

**1206 Faith, hope, and love; Prophesying and in tongues; keeping silence - 1Co(13)1-(14)40
(by Whirlwind)**

First, it speaks of living a life of faith, hope, and love, and mentions the true nature of love. It also references two previous articles. Second, it discusses how prophetic preaching to edify the church is superior to speaking in tongues. Third, it explains that speaking in tongues must be accompanied by interpretation. Fourth, it outlines the reasons for praying to get the gift of prophetic preaching and how it differs from speaking in tongues. Fifth, it explains that the spirit of a prophet is subject to another prophet and mentions that God is a God of peace. Finally, it discusses Paul's instruction that women in the Corinthian church at that time were to remain silent during meetings, and it provides a detailed explanation of why he said this.

Please note that this article is an expansion of the topicwise Bible study held on Sunday (9/6/26). Unless otherwise specified, verses refer to those in NASB95. If this article refers previous articles, they can all be found on our website, '<https://a-christian-voice.com/>'; click on 'Understanding Spiritual Life'.

1. Live a life of faith, hope, and love, and understand the true meaning of love

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love (G26, God's love), I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. And if I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Love never fails; but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when the perfect comes, the partial will be done away. When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known. But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love."(1 Corinthians 13:1-13)

First, please note that the love spoken of in the New Testament is overwhelmingly God's love (G26, noun; G25, verb). Previously, in "1193 Strengthen, God's and brotherly love, rapture, and watchfulness – 1 Thess.(3)1–(5)28," specifically in the section "3. Pleasing God and loving one another," we highlighted the few instances where "loving one another" (G5360) is mentioned, explaining where the distinction lies. Please refer to that article.

This passage essentially serves as the concluding statement. The Scripture is very clear; please read it for yourself. This conclusion is: "But now faith, hope, love, abide these three; but the greatest of these is love."(1 Corinthians 13:13) Although love is the greatest, we are to live a life of faith, hope, and love. This is because everything begins with faith; Paul makes this

very clear: "...a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law."(Romans 3:28) Therefore, we have the Holy Spirit dwelling within us, for the Scripture says, "...God, who also sealed us and gave us the Spirit in our hearts as a pledge."(2 Corinthians 1:21-22) And "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. And not only this, but we also exult in our tribulations, knowing that tribulation brings about perseverance; and perseverance, proven character; and proven character, hope; and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us."(Romans 5:1-5) Therefore, we are to live a life of faith, hope, and love.

Following this passage, the true essence of love is discussed. As we previously pointed out in "Examples of living out love in the Bible (by Whirlwind) 1027," the rest except one thing is quite clear, that is "love never fails" means "love never stops" because the verse that follows states: "...gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away."(1 Corinthians 13:8) So this refers to love never ceasing in the sense of time.

Clearly, "When I was a child, I used to speak like a child, think like a child, reason like a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things."(1 Corinthians 13:11) It continues, "For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; ..." (1 Corinthians 13:12) We will be face to face with the Lord only within the city of the New Jerusalem, "...then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known."(1 Corinthians 13:12)

2. Prophesying to build up the Church Is better than speaking in tongues

"Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries. But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying."(1 Corinthians 14:1-5)

Since love is the greatest, we must certainly pursue it, but we must also long for spiritual gifts and use them to build up the church—not as the church in Corinth did at first, when, though they had gifts, they were still carnal (see 1 Corinthians 3:1–4). "For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; for no one understands, but in his spirit he speaks mysteries."(1 Corinthians 14:2) Therefore, "...if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God."(1 Corinthians 14:28) "...but one who prophesies edifies the church."(1 Corinthians 14:4) It is far better to prophesy without the need for interpretation than to speak in tongues.

3. The reason for speaking in tongues must be accompanied by an interpretation

"But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will I profit you unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching? Yet even

lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or on the harp? For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle? So also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning. If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church. Therefore let one who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not edified."(1 Corinthians 14:6-17)

Therefore, Paul would not interpret his own tongues—it was simply unnecessary. He made use of revelation, knowledge, prophecy, or teaching; he did not speak in tongues before others, thus entrusted himself not to those who interpreted tongues, but placing himself solely in God's hands. We then see him using clear logic to illustrate why he made this choice; please read the passage for yourself. Simply put, "If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me."(1 Corinthians 14:11) That is why he says, "So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church."(1 Corinthians 14:12) Since no one interprets tongues, how can speaking in tongues edify the church? He states very clearly, "For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful."(1 Corinthians 14:14) The conclusion is, "... I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also."(1 Corinthians 14:15) Both the spirit and the mind are equally important, but the criterion for choosing must be the edification of the church—that is, the ability to edify others. Therefore, when speaking in tongues during a service, an interpreter must be present for it to be permissible.

4. The reason for praying the gift of prophesying

"I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue. Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature. In the Law it is written, "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to Me," says the Lord. So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers but to those who believe. Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you."(1 Corinthians 14:18-25)

Here it is clearly stated that he has the gift of speaking in tongues, "however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue."(1 Corinthians 14:19) Indeed, "Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be infants, but in your thinking be mature."(1 Corinthians 14:20) For "...solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."(Hebrews 5:14) Therefore, discernment is very important; we must discern.

