I Corinthians 14:1-40

Review…

- **I Corinthians 7 - The 1st question - Marriage…**
- **I Corinthians 8-10 - The 2nd question - Idols…**
- **I Corinthians 11 - The 3rd question - Rules for a worship service…**
- **I Corinthians 12:1-11 - The 4th question - Spiritual Gifts…**
  - 1st - Do not be ignorant - in order to live for Jesus we must be full of the Holy Spirit...
  - 2nd - There are many gifts - but they all serve one purpose - to encourage the church...
  - 3rd - The supernatural gifts - 23 gifts in all - 9 listed here in I Corinthians...
  - 4th - Everyone has at least one 'gift' - the Holy Spirit gives them to whomever He chooses!
- **I Corinthians 12:12-21 - Many members - one Body…**
  - 1st - Paul gives us the illustration of a body - many parts all under the control of one head...
  - 2nd - We all became part of the Body of Christ - when we believed in Jesus!
  - 3rd - We must be content with the place God has given us within the body - ear / eye / foot
  - 4th - We must accept the other parts of the body - other denominations...
  - 5th - No one part of the body is greater than another - all are equal in God's eyes...
- **I Corinthians 13:1-13 - Love…**
  - 1st - The gifts of the Spirit mean nothing without love - 3 examples...
  - 2nd - The definition of Love - Agape - 14 examples to describe perfect love!
  - 3rd - The greatest of all gifts is Love - these 3 remain - Faith / Hope / Love!

The gift of tongues… (*4 things*)

- **1st - Gift of Prophecy vs. Tongues… vs. 1-5**
  - Paul dedicates a whole chapter on how to properly use the 'gift of tongues'...
    - Interesting of all the gifts - Paul would give so much attention to this 'least of gifts'...
    - With only 13 verses dedicated to the greatest gift - 'love' - takes 40 verses for tongues!
    - God knew this would become one of the most controversial / misunderstood gifts...
    - So God clearly laid out how the gift was to be used - and where!
  - Peruse Love - desire Spiritual gifts... vs. 1
    - We are encouraged to chase after Love - the greatest gift - binds the church together
    - And we should excitedly seek after the Spiritual gifts - so we can encourage the church
    - But we should seek most those gifts that are the most beneficial to the church...
  - How the gift of tongues works... vs. 2, 14
    - When God gives the gift of tongues - speaking in an unknown language - men/angels...
    - Your spirit is speaking directly to God - apart from the understanding of your mind...
    - We have all had those times when our heart is heavy - but we lack the words to share...
    - We come before the Lord is prayer - but our mind in swimming in a sea of confusion...
    - Tongues is a wonderful gift to use personally - a way to pray / even sing in the spirit...
    - Not having to worry about finding the right words - just freely worshiping God!
    - But if we speak in tongues - we don't speak in a way other people can understand...

- In fact we don't even understand what we are saying!

- How the gift of prophesy works... vs. 3-4
  - When God gives the gift of prophesy - a person speaks in their own language...
  - They speak the Word of God to 'edify' (*build up*) / 'exhort' (*confront sin*) / 'comfort'!
  - Key difference from tongues - everyone listening can understand what is being said!
  - Where 'tongues' is just for an individual - prophecy is for the whole church!
- For that reason the gift of prophecy is a better gift than the gift of tongues... vs. 5
  - Paul's desire is that all men speak with tongues - it is an incredible PERSONAL gift...
  - But better for the church as a whole - if all men have the gift of prophesy...
  - Unless there is someone who has the gift of interpretation of tongues...
  - A 'translator' - who can take the 'message' in tongues and translate it for all to hear...
  - Then everyone can be encouraged because they can understand what is being said!

- **2ND - THE PROBLEM WITH USING THE GIFT OF TONGUES IN CHURCH... VS. 6-19**
  - You cannot understand what is being said... vs. 6-14
    - Paul uses himself as an example...
      - Paul had great wisdom and understanding when it came to God's Word...
      - He had much to share - 'revelations' from the Lord / 'knowledge' of God's Word...
      - 'Prophecy' and 'teachings' he wanted to share with the church...
      - But if he came to them and shared them all in a language they did not understand...
      - No matter how incredible the content - it would be useless!
    - Even music (*instruments that have not life*) teach us the same truth...
      - If a flute or a harp plays a 'tune' that no one knows...
        - If you hear a song playing you've heard 100 times - even before the words begin...
        - You know the tune and can sing along - because you 'know the tune'...
        - But if you don't know the song - then you are at a loss - you can't follow along
      - Or if a trumpet sounds for battle - but uses an unknown tune - no one will fight!
        - When I was in Israel in 2006 - Hezbolah declared war on Israel - missile attacks...
        - With every missile fired an 'air raid' siren sounded - if it made the wrong sound...
        - No one would know to take cover - get to a safe place!
    - In the same way - unless you speak in the language everyone knows...
      - And there are LOTS of languages in the world - 6,700 official in the world today!
      - But if you speak in an unknown tongue - you are speaking to the air...
      - You will be like a foreigner to those you are trying to speak to!
      - Therefore pray God gives an interpreter - so everyone can be encouraged!
      - Imagine if we taught Bible studies all in Russian - no translation...
      - Even if the teachings were amazing - if you can't understand - what good is it...
      - Many times when I have taught I have been told I don't need to be translated...
      - I have been told that everyone 'understands' - but it is often just pride...
      - Even if someone understand most of another language - you still miss out...
      - That is why we always translate the teachings - so they are easy to understand!
  - The conclusion... vs. 15-19
    - When you are alone - pray in the Spirit / sing in the Spirit...

