

"Practical Worship Guidelines," Part 4 - 1 Corinthians 14:15-20 – February 21st, 2016

- Today's teaching will be part four of a series I've titled, "Practical Worship Guidelines."
- The reason I chose this title is because the Apostle Paul addresses the issues concerning the overall church worship service.
- Namely, as it relates to their overemphasis of the gift of tongues, which only edifies self, at the expense of edifying the church.

5. Be understanding of others (Verses 15-17)

- v15 Paul says he will pray with the spirit but with understanding, and that he will sing with the spirit but also with understanding.
- v16 He explains why saying someone, in the position of an inquirer, can't say "Amen" since they don't know what you're saying.
- v17 He goes on to further explain why saying that while you are giving thanks well enough, no one else in the service is edified.

- What Paul is saying here is when they assemble together in a worship service; they need to speak in a way that is understood.
- It seems the speaking in tongues had so dominated their church service, that nobody could be in agreement and say "Amen."
- Amen, literally means, "so be it," and was an acceptable practice in the early church provided it didn't draw attention to oneself.

6. Seek first to bless not be blessed (Verses 18-20)

- v18 Paul says that he thanks God he speaks in tongues more than all of them, however, not within the church worship service.
- v19 He explains why saying that in church he would rather speak five intelligible words than ten thousand words in a tongue.
- v20 He then says as brothers and sisters, stop thinking like children; in regard to evil be infants, but in your thinking be adults.

- I find what he says here very interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is he's rebuking them for being childish.
- When Paul tells them that they're to stop thinking like children, he's basically saying that they were acting like immature infants.
- In other words, within their worship services, they were acting like selfish infants who were only concerned about themselves.

- Lest one think we should not be blessed by the church service, let me hasten to say that being blessed shouldn't be the focus.
- Actually, it's the ones who focus chiefly on what they can get out of it, are the ones who are usually the most discontent with it.
- That's not to say we don't get something out of it, rather, it is to say that the church service isn't only about what's in it for us.

- The problem with having this mindset is it puts pressure on the pastor to acquiesce and only teach what people want to hear.

A while back, I happened upon a description of "The Perfect Pastor"

1. The perfect pastor preaches exactly 10 minutes
2. He condemns sin roundly but never hurts anyone's feelings
3. He works from 8am until midnight and is also the church janitor
4. He makes \$40 a week, wears good clothes, drives a good car, buys good books, and donates \$30 a week to the church
5. He is 29 years old and has 40 years' experience
6. Above all, he is handsome
7. The perfect pastor has a burning desire to work with teenagers, and he spends most of his time with the senior citizens
8. He smiles all the time with a straight face because he has a sense of humor that keeps him seriously dedicated to his church
9. He makes 15 home visits a day and is always in his office to be handy when needed
10. The perfect pastor always has time for church council and all of its committees
11. He never misses any church meeting and is always busy evangelizing the unchurched and feeding the homeless
12. The perfect pastor is always in the church down the street!

- Perhaps this explains why we need look no further to see why it is that many a church today has abandoned the Word of God.
- This is a last days sign; people won't put up with sound doctrine, and flock to those who say what their ears are itching to hear.

Back on Monday, February 8th, Fox News published an Op-ed piece by Jeremiah Johnston in which by way of the title he asks, "Why are so many Christians biblically illiterate? Kindly allow me to share some of what he wrote, "The Bible in America is a massive industry (\$2.5 billion) yet it is the best seller few read and fewer understand. The Bible has become a moving target. One can strip it down, twist it, misread it, add to it, supplement it, and even overrule it, and, unfortunately, 95 percent of the congregation will not realize it. Why? Because Americans no longer know the Bible. The evidence is overpowering that contemporary Christianity is Bible-ish, at best, and at worst, in some cases, Bible-less. ...Everyone has an opinion about the Bible. Politicians attempt to use the Bible, Grammy-award winners quote it and Hollywood has portrayed it on the big screen. Yet one problem remains: most are oblivious to the Bible's basic content, meaning, and message.

<http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/02/10/why-are-so-many-christians-biblically-illiterate.html>

- I would submit that the main reason most people are oblivious to the Bible's basic content, is because churches don't teach it.
- They may quote from the Bible, they may even deliver messages centered on the Bible, but they don't simply teach the Bible.
- I suppose one could argue the reason churches don't teach the Bible is because of the aforementioned passage in Timothy.

- I'll bring it to a close by posing two questions for us to consider as it relates to the centrality of God's Word in a worship service.
- First, am I teachable, in the sense that I expect God to speak into my life vis-à-vis the teaching and preaching of God's Word?
- Second, is my focus only on what's in it for me, or do I seek first to bless God and God's people knowing I'll in turn be blessed?