

1 Corinthians 14:26-40

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[0 : 0 0] 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 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.

Or was it from you that the word of God came? Or are you the only ones 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.

Well, friends, I don't know about you, but this week I've been particularly struck by how much chaos there seems to be in the world. For weeks we've been hearing about the chaotic events in the UK, the Brexit vote, and now the turmoil over choosing a new prime minister.

And much closer to home, we've been witnessing even more chaos, it seems, with the tragic shootings in Texas and Minnesota and Louisiana. On and on it seems to come.

[1 : 3 6] And you know, these are just the chaotic things that happen to hit the headlines. How much more are we not reading about in other parts of the world, in other cities of our country, even behind the closed doors of our own neighborhoods?

Confusion, disorder, chaos. And here we gather this morning, the church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And what should characterize our gathering? Should the church just be more of the same? Another place where chaos is boiling below the surface, ready to break out at any moment, like water bursting through a rusty pipe.

Too often, you know, this has been the case. Too often the church has looked just like the world in this regard. A place of enmity and strife and confusion and chaos.

But our text this morning speaks to us in both challenging and inviting words. The church should be a place, we read here, not of chaos, but of order.

[2 : 5 9] An order that not just the church, but our world so desperately needs. You'll remember if you've been with us over the last few weeks, that Paul here is coming to the conclusion of his instruction to the church here in Corinth on the topic of spiritual gifts.

And in verse 39 through 40, at the very end of the text, Paul, hopefully, sums it up as clearly as he possibly can. Here's the big idea that he's been sort of working towards this whole chapter.

You ready? Here it is. Earnestly desire to prophesy. That is, to speak timely, insightful, spirit-led words of encouragement and upbuilding.

Don't forbid speaking in tongues. Okay, don't totally rule that out. But all things should be done decently and in order.

Or as another translation puts it, everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way. So when it comes to spiritual gifts and public worship, Paul says the bottom line is, all things should be done decently and in order, in a fitting and orderly way.

[4 : 17] Order! Okay. But why? Are we talking here about order just for order's sake?

Is Paul just sort of being a stick in the mud here? A little nervous about things getting out of hand? Like the school principal who walks into the noisy lunchroom and tells everyone to quiet down and stop having a good time.

This is school after all. No, you see, that's not it at all. You see, if the public worship of the church is not meant to be a sort of chaotic frenzy on the one hand, neither is it meant to be a dry and stiff formalism on the other.

I mean, think about it, friends. Nothing about the worship of the one true God ought to be boring and dry. We are worshiping God, after all.

The creator of galaxies and quarks and canyons and everything that takes your breath away. The author behind all poetry and music and every beauty you've ever seen.

[5 : 35] The one we're told in the book of Hebrews is a consuming fire. There ought to be nothing boring here. And forgive us, preachers, if sometimes we bore you.

We're falling short of our calling. Order for order's sake, not quite. So what is the reason? Why orderly worship of all the things that Paul could drive home?

Well, our text gives us three reasons. And the first one is this. Do all things decently and in order because orderly worship, Paul seems to say, lets everyone take part.

Jump back to the beginning of our passage. The vision here is of an incredibly participatory worship, is it not?

The way Paul would have it, corporate worship is not a spectator sport. It's not like showing up to see a movie at a movie theater where you sit back, eat some popcorn, and hope to be sort of mildly entertained for the next hour and a half or two hours.

[6 : 44] You hope not two hours, right, when you come to church. No, the way Paul would have it, the way the New Testament would have it, corporate worship is more like showing up at one of those murder mystery dinners where everyone has a role to play in the unfolding drama.

You show up and you're expected to participate. And if you don't, well, you just don't have that much fun, do you? Everyone comes with something to share.

You see that in verse 26. And for Paul, that's a good thing. Paul doesn't say, oh, you came with a hymn. No, no, no, no, no.

You're just supposed to come with your popcorn bucket so you can sit back and enjoy the show. Okay. Now, if that's the case, if everyone comes with something to share, if this is meant to be a participatory gathering, at first, a little bit of chaos might seem like the best way to let everybody jump in.

Why have any guidelines or structure or order or service leaders? Why not just let the spirit move? Won't that ensure that everyone gets a chance to participate?

[8 : 04] But, you know, the reality is that's almost never how it works out in practice. Chaos almost always ends up meaning that the strong and the domineering are the ones who steal the show.