- But when you are in church - pray/sing in a known language...
- That way when you finish your prayer - everyone will know when to say 'amen'!
- Paul himself spoke in tongues more than anyone else - he had the gift...
- But in church better to have 5 words in a known tongue - than 10,000 in an unknown!
- When I was in Russia - the whole service including songs / prayers / and the message...
- Were all spoken in an ancient form of the language no one understood...
- There are many churches that 'sing' in Latin - the songs are beautiful - not understood...
- When we sing - we sing in Illongo - so that we sing with understanding...
- The point of the worship / Word is to build up and encourage the church...
- But if you do not understand - then it just becomes empty ritual / religion!

- **3RD - THE PROPER USE OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES... VS. 20-25**
  - Be mature in your understanding... vs. 20
    - When it comes to things that are evil - be a child - be ignorant...
    - But when it comes to being wise - be a man - so that you understand...
    - The gifts of the Spirit can be confusing - and there are many who have misused them...
    - We are to be ignorant of how to abuse the gifts - using them selfishly...
    - But we are to be mature - grown up in our understanding of the Word of God...
    - Then we will understand God's purpose for the gifts - to build up the Body/Church
  - Using tongues for evangelism - **Isaiah 28:11**
    - It was prophesied God would use the 'gift of tongues' to reach out to the lost...
    - It would be a sign to those who did not believe in Jesus...
    - In **Acts 2** - at the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came upon the church...
    - In this instance God used tongues as an evangelism tool to reach many nations...
    - **Acts 2:8** - "We hear them speaking the languages of the lands we were born!"
    - Jews from all over the world were in Jerusalem for the feast of Pentecost...
    - They each heard the disciples praising God in their own native language!
    - If Roger began to speak in fluent Illongo - no accent - praising God - worshiping God...
    - It would grab a lot of people's attention - people would be ready to hear about Jesus!
  - Speaking in tongues in the church...
    - If an unbeliever (*or unlearned*) came into a church - everyone was speaking in tongues
    - They/you would say they were all mad - it would appear to be absolute chaos!
    - But if an unbeliever walked into a church where they were prophesying...
    - He will be convinced and convicted by God's Word - testify God is with you...
    - There was a man who came to church - thought I was talking about him in the teaching
    - God's Word convicted him - because he understood what was being said...
    - * **Hebrews 4:12** - "The word of God is full of living power. It is sharper than the sharpest knife, cutting deep into our innermost thoughts and desires. It exposes us for what we really are."
    - God's Word has the ability to cut right to our heart / convict us of our sin...
    - It can turn us away from the world - and convince us to follow Jesus...
    - But we have to be able to hear and understand the Word - **Romans 10:17**

- **4TH - ORDER IN THE CHURCH... VS. 26-40**
  - Whenever you come together in church... vs. 26-32
    - The saints in Corinth were 'competing' when they had a church service...
      - Trying to outdo the other with a better song / teaching / tongue / interpretation...
      - Rather than trying to build up each other - they were tearing each other apart...
      - I have been to many a 'services' or 'studies' where all the people did was argue...
      - No one trying to learn about Jesus - everyone just trying to prove they are better!
      - The result is no one grows in Jesus - they just end up debating pointlessly!
    - If someone speaks in a tongue...
      - Then let there be no more than 2 at most 3 people in a single service - one at a time...
      - Then there must be an interpreter - if there is not - then there should be no tongues!
      - This is the 'Law' concerning the use of tongues in a church service...
      - There is no other acceptable way for the gift to function in a corporate setting!
    - If someone has a prophecy...
      - 2 or 3 at a time - then let the others in the church discern if it is really from God...
      - Once one person is done - they are not to get up and interrupt the next person...
      - Everyone in the church can 'prophesy' - share God's Word - one at a time...
      - But what is said MUST NOT contradict the Word of God...
      - If your 'interpretation' - 'prophecy' - 'revelation' - contradicts God's Word...
      - Any part of God's Word - then you are wrong - and should not be listened to!
      - If someone says they have a 'revelation' we should all speak in tongues at once...
      - If someone tells you God has spoken to them - and He wants you to (*fill in the blank*)
      - Test everything against God's Word - reject anything that contradicts His Word!
  - God is not the author of confusion... vs. 33-40
    - God desires for us to have order in the church...
      - God does not work in chaos - God is God of order - He works through structure...
      - There is a balance - we are to be open to the Spirit - we are to be flexible...
      - But we are also to be wise - we are to make plans - we are to be organized...
    - Women are to be silent in church - they are not to speak out...
      - This is a statement that has caused a GREAT deal of controversy...
      - In Corinth - men and women were seated on opposite sides of the church...
      - Apparently some of the women did not understand the teaching...
      - So they would ask their husbands in the middle of the service to explain it...
      - Women calling out across the church - the end result was very disruptive...
      - Paul told them to hold their questions till they got home - then ask their husbands!
      - There is good wisdom in this - it encourages women to stir up their husbands...
      - If your wife has a question - she could ask a pastor - but better to ask you...
      - Because even if we do not know - we will dig into God's Word and learn!
    - If you think you are wise...
      - Paul knew there might be many who would be offended by his words...
        - Those who were abusing the gift of tongues - speaking without interpretation...
        - Women who were speaking out in church - disrupting the service...
        - When we teach God's Word - we will inevitably upset some people...
        - But that does not mean we stop teaching - all the more we need to teach...

    - God's Word upsets people because it has the power to convict - and change them!
- Recognize the wisdom of having order in the church - to build up the church!
    - Seek to prophesy in church so that you can encourage the church...
    - But do not forbid anyone from speaking in tongues...
    - Let all things be done decently and in order in the church!