

## THE FIRST LETTER OF PAUL TO THE CORINTHIANS

### Collect Prayer

<sup>23</sup>When they had appointed a day for him, they came to him at his lodging in great numbers. And he expounded the matter to them from morning till evening, testifying to the kingdom of God and trying to convince them about Jesus both from the law of Moses and from the prophets. <sup>24</sup>And some were convinced by what he said, while others disbelieved. <sup>25</sup>So, as they disagreed among themselves, they departed, after Paul had made one statement: "The Holy Spirit was right in saying to your fathers through Isaiah the prophet: <sup>26</sup>'Go to this people and say, You shall indeed hear but never understand, and you shall indeed see but never perceive. <sup>27</sup>For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are heavy of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest they should perceive with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn for me to heal them.' <sup>28</sup>Let it be known to you then that this salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles; they will listen."

Acts 28:23-28

Let us pray, Heavenly Father in the Incarnation, Nativity and Epiphany of your Son Jesus, the Christ, you have caused a new light to shine in our hearts. Grant that we may every walk in that light and seek your truth, in the Word made flesh your Son our Savior Jesus Christ. **Amen**

Are there questions or comments from the last session? For those of you following online you may email Fr. Bart at [frfryanssc@frontiernet.net](mailto:frfryanssc@frontiernet.net)

### **1 Corinthians 13**

*And I will show you a still more excellent way.*

*<sup>1</sup>If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned,<sup>£</sup> but have not love, I gain nothing.*

I. What does Paul mean when he uses the word Love?

- A. **Philia** - brotherly love - family love
- B. **Storge** - affection
- C. **Eros** - physical love - erotic love
- D. **Agape** - self sacrificing love - love with no benefit

II. Paul begins the section in 12:2 "*And I will show you a still more excellent way*"

A. How the Corinthians are acting:

Spiritual Gifts = acceptance by God = Salvation

B. The more excellent way:

The gift of Faith comes from God = Acceptance of God's Gifts = Responding by Love for God and our fellow man = Salvation

*<sup>4</sup>Love is patient and kind; love is not jealous or boastful; <sup>5</sup>it is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup>it does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right. <sup>7</sup>Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

I. The central focus of this section is the application of Agape love

II. It is the quality of the love - the application that is the issue

*<sup>8</sup>Love never ends; as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. <sup>9</sup>For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect; <sup>10</sup>but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. <sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up childish ways. <sup>12</sup>For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. <sup>13</sup>So faith, hope, love abide, these three; but the greatest of these is love. <sup>14</sup>Make love your aim,*

## I. Part of the understanding of the process of death as transformation

A. God's great Gift is not changed or destroyed even by death - we are to be told that Love abides beyond physical death because it is of God.

B. In the Jewish tradition and the Hellenistic love is a virtue to be cultivated - an ethical and religious reality

C. For Paul love is not so much as virtue as it is the eschatological power of God poured out into His creation. His power to transform and make real His Kingdom

## 1 Corinthians 14

*Make love your aim and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. <sup>2</sup>For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. <sup>3</sup>On the other hand, he who prophesies speaks to men for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. <sup>4</sup>He who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the church. <sup>5</sup>Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than he who speaks in tongues, unless some one interprets, so that the church may be edified.*

I. The beginning of this section is connected to the last verse (1a) belongs to Chapter 13 and connects chapter 13 to the issue of gifts- The greatest gift is not tongues or prophesy but love

### II. The Issue of Tongues

- A. A charism - gift of the Holy Spirit
- B. Easily visible
- C. Not easily verified

### III. Tongues vs. Prophesy

- A. Tongues are personal
  - 1. Divinely given

2. Speaking of mystery not understood
3. Speaking in tongues builds up the persons ego

#### B. Prophecy is for the Church

1. Prophecy - human directed speech which reveals
2. The words are of encouragement and for building up
3. Prophecy builds up the church`

*<sup>6</sup>Now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how shall I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? <sup>7</sup>If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will any one know what is played? <sup>8</sup>And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? <sup>9</sup>So with yourselves; if you in a tongue utter speech that is not intelligible, how will any one know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. <sup>10</sup>There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning; <sup>11</sup>but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to the speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me. <sup>12</sup>So with yourselves; since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.*

#### I. Paul uses three examples to teach the same truth

- A. Flute and Harp - enjoyed and appreciated
- B. Trumpet - Call to action
- C. The human voice - to be understood

#### II. It is not the sound, but the response to the sound that is important

If we are inspired (Filled with the Holy Spirit) that gift is given to us so that we can inform others for their benefit.

