

## INTRODUCE

Well, good morning church! If I haven't met you yet, my name is Chris Martin, and I'm the Lead Pastor here.

If you've got your Bibles, and I hope you do, please open them up to 1 Corinthians chapter 14. 1 Corinthians 14. That's where we're going to be.

We want every person to have a hand on their Bible. You can open your phone or tablet to 1 Corinthians 14.

## INTRODUCTION

So, I got saved when I was 16 years old, and around the end of high school a buddy of mine brought me to a very charismatic church service at this mega church.

- And let me tell you...
- as someone not raised in church...
- that was an experience.

We got there a little early, and so we get to our seats.

- And this guy comes and sits down right in front of us.
- And the first thing he does is he takes off his shoes,
  - and I'm like, "Yo, if that's what's happening
  - I'm outta here,
  - cause a thousand people with no shoes
  - just isn't my jam. "
- But the guy turns around to us and says,
  - "I'm just getting ready, cause this is holy ground."

- And I'm like,
  - *"Bro, this used to be a WalMart.*
  - *I actually think we're standing where*
  - *the men's socks used to be."*
- So, then the band gets up there,
- and shoeless Joe is dancing around all weird,
- and people are wriggling like bacon in the isles,
- and there are people running around in the isles waving flags,
  - like we're at a Soccer match.

And then,

- I hear someone behind me talking all weird
- I didn't know at that point,
- but they were speaking in tongues.
- And then my friend started to do it...
- and before I knew it, there was just a chorus of people...
- all talking in jibberish...
- it didn't make any sense to me...
- and I was honestly like,
  - *"Am I missing out on something here?"*
  - *Should I be speaking in tongues?"*

And that was my first encounter with the gift of tongues.

## TRANSITION

And that's what we're covering in our text today.

- The topic is tongues.
- And let's just out of the gate go,
- *"That's kind of weird."*
- Tongues is kind of weird.

And it's also one of the most controversial parts of 1 Corinthians.

Now, there's no way I'll cover all there is to say about tongues, so we're going to do a Q&A podcast this week.

- If you have any questions we don't cover
- text them to **SLIDE 720-507-8687**
- and we'll try to address them in a podcast to come.
- Ok? 720-507-8687. **BLANK SLIDE**

## CONTEXT

Now, this is the only teaching on the gift of speaking in tongues in the entire Bible...and it comes in the form of a rebuke.

So, remember what Paul has been doing:

- the Corinthian church has gone way off the rails,
- and one of the ways is that they were elevating certain gifts
  - that they thought were more powerful
  - or more spectacular
  - or more honorable...right?
- Like the gifts of tongues and prophecy are varsity level gifts.
- But the gifts of helping or administration...those are the JV gifts.

But Paul has given a sharp rebuke by saying:

- all the gifts are necessary...
- no one person has all of the gifts...
- every person has at least one gift...
- and none of the gifts are to be elevated or exalted over another.

## HISTORY

Now, before we can get to 1 Corinthians 14, we need to lay a foundation. This is the only *teaching* on tongues, but there are three stories of tongues in the book of Acts. Acts chapter 2, 10, and 19.

- In Acts chapter 2 we find the account of Pentecost.
- And this is the first time we see this idea of tongues,
- the Greek word is *glōssa*,
- which is translated *tongue*,
- but can also mean *language*.

And in Acts 2

- the Christians are filled with the Holy Spirit
- and they being speaking
- in languages not known to themselves,
- but they are the languages of those listening.

So, it's like they're speaking in a language that seems foreign...but you're like, "*Hey, that's German!*"

- I'd take that gift in a heartbeat! Right?
- Speaking unknown languages?!?
- I'm barely unilingual!

This is what we call a *missiological* use of tongues, and it seems to be kinda different than what we'll see in the rest of the book of Acts and in to our text in 1 Corinthians. Acts 2 is I speak in a tongue, you hear an earthly language.

In Acts 10 & 19

- we find accounts of Gentiles—non Jews—getting saved,
- being filled with the Holy Spirit,
- and then speaking in tongues as an evidence
- that Gentiles could, in fact, receive the Spirit.

