

Not a God of Confusion

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Preacher: Colin Horne

[0:00] 1 Corinthians chapter 14, we'll read verses 26 to 40. We've been thinking about worship in Sunday school, and here we see further evidence in this passage that God cares how we worship.

! So let's read his will for his church. In 1 Corinthians chapter 14, starting at verse 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.

If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two, or at the most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in the church, and speak to himself and to God.

Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting there, let the first be silent.

[1:15] For you can all prophesy one by one, so that all may learn to be encouraged, 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, 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.

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. Or was it from you that the word of God came?

Or are you the only ones it has reached? 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.

If anyone does not recognize this, he is not recognized. So, my brothers, earnestly desire to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues.

[2:20] But all things should be done decently and in order. Well, we get to bookend our day together.

Sunday school and now the evening service, considering, does God care how we worship? Well, we have three points tonight from this passage. We are going to see the problematic situation. We are going to see the reasonable solution. And we are going to see the authoritative command. All as it relates to our gathered worship together.

So, first, the problematic situation. And it's a three-fold problem. Paul addresses each of them here. The first is this. The speaking of tongues simultaneously and...

Uninterpreted. It would seem that there was no real structure to the worship service in Corinth. No parameters for how the gift of tongues was to be exercised.

[3:23] It was seemingly a free-for-all. Anyone with the gift could exercise that gift whenever he or she wanted. If you had something to say in a tongue, well, you could speak up.

Interrupting others. Talking over others. That was all fair game. Now, children, what's one of the first things that we learn when we're in a classroom situation?

Maybe your Sunday school class? Well, it's to raise our hand before we speak. Your teacher asks a question. And we know we don't just blurt out the answer.

We certainly don't blurt out the answer when someone else is already giving that answer. That's confusing. It's chaotic. It's unhelpful to everyone. You can't hear each other if you're talking over each other.

Or maybe the dinner table. We can relate to that experience. All of us. If someone's talking and others go to talk as well, well, we can't hear each other or understand what's being said.

[4:24] And that's something of what we see happening here in Corinth. Those with the gift of tongues exercising their gift like children in a classroom, all answering a question at the same time.

Or like a rowdy family meal where everyone is not listening to anyone. Speaking in tongues simultaneously. It's probably loud.

Because that's the natural effect when everyone is talking at the same time. You might not even realize it. But what do we do? We raise our voice as others are talking. And what do they then do? Well, they raise their voice as they are talking. And everybody keeps ratcheting up the volume. It's so loud because everyone with the gift of tongues here in Corinth is speaking at the same time. And not just loud. It's unintelligible speech. Because it's uninterpreted. Now we saw this the last time we were in 1 Corinthians 14.

[5:22] Uninterpreted tongues is problematic. Because not only can you not hear what's going on in the service, perhaps, but you don't know even if you could hear what was being said, what it is that they're actually saying.

Speaking in a foreign language. So speaking in tongues simultaneously and uninterpreted. That's the first problem. Now here's the second. The speaking of prophecies simultaneously and unchecked.

It's a similar situation. Members of the church exercising their gifts, the gift of prophecy, all at the same time. One person making a revelation, as Paul says, while another then is doing the same. The same effect is the speaking in tongues simultaneously. It's loud. It's chaotic. You can't hear. You can't understand and profit from that. And another problem is that these prophecies aren't being properly vetted.

No one is making sure what's being said is a legitimate prophecy. You see, much like tongues, there was a gift that complemented prophecy. The gift of tongues was complemented by the gift of the interpretation of tongues.

[6:35] Well, with prophecy, there was the gift of distinguishing between the spirits that complemented the gift of prophecy. Meaning that others in the church would have this spirit-given ability to discern whether the person claiming to be a prophet actually was.

Like in the Old Testament, not every prophet was actually a true prophet. There were false prophets. Those who claimed to speak a word from God, but in reality, they didn't.

And of course, that was very dangerous, as you could then have people claiming to speak on behalf of God, leading the church astray. So God gave this complementary gift to the early church, this gift that paired well with prophecy.

The ability to discern whether that prophecy was truly from God or not. That's what we see Paul talking about here in verse 29 when he says, Let the others weigh what is said.

And if what is said is discovered to not be from God, well, then the person speaking was a false prophet and not to be heard. But here in Corinth, none of this was happening. They were allowing for those who claimed to have the gift of prophecy to go ahead and share.

