our brother Frank right now, as Kyle said before, all the saints who have gone before, they are right now enjoying the beauty and the glory of being in the presence of God.

And one day, Christ is going to come back and restore all things, and we will dwell together in the perfect, ordered beauty of heaven. God is not a God of confusion, but of peace.

Now, Paul wants the Corinthians to see here the inconsistency of worshiping that God, the God of order and of peace, whom they were made to reflect in a disorderly, chaotic fashion.

And so, Shoreline, here we seek to conduct our services in an orderly fashion, reflecting the ways of God, reflecting the ways of our God of peace.

[28:10] In the midst of a chaotic and disordered and corrupt world, how refreshing is it to this soul when we get to gather in here together and motivated by love and the desire to build up the body, we get to sing and we get to pray and speak and preach God's word to one another in a peaceful and an orderly way.

That is soothing to the soul. You know, God's spirit is at work in the planned and the ordered, just as in the spontaneous. And you might even say that each worship service is ordered spontaneity. For even as the songs are chosen and the prayers are thought through and testimonies are written down and sermons are arranged, the spirit is at work then in the planning, but also here in the

conducting.

The spirit is at work. And this ordered spontaneity, it not only exists during the service, but before and even after the service as the saints fellowship with one another.

So this is a good time as any, especially with the kids present. Hey kids, if you haven't been listening up, I want you to listen up right now to this word here. Because God is calling us to an orderliness as we gather together.

[29:30] Like this ought to be a place where the saints can pray for one another, where they can exhort one another, where they can speak a word of encouragement to one another, where they can build one another up in love.

And you know, as we saw last week, sometimes that only takes five words. Five words, Paul says, he'd rather speak with his mind than 10,000 in a tongue. Sometimes it only takes five words.

Let's make this. Let's work to make this. All of us, adults and children, an environment where those things are going on. And by God's grace, those things are going on.

And by God's grace and with our effort, they will all the more. So building up the body requires order. Order reflects the ways of God. And this order ought to be reflected not just in speaking of tongues and prophecy, but also, Paul says, in the participation of women.

So that's where Paul goes next. He lays out rules for the orderly participation of women. Look at verse, the second half of verse 33.

[30:44] I also do want to say, kids, you all are doing a great job. It's hard to sit through me talking for this long. As in all the churches of the saints, 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.

If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home, for it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. Okay, here we go again. We've seen a lot of difficult passages in this book, haven't we?

You guys have patiently stayed with me in all of these, and I appreciate that. You know, as with last week's passage on tongues and prophecy, there are many ways to interpret these verses.

So we come to these verses, as with all of Scripture, independence on the Spirit, to understand what Paul is saying, seeking to rightly understand these words in context.

And that means in the context of the letter and of the whole counsel of God's Word. So I want to mention now just what I think are the most pertinent pieces of context to rightly understand these words.

[31:50] And the first thing, as I mentioned above, that I think is important to remember, there's a lot Paul doesn't say about corporate worship in these verses. Paul is specifically talking about the spiritual gifts.

He's specifically talking about tongues and prophecy, and he was specifically just talking about the weighing of prophecy. I think that's important. Second, in chapter 11, on the topic of head coverings, Paul speaks of women praying and prophesying in the corporate gathering.

The issue he takes with them doing so was without proper head coverings. If you weren't here for that sermon, you can go listen to that sermon. But Paul was not taking issue with the act itself of women praying and prophesying in the church.

That's important as we read these verses. Paul is okay with the Corinthian women praying and prophesying in corporate worships, and he assumes that they are going to be doing so.

And that leads me to a third point, and this is pulling in biblical context here. As we pan out and consider where are we in redemptive history, Joel chapter 2, verses 28 through 29.

[33:01] Okay, the Lord foretold this word through his prophet Joel in the Old Testament, and it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh.

Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy. Your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. Even on the male and female servants in those days, I will pour out my spirit. Joel was pointing forward to, the new age, the new covenant, in which we saw last week from Isaiah 45. It would be an age when the nations are gathered in to the true Israel.

And upon those who belong to the true Israel, sons, daughters, men, women, slaves, free, the Holy Spirit would be poured out in power. And what Joel is saying is that's going to look like dreams and visions and prophesying, and this is what came to pass at Pentecost.

Now, Peter quotes this text in his sermon at Pentecost. The Holy Spirit was unleashed on all the disciples gathered there.

[34:06] Right? And as the gospel, we read through Acts, as the gospel spread from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth, the Holy Spirit continued and continues today to pour himself out on all the saints.

So, women speaking in tongues and prophesying in the gathered worship was prophetic fulfillment of the new age that was inaugurated by Christ.

