

Edify the Church

I Corinthians 14: 1-19

10/7/01

Intro

- Growth Groups.
- Baptism service this evening.

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The church in Corinth was in trouble. There was division; there were factions, there were those who felt spiritually superior because they had more outward spiritual gifts.

But Paul knew that the greatest message he could give them was to love according to God's definition. That was the message of I Cor 13.

Now Paul addresses the issue of spiritual gifts themselves. In keeping with the emphasis on love, Paul here emphasizes the importance of using spiritual gifts to edify, or lift up the church.

He also wants to clarify the use of spiritual gifts in the church. If you've ever been to a Pentecostal church and heard everyone speak in tongues at the same time, you can see the importance of clarifying this issue.

These verses are about how the Holy Spirit edifies the church.

I. Pursue love and strive eagerly for spiritual gifts.

Vs 1

A. Love must be pursued.

- It doesn't come naturally.
- Selfishness does come naturally.

Illus- You have to be determined. Determination is overcoming adversity to reach your goal.

In the sixties there was a book called Cradles of Eminence a study of "famous and talented people" that discovered that the one common thread was that they all had to overcome great obstacles.

B. Earnestly desire spiritual things.

- Paul wants to make it clear that he doesn't want to discourage them in spiritual things.

- But he wants to clarify the use of spiritual gifts so the church won't be confused.

II. It's about edifying the church.

Vs 4, 5,6

A. What is edification?

- To build up, to increase the faith, the relationship to the Lord, and the righteousness of the church.

Illus- I've been in churches where the method used to try to increase the church is one of spiritual criticism. These things ought not to be this way neither in the church nor in the home.

Vs 4-5

B. What is prophecy and tongues?

- Tongues are mentioned in verse 2 as a way to speak to God. When there is a desire to express intense love, there can be limitations with our normal speech.

Illus- Sometimes, in marriage, couples in love want to express their love, words are inadequate.

- Prophecy then, is a way for God to speak to men to edify the church.

Conclusion

God has given gifts to His church for the purpose of increasing relationship to Himself.

These gifts are for the increasing of His church in that relationship. Prophecy is for the increase of the church as a whole and tongues for increasing as individuals.

Understanding their purpose helps clarify their use.

May God give us a new depth of love.

III. How is the church edified?

A. By calling the church to live out the heart of God.

Illus – That’s the purpose of sending the Holy Spirit. God is calling is to Himself.

B. But the call must be clear.

Vs 7-9

Illus – The use of the trumpet for signaling requires clarity in the sound.

An instrument cannot play notes that no one understands.