[7:47] Share your prophecy without anyone weighing them, without any evaluation of them. Judging these prophecies to see if they're really from God. What a dangerous situation this had created in the church.

Allowing for gifts to be exercised with no proper, healthy boundaries put into place. And that leads us to the third problem in this situation in Corinth.

The speaking of women in the service and unsubmitted. Now, the first two problems, they involved the misuse of spiritual gifts.

But this third problem here, it involves the disregard of spiritual authority. Women speaking in the service. Now, admittedly, Paul doesn't give much detail here.

Even that word that he uses to describe what the women are doing is rather vague. They are speaking. What does Paul mean by this? Does Paul mean that women cannot make their voices known at all?

[8:57] Well, it would seem in the first century church, there was a place for women to pray and prophesy. 1 Corinthians 11, verse 5. We saw that Paul was setting proper boundaries for women to pray and prophesy.

Their heads were to be covered. So, it seems that Paul doesn't have an objection to that. The praying, the prophesying. But the women could not what he said as speak.

So, what does that mean? We have not just the instruction in 1 Corinthians to see women praying and prophesying and speaking in that way. We also have the example of women prophesying in the book of Acts.

It's always helpful when God gives us instructions and when he gives us examples. Consider Acts 21. Paul and his companions, they're staying in the house of Philip the evangelist.

And we're told in verse 9 that Philip had four unmarried daughters who prophesied. Now, that doesn't say explicitly that they were doing this in a worship service, but they did prophesy at least in a public fashion.

[10:02] And the problem here in 1 Corinthians 14 that Paul is addressing is the speaking of women in a public fashion as the church has gathered for worship. So, whatever is happening here in 1 Corinthians 14, it doesn't seem that Paul is talking about women praying or prophesying as long as they were doing that with their heads covered.

That was allowed. What they couldn't do, Paul says, is speak, which we must distinguish from those two other things. So, to understand what Paul means by speaking, let's consider his words from another letter.

1 Timothy. There in chapter 2, with great clarity, Paul writes this, beginning in verse 11. Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness.

Now, that verse alone sounds very similar to what Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 14. He said that women should be in submission.

He said that if there is anything they desire to learn, they should ask their husbands at home. That's very similar to what he says in 1 Timothy 2, verse 11.

[11:12] Let a woman learn quietly with all submissiveness. Oh, but then he continues in 1 Timothy 2, and he says, I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man.

Rather, she is to remain quiet. So, here is where we take a very helpful rule of Bible interpretation. Use a passage that is more clear to then understand a passage that is less clear.

So, here we have a more clear passage, 1 Timothy 2. What is it that women are not permitted to do? To teach or to exercise authority over men.

So, then we return to 1 Corinthians 14, the less clear passage, where Paul says that women are not permitted to speak. Well, there we see another word that he uses in both places.

He uses that same word from 1 Timothy 2, permitted. But again, he's a little more vague here.

Women are not permitted to speak. And yet, in 1 Timothy, he speaks more clearly and precisely.

[12:18] What kind of speech is not permitted? The kind that exercises authority over men. That kind of speech is prohibited because that kind of speech is not done in a spirit of submission.

Submission to husbands. Submission to pastors. Now, rightly so, we often think of preaching and teaching as the kind of speaking that women are forbidden from doing.

As the kind of exercising of authority over men that is not prohibited. That's true. We see that. 1 Timothy 2. We also see that very clearly in the fact that zero women are shown to us as pastors in God's word.

And in the fact that the qualifications for elders specifically says candidates are to be husbands of one wife, not the other way around. So yes, women can't speak in the church in this preaching and teaching kind of way.

That is reserved for men. But it's likely that the problem here in Corinth wasn't exactly women preaching to and teaching men per se.

[13:27] What does the context tell us? It seems they were seeking to participate in the weighing of the prophecies that were being given. That they were seeking something of a role in the evaluation of the prophecies.

The asking of questions seems to signify that. And in doing that, they were crossing that line of authority that Paul is clearly establishing for us. The weighing of prophecies was a function that was reserved for men.

Then there's judging taking place. Evaluating taking place. Authority that men would have in doing that. So for women to participate would have demonstrated then a lack of submission.

And that's a problem. Not just for cultural reasons though. Paul doesn't root submission in culture, but in the created order. And we saw this in chapter 11.

And we see it again here in chapter 14. Paul doesn't speak of something that's cultural and therefore open to change. No, he speaks of something that is grounded in the unchanging order of creation.

