

# The Contents of Public Worship

Sunday 2/10 at 8:00 & 10:45 | Monday 2/11 at 7 PM

Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany – 2019

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Today is part 4 of a 6-part series on Paul's first letter to the Christians in Corinth.

We began the series with chapter 12, which includes ✨Spirit-given faith in Christ, ✨Spirit-given spiritual gifts, and ✨Spirit-given membership in the one body of Christ. In chapter 13 we focused on love, *which is THE KEY INGREDIENT for excellent function within the body of Christ*. Today we are in chapter 14, *which focuses on the contents of public worship!*

1. **Differences between Prophecy and Tongues (2-5):** <sup>2</sup> ...one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. <sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. <sup>4</sup> The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church....  
*// In the first century the Spirit enabled some people to speak in tongues, thus in foreign languages they had not studied; when they did so those individuals were blessed, but those who heard who did not know that language were not blessed. But when someone prophesies, thus speaks the Word of God in a known language, all are built up!*
2. **Knowing the Meaning Is Essential (9-11):** <sup>9</sup> ...if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air. <sup>10</sup> There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, <sup>11</sup> but if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the

**speaker and the speaker a foreigner to me.** // Imagine if Rev. James May preached a sermon here at Bethlehem *in the Swahili language*; it would be memorable – for sure, *but most or all would walk away not knowing the meaning of what he said.* To benefit, we must know the meaning of the words!

3. **Let Us Listen, Understand, and Benefit (16-19):** <sup>16</sup> **...if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider [thus a person without the gift of interpretation] say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying?** <sup>17</sup> **For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up.** <sup>18</sup> **I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.** <sup>19</sup> **Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.** // When tongues were spoken long ago, most did not understand the language and did not benefit; therefore, they could not say “Amen,” *which is one way to agree with what is said.* So speaking in a known language and in an understandable way is important. F. W. Robertson wrote, **“It is better to be useful than brilliant.”** Dr. Luther wrote to pastors, **“...see to it that you preach purely and simply and have regard for the unlearned people”** (Concordia Commentary, 486, 487). But what else is important in order to benefit? It is important for all hearers to be paying attention, trying to understand, taking notes, and even following the weekly sermon challenge here at BLC *in order to gain the greatest benefit!*

4. **The Spirit Works when the Words are Understood (23-25):** <sup>23</sup> **If... the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders [who are] unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?** <sup>24</sup> **But if all prophecy, and an unbeliever [who is an] outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all,** <sup>25</sup> **the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you.** // Paul just told us what *an unbeliever* would say to hearing tongues, **“you are out**

of your minds”; a similar reaction was given on the Day of Pentecost, those men “are filled with new wine” (Acts 2:1 ESV). But when an unbeliever comes to church and hears people prophesying – *speaking the Word of God in a known language*, that person is ✦convicted in his heart, ✦called to repent, ✦led to confess, and ✦moved to worship God! *It makes a huge difference when the words are understood!*

5. **We Gather for Divine Service to Be Built Up (26-31)**: When we gather to receive Word and Sacrament, is the purpose to build up the members or convert the visitors? Actually: “The same worship that builds up the church also converts unbelievers” (CC, 493). Paul gave these instructions for being orderly: <sup>26</sup> **...When you come together** [for a Divine Service]... **Let all things be done for building up.** <sup>27</sup> **If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three... and let someone interpret.** <sup>28</sup> **But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church...** <sup>29</sup> **Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said.** <sup>30</sup> **If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent.** <sup>31</sup> **For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all be encouraged...** // All we do in a Divine Service should ✦be based on the Bible and ✦build everyone up! Dr. Lockwood noted that “there should be no rigid adherence to what is old if that means a refusal to make any room for what is both biblical and meaningful to the young” (CC, 495).
6. **Men Speak while Women Remain Silent (34-35)**: Dr. Lockwood wrote that “Paul may be focusing primarily on women’s participation through tongues-speaking and prophecy” (CC, 508) – *so not writing about singing, praying, and responding*. Paul wrote that <sup>34</sup> **the women should keep silent in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be in submission, as the Law also says.** <sup>35</sup> **If there is anything they desire to learn, let them ask their husbands at home. For it is shameful for a woman to speak in church.** // On the same topic, Paul was inspired to write this to Timothy, a

young pastor, “Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet” (1 Tim. 2:11-12 ESV). The Bible states this order in 1 Corinthians 11: ♣God is the head of Christ, ♣Christ is the head of man, and ♣man is the head of woman. What Paul speaks of is a *voluntary* submission – like *the Son of God to the Father* (John 10:17-18), *wives to husbands* (Eph. 5:24), and *children to parents* (Col. 3:20). These are the four Biblical reasons why God placed men over women: (1) The man was created first (Gen. 2:7), (2) the woman came from the man (1Co. 11:8), (3) the woman was created for the man (1Co. 11:9), and (4) the woman was the first to fall into sin (Gen. 3:6).

7. **Truth and Order (37-40)**: <sup>37</sup> **If anyone thinks that he is a prophet, or spiritual, he should acknowledge that the things I am writing to you are a command of the Lord.** <sup>38</sup> **If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized.** <sup>39</sup> **So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.** <sup>40</sup> **But all things should be done decently and in order.** // Paul was not giving his opinion, *he was moved by the Spirit to write the very words of God*; therefore, *it was important for the Corinthians to listen!* Then Paul concluded with a summary of the chapter by ♣emphasizing the speaking of God’s Word, ♣permitting speaking in tongues, and ♣encouraging everything be done in good order – to build up all believers! *May God help us here to do the same!*

**This Week’s Sermon Challenge:** What did you understand? How were you built up? If necessary, reread or listen to the sermon again!

**Let Us Pray:** Dear Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, keep showing us our need for the gifts You freely offer to us in the Divine Service; *then move us faithfully attend and gladly receive!* In Jesus’ name!

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Podcast: Benefit from the Bible | Facebook: Bethlehem Lutheran Church Parma  
Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 7500 State Road, Parma, Ohio 44134, 440-845-2230