Grace Baptist Church/Crossroads International Church/ CIC again Dr. Rick Griffith

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NIV 40 Minutes

**Words from the Lord**

Title

***1 Corinthians 14:1-25***

**Topic:** Prophecy and Tongues

**Subject:** God’s Word must have the highest priority in public worship

**Complement:** because it encourages more people than experiences do.

**Purpose:** The listeners will commit to holding hold God’s Word in higher esteem.

**Attribute:** We worship our God who speaks

# Introduction

### Interest: A few years back, a friend of my Dad’s was bumped up to first class on a flight to Hawaii and had a wonderful chat with this guy named Bill. He said he worked for Microsoft. Later she told her friends about it and they said, “Did he give you his last name?” “Yeah,” she said. “Gates.” But she had never heard of Bill Gates so she didn’t think anything of it.

1st class

### That’s ultimately no big deal. But how sad when we don’t recognize *God* speaking to us! Each time we meet, God wants to speak to us—but too often we settle just for a “worship experience” where the focus is on each of us as an individual. When that happens we don’t even edify each other in our meetings.

God Speaks

### Context: So how *can* we edify each other in our worship? Paul devotes three chapters of 1 Corinthians to how we can use our gifts to benefit one another.

• 12

1 Cor 12-14

#### We saw in chapter 12 that we’re part of the same body, and in chapter 13 that gifts must be used in love. This is reiterated in 14:1.

• 13

#### But chapter 14 gives another way to edify each other in our worship—14:1 says…

• 14

### What does Paul mean by “eagerly desire spiritual gifts”?

14:1

#### Doesn't 1 Corinthians 12:11 say the Holy Spirit chooses our gift—so don’t ask?

#### The issue here is not *desire to obtain* but *desire to emphasize.*

#### In 1 Corinthians, Paul often gives his key idea in the first sentence of each section—like here. In your bulletin outline I sum up Paul’s point in these words…

### MI: We edify in public worship by emphasizing prophecy over tongues (14:1).

MI

Subject

### Subject: But why emphasize prophecy over tongues? Paul gives three reasons in today’s text. The first is that…

• 3 reasons

# I. (2-5) Prophecy benefits other believers.

MP

# Declaring God’s revelation in a language people understand helps them—but speech in a foreign language only helps us.

## (2-3) Prophecy is understood by others while tongues is understood only by God.

2-3

### Before we can see how prophecy can encourage and comfort us we need to answer this key question: What *is* the gift of prophecy?

#### As you might guess, there are different views on what prophecy is:

##### Some say it is the same as preaching.

##### Others say it’s not just any preaching but it is really *exhortative* preaching!

##### The newest view taking the evangelical world by storm is by Wayne Grudem that it’s “telling something that God has spontaneously brought to mind.”

Grudem

###### This is similar to one pamphlet I read that says that prophecy is anything that you say in your sermon that you hadn’t planned on saying!

###### Once I was helping find housing for a friend who holds this view and then I recalled he had a dog—but the house in question wouldn’t allow them to keep their dog. So he said, “Wow, thanks, you saved me a trip there. That was truly a prophetic word for me!” I thought, “Oh, brother! Don’t put in the category of Jeremiah just because I mentioned the dog!”

#### So what is prophecy?

What is it?

##### It is the special ability to receive revelation from God and communicate this in an immediate message to His people by speaking His words without error.

truth

##### Why do I say “without error”? God’s character demands that he speak only truth. That’s why prophets were executed. In fact…

• B

• A

##### Both the Hebrew & Greek words for prophet refer to using the mouth for God.

Hebrew

• Greek

##### Look at Deuteronomy 18:20-22. Not a lot of job security for prophets! Make one mistake and lose your job—and your life!

Dt 18

signboard

##### That this is an uninterpreted message is clear from 2 Peter 1:20-21.

2 Pet 1

##### This gift is so important that the church was founded on apostles and prophets (Eph. 2:20).

Building

##### Do you see now why Paul said to emphasize prophecy more than other gifts?

• foundation

#### Is prophecy still with us today? How would one know if it is?

##### As we see in Ephesians 2:20, the church was compared to a building. Apostles and prophets were the foundation of this church “building” and the rest of the church comprises the walls. How long do we continue building the foundation after the walls go up? Equipping gifts and non-equipping gifts are added later, it would seem strange to continue building the foundation.

