

## “Practical Worship Guidelines,” Part 2 - 1 Corinthians 14:5-7 – February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016

- Today's teaching will be part two of a new series we began last week titled, “Practical Worship Guidelines.”
- Here in this chapter, Paul is confronting the Corinthians ignorance and even arrogance concerning the use of the spiritual gifts.
- Namely, that of the gift of tongues, over prophesying, which seems to have been the dominant focus of their worship services.

- The problem with tongues being the focus of services was that the only one being edified were those who spoke in tongues.
- As such, Paul redirects their focus off of tongues, which only edifies the believer, and on to prophecy, which edifies the church.
- It's important to understand that Paul is not dismissing the gift of tongues; rather, he's emphasizing the gift of prophecy instead.

- For the benefit of those to whom the gifts of the Spirit are not understood, I'll briefly provide a description and definition of two.
- The gift of tongues is the Spirit's supernatural enabling whereby one speaks prayer, praise, worship and thanksgiving to God.
- Prophecy conversely, is the supernatural enabling of the Holy Spirit, whereby one speaks a prophetic word from God to man.

- It's for this reason that Paul exhorts them to exercise the gift of prophecy in public worship and tongues in their private worship.
- That's not to say that tongues should never be exercised in the setting of public worship, only that there are strict guidelines.
- Actually this is exactly where Paul is headed, but not before he both explains and illustrates why it is that there are guidelines.

### **1. Edify the church over self (Verses 1-4)**

- Here Paul explains why prophecy is better than tongues, such that, it strengthens, encourages, comforts and edifies the church.

### **2. Eagerly desire the greater gift (Verses 5-7)**

- v5 Paul says he wishes everyone spoke in tongues but he'd rather they prophesied because prophecy is greater than tongues.
- v6 He explains why saying what good is speaking in tongues unless there was revelation, knowledge, prophecy, or instruction.
- v7 He illustrates this with lifeless sounds of a pipe or harp, in that nobody will know what is played unless the notes are distinct.

- There's something I want to point out in verse five having to do with an apparent contradiction about all speaking in tongues.
- More specifically, here Paul says he would like every one to speak in tongues, whereas in 12:29-30, he implies that not all do.
- The question becomes on of why he would say here that he wants all to speak in tongues when he just said not all are able?

- In order to answer this question, we need to understand that Paul is delineating between our worship publically and privately.
- In other words, with the public expression of tongues, and subsequent interpretation, not all would express that particular gift.
- Conversely, with the private expression of tongues, there is no need for the interpretation, and this gift is available to everyone.

- This explains why he says the one who prophesies in a public worship service is greater than the one who speaks in tongues.
- The reason being is that unless someone interprets the tongues, the church cannot be edified, whereas with prophecy they are.
- He takes it a step further and explains that tongues are no good unless there is revelation, knowledge, prophecy or instruction.

- I think it would be good if we drill down into all of these because it really explains the dynamic of our church worship service.
- This because, all four can either come by way of one speaking a word of prophecy, or by way of teaching of the Word of God.
- Whether it's a revelation, knowledge, prophecy or an instruction, there is a merging of the gifts of teaching and exhortation.

Of this one commentator wrote, “Preaching is essentially a merging of the gifts of teaching and exhortation, prophecy has the primary elements of prediction and revelation.”

- Thankfully, Paul by the Holy Spirit provides us a brilliant illustration of this in verse eight where he uses the example of sounds.
- Specifically, the illustration of the sounds of a pipe and a harp as well as a trumpet, which we'll see when we get to verse eight.
- The reason I see this as a brilliant illustration is because musical instruments must have a certain pitch and tempo to be a song.

- What Paul is saying here is that absent this distinction, nobody will understand the tune being played, which will just be noise.
- In other words, if the tongues are not followed up with the interpretation, it will be like random notes on a musical instrument.
- Not only will it be noise, I would suggest that it would be an obnoxious and irritating noise like that of a child banging on a piano.

One commentator said, “It may feel good for a child to bang on a piano, and they may like the sound, but for anyone else, it is unpleasant. Even so, someone talking to God with the gift of tongues may be blessed, but no one else is. Therefore, if someone is going to make an uncertain sound (speak in tongues unto God), let them do so unto themselves, and not among others.”

- One has to wonder why the Corinthians abuse of tongues would rise to the level of Paul going to such lengths to address it.
- I would suggest that it had more to do with the core issue than it did the outward expression of the gift of tongues in the church.
- By that I mean, often times we deal only with the outward symptoms and never deal with the inward problem that's causing it.

- Here-in lies our application now that we've had the explanation, and illustration in the sense that it's the take away from the text.
- For Corinth, overemphasizing of tongues was the outward symptom, while selfish carnality was the inward problem causing it.
- I suppose the question before each and every one of us is am I dealing only with the outward symptoms, or the inward problem.

1 Samuel 16:7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”