

The Blessed Mess: Paul's First Letter to the Church at Corinth

June 11th, 2023

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1 Corinthians 14:1-25 – Practicing the Miraculous (Part 2)

“...since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.”
(1 Corinthians 14:12)

1. The Priority of Prophecy

2. The Properties of Prophecy

3. The Practice of Prophecy

For Further Thought and Discussion:

Getting Started:

1. What was helpful to you in this week's sermon? What didn't you understand?

Going Deeper

2. Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-5. Paul commands the Corinthians to pursue love as their highest priority (14:1; compare 1 Corinthians 13:1-13). How does Paul apply this principle in chapter 14? Why should the Corinthians prioritize prophecy over tongues (or languages) when they gather for worship (see vv. 3, 5, 12, 17; compare 1 Corinthians 8:1)?
3. What do we learn about the gift of languages from this passage? According to Paul, what is the primary purpose of languages (v. 4)? Why are uninterpreted languages in church gatherings a problem (see vv. 6-12, 16-17, 20-23)? When languages *are* interpreted, what is their basic content (see v. 6)? In general, where should the gift of uninterpreted languages be expressed (see v. 18)?
4. How does Paul's description of languages *differ* from what Luke describes in Acts 2:1-13? Why are these differences significant? What kinds of languages might this gift encompass?
5. Christians disagree on the nature (or properties) of New Testament prophecy; some believe that prophetic speech is – by definition – infallibly true, and authoritative. Others believe that some prophetic speech (like the kind Paul describes in this chapter) is the human report of a divine revelation, and may contain inaccuracies or errors. Why is this significant? How have you viewed this gift?

Application:

6. People often desire to hear from God for their own edification; they want their faith to be built up. While there is nothing wrong with this desire (see v. 4), how does Paul's teaching reorient us? Why, according to Paul, should we desire to hear from God? Why should we gather for worship? How does Paul's teaching challenge/encourage you?
7. How have you practiced the gifts of prophecy and languages? If you don't have personal experience with these gifts, how have you seen them practiced? What hesitations (if any) do you have about pursuing these gifts in the church?
8. What's one thing you can do this week to apply this passage?