

God's Word Brings Conviction – 1Corinthians 14:18-25

Bible Study ~ 7/12/17

Grace Church of Lockeford

We have been discussing how the preaching and teaching of God's Word is of primary importance for the church. It is of primary importance because it builds up, encourages, and comforts the body of Christ. In this passage we learn that the preaching of the Word of God also brings conviction on unbelievers. This is a blessing because without conviction there would be no conversion. Knowing that God's Word brings conviction helps us to understand the true purpose of tongues. We see here that...

1. A Proper Grasp Of Tongues Requires A Mature Understanding vv. 18-21

a. Understanding the teachers heart vv. 18-19

Paul speaks in languages he has never learned more than any of the Corinthians. Being an apostle, this is not a surprising statement. Yet it is somewhat surprising considering all he has said about tongues so far. Obviously, Paul is referring to tongues in its proper usage and not in the corrupted form exercised by the Corinthians. It is what Paul says next that is so vital.

Though Paul speaks with tongues more than them, in the church he wants to be understood. Log that phrase away "in the church". This is so very important! Paul is saying that tongues are not to be the priority in the church! This is exactly what he has been saying all along. His language is very direct here. He would rather say 5 words that can be understood than 10,000 in a language no one knows! Since Paul is referring to the proper use of tongues, we would have to assume he is even speaking about having someone there who could interpret. "My understanding" is literally "with my mind". This is not suggesting that Paul doesn't know what he is saying when speaking in tongues. It is simply Paul's assertion that in a church setting he would rather speak a language he has already learned. Why? He tells us. "That I may teach others also". If he is speaking in a language people do not know and it has to be interpreted, the teaching will be hindered. A teacher's heart is for people to learn and understand. Speaking in a tongue has a different desire and purpose. That is what Paul addresses in the following verses.

b. Understanding the Biblical revelation vv. 20-21

The title for this main point comes from v. 20. This is a rebuke by Paul. The way they have been thinking about tongues and spiritual gifts is childish. "Children" and "babes" are two different Greek words. He is saying, don't be a young child in your understanding. Be a baby in malice. "Malice" is the Greek word κακία (kakia) meaning *evil; wickedness; malice. Depravity (perversion) – the perverting of virtue and moral principles from their purposes to evil ends.* In wicked perversion and depravity, be a baby. Know nothing about it. But, in understanding, be mature. Be a grown up in your understanding. How? By understanding what he has already presented and what he will say next.

V. 21 is a quote from Isaiah. This is important in establishing who is being addressed. Isaiah was written to whom? Jews! So "this people" is Jewish people. Specifically, unbelieving Jews. This is not a prophecy with a one-time fulfillment because it is a plural prophecy. The Jews were repeatedly taken captive, yet didn't hear. The day of Pentecost presents another fulfillment of this prophecy. They still won't hear Him. What makes them hear? As always, persecution. The tribulation will open their hearts to the Lord, His deliverance will bring about their belief in Christ. Paul brings all this up to make a very important point in the next verse.

If we are going to understand tongues, we have to have a mature understanding. This means we recognize that in the church, the preaching and teaching of God's Word is primary. The desire is for people to understand God's Word. The focus of tongues is unbelieving Jews in particular and all unbelievers in general which is what

we see next. The blessing here is that if we have a mature understanding, it is possible for us to know exactly what tongues are all about! But we must have that mature understanding. When we do we will find that...

2. A Proper Grasp Of Tongues Requires An Understanding Of Focus vv. 22-25

a. The focus of tongues vv. 22-23

Part of the key to understanding these two verses is in v. 19's "in the church". The primary focus of the gathering of the church is not evangelistic; it is for the edification of believers. For this reason, tongues are inappropriate in a church context. Look at what Paul says here in v. 22. By definition, the church is made up of believers. You cannot be part of the church and be an unbeliever. Therefore, tongues have no place in the gather of believers! Why? Because they are for unbelievers! On the other side we have prophesy, the proclamation of God's truth. This is for believers, not for unbelievers. Since the church is made up of believers, should prophecy or tongues have the primary place? Prophecy (preaching)! This is spelled out in v. 23.