• non-equipping

• equipping

##### Revelation 22:18 closes the Scripture with a warning never to add to His completed revelation.

Rev 22:18

##### I spoke at another church in 2008 and met a man who believes God is giving him prophecies of the destruction of America. Henry called again later with another prophetic message for me, so I asked, as always, “Is this message equal in authority to Scripture?”

My Friend Henry

###### “Oh, no!” is the quick response from these folks. “I’m not claiming that!”

###### “But this is from God?” I asked.

###### “Yes,” they have said.

###### Then I said, “So are you saying that what God says in written form is more reliable than what he says in oral form?”

###### Prophecy is equal in authority to the Bible, for prophecy is God’s inerrant word in spoken form rather than written form.

##### However, two future witnesses are yet to come during the Great Tribulation who will both prophesy (Rev. 11:3).

Rev 11:3

### How does tongues differ from prophecy? To answer this we need to define tongues.

T vs P

#### This phenomenon first occurred on the birthday of the church in Acts 2. Three tongues are noted: with tongues of fire on their heads, the disciples used their physical tongues to speak in other tongues, or languages. They spoke fluently in languages they had never learned, which was fantastic! The same thing happened in Acts 8, 10, and 19.

Spirit

Witness

#### But are tongues *always* in a known language? Doesn’t “uttering mysteries” in a tongue here in 1 Corinthians 14:2 mean the tongue is *not* a foreign language like in Acts? Does it mean that this could be divinely inspired gibberish?

mysteries

##### No. The *only* NT description of tongues (Acts 2) is real human languages.

compared

##### The same word for tongue or language in Acts is used here in 1 Corinthians, so why would the meaning change? Besides Paul's 21 uses of the word for “tongues” in 1 Corinthians 12—14, he uses it three times elsewhere in the NT [Rom. 3:13; 14:11; Phil. 2:11], each time referring to intelligible speech.

##### BTW, the word for “interpretation” means to translate a foreign language.

##### Also, verse 22 says tongues are a sign—that means something miraculous that tells you God has done something amazing. How would gibberish be a sign to anyone? What’s so spectacular about that?

##### Therefore, “tongues” in the New Testament always refers to known languages. When verse 2 says one "speak mysteries" it simply refers to the speaker's and others’ inability to comprehend the foreign language he is using; it doesn’t say that the tongue is not a known language.

(So prophecy is understood by all. But how does this benefit believers?)

## (4-5) Prophecy edifies the church while tongues only edifies the speaker.

4-5

### Verse 4 may be the most misinterpreted verse in this whole charismatic debate.

#### Perhaps you have heard people say something like, “Oh, I don’t speak in tongues at church. I just use this to encourage myself in my personal quiet time. It’s my private prayer language.” Then they quote verse 4—at least the first part of it.

#### Does this verse say the purpose of speaking in tongues is to encourage oneself?

#### If you read the second part too then you begin to realize that self-edification is not the purpose of tongues at all—in fact, it is viewed negatively here!

#### Paul’s point is that God didn’t give us gifts just for our personal edification. They are given to benefit the church. Self-edification is not the purpose of *any* gift, but only the *result* of exercising a gift. And uninterpreted tongues didn’t edify others.

### Prophecy at Corinth, in contrast to tongues, did encourage the whole church.

(So do you see why to emphasize prophecy over tongues? First, it benefits believers. Now in verses 6-19 he shows just how this is so by giving the major disadvantage of uninterpreted tongues…)

# II. (6-19) Uninterpreted tongues are incomprehensible.

MP

# No one can understand a tongues message unless it is interpreted.

## (6) Tongues benefit no one unless they reveal God’s will.

6

## (7-9) Tongues without interpretation don’t communicate just like musical instruments that don’t distinguish notes.

7-9

### Over the years at various times I have played a trombone offertory at church. I must admit, that I’m getting less confident all the time—the perils of practicing once a year!

