

FOUNDATION OF FAITH!
GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT
PART 12
INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES

As we continue our series, Foundation of Faith, we are looking at the subject of Spiritual gifts or gifts that the Holy Spirit gives to us as He sees fit for the various situations that we find ourselves in. In our last study we looked at the gift of tongues and we discussed what that was all about and if it was for today, and we saw that it was a gift that is used today in the church.

This morning we are going to focus on the interpretation of tongues as Paul tells us starting in I Corinthians chapter 12, verse 7, **“But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills.”** I Corinthians 12:7-11.

Now before we get to the interpretation of tongues this morning, let me just say this regarding the gift of tongues. You see, you need to understand what this gift is all about if you want to understand what the interpretation of tongues is. We saw last time that the gift of tongues is the supernatural ability that is given by the Holy Spirit to a person enabling them to speak in a language that they have never learned or understand. And we said that tongues could be spoken in a common language or not so common language of today. It could be in the form of some ancient dialect whose people and language have passed off the scene, or it could be the language of angels, a heavenly language.

Now some feel that there is no reason for tongues to be around today. I disagree. When we speak in tongues we are expressing to God the things that our own language may not be able to express. It also bypasses our intellect and our fallen nature so that we might worship, give thanks, pray to our God, which does strengthen the inner man.

Thus, speaking in tongues is man speaking to God while prophecy is God speaking to man. God never uses tongues to preach the gospel or to teach the church. That is what prophecy does. In fact, the reality is, you would never hear a message in tongues, that would be prophecy.

Now in saying that some negate this gift, there are those that have gone to the other extreme and believe that unless you speak in tongues you are not even saved. They believe that tongues are evidence that shows you are saved. That is not true. Evidence for our salvation is a transformed life not speaking in tongues. Now let me share what one person wrote on the web page Truth or Tradition. We are told,

It is vital to understand that speaking in tongues and interpretation of tongues are, in fact, manifestations, that is, evidences of the gift of holy spirit, the divine nature of God that each person receives when he confesses Jesus as Lord and believes that God raised him from the dead (Rom. 10:9). For centuries, millions of sincere Christians who longed to speak in tongues have been denied that joy by erroneous teaching that led them to consider it a *gift*. We all know that the only way to get a gift is for someone else to give it to us, and those multitudes of disappointed Christians believed that they had not been given the “gift of tongues.”

- truthortradition.com

You see, in his thinking, speaking in tongues is not a gift but you just receive it when you are saved. That may sound good, but remember what we just read in I Corinthians chapter 12, that it is a gift, it is something that the Holy Spirit gives to believers as He sees fit.

Not only that but remember what Paul said in I Corinthians 12:30, “**Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?**” These are rhetorical questions with the answer being, “No, of course not!” God gives to each believer as He sees fit! And thus, not everyone has the gift of tongues or the interpretation of tongues! I hope that is clear to you because there are those out there who will try to tell you otherwise. I would encourage you to let the Scriptures speak for themselves instead of listening to the wisdom of men!

And so, as I have said we are going to be looking at another spiritual gift, the interpretation of tongues this morning. Now the Greek word that Paul uses for “**interpretation**” is HERMENEIA, (her-may-ni’-ah) from which we get our word “hermeneutics” from, which refers to the science of Scriptural interpretation.

And so, this gift of the interpretation of tongues is the supernatural ability that has been given to us by the Holy Spirit so that we may interpret tongues, a language that we don’t know or understand. Now every time you speak in tongues it doesn’t have to have an interpretation. The interpretation is only needed in a public setting, in fact it is required. On the other hand, in your own private devotional time, if you speak in tongues, no interpretation is required. We will see that in a few minutes.

Also, this is an interpretation, not necessarily a verbatim translation. In fact, most of the time it is a paraphrase of what was spoken for it may be very difficult to translate from that language to English for instance.