So, it seems to be an evidence that the Spirit can be poured out on a people group previously thought of NOT to be able to receive the Spirit.

And then this brings us to 1 Corinthians, where tongues seem not to be missiological...rather it has been described as a heavenly language, or an angelic language, or a prayer language...and it's really the kind of tongues that freaks some of us out.

Now, I say that

- to lay the groundwork here
- so you're aware
- that's all we have to work with
- in the New Testament concerning tongues.
- That's it.

## APPLICATION

Now, what that means is this:

- There is a lack of clarity when it comes to this issue...
  - and that's ok.
- There are many things that the Bible is crystal clear on,
- and then there are some issues
  - where we just don't get all that we might want.
- And on those issues, we need to err on the side of grace.

## 3 POSITIONS

Now, a little more theology before we get to 1 Corinthians 14. Because there are a few different theological positions concerning tongues.

I'll give three positions, and please forgive me if I under or mis-characterize these positions. I recognize that there are many gradients within each position:

First, there is what is known as the **SLIDE CESSATIONIST** position. Gary mentioned this position last week.

- Cessationists believe that the miraculous gifts
- served the purpose of validating the message about Jesus
- during the early days of the church,
- but now that the apostolic foundation is laid
- and the Bible is complete,
- the miraculous gifts are not a part of the normal operation
- of the church body today.

They believe that the gift of tongues has ceased...cessationist.

Second, there is what is known as the **SLIDE CONTINUATIONIST** position.

- Continuationists believe that the miraculous gifts
- continue to be in operation today,
- in the same way that they were in the days of the early church.

There are more gradients in this camp around the gift of tongues.

- Some believe that if a person has not spoken in tongues,
  - they are not truly a Christian.
- Others believe that non-tongue speakers may be saved,
  - but have yet to experience a Spirit-baptism,
  - and that tongues must accompany
  - a genuine second blessing.

But simply put, continuationists believe tongues is available as a gift for the church today.

And then third, there is what I've always claimed for myself: **SLIDE CAUTIOUS CONTINUATIONISTS.**

- This has also been known as the modified position,
- which really means we don't see
- the biblical precedent for the gifts ceasing,
- but we're also cautious of many modern churches
- using the gifts in seemingly unbiblical ways.

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## TRANSITION

Ok, so, let's work through our text today, and I'm just gonna walk through it and make observations about what Paul says about tongues.

Now, next week we're going to do the same thing with the spiritual gift of prophecy.

- That's all next week.
- I'm not tackling prophecy and tongues all in the same weekend.
- We would need a mind diaper.
- It would go badly.
- So, it'll be the same text,
- just different points made.

Here we go: 1 Corinthians 14 starting in verse 1.

### 1 CORINTHIANS 14:1-5

[1] Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. [2] For 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. [3] On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation. [4] The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church. [5] Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more to prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up.



## DEFINITION

So, let's use these verses to create something of a working definition for the non-missiological gift of tongues.

- This isn't speaking
- and someone else hearing
- in their own language...
- this is more of a prayer language.

So, here's the definition: **SLIDE**

- **SPEAKING IN TONGUES**
- **IS PRAYER OR PRAISE**
- **SPOKEN IN A LANGUAGE**
- **NOT UNDERSTOOD BY THE SPEAKER.**

So, when speaking in tongues, you are **speaking to God.**

- This is one way it differs from prophecy,
- which is from God to his people.

And that tongue is unknown to the speaker. **No one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.**

So, it's a prayer or praise in a language not understood by the speaker. And as you can see,

- this seems to be normally done in private...
- it seems to be useful for the building up of the individual
- more than for the building up of the church.

But we'll get into that more in the coming verses. Look at verse 6:

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## 1 CORINTHIANS 14:6-12

[6] Now, brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? [7] If even lifeless instruments, such as the flute or the harp, do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know what is played? [8] And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, who will get ready for battle? [9] So with yourselves, 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. [10] There are doubtless many different languages in the world, and none is without meaning, [11] 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. [12] So with yourselves, since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.