[14:35] We see it there in that little phrase. Verse 34. As the law also says. So women are to be in submission, Paul says. Because the law says so.

And not because culture at that time said so. But the law. Now where do we see this law? Well Genesis 2 is a great starting point. And now maybe we don't think Genesis 2?

The law? That's not what we think of perhaps as law. But it was. The first five books of the Bible. And what are they called? The Torah. The law. And in Genesis, what do we find?

The clear order of creation. Man made first. And then woman from man. Man being placed in the position of leadership.

And woman being placed in the position of following his leadership. And helping him to accomplish all that God has given to him. Men and women were not made to be against each other.

[15:32] But living in harmony with each other. And working together. It is a good order that God has given. When men and women are living out their roles in obedience to him.

In the church. And in the home. Complementing each other. And showing forth the full image of God. Now that wasn't happening in Corinth. Women were seeking to usurp the role of men.

And we see that men were abdicating their role to women. So that is the problematic situation. The three-fold problem there in Corinth.

Well now let's turn our attention to the reasonable solution. And indeed Paul addresses each of these problems. It's a three-fold solution. So let's go back and let's read this text again.

The first three verses of this text. To see the first solution that Paul gives. What then brothers. When you come together. Each one has a hymn. A lesson.

[16:30] A revelation. A tongue. Or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up. If any speak in a tongue. Let there be only two.

Or at most three. And each in turn. And let someone interpret. But if there is no one to interpret. Let each of them keep silent in church. And speak to God.

And to himself. So here we see. The solution seems pretty obvious. Pretty simple. Do things in an orderly manner. That's how the body will be built up.

All of this confusion. And chaos. And disorder. Will only serve to frustrate. And to hinder. The edification of the church. So those who speak in a tongue.

They were to take turns. With only two or three at most. Doing it in the service. There shouldn't be a line out the door. For people to have their turn. And they needed someone to interpret.

[17:29] If there was no one there to interpret. Paul says. Then be silent. Now that last verse there. Is a bit of a doozy. What does he mean. Keep silent in church.

And speak to himself and God. Many have understood that to mean. That he should do it then in private. But perhaps that is the case. When you're alone with God. In your own private devotions. You may be edified in that way. But the church is not edified. If you speak in tongues. And no one is there to interpret. Now Paul presents a similar situation.

Regarding the gift of prophecy. He says in verse 29. Let two or three prophets speak. And let the others weigh what is said. If a revelation is made to another sitting there.

Let the first be silent. For you can all prophesy one by one. So that all may learn. And all be encouraged. And the spirits of prophets are subject to prophets.

[18:25] So only two or three prophets. Again like those with the gift of tongues. Just two or three. To speak in the service. And again one at a time. Wait your turn to share the word.

And so they could each be properly heard. And also very importantly. So they could each be properly evaluated. So others in the church. With the gift of distinguishing between spirits.

Could weigh what each was saying in turn. Now what was this order to result in? The body effectively learning. And being encouraged.

It was a good result. The orderliness. That Paul was calling for. And then finally. The solution for women. Beginning in the second half of verse 33.

As in all the churches of the saints. 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.

[19:25] 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. So for the women in the church.

Again they were not to be joining in the evaluation of the prophets. They weren't to be questioning the prophets. But allowing for the men in the church to properly lead the service.

To exercise their authority in this way. The women speaking out was subverting. That very important responsibility given to men. It was another type of confusion really.

A confusion of roles and responsibilities. And so Paul was even restoring order in that. So these were these concrete solutions. That Paul is giving to the church in Corinth.

Ensuring that there was order established. Ensuring that there was order maintained. But why?

Why was order so important to Paul?

[20:22] What is his reasoning behind doing this? Was it just because Paul was being pragmatic? He was doing what worked. Was he just saying that orderly worship is good.

Because it enables the body to be built up. It enables the body to learn. And to be encouraged. And we should want that. Or was there more? Was there a reason for all of this.

Grounded in something beyond. Just what Paul thought worked best. Yes there was. There was a driving theological reason. For all that Paul said here.

And we need to especially see that together. It's right there in verse 33. For God is not a God of confusion. But of peace. We should be greatly concerned.

With how we worship. Because we want the nature of our worship. To reflect the nature of our God. Our God is a God of order.

[21:24] He is a God of peace. And so our worship should reflect that. So to help us to see this. I want to take just a quick tour through scripture.