### But just imagine that I got so bad that you couldn’t even recognize the song. This actually happened once when I was playing my trombone in Korea when the temperature was below freezing—it got the instrument so out of tune that I just stopped playing. Paul says that uninterpreted tongues is about as recognizable and edifying!

## (10-12) Since languages make sense only to those who understand them, he says to emphasize intelligible gifts more than uninterpreted tongues.

10-12

### Hola! Que tal? Me llamo Ricardo pero esto es todo lo que puedo decir.

### Does that edify you? Only if you know Spanish! Even then it might not edify because I said only, “Hi! How ‘ya doin’? My name is Rick. But this is all I can say!”

### Paul says don’t spend time saying what others don’t understand.

13-15

16-17

## (13-17) Prayer and singing are superior only when understood because this edifies people.

### Does verse 13 say a tongues-speaker should pray for another gift—the gift of interpretation? It may look like it, but he doesn’t use the word “gift of interpretation” at all. This actually is the gift of interpreting *other’s* messages.

### In verse 15 Paul asks what advantage there is in praying when the mind doesn’t even know what the prayer is about! He says he would rather pray with the mind.

## (18-19) A little understandable prophecy is better than a lot of incomprehensible tongues.

18-19

### Paul definitely spoke in tongues, but did Paul say here that he spoke in tongues *in private*? I ask this because in verse 19 Paul says, “But in the church…” Some say he is implying that his tongues speaking was not in the church—that it was private.

### I think we need to be careful not to read more than is actually there. He doesn’t say that his tongues were private in verse 18. His main point is not location but that intelligible speech is better than unintelligible speech.

(So far we have seen two reasons Paul says to emphasize prophecy over tongues. First, it benefits believers whereas tongues only benefits the speaker. Second, uninterpreted tongues are incomprehensible. Now he gives the final reasons in the last section we’ll cover today…)

# III. (20-25) Prophecy has a superior purpose and results.

MP

# The aim and effects of prophecy supersede those of tongues.

## (20-22) Prophecy has a superior purpose. How’s that?

Purpose

### (21-22a) Tongues shows God’s work to unbelievers (• but prophecy edifies believers)

• Tongues

#### Here we see the clearest statement of the purpose of tongues in the Bible. Yet this is also one of the most neglected verses in the debate!

21-22

#### What does he say here?

##### First, tongues is a sign.

###### Now if you start speaking in a language you’ve never has learned, this would *definitely* be a sign. Wouldn’t it be fantastic if I suddenly switched to fluent Mandarin and some of you understood perfectly?

###### But D. A. Carson points out, “To my knowledge there is universal agreement among linguists who have taped and analyzed thousands of examples of modern tongues-speaking that the contemporary phenomenon is not any human language. The patterns and structures that all known languages require are simply not there. Occasionally a recognizable word slips out; but this is statistically likely, given the sheer quantity of verbalization” (*Showing the Spirit*, 83).

Carson

###### Carson gives a story of one of his Greek professor friends who attended a charismatic service and publicly recited portions of John 1 in Greek as his contribution to the “tongues-speaking.” Immediately an “interpretation” came forth from another that had nothing to do with John’s gospel (p. 87).

Greek

##### Paul also says in verse 22 that tongues are directed to unbelievers.

Definition

###### Wow, this is a little-known fact! But how can this be reconciled with verse 5 that says, when interpreted, tongues edify the church?

###### What we have here is a gift that God gave when unbelievers were in the audience, but so that it not only was a sign to them, God also gave the gift of interpretation to edify the saints.

#### Now since verse 22 says tongues must be real languages and are for unbelievers, what does that say about the bulk of so-called tongues speaking today? How many utterances are both in a known foreign language and for non-Christians?

Today

### But is tongues a special prayer language?

Prayer?

#### Gifts are given to edify others in the assembly (12:7; 14:26)—not self in private

•

#### Tongues are a sign to unbelievers (14:22)—so how could they witness to an unbeliever it they are in a believer’s private prayer life?

