



1 Cor. 14:6-19

Why 5 Intelligible Words Are Better Than 10,000 in Tongues

6 But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching?

7 Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played?

8 For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare himself for battle?

9 So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air.

10 There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance.

11 Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me.

12 Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel.

13 Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret.

14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.

15 What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding.

16 Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not understand what you say?

17 For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified.

18 I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all;

19 yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Bleep blorp blorp, gleeble, gleeble, dweep. Shugga, worp, gwarp, buzz, mak, woob, ubbo, dubbo, bub.

11 Καὶ αὐτὸς ἔδωκεν τοὺς μὲν ἀποστόλους, τοὺς δὲ προφήτας, τοὺς δὲ εὐαγγελιστάς, τοὺς δὲ ποιμένας καὶ διδασκάλους,

12 πρὸς τὸν καταρτισμὸν τῶν ἁγίων εἰς ἔργον διακονίας, εἰς οἰκοδομὴν τοῦ σώματος τοῦ Χριστοῦ

Edifying gave work prophets He evangelists be for pastors some, some and some for the And of the of equipping Himself Christ apostles body ministry saints the of some to and teachers of the the for. Amen?

How many times would I have to say those things before you were edified?

Now the first time I spoke it was just in unintelligible sounds which made no sense, so there was nothing edifying in it. The second time I spoke in a foreign language Greek, which none of you speak,

and so no one understood it. The third time I spoke it was in English, and it was full of biblical words but the words were hopelessly jumbled up so that the sentences made no sense. I could work through variations of those three approaches all day long, and we might be *entertained*, we might even be *excited*, especially if you all began doing the same thing but at no point would we be instructed or edified and if there were any unbelievers in our presence they would not be converted.

Now even if I somehow understood what I was saying, as in the case of the Greek, if you the other members of the church don't understand then the church is not edified.

What is needed for the church to be edified and the lost to be evangelized is speech in a known tongue and with the words in the proper order. Or as Paul puts what we need is to speak in words *easy to understand*. Then the church will be edified.

For instance what I was saying was: ***And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ,*** (Eph. 4:11-12)

But until I put that into orderly English, it was just words spoken into the air. Even when it was uttered in Greek, the language in which it was first written, it was of no use to this particular church. There is no mystical power to edify in the sounds or even words when they are in a jumbled order when we cannot *understand*.

It seems an easy concept to grasp, but the Corinthians had forgotten it. They had made speaking in unintelligible and uninterpreted tongues that which they desired most in their worship, and the more they made this their objective the less the church body was edified and instructed, and worse, the less likely it was that the uninitiated, those whom Paul calls "he who occupies the place of the uninformed" in verse 16, in the Greek the word is *idiotes* because they do not yet know about the faith and are unaware of how a church service proceeds would be able to understand and agree. He is speaking of course of the visitors to the congregation, and then as now they should be present in every congregation.

Paul uses several analogies to try to bring this point home to them:

First, had Paul come to Corinth originally speaking only in an unknown tongue, no one would have understood, and the church would not have been established. But Paul came to Corinth preaching Christ Crucified and the message of the cross and therefore the church was established, and it continued to grow via the preaching and teaching of the Gospel.

Second, he uses the example of music which depends on order and distinction in sounds. If I went over to the piano and began to play, in no time at all you'd be covering your ears and crying for mercy, there would be no rhythm, no harmony, no melody. No order to it, if possible it would be worse than rap.

Someone might say, ah yes but atonal music can be interesting too.

Well Paul points out that the one place where music was necessary to convey information – in battle where playing a certain order of notes on a trumpet or bugle signaled retreat or advance, order is

necessary. If the general said, sound the advance, and I picked it up and blew random notes, how would anyone know what is meant.

It is only when there is order and our communication is understandable that it is profitable.

Paul acknowledges that foreign languages and prayer languages have meaning, but if the person doesn't understand them, you might as well be an assembly of foreigners for all the good it will do. You will be as unable to understand and edify and build the church as they were to complete the city of Babel after God had confused their languages

If I don't speak intelligibly in church, he says I must as well be a Foreigner – *barbaros* - Bar bar – barbarian. They called them this because the language of northerners sounded to them like brrr brrr. To call someone a BARBARIAN in Greek culture was quite an insult.

So He once again says what they need are gifts that edify. Yes, tongues might be a spiritual gift, but without understanding its value even to the man with the gift itself is limited. Now he says even the person who has them might be fervent and even in some sense spiritual but his understanding remains unfruitful, his tongue speaking doesn't bear fruit, there is no good result either to him or the church.

So he says then that ultimately what needs to happen is that they need to pray and sing with understanding, in a known language and intelligibly.

Now the typical reaction by those who are excited about tongues to this teaching, that tongue speaking is of very little value to the church, then as now is to simply say "you say that because YOU don't have the gift – that's why you are quenching the spirit" Its all sour grapes on your part. Paul goes ahead and dismisses that idea saying he speaks with tongues *more than any of them*.

Its not because I have this "exciting gift" that I'm not pushing it. He says rather that it is because he realizes that the intelligible teaching of the WORD OF GOD is 10,000 times more valuable to the kingdom than tongues.

Applications: First no power in words simply words - **Roman Catholics and the vulgate bible and the Latin Mass.**

WCF 1.VIII. The Old Testament in Hebrew (which was the native language of the people of God of old), and the New Testament in Greek (which, at the time of the writing of it, was most generally known to the nations), being immediately inspired by God, and, by his singular care and providence, kept pure in all ages, are therefore authentical;[17] so as, in all controversies of religion, the church is finally to appeal unto them.[18] But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them,[19] therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come,[20] that, the Word of God dwelling plentifully in all, they may worship him in an acceptable manner;[21] and, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, may have hope.[22]

The words have to enter the ear and pass through the mind.

Value in Evangelism- Romans 10: 14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear

without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!"

Modern church seems to have forgotten the value of intelligibility and understanding over fervor and emotion, we are not arguing for a barren intellectualism but that too is anathema maranatha – what we are arguing against is that there is any value of feelings for feelings sake.

Music, Signs, etc. while teaching drops out once again.