Let me give you an example from the Old Testament. In Daniel chapter 5, Belshazzar, king of Babylon, is having a drunken party while the army of the Medes and the Persians gathered around their city. And during this party God wrote on the wall by the king these words: **MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN**. And this troubled the king greatly, he knew it was not good news, but he didn’t know what it meant.

We read in Daniel 5:6, “**Then the king’s countenance changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his hips were loosened and his knees knocked against each other.**” We might say that he was shaking in his boots!

So the king calls for his wise men, astrologers and-so-on, to come and read these words and interpret them, but no one could. Then his grandmother, the wife of the late King Nebuchadnezzar came in and told her grandson that there is a man in the kingdom that will be able to tell you what this means, his name is Daniel.

Now the words meant: MENE - WEIGHED, TEKEL - LACKING, and UPHARSIN -DIVIDED. So the message was: “WEIGHED, WEIGHED, LACKING, DIVIDED!” Not a lot of help, we still don’t know what it means. But beginning in verse 26 of Daniel chapter 5 we read, **“This is the interpretation of each word. MENE: God has numbered your kingdom, and finished it; TEKEL: You have been weighed in the balances, and found wanting; PERES: Your kingdom has been divided, and given to the Medes and Persians.”**

You see, Daniel interpreted what these words meant; he did not do a verbatim translation. And the same is true many times with this gift of tongues. It is not the gift of translation, although at times it may be a translation of what was said, but it is the gift of interpretation, which many times may be a paraphrase of the thought or intent of the message that was spoken in tongues.

In saying all that, please turn to I Corinthians chapter 14 as we are going to look closer at what tongues and the interpretation of tongues is all about. And remember, the Corinthian church was exercising all the spiritual gifts and yet they were very carnal, very immature in the faith. Now some may like to tell you that you need to reach a certain level of maturity to attain these gifts, that is just plain wrong. These are grace gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit and not a reward for our spirituality. If they were based on our behavior think about all the pride we would have as we look down upon those who haven't made it yet to the place where we are. Thank God they are grace gifts for it eliminates any kind of prideful attitudes on our part, or at least it should! And when you think about it, if these gifts were based upon our deserving of them, none of us would have any of these gifts!

And please keep in mind that the Corinthian church had some major problems in the exercising of these spiritual gifts. They were very self-centered which lead to the abuse of these gifts. You see, they became more concerned about flaunting their gifts instead of seeing people built up in the faith. And we are going to see Paul tell us in I Corinthians chapter 14 that he is coming against this self-centered, abusive attitude they were manifesting with these gifts.

I think that this is one of the main reasons that Paul, in I Corinthians chapter 13, interrupted his writings on spiritual gifts to speak of *LOVE!* Paul said beginning in verse 1 of I Corinthians chapter 13, **“Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. . . .”** I Corinthians 13:1-8a.

You see, we need to be others centered instead of self-centered and that is why Paul is speaking of manifesting the *AGAPE* love of God towards others and not let the gifts puff you up! It is a love that is more concerned about others than if they deserve that kind of love or not! And then, as Paul moves into I Corinthians chapter 14, he is going to deal with the gift of tongues, the interpretation of tongues and of the gift of prophecy.

Remember that the Corinthian church abused the gift of tongues in the public setting. Tongues is mostly used in a private setting, although not exclusively. Why was it used in the Corinthian church in the first place during their church services? Keep in mind that this was an early letter of Paul's and the Scriptures were not together yet and so someone would read a Psalm and someone would teach on it. Someone spoke in tongues and someone interpreted the tongues. Someone gave a prophecy and someone judged that prophecy to see if it was Scriptural. And this was all done to build up the body until the Lord could raise up leaders to teach because the church was built with new believers at this time.