And they run roughshod over the humbler and the quieter ones. You know, if the teacher in the classroom never says, why don't we hear from someone who hasn't shared yet?

It's always going to be that obnoxious kid in the front row who blurts out the answers to all the questions. Isn't it? I know, because I was too often that kid.

So, you see, order in corporate worship ensures that the loudest voices, the most domineering, pushy personalities, don't monopolize the meeting, which seems to be what was taking place at Corinth.

In other words, an orderly service ensures that the quieter, humbler voices that we need to hear can also be heard. So then, in verses 27 through 31, Paul gives us some ground rules.

[9 : 29] Only let two or three speak in tongues or in prophecy. And make sure they speak in turn, not over each other, okay? Take note of how Paul is implying self-control here.

If you want to do, if you can't happen to do what you want to do at this gathering, just wait for another opportunity. And by the way, tongues, speakers, you need an interpreter.

If no interpreter is present, stay silent. Oh, and prophecy, speakers, look, you can wait till someone is done speaking before you start speaking. And don't blab on and on and on and on and on and on.

That seems to be what verse 32 is all about. It's a bit confusing on the surface. The spirit of prophets are subject to prophets. I think what Paul means there is that you, prophet, whoever you might be, you, speaker, you are in control of your own spirit.

That is, you don't just have to blurt something out because there's something on your heart or in your spirit to say. You can wait. You can exercise self-control here.

[10 : 37] But now note, even if you're not speaking, Paul seems to be very strongly seeing that you're still participating. You may be quiet, but you're not passive.

The tongue speakers are still speaking to themselves and God. Those who are not prophesying are weighing what is said. The vision here is of a gathering where everyone is engaged in heart and mind with all that's being said.

Okay, fair enough. Now, at this point, you might be thinking, wait a minute. I've been coming to Trinity for fill in the blank. Three months, three years, 30 years.

Our Sunday morning services don't look anything like this. Right? Does that mean we have it completely wrong?

Are we missing the mark here? Next Sunday, should we just set up a microphone in the middle of this stage stage and say, okay, who's got a word? Well, I think there are a few things to say to that.

[11 : 48] First, we would actually love to see Sundays as a time where more people are sharing encouraging words to the congregation up front. And not just when someone becomes a member or gets baptized, as great as those times of sharing are.

But also, maybe when the Lord is just teaching you something that will be edifying to share with the whole congregation. What might that look like?

Well, the Lord's been teaching you something that you think might be edifying to share with the whole congregation. Come talk to one of the elders so that we can pray about the best means of actually communicating that to your church family so we can help you discern the best means of building up your body.

Okay, the second thing to say is that this gathering on Sundays isn't the only gathering of our church. There are different sorts of gatherings that can have different sorts of purposes and that give us different opportunities to use our gifts in different sorts of ways.

In the church where I became a Christian, there was a midweek service on Wednesday nights. How many people here went to a church growing up that was like Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night?

[13 : 06] Yeah, you know what I'm talking about. Some of you are like, why would you ever go to church three times a week? That's nuts. Okay, well, the church I went to, we had this midweek service, right?

And I'll tell you, that midweek service looked a bit like 1 Corinthians 14. Instead of the songs being planned ahead of time, people would call out hymn numbers.

And then we'd hope the pianist kind of knew that one. Then there was an open time when what we called testimonies were given. And when prayers were prayed. And when scripture passages were shared and taught.

And you know, here at Trinity, if you become a part of a midweek small group, you might see something a lot more like 1 Corinthians 14.

In fact, I will say from personal experience, I have seen the gift of prophecy at work all the time in my small group. I don't think the members of my small group would have necessarily called it that.

[14 : 10] But if we understand prophecy, as we've been saying over the last few weeks, as timely, insightful, spirit-filled words that apply the truths of scripture to a specific situation, then I've seen that again and again and again.

Someone struggling with a sin and a brother or sister shares a word that's very encouraging and challenging. Someone wrestling with anxiety or fear and someone saying, I've struggled with that too. Here's how the Lord has helped me.

Someone just over our Bible study time sharing something that seems to hit the nail on the head for all of us and it ends up being woven through a lot of our prayers later in our time together.

