

Week of August 3, 2025 - The Superior Gift

Small Group Lesson 30

Connect

Can you recall a time when you had to listen to some important instructions, but the person spoke way too fast? How did that make you feel?

Verses - 1 Corinthians 14:1-25 (CSB)

READ ALOUD:

1 Pursue love and desire spiritual gifts, and especially that you may prophesy. 2 For the person who
speaks in a tongue is not speaking to people but to God, since no one understands him; he speaks
mysteries in the Spirit. 3 On the other hand, the person who prophesies speaks to people for their
strengthening, encouragement, and consolation. 4 The person who speaks in a tongue builds himself up,
but the one who prophesies builds up the church. 5 I wish all of you spoke in tongues, but even more
that you prophesied. The person who prophesies is greater than the person who speaks in tongues,
unless he interprets so that the church may be built up. 6 So now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you
speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I speak to you with a revelation or knowledge or
prophecy or teaching? 7 Even lifeless instruments that produce sounds — whether flute or harp — if they
don't make a distinction in the notes, how will what is played on the flute or harp be recognized? 8 In
fact, if the bugle makes an unclear sound, who will prepare for battle? 9 In the same way, unless you use
your tongue for intelligible speech, how will what is spoken be known? For you will be speaking into the
air. 10 There are doubtless many different kinds of languages in the world, none is without meaning. 11
Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker, and the
speaker will be a foreigner to me. 12 So also you — since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, seek to excel
in building up the church. 13 Therefore the person who speaks in a tongue should pray that he can
interpret. 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. 15 What
then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with my understanding. I will sing praise with the
spirit, and I will also sing praise with my understanding. 16 Otherwise, if you praise with the spirit, how
will the outsider say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? 17
For you may very well be giving thanks, but the other person is not being built up. 18 I thank God that I
speak in tongues more than all of you; 19 yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my
understanding, in order to teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue. 20 Brothers and
sisters, don't be childish in your thinking, but be infants in regard to evil and adult in your thinking. 21
It is written in the law, I will speak to this people by people of other tongues and by the lips of
foreigners, and even then, they will not listen to me, says the Lord. 22 Speaking in tongues, then, is
intended as a sign, not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is not for unbelievers but for
believers. 23 If, therefore, the whole church assembles together and all are speaking in tongues and
people who are outsiders or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your minds? 24
But if all are prophesying and some unbeliever or outsider comes in, he is convicted by all and is called
to account by all. 25 The secrets of his heart will be revealed, and as a result he will fall facedown and
worship God, proclaiming, "God is really among you."

Briefly restate the context. How is it encouraging, challenging, comforting, etc.?

Study

Answer the questions together based on the Bible verses:

1. How does prophecy differ from speaking in tongues? (vv.1-4)

2. What's the main point of Paul's analogies about musical instruments and languages? (vv.6-12)

3. What does Paul's preference for five understandable words over 10,000 words in a tongue reveal about his priorities for multi-lingual church services? (v.19)

4. How would unbelievers react when everyone is speaking in different tongues versus when everyone is prophesying, and why? (vv.22-25)

Share

Discuss 1:
Pastor Takeshi used the analogy of bringing natto vs. KitKat, Hi-chew, or Ichiran Ramen to his American friends to illustrate a point about gifts. How does this illustration help us understand the difference between a gift that "builds up the speaker himself" versus a gift that "builds up the church" (v. 4)?

Discuss 2:
What is one specific way you can pursue love and the "superior gift" this week? How can you do this in your daily life?

Minister to one another through sharing specific prayer requests.