•

#### Since tongues are not understood by the speaker, Paul says prayer with understanding is superior to prayer in a tongue because prayer without understanding by comparison is a negative action (14:14-15)

•

#### Tongues are not given to all (1 Cor. 12:30), so why would God give a special prayer language to only some of His children?

•

#### The gift of interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:30) shows that tongues were not for devotional use.

•

#### Isn’t 14:28 private? “If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God”? No, for every time in Scripture that tongues are spoken they are uttered within the context of a group.

•

#### Doesn’t Paul’s contrast of his tongues (14:18) with tongues “in the church” (14:19) mean private use? No, he’s only contrasting tongues outside of the assembly as a sign to unbelievers (vv. 20f.) with tongues needing interpretation in the assembly. In both cases tongues are public.

•

### (22b) Far superior is prophecy, for prophecy edifies believers.

Edifies

(Prophecy not only has a superior purpose, but…)

## (23-25) Prophecy also has superior results.

results

### (23) Uninterpreted tongues turns off unbelievers in the assembly.

• Turn off

#### A few years ago at a church camp in Malaysia my church was located in a room next to another church that had their meeting on the other side of the wall.

#### At various times during the camp that whole church got up and started speaking what they considered tongues. It was chaos! I remember seeing some of their kids, not allowed in the room, peeping through the whole in the door. I wondered what they thought of all the confusion! I wonder how many of them would become believers from witnessing such mayhem…

### (24-25) Prophecy brings conviction, repentance, & worship for unbelievers at church.

• Conviction

#### Why? Because he understands what God is saying!

#### Now Paul is speaking hypothetically here. In our next message we’ll see that verses 26-40 prohibit everyone from prophesying like this so that there’s order.

(But here’s what I think Paul’s point is in this section we have covered today…)

# Conclusion

### God’s Word must have the highest priority in public worship (MI).

MI

#### In the Corinthian church prophecy was to be emphasized over tongues because God’s Word in their language encouraged more people than experiences did.

#### We must never denigrate experience, but in our church God’s Word must take priority over experience because understanding benefits us more.

### How can you hold God’s Word in higher esteem?

#### Get into the Word with others.

• Home

##### Host a home group. Don’t be afraid to study it without a study guide!

##### Join a Life Transformation Group where you are accountable to 1-2 others to read three chapters daily.

• LTG

#### Take notes during the sermon.

• Notes

#### Bring your Bible to church. If you forget, get one there at the entrance.

• Bible

#### Read your Bible before you read your newspaper. Or follow what a friend of mine used to do—“No Bible, no breakfast.” Spiritual food takes priority over physical.

• “No Bible, no breakfast”

### I know we haven’t answered all the questions about tongues and prophecy today. This is a big issue, so we will address it more next week.

Black

### For now, remember that what God wants from us most is to know and obey His Word.

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### Paul has just noted in chapter 13 how love is superior to all the gifts so it should be pursued more than gifts.

### But there’s a danger is emphasizing love so much that we don’t emphasize gifts at all, so he notes to keep these two in balance by not neglecting gifts entirely.

# Purpose Why is this passage in the Bible?

### The Corinthians were getting caught up in a frenzy during worship so much that they forgot about the importance of content.

### So Paul wrote to tell them that prophecy (with God’s content) is more important than uninterpreted tongues.

# Background What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### The mystery religions of Corinth had unruly worship services where the pagan worshippers got caught up in a frenzy.

# Questions

### What does Paul mean by “eagerly desire spiritual gifts”? I thought 1 Corinthians 12 said we weren’t supposed to ask for certain gifts?