I've seen the gift of prophecy at work in our small group again and again and again. No one has spoken in tongues yet. I don't think anyone has the gift of interpretation that I know of, so, you know, we're good there.

We don't need to go there. But it could happen, right? And then we'd say, does anybody have the gift of interpretation? And maybe someone would. Who knows? But the point is that these smaller gatherings provide good context to exercise gifts in different ways.

[15 : 20] Now, it's also clear from the New Testament, if you look at the book of Acts or the pastoral epistles, for example, that biblical preaching and teaching, sustained exposition of the Bible, and encouraging one another through song and scripture readings and taking up a collection, these are also part of a healthy, public worship life at the church.

And our Sunday morning gatherings seem like a good time to devote to those things. Now, of course, we could do all of those things in one big service.

But with 200 to 300 people here on a Sunday, that would probably make for a really long service. Right? And fortunately, lots of people would probably be too intimidated to speak up and exercise their gifts.

So, we meet more than once. And we meet in lots of different ways. We meet in different forms so that we can embody the breadth of what a healthy church gathering looks like.

Okay, one more point to be made as we think about the sort of, maybe dissonance between what we see in 1 Corinthians 14 and what we see here. And that point is that as we think of how our Sunday morning service is compared to what we see here in 1 Corinthians 14, I think it's true that orderly worship, which is what Paul's big idea is here, orderly worship, even in a large meeting like this, orderly worship still facilitates the participation and mutual edification that Paul really wants.

[17 : 01] in other words, even if things don't look identical on the surface, the principles are still being embodied. Orderly worship allows everyone to take part in what's happening.

This is one of the reasons why we have an order of service. So that when we come together, we're not just spectators of what's happening up on stage, but so that we can enter into the worship service itself with our spirits and with our minds, as Paul says back in verses 14 through 15.

And we put a lot of thought into making the order of service. It's not just a random string of songs and reading and prayer, but something that actually takes us, if you notice, week in and week out on a journey through the gospel narrative.

This is what we're hoping to do with our order of service. We begin, did you notice, it's right there in your bulletin, with a time of adoration. Right?

Praising God for who he is. And then we move, what, to a time of confession. Acknowledging our sin and our need of a savior. And then we move to the cross.

[18 : 16] And we sing and we speak of what Jesus has done for all who believe. Paying the penalty for our sin. Rising again to give us new life. And then after we've adored God for who he is and we've celebrated what Christ has done for us to forgive our sins, having celebrated God's grace in that way, we move to a time of sharing what God's been doing in our lives.

And particularly, coming to God as our heavenly father who knows our needs even before we ask them. and pouring out our hearts to him with our needs and our petitions and our prayers.

So you see, we're moving through the narrative of the gospel. God, we adore him. We're sinners and we need to confess that before him. Christ has done something once and for all for us and that opens up a new kind of relationship and response to God.

God, we're shaping our services around the message, the story of the good news. Why do we do that? Friends, so that week in and week out in a hundred different ways, we can participate together in the celebration of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Which 1 Peter tells us even angels long to look at and look into with wonder. the gospel is something that will never grow old for all eternity.

[19 : 49] So every Sunday, we want to come before it and in the hundreds of different ways in which we can celebrate it, we want to be diving into it together. So I hope that our orderly service and our order of service empowers your meaningful participation.

You know, this is another reason why we also don't just have an order of service, but we print out the sermon text ahead of time on the sermon cards so that we can be engaging with the text together before we come on Sundays and so that we can be praying for the message.

Just this week, I actually heard of a student in our youth group who uses the sermon text each week as part of his quiet time. I think that's a great example for all of us.

I guarantee you that you will get more out of Sunday mornings, you will feel more engaged if you read and you meditate on the text ahead of time and pray for the message on Sunday. Pick up a good study Bible like the ESV study Bible or there's others out there, you don't have to get that one.

But that will be a good help to you as you study the passage during the week and get your bearings in it and start to meditate on it to help you delve into it. But you know, it's not just leading up to the service but in the time following the service.

[21 : 14] You know, what we do after the benediction here is still very much part of our gathered worship. We engage with one another over the text.

I know some of the small groups are actually using the sermon text as part of their weekly small group discussion to be carrying what we're doing here into their one anothering throughout the week.