If the church assembles and everyone is speaking in tongues, an unbeliever will come in and assume they are insane! If Paul says that even a proper use of tongues, speaking actual languages, will lead people to assume you are insane, how much more if you are speaking gibberish? Paul just said that tongues were for unbelievers, so why does he say here that an unbeliever hearing tongues will assume you are insane? The key is that Paul is speaking of the gathering of the church. If an unbeliever walks in and everyone is speaking a different language, it will sound like madness! In the church, we are to be proclaiming God's Word. Tongues were for evangelistic use outside the church. Paul is saying in no uncertain terms that if tongues are used in the church, an unbeliever will think you insane. The focus of tongues is unbelievers outside the church. Paul then explains...

b. The focus of preaching vv. 24-25

If the truth of God's Word is being proclaimed in the church, and an unbeliever walks in, the unbeliever will be convinced and convicted by the Word of God. "Convinced" is the idea of being exposed or shown to be guilty. "Convicted" is the idea of being examined or evaluated. This is what God's Word does! *Hebrews 4:12* describes it vividly. This is why the proclamation of God's Word is so vital in the church! But, to do this work, it must be understood. Tongues doesn't do this. This is where our title today comes from. We are to focus on the proclamation of God's Word because it brings conviction and demonstrates that God is at work among His people as v. 25 reveals.

Through the preaching of the Word, the secrets of the heart are revealed. What we try to keep hidden from others, and sometimes even ourselves, is exposed by the Word! When our sin is exposed for what it is, the response is to be convicted, converted, and worship. What is interesting here is that Paul states the unbeliever, after his conversion, will report that God is among us. "Report" is the Greek word ἀπαγγέλλω (apangellō) meaning *report; announce; tell. To bring back a message – to inform someone of someone else's message.* Why is this so interesting? Some have the idea that we need miracles and wonders to impress people. They claim that what we need is signs and wonders. Paul says no. If they see the miracle of speaking in languages, they will think you are crazy. What they need to see is the people of God proclaiming the truth of God's Word! The evidence that God is among us is the power of His Word in our lives!

The purpose of tongues is to expose unbelievers to the power of God and the message of God. But in the church the focus is the proclamation of God's Word so that the body can be edified. To take tongues, which are intended for unbelievers, into the church violates their purpose! Preaching the Word is the best way to build up the body, and to convict the unbeliever.

CHALLENGE: Stick to the Word of God, it changes lives.

V. 18

Thank – εὐχαριστέω eucharisteō *give thanks. To thank – to express gratitude or show appreciation to (someone).* Finite verb, present, active, indicative, first person, singular.

V. 19

Church – ἐκκλησία ekklēsia *assembly; church. Church – an orderly congregation specifically of those who trust in Jesus as the Messiah (or those who compose it).* Noun (prepositional object), dative, singular, feminine.

Would – θέλω thelō *wish; want. To desire – to feel or have a desire for; want strongly.* Finite verb, present, active, indicative, first person, singular.

Teach – κατηχέω katēcheō *teach; instruct. To teach (verbally) – to teach or instruct by word of mouth.* Finite verb, aorist, active, subjunctive, first person, singular.

Ten thousand – μυρίος myrios *ten thousand; countless. Ten thousand (myriad) – denoting a quantity consisting of 10,000 items or units; often used hyperbolically as of an incalculably large number.* Attributive adjective, accusative, plural, masculine.

V. 20

Children – παιδίον paidion *child; young child. Young child (endearing) – a (normally) prepubescent person of either sex; possibly with endearing notions.* Noun, predicate nominative, plural, neuter.

Understanding – φρήν phrēn *understanding. Thinking – the process of using your mind to consider something carefully.* Noun, dative of respect, plural, feminine.