His death, resurrection, and ascension inaugurated the new age. Okay, so where does that leave us with these verses? Now, there's a fourth contextual clue in here. Paul appeals to the law, he says.

The law. And the law can refer to all of the Old Testament. I think he's referring to the order established at creation, which he did back in chapter 11.

We saw then in chapter 11 that God has established for the flourishing of humanity a hierarchy not of equality but of authority.

[35:07] Right? He said that God is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of man. Man is the head of woman. And this authority structure is to be reflected in the home between husbands and wives and in the church between elders and members.

So, let me just, all of that said, let me get to the point. In these verses, I think Paul is telling women that they are to remain silent in the wane of prophecy. Okay, all of that to say that.

Just as tongue speakers are to be silent, absent in interpretation, just as the prophets are to be silent when another is given a revelation, so he's saying the women are to be silent as the prophecies are being weighed.

Now, this allows women to exercise their spiritual gifts. There were women praying and prophesying while at the same time ensuring that they continue to uphold the authority structure established by God at creation.

And so, I need to explain what is meant by weighing of prophecy. What does that actually mean? What's Paul saying? Well, to weigh is to judge or to sift. The criteria of that judgment is the revealed word of God.

[36:20] Right? It's the gospel passed down by the apostles. So, when Paul tells the prophets to weigh what is said, he's telling them to hold that prophecy up against the standard of God's word and see if it passes the test.

Does this cohere? Does this align with scripture? And then, you know, look at verse 29 for a second. Paul says that he calls the others to weigh what is said.

Who are the others of verse 29? On the one hand, I think the others are the whole church. Okay? I think, in a sense, all the believers should have been weighing the prophecies against the word of God like the Bereans, Acts 17, 11, who received the word with all eagerness, examining the word and reading the scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

We are all called to be Bereans, weighing what is said against the word. On the other hand, I think there is very good reason to believe, based on all of the other instructions in the New Testament, particularly from Paul, that it would have probably been the job of the elders of the church to actually speak up in the gathered worship as part of the weighing of prophecy.

prophecy. To do that would be an exercise of authority in front of the whole congregation. It's to weigh what is said, hold it against the word, instruct the congregation.

[37:46] That seems to fall squarely under the role of elders who are charged with the preaching and teaching of the word. And Paul says in 1 Timothy 3 that they are to be qualified men, and that's in accordance with the authority structure established by God.

That was a lot, and a lot more could be said about that topic. I just wanted to give you some of the context and the background for why I think that's what Paul is saying. This isn't an absolute

prohibition to speaking in the gathered worship, but it's in context of what Paul has already been said.

But what does all this mean for us today? That's really where I want to get to next. What does this mean for us here at Shoreline? And the first thing that I want to say, as we saw from Paul's body analogy in chapter 12, that every single believer is vital and indispensable to the body of Christ. You are a vital member here at Shoreline, whether you're young or old, whether you're an officer or enlisted, whether you are a man or a woman. And every single believer has been indwelt with the Holy Spirit.

We are living in the new age, inaugurated by Christ. Every believer is indwelt with the Holy Spirit of God and then given grace gifts according to his will for the building up of the body.

[39:08] So, ladies, let me talk to you for a second. Ladies, we need you. This church needs you, every one of you, to be exercising those spiritual gifts, whether that is a gift of mercy or a gift of faith or a gift of exhortation or a gift of prophecy or a gift of teaching.

I'm like, what do you mean by teaching? Whoa. You just... Right now, in this church, there are ladies who have the gift of teaching and they have and are exercising that gift in a way that builds up the body while also upholding the authority structure that God has given to the church. For example, there have been ladies teaching one another like in those quarterly ladies gatherings. We need more of that. Ladies teaching ladies from God's word. There are ladies teaching their own children at home.

There are ladies teaching in Shoreline Kids in these ways and in other ways. You all are exercising your gifts. That's just specifically of teaching but all the gifts. We need you.

This body needs you, women, to be exercising your gifts for the building up of the body. And so, I thank you for doing that and thank you for even in the gift of teaching to do it in a way that submits to the authority of the word of God and that's where Paul goes next in this text.

[40:35] The authority of God's word. And he uses a couple rhetorical questions like he likes to do with the Corinthians to expose their error. Look at verse 36.

Paul says, Order submits to the word of God.

Building up the church requires order. Order reflects the ways of God. Order submits to the word of God. Paul again provides this theological anchor for his instructions.

And he reminds the Corinthians here that God's word and no doubt he's also thinking about the gospel specifically which he's about to expound on in chapter 15. God's word did not originate from the Corinthians nor are they the only ones that God's word has reached.

He's saying, look, you don't have a monopoly on the word of God. Like all of the other churches you are recipients of the word and subject to the authority of the word and therefore everything you do including in the gathered worship must be consistent with that word.