Again, as you look at the Pastoral Epistles, the focus is on the teaching of God's Word and not these spiritual gifts. Paul tells us in I Timothy 3:14-15, "**These things I write to you, though I hope to come to you shortly; but if I am delayed, I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.**"

Did you notice what Paul is saying here. Not only does the church have God's truth but also it is the vessel that God uses to proclaim it to the world! A pillar is a supporting structure and we hold up God's Word to the people of this world. The foundation is also a supporting structure and this world rests upon one of two foundations, the truth or the lie, but if the foundation is weak, the structure will be unstable. Thus, to bring stability to the people of this world, we need to bring them the truths of God!

Thus, as a local church we must be faithful to preserve the truth, preach the truth and put into practice the truth so that as people look at our faith, they see that it is real! One of the problems in the church today is that the Word of God is not being taught as it should; teachers are not rightly dividing the Word and teaching it. They tend to make it say what they want it to say, but not what God has said. Jesus said in John 17:17,

“Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.”

Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 4:2-5, **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables. But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry.”**

It doesn't matter what people want to hear, you give them the truth. People may want to believe a lie, but that does not mean we must go along with them. We speak forth the Word of God; it is our source of truth!

You see, the church is to focus on God's worship and His Word and in doing so it will be a strong pillar in any community, a solid foundation of truth, unshakeable in times of fierce storms. And as false doctrines come, and they will, the church can stand strong against it. Thus, *The Church is the Pillar and Foundation of the Truth!*

That is not to say that gifts are not important or they are not for today, but the focus in the church is the teaching of God's Word and many of the gifts will be exercised throughout the service like word of wisdom, word of knowledge, prophecy and-so-on. I don't think the gift of tongues and the interpretation is to function during a teaching service, but it can during praise, prayer and worship times.

We also have to remember that prophecy is better used in a public setting for it builds up, exhorts people into action and it comforts them. That is the background of Paul's remarks that he is making in I Corinthians chapter 14, which we are now going to look at this morning.

I CORINTHIANS 14

VERSES 1-2

Paul is speaking in general terms regarding tongues, that no one understands tongues unless there is someone to interpret them. Pastor Chuck tells a story that took place many years ago. About 55 or 60 people had gathered together on Pentecost Sunday to wait upon the Lord and remember what He did when he sent His Spirit upon the Church.

As they worshiped and praised the Lord a woman named Lynn stood up and began to speak in tongues, and Pastor Chuck recognized she was speaking French, although he could not make out all that she was saying. But what he understood was she was giving praise unto God. This woman was thanking God for the beautiful new song He had put into her heart as He moved her from singing in nightclubs to singing for Jesus. Pastor Chuck could understand just enough of what she was saying, but not enough to give an interpretation, which of course if he knew the language it would just be an interpretation, not the supernatural gift of interpretation.

Now Pastor Chuck's wife, who doesn't understand any French, began to interpret the message that was given in tongues. Pastor Chuck goes on to say, "A Jewish visitor from Palm Springs who was going through some marital problems had joined us that night. A friend had brought her so I could counsel her after the meeting. When the people left and we were getting ready to talk, she said 'Before we get into my problems, I would like you to explain to me why the one lady spoke to the group in French and why the other lady translated what she said.'"

"'Would you believe it if I told you that neither of those ladies know French?' I asked."

"'No I wouldn't' she explained."

Pastor Chuck went on to say that he has known his wife for years and she doesn't know any French and neither does the other lady. And he took her to the Scriptures showing her the gift of tongues and the interpretation of tongues.

“‘Well,’ she said, ‘that was the most beautiful French I have ever heard. It was spoken with a perfect aristocratic accent. I lived in Paris for five years and it isn’t street French; it was the aristocratic form of the language. And the other lady gave a perfect translation.’”

That is the gift of tongues and the interpretation of tongues properly used in a public setting. As I have said, in a private setting you don’t need the interpretation; it is your spirit communicating with God’s Spirit!

VERSES 3-5

Paul’s point is simple. Tongues edifies you and that is why its primary use is in private. Prophecy is beneficial to the body of Christ and thus it is used in a public setting. The only time tongues is beneficial in a public setting is when an interpretation is given, and tongues is praise, not teaching!