That gives them a way to connect what's happening on Sundays to their mutual teaching and edifying of one another in their small group. So there are lots of ways in which our services through being orderly are actually encouraging this kind of mutual full-on participation that we're all engaged in what's happening here.

Okay, let's keep moving. I hope you see that the first big reason why orderly worship is so important is because chaos can't produce and maintain a culture of mutual participation and mutual building up.

But Paul says orderly worship can. Okay. Now, let me say a few words about verses 34 and 35. Ah, when was he going to start talking about that?

[22 : 31] Okay, here we go. These verses in the text of our passage seem to come out of nowhere, right? So much so that some commentators have even speculated whether they were added to the manuscript at some later date.

Some people have wondered maybe there was a scribe who just sort of wrote that in the margins and eventually just kind of got stuck in. Okay. The reality is that these verses are in every single manuscript of 1 Corinthians that we have.

So it seems that Paul actually did write them. So, what do they mean? You know, it's very important when we run across a passage like this, ones that at first are very arresting and seem very unclear and on the surface maybe seem a little offensive or on the surface seem a lot offensive.

Okay. It's important to interpret the less clear parts of Scripture in light of the more clear parts of Scripture. and when we do that we realize pretty quickly that there's one thing that this text cannot be saying.

This text cannot be saying that women should never ever participate verbally in public worship. How do we know that? Well, look, if you go back three chapters to 1 Corinthians 11 we see there very clearly that women are praying and prophesying in the church and Paul has zero problem with it.

[23 : 53] He just wants to make sure that they respect their husbands as they do so. That's the deal with head coverings. So unless Paul is hopelessly contradicting himself he can't mean that women should never ever pray or speak in church.

So whatever Paul means by keep silent that can't be it. Okay. So what does Paul mean then? Well here commentators go in all sorts of different directions and if you're interested in the nitty gritty details you can come talk to me afterwards and we can have a long conversation about all the crazy ways in which scholars try to put these pieces together.

But here's another principle. If we should always interpret the less clear parts of scripture by the more clear parts we should also always look at texts in their context. And what's the context of these verses?

Verses 34 and 35. Not just speaking in church in general. The immediate context in verses 29 through 33 is what?

The giving and the weighing of prophecy. Now as we just pointed out from 1 Corinthians 11 and as we actually see all across the New Testament women were most certainly giving words of prophecy and sharing all sorts of encouraging words in the church.

[25 : 15] So the best bet seems to be that verses 34 to 35 have something to do with the weighing of prophecy. That is the evaluation of prophecy.

And at this point it seems there are broadly two directions, two interpretations that could make sense. And here's where some commentators go with this. One reading would seem to understand these verses to be saying that married women shouldn't publicly evaluate and question the prophecies of their husbands.

Instead they should talk to their husbands at home lest they run the risk of dishonoring their husbands and undermining the special relationship that exists in a marriage between a husband and wife that's meant to mirror Christ in the church.

And so in this reading Paul isn't saying that women shouldn't speak at all but again in the context of weighing prophecies they shouldn't speak in evaluation of their husbands.

Okay that's the first way of reading the passage and that would understand verses 34 through 35 as relating to a particular relationship right? To the relationship of marriage. The second way we could understand these verses is to see them referring not necessarily to a particular relationship marriage but relating to a particular office in the church.

[26 : 45] That is the office or the role that was responsible for giving the final public evaluation of anything that was formally taught in the church assembly.

and held up as true doctrine. Think of it this way when the first century New Testament church gathered as Paul says each one had a hymn each one had a lesson each one had a revelation a word of prophecy an interpreted tongue who was entrusted with the final buck stops here Jesus is going to judge us for it responsibility to weigh and evaluate and make sure that whatever was being held up as true doctrine in the church aligned with the apostles teaching and the deposit of the faith once for all delivered to the saints who was going to make sure that the teaching was going to be upheld in that life giving way and we see that in the New Testament that responsibility was entrusted to the office of the elders.

Yes, every believer is meant to test and weigh what's being taught in good Berean-like open your Bibles and study the scriptures fashion.

If you have no idea who the Bereans are I'm sorry for that esoteric reference come talk to me afterwards. They were Christians in the city of Berea who really sort of dug into the Bible and understood the apostles' teaching.

Okay. Every believer is meant to be doing that but the responsibility of overseeing and preserving the faithful teaching in the congregation falls especially to the office of the elders.