### ILLUSTRATION: PIANO

So, Paul illustrates tongues as something that are **indistinct**.  
It's like when my 5-year-old plays piano.

She says, "*Daddy, let me play you a song...*" and then proceeds to play this: **SLIDE VIDEO**.

It's like: "*I hope she's good at math!*"

But that's tongues.

- Tongues are indistinct without interpretation,
- **and thus are not normally meant to uplift the corporate body,**
- but rather, are normally for the speaker alone.

But Paul's main point is for the gifts to be used in building up the church.

- It's not that tongues are bad...
- but they can be used improperly.

Look at verse 13:

### **1 CORINTHIANS 14:13-17**

[13] Therefore, one who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret. [14] For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. [15] What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. [16] Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say "Amen" to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? [17] For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up.

So, Paul is saying that just babbling out in a tongue is of no help when the church is gathered...

- no one is being built up,
- which, again, is what the gifts are meant to do.

But just so you know that Paul isn't anti-tongues he goes on in verse 18...

### **1 CORINTHIANS 14:18**

[18] I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

Which you are not allowed to say unless you're the Apostle Paul! Right?

- "I thank God I'm much more gifted than you are!"
- You only get to say that if your job is to write Bible.

But remember, this is an inditement on the Corinthians who think they are really spiritual because they think they have these spiritual superhero gifts.

But Paul's is like, *"If you want to play that game, I've got you all beat."*

### **1 CORINTHIANS 14:19**

[19] Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Paul speaks in tongues more than anyone else, and yet, while in church he would rather speak intelligible words...again, building up the church.

And now the rebuke. Verse 20:

### **1 CORINTHIANS 14:20-25**

[20] Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature. [21] In the Law it is written, "By people of strange tongues and by the lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord." [22] Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. [23] If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds? [24] But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account

by all, [25] 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.

## EXPLAIN

So, Paul picks back up from chapter 13 calling out the Corinthian's immaturity!

- He says, don't be children in your thinking...
  - i.e. thinking that by displaying these certain gifts
  - you are somehow more mature than you really are.

The gift of tongues is not a sign of one's spirituality or maturity.

- They thought their gift elevated them above others;
- made them feel close to God.
- But Paul says, *"That is NOT mature."*
- Maturity is when you find your identity in Christ
- and use your gift to serve others.

And then Paul quotes Isaiah 28 and I really don't have time to go into this too deeply, but suffice it to say, tongues and prophecy do have their place in the life of the Christian, AND in the work of evangelism.

Now, let's look at verse 26 where Paul gets really practical:

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:26-28

[26] What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. [27] If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. [28] But if there

is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God.

## EXPLAIN: SELF-CONTROL

So, there you go...

- if you have a tongue,
- and there are no interpreters,
- keep it to yourself.
- It is meant to be used privately.
- And if there is someone with an interpretation, even then,
- it's not a mass of people jabbering on,
- but only two or three
- and each in turn.

Wayne Grudem puts it like this:

- *“Tongues require a high degree of self-control*
- *and there is no support to the idea*
- *that Paul thought of tongues as ecstatic speech of some kind.*
- *Tongues are not ecstatic,*
- *but self controlled.”*

Now, I'm gonna skip down and cover more of this next week, but here's Paul's concluding thoughts in verse 33.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 12:33

[33] For God is not a God of confusion but of peace.

And then down to verses 39 & 40.

## 1 CORINTHIANS 14:39-40

[39] So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. [40] But all things should be done decently and in order.

Now, I'm going to get into the rest of this passage in talking about prophecy next week, but let's make some concluding points about the speaking in tongues from this passage with the remainder of our time.

### POINT 1

Point number 1: **SLIDE WE SHOULD NOT FORBID SPEAKING IN TONGUES.**

- Goodness, I know there are some who would like us to,
- but I just can't get away from what I see in the text,
- and what I see is that this is a gift
- that God DOES give
- to SOME of his people.

So, if you do speak in tongues in how you pray to and praise God, we are not the ones to judge it.

We will, however, insist you abide by the rules Paul lays down in 1 Corinthians 14 as it relates to corporate worship. But I am not going to forbid you to speak in tongues here or in private.

