

PAUL'S EVALUATION OF SPEAKING IN TONGUES  
I COR. 14:1-9

Introduction:

- A. After Paul reveals the transitory nature of the spiritual gifts, he then reveals the minor importance of tongues.
  - 1. They probably considered tongues the most important or glamorous gift.
  - 2. The most disruptive to an orderly service.
- B. Paul does not forbid them to speak in tongues.
  - 1. v39.

I. IT IS BETTER TO PROPHECY THAN SPEAK IN TONGUES.

- A. "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophecy."
  - 1. Pursue this gift of love.
  - 2. But still keep cultivating your spiritual gifts.
  - 3. Above all things that ye may prophecy.
- B. "For he that speaketh in an unknown tongue."
  - 1. "unknown" is not in the Bible!
  - 2. Only God hears him, without an interpreter.
- C. "for not man understandeth him; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries."
  - 1. No one hears, catches his meaning.
  - 2. He is inspired by the Spirit, but what he speaks is a mystery.
  - 3. No one is present to interpret.

II. THE THREE BENEFITS OF PROPHECY.

- A. "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men."
  - 1. Tongues without an interpreter speaks only to God, the prophet speaks to men!



2. to edification = to build up.
  3. to exhortation = to encouragement.
  4. to comfort = to consolation.
- B. "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself"
1. The speaker, without an interpreter, is the sole beneficiary.
  2. It is praying or doing alms in public.
- C. "but he that prophesieth edifieth the church."
1. Speaking God's Word builds up others.
  2. Teaching publicly benefits all.

### III. PROPHECY IS BETTER THAN TONGUES.

- A. "I would that ye all spoke with tongues."
1. I want all of you to speak in languages.
- B. "but rather that ye prophesied."
1. But I prefer that you speak forth God's word.
- C. "for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues."
1. He that speaks forth God's word is more important than he that speaks languages.
- D. "except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying."
1. Unless he interprets what he says so that the congregation may be strengthened.

### III. TONGUES WITHOUT INTERPRETATION DO NOT PROFIT THE CHURCH.

- A. "Now, brethren, if I come unto you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you, except."
1. How can I instruct you if I don't speak in a language you understand?

- B. "I shall speak to you either by revelation, or by knowledge, or by prophesying, or by doctrine?"
  - 1. revelation = unveiling.
  - 2. knowledge = knowing.
  - 3. prophesying = speaking forth.
  - 4. doctrine = teaching.

#### IV. ILLUSTRATIONS FROM LIFE. V7,8

- A. Sounds do not a tune make.
  - 1. "And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped?"
  - 2. sound = phonen.
  - 3. Even musical instruments are examples...such as flute and harp.
  - 4. Unless each note is sounded clearly, no one will recognize the tune.
- B. The bugler sounds the message.
  - 1. "for if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself for the battle?"
  - 2. If the bugle does not sound a call distinct and clear...
  - 3. How shall the soldier prepare himself to battle.

#### V. WE SHOULD MAKE SOUNDS THAT HAVE MEANING. V9

- A. "So likewise ye, except ye utter by the tongue words easy to be understood, how shall it be known what is spoken?"
  - 1. Therefore, in speaking, you too must use a language that men can understand.
- B. "for ye shall speak in the air."
  - 1. Or you will be pouring words into the empty air.