Now some, like John MacArthur believe Paul is speaking sarcastically here, and he says, “Because even true tongues must be interpreted in order to be understood, they cannot possibly edify anyone, including the person speaking, without such interpretation. They cannot, therefore, be intended by God for private devotional use, as many Pentecostals and Charismatics claim . . . Why, many people wonder, did Paul say I wish that you all spoke in tongues? . . . Paul was wishing them the impossible for the sake of emphasis.”

It is interesting how far people will go to disregard the sign gifts. Then how do tongues edify the person speaking in tongues? Tongues reaches beyond the human intellect and helps us to pray, to praise, to intercede beyond our own ability, the Spirit does this for us and as it happens, we are strengthened in the faith.

Thus, the gift of tongues is the best gift for our private devotional time with the Lord and the gift of prophecy is the best gift for our time in the church. You see, desire the best gift for the situation you are in.

Does everyone speak in tongues? It would seem that Paul is saying, “No, not at all!” for he tells us, “**I wish you all spoke with tongues.**” If you do that is great, if you don’t, that does not make you less spiritual, not at all. The Spirit gives to us as He wills, we can ask because it is a beautiful prayer and praise language unto God, but then it is up to the Holy Spirit to give the gift to us!

VERSE 6

Notice what Paul is saying here. If a person can’t understand what is being said, then it is of no real benefit to them. Now Paul is going to give to us some illustrations to drive home his point.

VERSES 7-8

Back in those days the sound a trumpet made would call you to battle, wake you up, call you for meals, when to retreat in battle, and-so-on. Thus, it was very important that you made the right sound with the trumpet so the soldiers would know what to do. You wouldn't want to call the soldiers to battle when you want them to retreat, that would not be good! And like our language, pre-arranged sounds mean certain things to us.

VERSES 9-11

In other words, if you don't understand the language, then the words are meaningless. They make no sense and they don't help you or anyone at all. But the gift of tongues is different in that the person speaking it can be edified, drawn closer to God. Tongues can benefit you and of course God understands it for it is primarily but not exclusively praise unto Him!

VERSES 12-13

Paul is speaking here of the use of tongues in a public setting. If you exercise this gift in a public setting there needs to be someone to interpret. If not, then no other tongues should be spoken. Paul is not speaking of the use of tongues in a private setting when there does not need to be an interpretation.

VERSE 14

This really upsets our intellect. We want to figure out what we said and we try to make sense out of it. When we can't our mind tells us that these words are just made up and we try to reject what God is doing. We say that it is not real. The gift of tongues does take faith because it bypasses our intellect, we don't understand it. It also bypasses our fallen nature. For example I may be praying for revival, to see people saved. That is good, right? Of course it is! But maybe my motive is to get more people into the church so I can get a bigger salary or whatever. The flesh, the fallen nature gets in the way of what we are praying for. But tongues bypasses that and it is our spirit speaking to God praise and worship, thanking God for all He has done, without it being contaminated by our fallen nature, without our selfish ideas, without our wants getting in the way!

VERSE 15

There are times we don't know what to pray for and the Spirit makes intercession for us, praying in the will of God. Paul said in Romans 8:26-27, "**Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.**" But we also are to pray on our own, with understanding, so that we can know when God answers our prayers.

VERSES 16-18

Now please understand that there is nothing wrong with speaking in tongues, Paul himself spoke in tongues. But in a public setting, without an interpretation, no one is edified except you. The gift of tongues is primarily used in a private setting as we praise and thank God for all He is and all He has done.

VERSES 19-20

Again, notice Paul's focus, to build people up, and that is primarily done with the gift of prophecy. The problem in the Corinthian church was that they were self-centered and used the gifts to bring glory to themselves instead of building up the body of Christ. That is why Paul says that they are children or they are selfishly immature! In fact, Paul is telling them to grow-up, act their age, be mature, put on the mind of Christ. As you examine the life of Jesus He was others-centered instead of being self-centered! And, of course, He is a great example to follow! The gifts are not given to exalt us, but to honor and praise the Lord and build up the body of Christ. May we not forget that!