## POINT 2

Point number 2: **SLIDE SPEAKING IN TONGUES IS NOT A SIGN OF MATURITY.**

- Paul is very clear here that tongues
- is not a sign that always accompanies conversion,
- nor a baptism of the Holy Spirit,
- nor some sort of marker of a varsity level of faith.

In fact, he calls that the immature stance.

- So, if you have the gift of tongues...
  - you may be mature in your faith...
  - you may not.
- If you don't have the gift of tongues...
  - you may be immature in your faith...
  - you may not.

**Speaking in tongues is not a sign of Christian maturity.**

## POINT 3

And finally, point number 3: **SLIDE DESIRING TO SPEAK IN TONGUES IS GOOD. DESIRING TO BUILD UP THE CHURCH IS BETTER.**



- Paul seems to have spoken in tongues.
- And frankly, he seems to want you to speak in tongues as well.
- Ok? Verse 5: **Now, I want you all to speak in tongues.**
- So, again, DESIRING TO SPEAK IN TONGUES IS GOOD.

BUT DESIRING TO BUILD UP THE CHURCH IS BETTER.

- Verse 12: **since you are eager for manifestations of the Spirit, strive to excel in building up the church.**
- Verse 26: **When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.**

**It's okay to desire, even earnestly desire other gifts.**

- **But it's sinful to despise the gifts you've been given**
- **because you want another one.**

You've been given a gift, and it's not a good thing for you to go,

- *"Well, since I don't have this gift*
- *I'm not going to use my gift*
- *cause it's not the gift I want."*

What God wants you to do

- is to interact with the Spirit
- and offer yourself to be used by the Spirit
- for the good of the church
- in whatever way he gifts you.

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## CONCLUSION

So, let me end with this: I've never spoken in tongues. God hasn't given me that spiritual gift.

But listen to me,

- I want it!
- Like if there's more intimacy to be had with Christ...sign me up!
- So, I've prayed for it,
- and I've even tried to speak in tongues.

So, back in high-school, after my time at that charismatic church, I tried...

- like I was in my car,
- just by myself,
- and I tried to speak in tongues...
- right? I just tried to muster up the gift of tongues.

And I've watched videos of people supposedly speaking in tongues on YouTube, and tried that.

- And I've been to charismatic churches,
- and been surrounded by people speaking in tongues...
- which doesn't seem to be a biblical expression of tongues...
- but I've prayed,
  - *"God, if you want me to speak in tongues,*
  - *let me have it!"*

But I think if you have to muster it up, you're not doing it. Right?

Like, I knew I was just trying to force the issue.

And then, like two years ago,

- I was reading another book on these charismatic gifts,
- and so, I just started praying for the gift of tongues again...
- and again, it just didn't come.
- But I have friends and colleagues who do speak in tongues.
- And I'm convinced by the text that it exists.
- And yet, I don't.

And I felt like God said to me while reading that book:

- *"Hey, you've got teaching.*
- *You've got leadership.*
- *You don't get them all."*

*"But I want that one!"*

Right? Like a kid who didn't get what he wanted for Christmas!

- And God lovingly said: *"Sorry buddy...*
- *use what you have to build up my church."*

## ENDING

And here's what I know from the Bible: **you have been given a manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.**

- That means you...
- every single one of you...
- made in the image of God,
- empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit,
- has been given a gift.

- Maybe it's administration.
- Maybe it's works of service.
- Maybe it's tongues.
  
- But you've been gifted,
- and you've been brought to this place
- because we needed a dash more of that here
- to be all that God would want us to be.

So, here's what that means:

- If you're a member or a regular attender,
- God has led you to this place
- not simply because we have a bunch of things FOR you,
  - although that's true...
- but because you have something God wants here
- to make us fully what he plans for us to be.

So once again, who wants to play?

Pray with me. **LYRICS SLIDE W/PADS**

## RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – [fathomchurch.org/give](http://fathomchurch.org/give)
- PRAYER - [fathomchurch.org/prayer](http://fathomchurch.org/prayer)
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

### 1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

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