### What is the gift of prophecy?

### Why did Paul tell the church to emphasize prophecy more than the other gifts?

### Is prophecy still with us today? How would one know if it is?

### Is verse 1 the main idea of the chapter?

### Does uttering mysteries in a tongue mean that the tongue is not a foreign language as in Acts (2)?

### How are tongues spoken to God rather than men (2)? Not addressed in sermon.

### Are tongues always in a known language?

### Does this verse say that the purpose of speaking in tongues is to encourage oneself (4)?

### Does verse 13 say that a tongues-speaker should pray for another gift—that of interpretation?

### Does verse 6 say that prophecy can be in a tongue?

### Does verse 13 say that a tongues-speaker should pray for another gift—that of interpretation?

### What advantage is there in praying when the mind doesn’t even know what the prayer is about (14)?

### Did Paul say he spoke in tongues in private (18)? Why was he thankful that he spoke in tongues more than them?

### When Paul says, “But in the church…” is he implying that his tongues speaking in verse 18 was not in the church—that it was private?

### How were the Corinthians thinking like children (20)?

### Who are “this people” in verse 21?

### What does it mean for tongues to be a sign?

### Why are tongues a sign for unbelievers (22)?

### If tongues are meant for unbelievers, what percentage of tongues today would then be for the wrong purpose?

### Why should tongues be limited in the church to only 2-3 speakers?

### If there’s no interpreter, why should a tongues speaker speak to himself and to God (28)?

### Why is prophecy also limited to only 2-3 speakers (29)?

### Who are “the others” who weigh the prophecies (29)? Verse 32 clarifies that prophets are the best ones to judge other prophecies.

### Does verse 31 say all believers can prophesy?

### How can verse 34 say women should remain silent but also be allowed to prophesy according to chapter 11?

### How can Grace Baptist prohibit both prophecy and tongues in light of verse 39?

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

Prophecy should be emphasized over tongues because it encourages more people.

God’s Word must take the highest priority in public worship.

Emphasize God’s Word over experience because understanding benefits us more

# Possible Illustrations

Cell groups have decreased in GBC in the past year or so.

Babcock: *A Search for Charismatic Reality*

Why are charismatic churches growing faster?

### Interest: The famous theologian Karl Barth was once on a streetcar in Basel, Switzerland, where he lectured. A tourist to the city climbed on and sat down next to him. The two men started chatting with each other. “Are you new to the city?” Barth inquired. “Yes,” said the tourist. “Is there anything you particularly would like to see in this city?” asked Barth. “Yes, I’d love to meet the famous theologian Karl Barth. Do you know him?” the tourist asked. Barth replied, “Well, as a matter of fact, I do. I give him a shave every morning.” The tourist returned to his home country and exclaimed to a friend, “You won’t believe this, but while I was in Basel, on a streetcar I… I actually met… Karl Barth’s barber!” (WORSHIP not acknowledging Christ’s presence)

Barth

**Words from the Lord**

***1 Corinthians 14:1-25***

**Exegetical Outline**

# Exegetical Idea: The way to achieve orderly worship is to emphasize prophecy over uninterpreted tongues and to impose speaking limitations.

# I. (1-25) The reason to emphasize prophecy over uninterpreted tongues is because prophecy better edifies both believers and unbelievers with understanding.

## (1) The ways for public worship to edify are to love and to emphasize the most important gift of prophecy.

## (2-25) The reason to emphasize prophecy over uninterpreted tongues is because prophecy edifies both believers and unbelievers.

### (2-5) Prophecy is better than tongues because prophecy benefits other believers while uninterpreted tongues only benefits oneself.

#### (2-3) Prophecy is better than tongues because it is understood by others while tongues is understood only by God.

#### (4-5) Prophecy is better than tongues because it edifies the church while tongues only edifies the speaker.

### (6-19) Prophecy is better than tongues because uninterpreted tongues are incomprehensible.

#### (6) Tongues benefit no one unless they reveal God’s will.

#### (7-9) As musical instruments that don’t distinguish notes don’t communicate, so tongues without interpretation doesn’t communicate.

#### (10-12) Since the languages of tongues speakers make sense only to those who understand them, prophecy and other intelligible gifts should be emphasized more than uninterpreted tongues.

#### (13-17) The reason prayer and singing with the mind is superior to these activities without understanding is because comprehension edifies oneself and others.

