

## The Corinthian Letters, Lesson 57, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14, "The Order of Things"

↪ Last time we looked at the tongues issue within the Corinthian church and how it was affecting their worship and this time we will be looking at their worship practices in general. There were a couple of things that affected this church that will cause problems in any church and make issues greater than they should be. First, there was a general attitude of selfishness and self-absorption in the church at Corinth. Second, they carried this selfish attitude into their worship services each Sunday morning. A glimpse into what worship was like and what they were up against every Sunday is in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:26. Can you imagine if everyone wanted a turn to speak, teach, pray, sing? How long would that take? Most were just doing what they wanted to do without considering everybody else's needs and situations. It's not really a cooperate worship service but a bunch of people who are in one place having their own private worship services all at the same time. Major chaos!

### 1. Paul lays down some general rules to stop the stampede and then some lesser points to settle the dust.

- ✓ 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13 was strategically placed where it was so that Paul would have the leverage he needed to address their public display of self-absorption, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:1-2 and verses 4-5.
- ✓ **General rules:**
  - 1) Let all things be done for Edification, not exhibition! Edification means it's not about me and it's all about you if I'm the one ministering. How can my gift help you become a better person or a better follower of Christ? Edification comes from the same root as edifice (building or structure). How can I build you up? If you are not getting anything out of worship, then may I suggest something to you? Don't come to worship to get, come to give! The number one killer of worship is self-focus, Matthew 5:24.
  - 1) God is a God of order not of confusion 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14: 33; 40. God did not create chaos, He stopped chaos and that which represents God cannot be chaotic.

### 2. "Why not just let God be in charge?"

- ✓ I have heard this proposed with regard to worship. "Give the service to God and just let the Spirit lead." Sounds really spiritual but in practice, it is often chaos. The same just want there be an opportunity for them to do what they want. These types of services usually result in confusion and chaos which is the opposite of the leadership of the Spirit. A Spirit filled meeting is one that is orderly and respectful of all who are there. Two or three at the most (decided ahead of time for the sake of order); taking turns; always with interpretation, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:27-28. Quite indicting to many tongues services that are being perpetrated in some churches today. Sounds like a pretty long service from where I sit and I'm sure it was, but not near as long as it was before these rules were followed, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:29-31.
- ✓ One prophet may critique another's words or add to them, but more likely the one who prophesies controls his own spirit and corrects himself, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:32. He has self-control, which is a hallmark of the Spirit's control, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 14:30-33. To be out of control is not a hallmark of Spirit but of one's own selfish attitude or one of another spirit who isn't holy. There is this idea held by some that the more we are controlled by the Spirit the more we are out of control, this idea is not Biblical at all. There is no Scriptural evidence that the Spirit ever overrides a person's conscience and personality.

### 3. The third rule of order has to do with the sexes, and it is controversial today, 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 14:34-35.

- ✓ To get to what Paul is really saying, we need to eliminate what Paul is not saying. He is not saying that this is a rule only for that local church and that it had not application for other churches of the time both then and now. He is saying this is universal in scope. He is not saying that women were chattering during worship and needed to be quite and not be rude. He is talking about women who are leading in speaking in tongues or prophesying. He is saying that women are not allowed to do this in the assembly in any of the churches. He does repeat a similar ruling in 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:12 as well as in chapter 3 of 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy where he says Pastors and deacons are to be men. Again, the context is order, and as there is order of leadership within the household as delineated by God, so there is the same order within God's household with men required to be the leaders in both cases. The husband is to be the head in the household, so how can his wife be the head when they get to church?

**The oldest institution on the planet is the family where God appointed the husband to be the head. The institution of the church that came centuries later was not to overthrow the order of the family. Again, if this rule isn't followed, there is much confusion.**