VERSES 21-25

Now there are some Scriptures that are difficult to understand and these are some of the most difficult verses to understand in the Bible, some of the hardest ones to figure out! J. B. Phillips, the famous Greek scholar, when he was translating the Greek Scriptures to English thought there was a copyist error because it didn't make sense to him. It seemed that Paul was contradicting himself. And so in verse 22 he said it was correctly translated this way, that tongues are for those who believe, to fit in with the rest of what Paul said in these verses.

I think this is hard to understand because many are trying to understand it without seeing what the Old Testament has to say about this. We saw that with the book of Revelation, that many of the things spoken of in the book of Revelation come right out of the Old Testament and if you don't approach the book that way, it can be confusing and you can come to the wrong conclusion!

Here's the thing. I don't believe there was a copyist error and I will show you why. Paul is using an Old Testament illustration from Isaiah chapter 28 to make his point. In Isaiah God is pronouncing judgment upon the Northern Kingdom of Israel by the hands of the Assyrians, and upon the Southern Kingdom of Judah by the hands of the Babylonians.

And God said that He sent them prophet after prophet who spoke to them in a language that they understood. And God was telling them through the prophets that they needed to repent and get right with God or judgment was going to come upon them. And they refused to listen to what the prophets were saying and God was going to send them another people whose language they didn't understand, the Assyrians to the Northern Kingdom of Israel, and the Babylonians to the Southern Kingdom of Judah, and judgment would come upon them. They would speak to them in a language they did not understand!

Paul is now going to apply this illustration, but in verse 20 of I Corinthians chapter 14, before he does, listen to what he tells them, “**Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.**” Paul is telling them not to be children, to grow up, to be mature, to understand these things. Tongues is not a sign of spiritual maturity or even that God is among you, for God used unbelievers to speak to Israel and Judah as a sign of judgment.

And thus, Paul is telling us that tongues is a sign to unbelievers in that it speaks to them of God's judgment that is coming upon them. I think Paul is speaking of people of faith who are refusing to hear what God is saying to them. You see, the prophets are speaking but they refuse to listen, and thus they are condemning themselves by rejecting Christ and what He has to say to them. Just as in Isaiah's day as they grew cold, indifferent to the Lord, I think that is who Paul is speaking of here. You see, if these were true unbelievers, then, as tongues are spoken in the hearing of unbelievers, most of the time it does not draw them to Christ, but pushes them out the door, they think you are crazy when they see this gift being exercised in front of them.

Prophecy, on the other hand, speaks to believers that God is among them, the Word of God, as it is being taught, ministers to the people.

Now the illustration may be a little confusing, it may be a little cloudy, but Paul draws the conclusion from this illustration beginning in verse 23 of I Corinthians chapter 14, when he said, **“Therefore if the whole church comes together in one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those who are uninformed or unbelievers, will they not say that you are out of your mind? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an uninformed person comes in, he is convinced by all, he is convicted by all. And thus the secrets of his heart are revealed; and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God and report that God is truly among you.”** I Corinthians 14:23-25.

Here’s the thought. Tongues, in general, does not minister to new believers or unbelievers. In fact many times they will think you are nuts, that you lost your mind. Therefore, in a public gathering, when you get new believers and unbelievers together, prophecy, the teaching of God’s Word, is the gift that needs to be exercised. You see, prophecy cuts right to the heart and as Hebrews 4:12-13 says, **“For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.”**

A great example of this is seen in Acts chapter 2, on the day of Pentecost as Peter launches into his first sermon, bringing the Word of God to the people. And in Acts 2:37 we read, **“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’”** They were cut to the heart, conviction came upon them and they wanted to get right with God, they wanted to get saved, and they did. That day some 3,000 gave their hearts to Christ and if you include the women and children, it may be more like 10,000 people! That is what happens as the Word of God is being taught. Prophecy in a public setting and tongues in a private setting is the general rule.