[28 : 23] Who are the elders? We see from the New Testament that the elders are those men whom the congregation formally recognizes as being able to faithfully teach and defend the biblical apostolic teaching and whose character consistently conforms to the image of Christ.

Look at 1 Timothy chapter 3 if you want to see a description of elders. So what does this mean? Paul in verses 34 through 35 of our text isn't saying that women shouldn't speak at all.

But in the context of weighing prophecies he's saying that they shouldn't speak in the place of an elder. And I think if we were to push Paul on this he would also say non-elder males shouldn't be speaking in the place of an elder either.

Because this isn't an office that just goes to every male indiscriminately but those whom the congregation all of us have seen and tested and approved to occupy that office for us.

Okay. There are two readings. Maybe none of them seem satisfying to you but there they are. Which one is it? Well again I think both are somewhat plausible.

[29 : 45] And the reality is we don't want to be overly dogmatic or close fisted about the meaning of text that pretty much everyone recognizes are really tricky to discern the exact meaning of. Every single honest commentator who looks at these verses will say man it's hard to know exactly what Paul has in mind here.

Personally I find the second reading to make the most sense in light of the rest of the New Testament. But we don't want to lose the forest for the trees here friends.

This passage is helping us see the importance of orderly worship. And part of orderly worship means at times deferring to others. Look at verse 28.

Those who speak in tongues should defer when there isn't an interpreter around. They too should keep silent. In verse 30 those who prophesy should defer when another prophet stands up to speak.

And all of that is for our good. And so friends we can trust too that whatever Paul has in mind here whether it's regarding the relationship between husband and wives or whether it's regarding the office of the elder that God intends this too for our good and for our freedom and for the upbuilding of the church.

[31 : 10] Okay we've seen then that orderly worship lets everyone play their part. If you want to come talk to me about this passage after the service please come I'd love to talk more about it. But there are more reasons that Paul gives for the importance of orderly worship.

And the next big reason is this. He tells us to do all things decently and in order because orderly worship is the Lord's command. Look at verse 36. Paul here is sort of picking up the line of thinking from verses 32 and 33.

And in verse 36 he seems to be responding to a potential question or a potential sort of pushback from the Corinthians. They were probably thinking something like look Paul won't this order of yours quench the spirit?

I mean what if the spirit gives me a word that just has to be said? Do you really want me to wait? You surely don't think I should just refuse the leading of the spirit?

Won't that stifle God's work in our midst? Not to mention squander the spirit's gifts? And Paul sort of replies to that critique or criticism with a little bit of sarcasm doesn't he?

[32 : 20] Oh really? Does the word of God come from you? Are you the only ones with the word of God? Do you have a corner on how God's word ought to work?

Are you the authorities on this matter? No Paul says Jesus is he's the Lord and his word is what we ought to do and his word is that we ought to do things in an orderly way and defer to one another and exercise self-control in our meetings at the end of verse 37 Paul says the things I'm writing to you are a command of the Lord and in Paul's writings the Lord almost always means the Lord Jesus Jesus himself Paul is saying wants worship to be orderly and friends if that's true if this is something that Jesus wants for us isn't that enough?

If the one who loved us and gave himself for us and who rose again conquering death and who sits at the Father's right hand interceding for us and one day will come again in glory if that Jesus says when you gather for worship do things in an orderly way that should be enough if I happen to get lost in the woods and suddenly out of nowhere Bear Grylls comes down on a line and lands next to me and says I'm not going to try a British accent you can fill one in hey if we do things this way we'll find our way again and we'll make it home so trust me and let's do it this way look what am I going to do I'm probably not going to say well look Bear you're Bear Grylls and all but I mean really do you think that's what we should do why give me ten good reasons why I should follow your advice no I am immediately going to trust him and do what he says he's Bear Grylls do you know who Bear

Grylls is if you don't go google him afterwards he's a stud he knows what he's talking about friends how much more ought we to trust the words of the risen Lord Jesus when we kind of lose our way when it comes to what we ought to do when we gather together for worship it's his church it's his world he rules and reigns it in his good loving merciful patient just way we should listen to what he says and of course the million dollar question is well where exactly do we find the words of Jesus today in verses 37 through 38 actually point us to where we ought to look Paul says if anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of Lord do you see what the text is implying here the commands of the