The Law corresponds with this passage: "Indeed, He will speak to this people Through stammering lips and a foreign tongue, He who said to them, "Here is rest, give rest to the weary," And, "Here is repose," but they would not listen."(Isaiah 28:11-12) In any case, unbelievers still do not heed the prophetic message, so the prophetic message serves as evidence for believers. Believers already know that speaking in tongues is a gift, so it serves as evidence for unbelievers. But consider this: "Therefore if the whole church assembles together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad?"(1 Corinthians 14:23) Of course they would, because they have no idea what is being said and would think you're a bunch of madmen!

"But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you."(1 Corinthians 14:24-25) Of course, the prerequisite is that the person is willing to have the secrets of his heart revealed, or that someone possesses the gift to bring those secrets to light. But people's hearts can be very hardened; not everyone will fall face down and worship God. Only those who truly know that God is certainly among you will do so. Why do I say this? Consider the Jews who lived during Jesus' time: even after witnessing miracles, they still did not believe in the Lord—they even crucified Him. How hardened the human heart can be! Yet, regardless of the circumstances, there is always an opportunity for people to come to faith in the Lord.

5. The spirit of a prophet is submissive to another prophet

"What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, and each in turn, and one must interpret; but if there is no interpreter, he must keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted; and the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets; for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints."(1 Corinthians 14:26-33)

Right from the start, Paul took a different approach to describe how gifted the church in Corinth was. He then consistently emphasized that everything should be done for the edification of others. Therefore, only those who have an interpreter should speak in tongues, and no more than three people should speak in turn. As for those who prophesy, "Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment."(1 Corinthians 14:29) Passing judgements indicates that careful discernment is necessary to confirm that it comes from God.

Furthermore, since "...the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets."(1 Corinthians 14:32)—unlike speaking in tongues —"...if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent."(1 Corinthians 14:30) Know that "...you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted."(1 Corinthians 14:31) Therefore, from these verses we can see that "...God is not a God of confusion but of peace, ..." (1 Corinthians 14:33)

6. A that time, the women in the Corinthian church were to remain silent in the assembly

"The women are to keep silent in the churches (G1577, singular or plural?); for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church (G1577, singular). Was it from you that the word of God first went forth? Or has it come to you only? If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. But if anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner."(1 Corinthians 14:34-40)

First, we have specifically marked the first "church (G1577)" word with a question mark because this term can be singular or plural, and whether it is singular or plural here carries a completely different meaning—a point we will see very clearly later on.

When used in the plural, as seen in this passage: "So the church (G1577, plural) throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria enjoyed peace, being built up; and going on in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, it continued to increase."(Acts 9:31) Here, "the churches in every place" is clearly plural. When used in the singular, we can see this in another passage: "If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church (G1577, singular); and if he refuses to listen even to the church (G1577, singular), let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."(Matthew 18:17) This definitely refers to that particular church. Therefore, to determine whether this word is singular or plural, we must look to other passages.

This point is particularly important in the context of the question mark we have highlighted, for Paul clearly states, "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment."(1 Corinthians 14:37) The Lord's command is no trivial matter. If the word is singular, it applies only to the Corinthian church at that time; if it is plural, it applies to all churches—as in this translation and many others like it. Yet because of this single word, the meaning can be entirely different; therefore, we must view this passage in light of "what God tell us through the Bible is consistent."

Let us first consider a principle from the Bible: "Some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and began to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife. And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and

mother, and the two shall become one flesh; so they are no longer two, but one flesh."(Mark 10:2-8) This shows that God permitted Moses to do this only under the circumstances of that time—it was not God's original intention. The same is true of Paul. Given the many problems in the Corinthian church at that time, God allowed Paul to express his revelation, but this was not addressed to all the churches, which is why the text should use the singular form here.

Let us look at this from another perspective: "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."(John 3:16) When it comes to salvation, there is no distinction between men and women. If the word here were in the plural, it would imply that Paul discriminated against women, forbidding them to speak in all the churches; yet he said, "Be imitators of me, just as I also am of Christ."(1 Corinthians 11:1) Since Jesus Christ did not discriminate against women, how could Paul have done so? His first appearance after the resurrection was to Mary Magdalene (see John 20:11-17). When He was incarnate, "...Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means."(Luke 8:3) Those standing by Jesus' cross, aside from John, were all women (see John 19:25-27). How could Paul possibly discriminate against women! So from this perspective, the term here is also in the singular, meaning that women are not required to remain silent in all the churches. However, as we have said before, there is a proper order of precedence: women are not to take the lead, because the Bible makes no mention of female elders or overseers.

In short, these words were addressed to the Corinthian church at that time; please read the passage for yourself to see what it actually says. The conclusion of this passage is: "Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to speak in tongues. But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner."(1 Corinthians 14:39-40) Currently, there is at least a church I know to have essentially banned speaking in tongues entirely, likely because it is difficult to discern whether the speaker and the interpreter are colluding. However, even so, speaking in tongues should not be prohibited in advance; rather, it is not too late to prohibit it only when the elders are unable to determine whether such a situation has occurred.