And see a few places. Where God is shown to be very orderly in his nature. And we can begin all the way back. In Genesis 1.

1. In the account of creation. What do we see there? But a well ordered. Well formed. Heavens and earth. Six days.

In which God formed. And filled. In which God spoke. And things came into being. In which God reflected on his work. As it was in progress. And he called it good.

And after making man and woman in his image. He called it very good. He rested. And we see that man was put in the garden. He gave man purpose in his work.

[22:19] He provided a wife for him to be united to in marriage. He cared for them both. Down to the very small detail in the text even. Of saying. I have given every green plant for food.

Even to that little detail. Caring for them. Orderliness in God's creation. Now I think we can look at that. Even today. And say yes. We see the orderliness of it.

But it's even heightened. When we consider. The creation myths. All around Israel. As they learned of the true account of creation. At that time. Moses would have been teaching.

The children of Israel. This is how our God. The true God. Made all things. And Israel would have known. Some of the other. False creation myths. Of their time.

And like the account of the Babylonians. Where mankind was formed out of the carcass. Of a slain God. Who was killed in battle with other gods. And mankind.

[23:16] Made from that carcass. Was made with the express purpose. Of being enslaved to the gods. And providing food for the gods. As man. Worked tirelessly for them.

This account was grotesque. It was chaotic. In fact. One of the gods. In this Babylonian myth. Was said to have summoned. The forces of chaos. To use for her advantage.

What a difference. In how the true account. Of creation reads. God spoke. And what he commanded. Came into existence.

No primordial battle. No chaos. That he had to fight. To keep at bay. No everything. Came into existence. At the sound. Of his voice.

All of creation. Is obeying. His commands. So from the very first verse. Of scripture. We see the orderly. Nature of our God. Well then. Let's fast forward.

[24:15] Into the book of Exodus. And we come to God's instructions. For how Israel is. To worship him. And particularly. In chapter 25. We see. How Israel is instructed.

To build the tabernacle. That mobile temple. That God would dwell in. And God says to Moses. In Exodus 25. Beginning in verse 2. Speak to the people of Israel.

That they take for me. A contribution. From every man. Whose heart moves him. You shall receive. The contribution. For me. And this is the contribution. That you shall receive. From them.

Gold. Silver. And bronze. Blue. Blue. And purple. And scarlet. And scarlet. And fine twined. Linen. Goat's hair. Tanned ram skins. Goat skins.

Acacia wood. Oil for the lamps. Spices for the anointing oil. And for the fragrant incense. Onyx stones. And stones for setting. For the ephod. And for the breast piece.

[25:10] And let them make a sanctuary. That I may dwell in their midst. Verse 9. Exactly. As I show you. Concerning the pattern.

Of the tabernacle. And all its furniture. So you shall make it. So the people of Israel. Could not just construct. The tabernacle. However they liked.

In fact. They didn't have any say. In it at all. God didn't consult them. He gave them a pattern. For the tabernacle. And its furnishings. A blueprint. And they were to follow it.

To a T. Now from Exodus 25. All the way through chapter 31. God gave very detailed. Orderly instructions. That they were to follow.

Now once that tabernacle was made. The worship that was to take place. At the tabernacle. And in the tabernacle. Was also very detailed. And very orderly.

[26:07] So much of the book of Leviticus. Is given to describing. This worship. That was to take place. Clear structure. In Leviticus. Given to the people.

Here's a glimpse of it. Chapter 6. Beginning in verse 8. The Lord spoke to Moses. Saying. Command Aaron and his sons. Saying. This is the law of the burnt offering.

The burnt offering. Shall be on the hearth. On the altar. All night. Until the morning. And the fire of the altar. Shall be kept burning on it. And the priest. Shall put on his linen garment.

And put his linen undergarment. On his body. And he shall take up the ashes. To which the fire. Has reduced the burnt offering. On the altar. And put them beside the altar.

Then he shall take off his garments. And put on other garments. And carry the ashes. Outside the camp. To a clean place. The fire on the altar. Shall be kept burning on it.

[27:02] It shall not go out. The priest. Shall burn wood on it. Every morning. And he shall arrange the burnt offering on it. And shall burn on it. The fat of the peace offerings. Fire shall be kept burning.

On the altar. Continually. It shall not go out. Again. That's very detailed. But that's the point. God is giving clear instructions.

Prescribing how the people of Israel. Were to worship him. There was a clear pattern. For them to follow. I mean. We're talking down to the dress code. That was to be followed.