Lord Jesus the words of our risen savior and the head of the church how do they come to us today where do we find them through the teaching and the writing of Jesus appointed representatives the ones he entrusted to speak and teach his words to the church that is the apostles then Paul says something really bold if anyone doesn't recognize this he is not recognized that is not recognized by God now that would be the most insanely audacious thing in the world to say if Jesus himself hadn't said the exact same thing during Jesus earthly ministry when he sent out his apostles to teach you see this in

[36 : 23] Luke chapter 10 for instance Jesus told them this to his apostles to those chosen twelve that he appointed for this task whoever hears you hears me and the one who rejects you rejects me and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me so you see Jesus himself the historical Jesus himself is drawing a direct link between God the father and himself and his apostles do you want to know what God has to say listen to his son do you want to know what the son has to say listen to the apostles that he appointed to teach and preach in his name and where do we find the teaching of Jesus appointed apostles today in the new testament friends that's why the bible is our well spring that's why

Sunday after Sunday we open it up and we read it and we try to teach the message of the scriptures here we have the words Jesus himself gave to his church through his apostles in the new testament and through his prophets in the old testament too and this apostolic word that Jesus entrusted is preserved in scripture for the church and isn't that good news that instead of wondering where we can hear the voice of our Lord he says here it is it is for you so you can always have his words so we can always have his voice leading us and guiding us and correcting us and comforting us we often think that having an authoritative bible is this huge problem but in fact it's this great gift that we don't have to make things up on our own that we don't have to create

God in our own image that we don't have to guess what Jesus says but he 38 is that truly spiritual worship places the apostolic words of Jesus which we have preserved for us in scripture at the center of everything in other words they're the order underneath the order that's why our orderly worship seeks to be just saturated with the words of scripture our songs and prayers and testimonies and sermons we want them to be infused with the bible why because we don't have anything else better to say yeah we don't have anything else better to say than what God is saying in his word Beth and I recently started making cold brew coffee at home do you know what cold brew coffee is the process is really easy actually you grind up some coffee you put it in a container of water and then you just put it in your fridge for 12 hours rich super caffeinated beverage to jump start your day or you can go to

Starbucks and pay like six bucks for one we'll make ours at home okay friends that's sort of what we want to happen with public worship we want the scriptures to so saturate everything we do that you can't help but get a good strong rich dose of Jesus life giving words on Sunday which is why if you have a friend who is seeking God or if you yourself are feeling far from God bring them to a gathering where the scriptures are being explained and read and talked about and prayed and preached because God is speaking through his word and it also means that if we want to grow in our maturity of using our spiritual gifts in worship the best thing that we can do is pray earnestly which

Paul says a number of times in this passage and immerse ourselves in scripture so let me ask friends do you have a way of doing that what steps are you taking to soak in the scriptures and to fill your mind with the mind of Christ showing up to public worship is the first best step but are you taking advantage of other means maybe you have tried reading through the Bible in a year and have totally failed okay I have done that like a thousand times somewhere around you know Deuteronomy if you are really having a good year you peter out right let me offer another strategy if that one hasn't worked for you pick one book of the Bible like the book of Ephesians it's short or the Gospel of Mark it's also kind of short pick one book and read it over and over and over again and pray through it and journal about it and outline it and memorize key verses and talk to a friend about what you're learning from that one book just soak in that one book until you feel like you know it really well like the living room of your house until it feels like it's inside of you maybe that'll take a few months maybe it'll take six months for a longer book it might take a whole year but just inhabit that book and only then move on to another book and do the same thing in other words instead of going a mile wide and an inch deep go an inch deep and a mile wide and

[42 : 41] I guarantee you you will not be so orderly worship then is Jesus' command and we want his words to be at the center of all that we do but there's one last point that our text holds up for us as we consider orderly worship and it's this this is a short point do all things decently and in order because orderly worship displays God's character to the world look back at verse 33 do all this Paul says for God is not a God of confusion but of peace in our worship in our life together whether we like it or not we are saying something about the character of God so what do people see when they join us do they see chaos do they see people just trying to one up each other and show off or do they see something different not just in what said but how our life together is functioning do they see the

God of peace listen to how Paul describes it in his letter to the Ephesians he says remember that you were at that time separated from Christ alienated from the commonwealth of Israel strangers to the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world but now in Christ Jesus you who were once far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ for he himself is our peace who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two so making peace and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross thereby killing the hostility

