

## **Pursuing Love in the Worship of the Church – Part 3**

1 Corinthians 14; Coast Community Church; Pastor Earl Miles; 1-28-2024

### **Intro**

In trying to understand the reality of spiritual gifts today, we need:

- Careful study of the Scripture.
- Honest evaluation of Church history.
- Reluctance to immediately dismiss a believer's experience.

Let's think through 1 Corinthians 14 along these lines:

- Pursue love. (1)
- Love seeks to edify. (1-5)
- Love that edifies is clear. (6-19)
- Love that edifies understands purpose. (20-25)
- Love that edifies is orderly. (26-40)

### **1. Pursue Love. (1)**

- We are to passionately pursue the 'agape' love that is commanded in the Scriptures. (1 John 3:13-22)
- Love for God that causes us to love like God loves is to rule all our other loves (family, friends, romantic love, etc). Our problem is not that we love people too much but that we love God too little. "The real question is, which (when the alternative comes) do you serve or choose or put first? To which claim does your will, in the last resort, yield?" (CS Lewis)
- Love for God is to be pleased with God (as the gracious and good God who promises to meet all our needs and desires through His Son, Jesus) and to live to please God (in obedience to His commands in Scripture). (Matthew 6:9-10)
- The pursuit of this love is to govern the worship of the Church and Paul tells us what this looks like in 1 Corinthians 14 (with commands regarding what to do or what not to do in corporate worship).

### **2. Love seeks to edify. (1-5)**

- The gift of tongues was a way of men speaking to God and a means of personal edification. Speaking in tongues without interpretation edifies the individual. Speaking in tongues with interpretation edifies the church.
- The gift of prophesy was a way of speaking to men for God and a means of edifying others/the Church. Prophecy is meant to edify (build up in love), exhort (encourage our hope in God) and console (encourage us to rest in Jesus).

### **3. Love that edifies is clear. (6-19)**

- Paul uses some illustrations to make the point that understanding is crucial for speech to be beneficial: The Preaching Illustration (6); The Music Illustration (7); The Military Illustration (8); The Barbarian Illustration (9-12).
- Clarity is important in worship. (9)
- Language (literally, voices) is meant to be understood. (10-11)

- Edification of others requires clarity and understanding of speech. (12)
- One may speak in a tongue without being able to interpret but should pray to be able to interpret, both for the individual's greater edification and for the edification of the Church body. (13-17)
- Paul spoke in tongues but recognized the greater importance of understanding and communicating truth in the worship service. (18-19)
- Understanding (engagement of the mind) is vital! (Romans 10:13-15; Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 4:20-24)

*Application:* Are you committed to the renewing of your mind?

Why do some see certain giftings of the Spirit for the 1<sup>st</sup> century only and possibly only continuing in a different form today? (John 14:25-26; 16:12-15; Hebrews 1:1; 2:1-4; Ephesians 2:19-22; 1 Timothy 3:14-15; 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 4:1-5; Titus 1:5-11)

*Application:* Do you evaluate all communication that comes to your mind (whether from inside of you or from outside of you) in light of the Scriptures and wisdom?

#### **4. Love that edifies understands purpose. (20-25)**

- Paul commands them to be mature in how they think about, value and use spiritual gifts. (20)
- The Corinthians need to understand that spiritual gifts are purposed by God for the edification of His people and as a sign for unbelievers (in the case of tongues).
- The purpose of tongues appears to be witness and worship but also judgment!
- The purpose of prophecy is edification and exhortation and consolation.
- A sign points to God and His activity. (20)
- Paul's point from Isaiah 28:9-13, especially verse 11 (see also Deuteronomy 28:49) seems to be that to be 'childish' is to be satisfied with a 'babbling experience' instead of learning and growing through engaging their minds regarding the revelation of God to them; and to be so satisfied with a mere incoherent experience and without understanding of God's Word is possibly to incur the judgment of God rather than the blessing of God. A lack of understanding speech (whether God's speech or another's speech) may be a sign of divine judgment (as in the case of Israel) and not a sign of blessing (like the Corinthians seemed to think). Blessing comes through understanding that leads to faith and hope and love! (20)

*Application:* Are you more interested in experience or in the growth of understanding that produces greater faith and hope and love?

#### **Conclusion**

- Are you *resting in Jesus* for pardon and perfection and perfect love?
- Are you *hoping in God* for help and happiness and holiness?
- Are you *pursuing love* in submission to God's Word and will and in dependence on God's Spirit?