VERSES 26-27

As much as people hate restrictions, Paul gives us some restrictions for the use of the gift of tongues. Only 2 or 3 are to speak, not all at the same time, and not the entire congregation. And what we see happening today is the whole church is speaking in tongues at the same time and that is not Scriptural. Not only that but if the gift of tongues is given, then there must be another who will interpret what was said. Back then, as today, people love to draw attention to themselves, and this gift does have the potential to do that. That is why Paul was trying to set things in order, to get them to understand the proper function of the gift of tongues and the interpretation of tongues.

And once again you need to keep in mind that this was an early letter and the Bible was not completed yet. The leaders were new Christians and so they still needed to grow in the faith. Also, some feel that there were many home churches and this may relate to them. In either case, on a Sunday, someone would read a Psalm, another would teach, someone would speak in tongues and there would be an interpretation, someone may give a revelation and the problem was their selfishness, their lack of love, their desire to be heard and it caused a mess in the church. Thus, Paul says, “**Let all things be done for edification.**” If everyone is speaking at the same time there is no edification only a lot of noise! You see, the goal of coming together as a body of believers is not entertainment, it is not for ourselves, to meet our needs, but it is for the edification of the body of Christ, being built up in the Spirit by the Spirit of God and the Word of God!

VERSE 28

Here we see another restriction by Paul. Some today would say that Paul is quenching the Spirit by all these restrictions, you just need to let go and let the Spirit do whatever He wants. Not at all, that would just bring about confusion and God is not the author of confusion. In fact, when you think about it, just letting things go, do whatever you want, when things are chaotic, when there is no order, when people have moved outside the Word of God, that is what quenches what the Spirit is trying to do! And so, if there is no one to interpret, then the gift of tongues is not to be exercised.

Now some people feel that when the Spirit gets a hold of you, you have to speak. You can't stop what the Spirit is doing. Paul says that is not true. You have a choice to make when to speak and when not to speak. You can speak in tongues softly to yourself, you don't have to speak at all, or you can speak so that all can hear. You do have control over this gift. You are not going to be at Walmart and start shaking all over the place and speak in tongues!

And what we see here in these verses is that Paul is laying the ground rules for speaking in tongues. He tells us that at the most 3 people can speak in tongues during a service and then there must be the gift of interpretation also working. If not, the gift is not to be exercised.

Now here is a question some of you may have. "Why don't we see the gift of tongues in operation on Thursday evenings or Sunday mornings here at Calvary?" First of all tongues is used in our private devotions, but as I said, not exclusively! Also, think about this for a minute. As we are worshiping the Lord, singing praises unto Him, why would God interrupt the worship of Himself? During the teaching of God's Word God is speaking through me with the gift of wisdom, knowledge, teaching, prophecy and-so-on. And again, why would God interrupt Himself during the teaching? He wouldn't! During our praise, prayer and worship nights that we have on Thursday's every so often, that is when the gift of tongues and the gift of interpretation is to be in operation besides being in our own personal devotional time as I have said.

Let's jump down to verse 37 and begin reading there, here in I Corinthians chapter 14.

VERSES 37-38

Now what Paul says here is interesting. You might not think it fits in, but it does. You see, Paul understands that some are not going to accept what he has to say. Some may reject it and may even think that Paul is quenching the work of the Spirit by his restrictions. So Paul hits them hard by telling them that if they are really spiritual, if they are mature, then they will understand that these things are from God and not out of Paul's own heart. But for those who still want to come against him, he tells them to remain ignorant, fight with yourself because he is not going to waste his time trying to convince them otherwise. Here is the information and they needed to receive it. Paul was not politically correct, but he did make his point with them.