Paul goes on he says and he came and he preached peace to you who are far off and peace to those who are near for through him we both have access in one spirit to the father could there be a more sweeping vision for how what Jesus has done on the cross not just reconciles us to God but reconciles us to one another it makes peace one with God and one with one another the dividing wall of hostility that separates Jew and Gentile and all the races for that matter and rich and poor and male and female and all these things that divide us has been ripped down through the death and the resurrection of Jesus because we all come to God on equal terms through him and he now is our righteousness and our peace not anything else peace friends the God we worship is the God of peace and our gatherings ought to be a glorious display of that peace and in the

Bible peace is not static and it's not lifeless the biblical concept of peace is rich and dynamic it replaces enmity and conflict and hostility not with the mere absence of those things but with the presence of something positive of harmony and of right relationship and of the world healed and put back the way it's supposed to be imagine a highway where everyone is driving however they see fit what would that look like there would be accidents and chaos everywhere and biblical peace is not just getting everyone off the road and making an empty highway no biblical peace is all the cars of all kinds flowing seamlessly to their destination and so friends orderly worship isn't necessarily going to look the same everywhere it's going to take different forms and different rich expressions orderly worship for our Anglican brothers and sisters will look different from orderly worship among our Pentecostal brothers and sisters right and they could both be upholding

Paul's principle here because biblical peace displaying the God of peace biblical peace is like a great dance where the dynamic inner life of our triune God Father Son and Holy Spirit begins to be reflected in our life together so that where once we just tried to show off our gifts and pretend and perform and make ourselves look good and as a result there was conflict and strife now because of what Jesus has done and through his spirit we care more about coming together and building each other up and there's concord and there's compassion and there's even deference and of course another name for all this is love and that's what 1 Corinthians 12 through 14 has really been all about hasn't it with chapter 13 beating like a heart in the middle of it all love a love that issues in peace and friends isn't that the gospel as James said earlier that God so loved us that he came and he paid the penalty for our sins to give us eternal life to give us unending peace peace and friends in our chaotic world that may be the hardest thing to come by we are hard pressed to even get a glimpse of peace but the vision here is that in our life together as the church that here there's actually a foretaste of it that here the hurting world can actually see something different they can actually see God's peace on display that they can find a people of peace displaying the God of peace the God who made peace for his enemies through his own death on a cross and of course

[49 : 21] Paul's vision isn't just that they'd see it on Sunday mornings but as we go out from here they'd see it in all that we do in our families in our work in our relationships with our neighbors that there would just be an aroma of something different of peace so you see friends orderly worship isn't just order for order's sake ultimately at its highest end it's a reflection of God's own character it's a reflection of that character out into the world God has made this world that God aims to restore and to renew does that seem stunning to you could something as small as our public worship gathering really play that big of a part in God's purposes in the world giving people a glimpse of who God is hands down the Bible would say yes yes it does and let's pray that our worship gatherings and our life together do the same thing let's pray together

God we praise you as the God of peace and we ask that we would be a people of peace Lord not just in how we conduct ourselves on Sunday but in all of our relationships we need your spirit to make this happen God so often we have fallen short as your church but thank you that you have not left us but you've given us your holy spirit to work out this peace that you've granted us so God heal us make us a loving people and help this world that you love our city that you love so much to see peace in and through us we pray this in your name Jesus our prince of peace amen well friends the music team is going to come up and lead us in a final hymn and let's use the words of this hymn as a means of just meditating on and reflecting and taking into our hearts the message of our passage this morning would you stand beneath the cross of

Jesus I find a place to stand and wonder at such mercy that upholds me as I am for hands that should discard me hold wounds which tell me come beneath the cross of Jesus my undirty soul is beneath the cross of Jesus his family is my own what strangers chasing selfish dreams of the grace of how could

I now dissout the ones that you have known beneath the cross of Jesus see the children call my God love beneath the cross of Jesus above before the cross we follow in his footsteps where the promise to his heart how great the joy before us to be his perfect God beneath the cross of

Jesus we will bear in the lives friends hear the benediction now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus the great shepherd of the sheep by the blood of the eternal covenant equip you with everything good that you may do his will working in us that which is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ to whom be glory forever and ever amen friends go in peace you you Thank you.