Malice – κακία kakia *evil; wickedness; malice. Depravity (perversion) – the perverting of virtue and moral principles from their purposes to evil ends.* Noun, dative of respect, singular, feminine.

Babes – νηπιάζω nēpiazō *be (as) a child. To be infantile – to be (or act like) an infant; especially attributes or activities befitting or characteristic of an infant.* Finite verb, present, active, imperative, second person, plural.

Mature – τέλειος teleios *perfect; mature. Spiritual mature – being at an advanced stage of spiritual development; usually as a result of experience, teaching, and in most cases time.* Predicate adjective, nominative, plural, masculine.

V. 21

Law – νόμος nomos *law. Tanakh ⇔ law – the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures (before the writings of the New Testament were added).* Noun (prepositional object), dative, singular, masculine.

Other tongues – ἑτερόγλωσσος heteroglōssos *speaking a foreign language. Foreign language – a language that is not native to or understood by oneself.* Substantival adjective, dative, plural, masculine.

This people – λαός laos *people. People of Israel – the people group (normally) geographically situated in Palestine of those descended from Abraham who claim alliance and trust in the God of Israel.* Noun (indirect object), dative, singular, masculine.

V. 22

Sign – σημεῖον sēmeion *sign; sign miracle. Miracle ⇔ sign – a marvelous event manifesting a supernatural act of a divine agent; often with an emphasis on communicating a message.* Noun (prepositional object), accusative, singular, neuter.

Prophesying – προφητεία prophēteia *prophecy*. *Prophecy (ability) – the ability to deliver representative declarations of the mind, will, or knowledge of God.* Noun (subject), nominative, singular, feminine.

V. 23

Comes Together – συνέρχομαι synerchomai *assemble; come together*. To meet (get together) – to get together for a specific purpose. Finite verb, aorist, active, subjunctive, third person, singular.

Uninformed – ιδιώτης idiōtēs *outsider; unskilled person*. *Uninitiate – someone who is excluded from or is not a member of a group; especially who is unlearned in the teachings of that group.* Noun (subject), nominative, plural, masculine.

Out of your mind – μαίνομαι mainomai *be out of one's mind; rave*. To be frantic (insane) – to be insane, perhaps marked by uncontrolled excitement or emotion. Finite verb, present, either middle or passive, indicative, second person, plural.

V. 24

Convinced – ἐλέγχομαι elenchomai *reprove; expose; convict*. To be convicted – to be proven or shown to be guilty. Finite verb, present, passive, indicative, third person, singular.

Convicted – ἀνακρίνω anakrinō *examine; question; judge*. To be evaluated – to be subject to the critical scrutiny of another. Finite verb, present, passive, indicative, third person, singular.

V. 25

Secrets – κρυπτός kryptos *secret; hidden*. *Secret – something (whether information or object) that remains hidden from others.* Substantival adjective, nominative, plural, neuter.

Heart – καρδία kardia *heart*. *Self ⇔ heart – the locus of a person's thoughts (mind), volition, emotions, and knowledge of right from wrong (conscience).* Noun, partitive genitive, singular, feminine.

Revealed – φανερός phaneros *evident; visible; known*. To be manifest – to be or become clearly revealed to the mind, the senses, or judgment. Predicate adjective, nominative, plural, neuter.

γίνομαι ginomai *be; become; take place*. To become (condition) – to enter or assume a certain state or condition. Finite verb, present, either middle or passive, indicative, third person, singular.

Worship – προσκυνέω proskyneō *worship*. To worship ⇔ prostrate – to prostrate oneself in the presence of the divine or supernatural as a sign of deference and worship. Finite verb, future, active, indicative, third person, singular.

Report – ἀπαγγέλλω apangellō *report; announce; tell*. To bring back message – to inform someone of someone else's message; sometimes without any definite idea of the message's source. Verb, present, active, circumstantial participle, singular, nominative.