We're talking how the fire itself. Was to be maintained. For the offerings. Burnt on it. God was serious about all of this. We see that when his.

Orderly worship instructions. Were not followed. To a T. I think we've seen this in Sunday school. Leviticus 10. Nadab and Abihu. What did they do?

[27:57] Well they ignored what God said. About his order. And his worship. And we see there were grave consequences. For them. We read in Leviticus 10.

Verse 1. Now Nadab and Abihu. The sons of Aaron. Each took his censer. And put fire in it. And laid incense on it. And offered unauthorized fire.

Before the Lord. Which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the Lord. And consumed them. And they died before the Lord. Then Moses said to Aaron.

This is what the Lord has said. Among those who are near me. I will be sanctified. And before all the people. I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace.

How Israel. Worshipped God. Mattered. And when they took matters. Into their own hands. And they worshipped him. Outside the bounds. Of his prescribed way.

[28:52] It did not go well for them. It displeased him. They suffered the consequences for it. Even death. So we've seen God's orderly worship on display.

In the building of the tabernacle. In the worship that took place at the tabernacle. But it extends even beyond that. Even the very camp of Israel itself. Was to be properly ordered.

And arranged. Exactly by God's design. As the nation moved through the wilderness. And made their way to the promised land. Each time that they would come to a new location. And make camp.

They were to arrange themselves. In a very particular way. Numbers 2.2 tells us. The people of Israel shall camp. Each by his own standard. With the banners of their fathers houses.

They shall camp. Facing the tent of meeting. On every side. And then they were given instructions. This tribe was to be here. Facing this direction. Towards the tent of meeting.

[29:52] The tabernacle. This camp. This tribe was to face camp. From this direction. And so on. So sorry kids. If you were an Israelite. You couldn't just camp next to your friends.

Unless your friends happened to be in the same tribe. As you. Distant relatives that they were. So God had a purpose for all of this. The tabernacle was at the very center of the camp.

Of course that was symbolic. It showed that God's presence. Was to be the focal point of their camp. Each tribe facing the tabernacle. Surrounding it. Again here is our God.

A God of order. A God of peace. Compare him then. To the God of this world. What is Satan like? He's defined by disorder.

And confusion. He disguises himself. As an angel of light. He masquerades. He manipulates. So we've seen this in Proverbs 9. Lady folly.

[30:49] Lady wisdom. Lady folly. Tries to trick us. And tries to persuade us. That she's like Lady folly. Or like Lady wisdom. What she has to offer will be good for us. Like Lady wisdom.

Calling to us. Inviting us. Pretending to be something. That she's not. Satan wants to bring disorder. And confusion. I mean that's really just one way to think about sin itself.

Sinful man is himself disordered. Not following the pattern of God. Not walking in the ways of God. But wandering off. And going his own way.

Where we find disorder. We find sin. James 3.16 For where jealousy. And selfish ambition exist.

There will be disorder. And every vile practice. Or listen to what Paul says. In his second letter. To the Corinthians. So this is a follow up. To the first letter here.

[31:49] And in chapter 12. Verse 20. We read. For I fear that perhaps. When I come. I may find you. Not as I wish. And that you may find me. Not as you wish.

That perhaps there may be. Quarreling. Jealousy. Anger. Hostility. Slander. Gossip. Conceit. And. Disorder.

There you have it. Listed among all of those. Other sins. So on the surface. The instructions of. First Corinthians 14. Well they might not seem. All that important.

Why spend all of this time. Talking about. Orderly worship. Worship. Some might even accuse. Paul of being uptight. Of being overly strict. I mean. Loosen up a little bit.

But when we consider. That the nature of our worship. Is to reflect. The nature of our God. That changes things. We should approach. Worship. Not casually.

[32:47] But soberly. Not however we like. But however God says. So no. Paul is not being uptight. Paul is taking God seriously.

Paul is serious. About our worship. Being serious. About our worship. Doesn't mean. That our worship though. Should be stifled. And stiff.

No. We can be orderly. And joyful. Orderly. And jubilant. As we just read. In Psalm 70. This morning. I love that Sam. Brought our attention.

To this verse. But may all. Who seek you. Rejoice. And be glad in you. May those who love. Your salvation. Always say. Let God be exalted.

Or Psalm 100. What does Psalm 100 say? Shout for joy. To the Lord. All the earth. Worship the Lord. With gladness. Come before him. With joyful songs. Looking at the early church.