[42:01] I recall from the beginning of this whole discussion on the gifts in chapter 12 Paul laid down the chief criterion the chief assessment for knowing whether a believer is operating under the spirit's influence.

What was that? It was the lordship of Christ. Right? Jesus is Lord and the Corinthians must submit then to the authoritative word of Jesus Christ who is the word.

And Paul then goes so far as to say that his instructions are a command of the Lord. So he is asserting here his apostolic authority. This word, this is actually from Jesus Christ himself not just the apostle Paul.

And since it's not just Paul speaking but Christ for anyone to ignore this instruction Paul is saying it actually invites the judgment of the Lord. That's basically what Paul is saying in verse 38.

Back in chapter 8 verse 3 Paul said if anyone loves God he is known by God. Love is demonstrated through obedience. So to disobey the Lord to reject his word is to be rejected by him is what Paul is saying it's to be not known by him.

[43:16] So Shoreline we are in danger individually and corporately when we think we have a monopoly on God's word. Okay? If we arrive at unique understandings of the word that nobody else agrees with we need to be careful.

Right? We might be we just might be tampering with God's word. And here's the other thing when we think as a church like corporately when we think that we've got it all figured out and like all those other churches out there are just off the rails we need to slow down and reconsider.

And we need all of you to help make sure that we're doing that. Not going off the rails ourselves. And what it comes down to ultimately is this. Do I ask this for yourself. Do we we ask this corporately.

Do we submit ourselves to the authority of God's word? Do we approach God's word humbly and reverently seeking to understand what God is speaking through it and then seeking to allow it the word with the spirit's help of course to shape the totality of our hearts and lives.

The Corinthians need to be reminded that building up the body requires order and that orderly worship it reflects both the ways and the word of God from which they had veered and that they needed to return.

[44:33] And so for us shoreline here is where this is all if we can summarize this whole thing when we gather when we gather God wants the saints to build each other up that was a start to last week's main point through intelligibility right through a clearly spoken word today God wants the saints to build each other up through orderly participation which reflects his ways and submits to his word.

As a final point of application here I just want to ask how do we prepare ourselves beforehand for what goes on here? Like how do we prepare to encourage and participate in orderly worship on Sunday morning?

The first thing I just want to say is we need to prioritize like you all have done prioritize your week so that this gathering is a non-negotiable right?

You can't do any of these things if you're not here we have to be here and that's Hebrews 10 25 let us consider how to stir one another up to love and good works not neglecting to meet together right?

The first job of a member of a church is to be present and so we prioritize the weekly gathering earlier I talked about the need for heart preparation right? Being in the word and in prayer and that gets our eyes off of ourselves onto God and others more specifically you can be reading and studying the sermon passage in advance right?

[46:00] And that allows us all again it's not about me it's about what is God saying in his word if you're in his word then you are better attuned to what God is saying and I'm thrilled that a lot of our community groups are studying the passage beforehand so I know that when I'm up here preaching a lot of you have already studied this text I can't just slack off up here that's been a big help to me though honestly pray for the members throughout the week that's a way that you can prepare if you're praying if we're praying for one another right?

God is already preparing us to meet together and encourage one another and build each other up and I want to say we've been working on our membership directory and it is almost ready within the next couple weeks I think we'll have it to you and that will be a big help in actually seeing faces and praying for one another lastly help prepare your families right?

by reminding them why we gather we gather to worship God to edify the saints to evangelize the lost okay that's why we gather to worship God to edify the saints to evangelize the lost let's remind ourselves of that throughout the week and then turn that into a prayer on the way here asking the spirit to use you and lead you in that way okay Paul concludes in verse 39 so my brothers earnestly desire to prophesy and do not forbid speaking in tongues but all things should be done decently and in order this is Paul's conclusion to the whole chapter he prefers prophecy over tongues because as we saw it communicates intelligibly right?

it builds up the body it encourages exhorts comforts instructs but whether in prophecy or tongues and in every element of the gathering he wants Christ wants order in the gathering of his holy ones and not just order for order's sake right?

just as last week it wasn't just clarity for clarity's sake no no no it's that the saints would be edified the lost would be evangelized and God would be worshiped as we reflect his ways and submit to his words and I just want to ask saints is that what you want when you come to church?

[48:21] is that what you want when you come to church? let's pray
heavenly father we thank you for the revelation of your word God this is
the faith once for all delivered to the saints given to us God may we
increasingly submit to the authority of your word God individually
corporately may we increasingly reflect the ways of our holy God of peace
yeah yes Lord help us to put these things into practice that we would be
edified when we come together that the lost would be evangelized and God
that you would be worshiped we pray this in Jesus name amen God God God