Sadly today those that come against God's Word are still around and many are in the church and leaders in the church. Paul Crouch, TBN founder and president had this to say regarding those who search the Scriptures: "To hell with you! Get out of my life! Get out of the way! . . . I say get out of God's way! Quit blocking God's bridges or God's going to shoot you if I don't. . . . I don't even want to even talk to you or hear you! I don't want to see your ugly face!" A nice way for someone to be talking on television about the body of Christ!

His remarks on judging heresy is very simple, he says to let God "sort out all this doctrinal doo-doo . . . 'We can't have faith preaching.' 'You can't have confession stuff.' 'You can't do this, you can't do that.' Who cares? Who cares? Let Jesus sort that all out at the Judgment seat of Christ. We'll find out who was right and wrong doctrinally."

Like it or not, we better care about doctrine for it is a matter of life and death! As I have said before, rat poison is not 100% deadly; in fact it must taste good for the rat to eat it. But there is just enough poison in that material to kill the rat as he satisfies his bodily appetites. The same is true with the winds of doctrine that are blowing through the church as leaders are moving people away from the truth of God's Word and sending them down a path of death and destruction. Let us be wise! Yes Paul was very blunt about this as he said in I Corinthians 14:38, "**But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.**" In other words, if someone wants to believe a lie, you can't change them!

And here's the thing. We do not need to be ignorant. God does not want us to be ignorant on these things. But also note that everything that people say is not of God, you must test the teachings to see if the Word of God supports it. That is what Paul said in I Thessalonians 5:18-22, "**Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies. Test all things; hold fast what is good. Abstain from every form of evil.**" I Thessalonians 5:19-22.

Yes, we can quench the Spirit's work in our lives by disobeying Him, rejecting what He wants us to do. It is like throwing a bucket of water on a fire, it will be quenched. But also understand that all that He wants us to do is in accordance with the Word of God and not apart from it!

VERSES 39-40

There is nothing wrong with the gift of tongues; in fact, it is a gift that the Holy Spirit gives to us. Paul's point is simple, don't forbid tongues in a public setting, but if it is exercised, make sure there is the gift of interpretation to go with it. If not, then tongues should not be exercised in the public setting. There does need to be a balance, and Paul rightly recognizes that prophecy is the best gift to be used in a public setting.

And so as Paul closes out I Corinthians chapter 14 he sums things up for us. Tongues are not bad, there is nothing wrong with this gift but prophecy is better during a church service for the people will be edified, exhorted, comforted by the Word of God!

And I want you to notice the difference between the Corinthian church and what Paul is saying here. The Corinthian church was out of control. People were doing their own thing, everyone was speaking when they wanted, and there was no order to it. And Paul is telling us that our God is a God of order, not disorder and chaos!

When you look at how some church services are, how some exercise the gifts of the Spirit today and it is embarrassing. In fact, I remember back at Calvary Chapel of Elk Grove there was a couple coming to our church from a Pentecostal church in which their services were so chaotic, so bizarre that they would never invite anyone to their church because of it, they were embarrassed! But at Calvary Chapel they were very comfortable inviting people because things were done decently and in order!

I also have a DVD of conferences where people are running up and down the aisles, they are laughing uncontrollably, they are slithering off their seats onto the floor like snakes, they are drunk in the Spirit, and there is no order, no one is being built up but there is truly much confusion. That is not of God!

Of this Clarke tells us: “How often is a work of God marred and discredited by the folly of men! For nature will always, and Satan too, mingle themselves as far as they can in the genuine work of the Spirit, in order to discredit and destroy it.” How many discredit the gifts of the Spirit, the outpouring of the Spirit upon our lives because of the bizarre stuff they see that is not of God! May we enjoy what God is doing and use the gifts to build up the body of Christ!

The interpretation of tongues is a powerful and effective tool that the Holy Spirit has given to us, may we use it properly with the gift of tongues!