[33:44] In the book of Acts. A wonderfully. Helpful passage. To see how we ought to. Conduct our worship. The elements. That should be included. In our life as a church. Well we see the church there.

Having glad. And generous hearts. We ought to have glad hearts. As we worship our good. And our awesome God. So we seek to worship God. As he has told us to.

As Pastor Jeremy. Has been teaching on this. In Sunday school. This is the regulative principle. We make the word of God. Central to our worship. We seek to do. What God commands us to do.

So we want to read God's word. And preach God's word. We want to pray. According to God's word. We want to sing songs. That reflect the truth. Of God's word. And we want to observe.

The Lord's supper. And baptize disciples. Just as Christ commanded. In short. We want our worship. To be done. In obedience.

[34:42] To God. For his glory. And for the good of his church. We want to do things decently. And in a structured manner. So that all may learn.

And be encouraged. So there may be peace. And not confusion. And if we think even into the details. Well we seek to be wise. In using tools.

That God has given to us. To help us to this end. Like microphones even. To be heard. Like hymnals. And slides with lyrics. So we can all sing the songs together.

Together. We have a set time. That we start our service. We aim for when to end. And we hit that pretty well. We don't have multiple people. All talking at once.

We have men to lead in the service. And to move the service along. We strive for order. In worship. And to do that. In a joyful.

[35:35] God honoring way. Because God cares. Not just about our motives. God cares. Not just about our intentions. But God really cares. About our actions as well.

Not just that we are sincere. In our worship. That is sadly. What many Christians think today. As long as I'm sincere. This is good. No. We're to be sincerely.

Obedient. To God. In our worship. That's Paul's aim for us. In all that he teaches here. That we would be sincere. And obedient. In our worship.

Now. This isn't just his opinion. It's not just what Paul thinks is best. Or most effective. We see that very clearly then. In the last few verses of this chapter.

As we look now at the third and final point tonight. The authoritative command. Beginning in verse 36. Verse 36. Or was it from you.

[36:31] That the word of God came. Or are you the only ones it has reached. 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 God. If anyone does not recognize this. He is not recognized. So my brothers. Earnestly desire to prophesy. And do not forbid speaking in tongues.

But all things should be done decently. And in order. So Paul anticipates some pushback here. To what he is writing. He expects that some might say.

Well who are you to tell us. How to worship. Paul we have the gift of tongues. We have the gift of prophecy. God is speaking through us. In those very gifts.

The spirit is moving. So Paul. You can't tell us what to do. How can you tell us. That only two or three prophets may speak. I have a word from God to give.

[37:31] So you need to let me give it. Paul says. I speak from God. Paul says. This is a command that you must obey. What I say to you.

What I write to you. Is a command of the Lord. So here we have Paul's apostolic authority. Put on display. God is using Paul.

To give his divine authoritative guidance. To not just Corinth. But to all the churches. Including our own local church. So let's heed his words.

Let's do all things decently. And in order. Let's continue seeking to do that. And not because. We think we can do as we like. And not because we just think it's best.

But because we want to do things. As God tells us to do them. Because God is in charge. Because God decides. And because God knows what is best. So let's worship him.

[38:26] As he says. And that will be. To our great joy. And to our great delight. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father.

It's passages like this. Where we are. Reminded yet again. What a kindness it is. That you give us your word. That you tell us. That you instruct us. That you don't leave us to our own devices. You don't leave us to figure out the best way to do things. You've told us. So help us to live in obedience. Help us to seek to be orderly in all that we do.

And to do that with great joy and gladness flowing from our hearts. Thank you that you have gathered us together. That you've made us to be a body of believers in this local church.

To be a blessing to each other. An encouragement to each other. And to be able to together worship and praise you week in and week out. What a privilege that is Father.

[39:21] Help us to do it in such a way. To continue to do it in such a way. That you are honored. That you are glorified. That much is made of the Savior. And that there wouldn't be distractions.

That there wouldn't be ways in which we are putting up stumbling blocks. Or making it difficult to be edified. We pray Father that you would make our worship to be pleasing to you.

And to be helpful to the church. Even as unbelievers come in. We pray Father that they would see the worship here. They would hear the word as it's proclaimed. And that they would fall on their face.

Being called to account by your spirit. Convicting them of sin. And that they would become true worshipers of you. We pray all of these things in Christ's name. Amen.