#### (18-19) A little understandable prophecy is better than a lot of incomprehensible tongues.

### (20-25) Prophecy is better than tongues because prophecy has a superior purpose, audience, and results.

#### (20) The church should act maturely rather than childishly in the use of their gifts.

#### (21-22) Prophecy is better than tongues because of its superior purpose and audience.

##### (21-22a) The purpose of uninterpreted tongues is to authenticate God’s work for unbelievers.

##### (22b) The purpose of prophecy is to edify believers.

#### (23-25) Prophecy is better than tongues because of its superior results.

##### (23) The result of uninterpreted tongues will be revolting for unbelievers in the assembly.

##### (24-25) The result of prophecy will be conviction, repentance, and worship for unbelievers in the assembly.

# II. (26-40) The way to achieve orderly worship is to impose speaking limitations.

## (26) The motive of all verbal messages in church services should be to edify the church.

## (27-35) The way for verbal messages to edify the church is by speakers to be orderly by taking turns.

### (27-28) The way for tongues messages to be orderly and edify the church is by speaking in turn and with interpretation.

### (29-33a) The way for prophetic messages to be orderly and edify the church is by speaking in turn and with evaluation by other prophets.

### (33b-35) One way for worship to be orderly and edify the church is by women asking their husbands questions at home rather than in church.

## (36-38) The penalty for disobeying Christ’s speaking limitations by following one’s own guidelines is church discipline.

## (39-40) The solution to disorderly worship at Corinth is to emphasize prophecy without totally excluding tongues.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: ILL: True worship

### Context: How can we edify each other in our worship?

#### We saw earlier from 1 Corinthians 13 that it takes love. This is reiterated in 14:1.

#### But most of chapter 14 gives another way we can edify each other in our worship. Chapter 14 says…

### MI: The way to edify in public worship is to emphasize the gift of prophecy over tongues (14:1).

### Subject: But why emphasize prophecy over tongues?

# I. (2-5) Prophecy benefits other believers.

## (2-3) Prophecy is understood by others while tongues is understood only by God.

## (4-5) Prophecy edifies the church while tongues only edifies the speaker.

# II. (6-19) Uninterpreted tongues are incomprehensible.

## (6) Tongues benefit no one unless they reveal God’s will.

## (7-9) Tongues without interpretation doesn’t communicate just like musical instruments that don’t distinguish notes.

## (10-12) Since languages make sense only to those who understand them, emphasize intelligible gifts more than uninterpreted tongues.

## (13-17) Prayer and singing are superior when understood because this edifies people.

## (18-19) A little understandable prophecy is better than a lot of incomprehensible tongues.

# III. (20-25) Prophecy has a superior purpose and results.

## (20-22) Prophecy has a superior purpose.

### (21-22a) Tongues authenticates God’s work to unbelievers.

### (22b) Prophecy edifies believers.

## (23-25) Prophecy has superior results.

### (23) Uninterpreted tongues turns off unbelievers in the assembly.

### (24-25) Prophecy brings conviction, repentance, and worship for unbelievers in the assembly.

# Conclusion

### God’s Word must have the highest priority in public worship (MI).

#### In the Corinthian church prophecy was to be emphasized over tongues because it encouraged more people than experiences do.

#### In our church God’s Word must take priority over experience because understanding benefits us more.

### How can you hold God’s Word in higher esteem?

# Introduction

### We edify in public worship by emphasizing prophecy over tongues (14:1).

### Subject: But why emphasize prophecy over tongues?

# I. (2-5) Prophecy benefits other believers.

## (2-3) Prophecy is understood by others while tongues is understood only by God.

## (4-5) Prophecy edifies the church while tongues only edifies the speaker.

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### (22b) Prophecy edifies believers.

## (23-25) Prophecy has superior results.

### (23) Uninterpreted tongues turns off unbelievers in the assembly.

### (24-25) Prophecy brings conviction, repentance, and worship for unbelievers in the assembly.

# Conclusion

### God’s Word must have the highest priority in public worship (Main Idea).

### How can you hold God’s Word in higher esteem?

# Introduction

### We edify in public worship by emphasizing prophecy over tongues (14:1).

### Subject: But why emphasize prophecy over tongues?

# I. (2-5) Prophecy benefits \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ believers

## (2-3) Prophecy is understood by others while tongues is understood only by God.

## (4-5) Prophecy edifies the church while tongues only edifies the speaker.

# II. (6-19) Uninterpreted tongues are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

## (6) Tongues benefit no one unless they reveal God’s will.

## (7-9) Tongues without interpretation don’t communicate just like musical instruments that don’t distinguish notes.

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## (13-17) Prayer and singing are superior when understood because this edifies people.