<sup>13</sup>Therefore, he who speaks in a tongue should pray for the power to interpret. <sup>14</sup>For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. <sup>15</sup>What am I to do? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. <sup>16</sup>Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how can any one in the position of an outsider say the "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? <sup>17</sup>For you may give thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified. <sup>18</sup>I thank God that I speak in tongues more than you all; <sup>19</sup>nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind, in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

I. Using all gifts to build up the body - pray to interpret

II. The passage concerning Spirit and Mind

A. The Hellenistic notion is that body and soul are separate

Soul is only free when body is not present - likewise the rational inhibits the creative spiritual side

B. Paul is teaching that there needs to be a unity between the rational and the spiritual - mind and spirit

<sup>20</sup>Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; be babes in evil, but in thinking be mature. <sup>21</sup>In the law it is written, "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." <sup>22</sup>Thus, tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for believers. <sup>23</sup>If, therefore, the whole church assembles and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? <sup>24</sup>But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, <sup>25</sup>the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.

I. Outside and Inside the Church - Believers and Non-believers

A. From the beginning of the letter Paul has identified as a people set apart

1. Repository of the Truth
2. A Holy People
3. A gifted people - Note the connection between O.T and now - God's people have prophesy, receive God's Grace - fed in the desert, water from the rock, led in battle etc.

B. Why has the church been given these gifts?

1. To build up the Body - health of every member
2. To share the Word - evangelism

C. Remember that the church at Corinth exists in a pluralistic culture

1. Paul has already taught about the conversion of non-believing spouses (7:16)
2. The conduct of the church both inside the assembly and outside should be oriented toward proclaiming the truth so that it may be understood by outsiders

*<sup>26</sup>What then, brethren? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. <sup>27</sup>If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. <sup>28</sup>But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silence in church and speak to himself and to God. <sup>29</sup>Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. <sup>30</sup>If a revelation is made to another sitting by, let the first be silent. <sup>31</sup>For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged; <sup>32</sup>and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets. <sup>33</sup>For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.*

*As in all the churches of the saints, <sup>34</sup>the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says. <sup>35</sup>If there is anything they desire to know, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church. <sup>36</sup>What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?*

<sup>37</sup>If any one thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that what I am writing to you is a command of the Lord. <sup>38</sup>If any one does not recognize this, he is not recognized. <sup>39</sup>So, my brethren, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues; <sup>40</sup>but all things should be done decently and in order.

## I. The Ordering of the Church

A. All are to use their gifts for the benefit of the church

B. Concerning the gifts of Speech - five types

1. Songs of praise
2. Teaching
3. Revelation
4. Speaking in tongues
5. Interpreting tongues

C. Rules concerning tongues

1. Limit the number who speak - 2-3
2. Those who speak need to take turns
3. That there must be an interpretation available  
(No one to interpret - no speaking in tongues)

D. Rules concerning Prophecy - Prophecy is noted as a greater gift

1. Limit the number who speak - 2-3
2. Those who speak must take turns and give way to each other
3. The church must judge what is stated

E. Women must be silent - (33-36) this seems to be contradictory to Paul egalitarian stance -

1. The Christian Assemblies met in private homes - but there is a public nature to the assembly - Is Paul suggesting that the active roles in hospitality that women took in the Greco- Roman culture privately should not be exercised in the public setting?

2. Was Paul addressing the frenzied fashion of speaking found in women in the cult of Dionysus?

In the Delphic Oracle tradition women responded to questions addressed to them concerning one's personal life

3. Was Paul commenting about the Gnostic Cult and their early women's liberation which led women to speak their minds in the assembly? Paul may be commenting about this action as being out of order.

4. Was Paul talking only about married women? He comments about asking their husbands later.

5. Is it that Paul is not encouraging women to be silent any more than he encourages men to be silent? Rather he is addressing the men who wish to maintain their patriarchal status by appealing to the Jewish tradition.

6. Anthropology of Religion - Is faith about old men, women and children? Look at who attends church on Sunday. There have been those who suggest that for the church to thrive and grow men need to feel they have a place in the community that "belongs to them" Is this what Paul is addressing?

7. Is it an error?- a gloss - NRSV places this passage in brackets

a. There is an issue with the language - not Pauline

The law says - Paul does not usually appeal to the Law, rather he uses Scripture

b. 33-36 disagrees with the equality of Paul

c. 33-36 disagrees with 11:5 (that passage establishes a dress code for women who pray and prophesy in the church)

d. There are some ancient texts that that place 33-36 after 40 which may indicate it is an late addition

F. The arguments for inclusion of 33-36 as canonical

1. No one passage of scripture can be read to the inclusion of the totality of Sacred Scripture - What has Paul said before about equality?

2. 33-35 are the conservative, Jewish position concerning women. Paul states this simply and clearly, Why?

3. Verse 36 places 33-35 into a different light, perhaps even the light of ridicule?

<sup>36</sup>What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?

Is Paul not negating his comments with this question? Does this negation not agree with his previous teaching?