## (18-19) A little understandable prophecy is better than a lot of incomprehensible tongues.

# III. (20-25) Prophecy has a superior \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

## (20-22) Prophecy has a superior purpose.

## (23-25) Prophecy has superior results.

# Conclusion

### God’s Word must have the highest \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in public worship (Main Idea).

### How can you hold God’s Word in higher esteem?

**Rick Griffith**

21 April 2013

*Message 21 of 24 in “Becoming Who We Are” 1 Corinthians Series*

**Words from the Lord**

**1 Corinthians 14:1-25**

# Introduction

### We edify in public worship by emphasizing prophecy over tongues (14:1).

### Subject: But why emphasize prophecy over tongues?

# I. (2-5) Prophecy benefits \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ believers

## (2-3) Prophecy is understood by others while tongues is understood only by God.

### What is prophecy? It is “something God spontaneously brings to mind” (Grudem)?

#### Prophecy is the special ability to receive revelation from God and communicate this in an immediate message to His people by speaking His words without error.

#### Prophecy is 100% accurate (Deut. 18:20-22).

#### Prophecy is not interpreted (2 Pet. 1:20-21).

#### Prophecy is foundational to the church (Eph. 2:20).

#### God’s Word is closed (Rev. 22:18-19) except for future prophets (Rev. 11:13).

### How does tongues differ from prophecy? To answer this we need to define tongues.

## (4-5) Prophecy edifies the church while tongues only edifies the speaker.

# II. (6-19) Uninterpreted tongues are \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

## (6) Tongues benefit no one unless they reveal God’s will.

## (7-9) Tongues without interpretation don’t communicate just like musical instruments that don’t distinguish notes.

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## (18-19) A little understandable prophecy is better than a lot of incomprehensible tongues.

# III. (20-25) Prophecy has a superior \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ .

## (20-22) Prophecy has a superior purpose.

### Tongues has two basic marks:

#### It is a sign since it is a miraculous declaration in a foreign langue the speaker has never learned (22a).

#### It is directed towards unbelievers (22b).

### But is tongues a special prayer language?

#### Gifts are given to edify others in the assembly (12:7; 14:26)—not self in private.

#### Tongues are a sign to unbelievers (14:22)—so how could they witness to an unbeliever it they are in a believer’s private prayer life?

#### Paul says prayer with understanding is superior to prayer in a tongue because prayer without understanding by comparison is a negative action (14:14-15).

#### Tongues are not given to all (1 Cor. 12:30), so why would God give a special prayer language to only some of His children?

#### The gift of interpretation of tongues (1 Cor. 12:30) shows that tongues were not for devotional use.

#### Isn’t 14:28 private? “If there is no interpreter, the speaker should keep quiet in the church and speak to himself and to God”? No, for every time in Scripture that tongues are spoken they are uttered within the context of a group.

#### Doesn’t Paul’s contrast of his tongues (14:18) with tongues “in the church” (14:19) mean private use? No, he’s only contrasting tongues outside of the assembly as a sign to unbelievers (vv. 20f.) with tongues needing interpretation in the assembly. In both cases tongues are public.

## (23-25) Prophecy has superior results.

# Conclusion

### God’s Word must have the highest \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in public worship (Main Idea).

### How can you hold God’s Word in higher esteem?

**Thought Questions**

1. Read 1 Corinthians 14:1-25 aloud. What contrasts does it make between prophecy and tongues? Give the verses and the contrasts.
2. Why must tongues be interpreted? Must this *always* be so?
3. Does it make a difference whether the tongues are in actual languages or are ecstatic utterances? Why or why not?
4. What is the biblical definition of tongues from verses 21-22?