

Acts 03-07-13b

We're ready now to resume our extended study of the phenomenon at the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter 2 by way of 1st Corinthians. We chose as our scripture reading slash text for the first session 1st Corinthians chapter 14. We have worked our way down to verse 26 where Paul says this, how is it then brethren whenever you come together each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a language, has a revelation, has an interpretation.

Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a language let there be two or at the most three each in turn and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter let him keep silent in church and let him speak to himself and to God.

Let two or three prophets speak and let the others judge. But if anything is revealed to another who sits by let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged and the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

For God is not the author of confusion but of peace as in all the churches of the Saints. Well how is it then brethren when you come together each of you has something. In the early church these supernatural manifestations took the place of the New Testament scriptures that they did not have.

So how are you going to learn about the work of Christ and the ministry of the Spirit and the calling of the Saints and the opportunities in the kingdom and everything else that pertains to the church age without anything after Malachi. God would reveal it sometimes to one sometimes to several and in a group God would sometimes give the first part of the message to one person and then give the next part to the next person and then the next part to the third person. Why is that? So that everyone gets the chance to contribute.

It is important in any local assembly. This is one of the reasons why I think large megachurches are unbiblical. People say well you just say they're unbiblical because you don't have one.

If you were the pastor of a megachurch you'd think they were great. Not so. And you will notice that a lot of your larger churches wind up breaking themselves into smaller groups.

They will have flock meetings or they will have smaller congregations split up and have their own separate meetings because this is the principle right here. Whenever you come together each of you has something. This is one of the reasons I love to let different ones suggest hymns for us to sing because if you've thought about it if there's a hymn that has meaning to you well that's something God the Holy Spirit lets you bring as a blessing to all of us.

If you have a thought during the week and you get a chance to talk about it before or at the break or after the service that is a blessing. It is always a blessing to me because I don't want to just hear my own thoughts all the time on the Word of God. I enjoy it when there are questions

when there are observations and all of you are great about doing that.

All of you. And I appreciate it so much because that keeps my perspective fresh. It helps me when I study to know what's striking you all or what's going on in your mind or things that I've not explained very well and there are questions or just insights and ideas that didn't occur to me.

I can't think of everything. Even in the ministry of God's Holy Spirit I get wonderful ideas and insights from what everyone in our group contributes. That is a biblical function.

I don't want to tell you it's your job but it's a great opportunity. Every single one of us in this room, everybody else that you can think of that's ever assembled in this room, anybody that listens to the sound of my voice at some time or another and often it's a pattern of communication where we have fellowship in God's Word and it is a function of the Holy Spirit. It's an opportunity for exercise, a spiritual gift.

It is a benefit of edification that you can provide, that you can be a blessing either directly or indirectly to the rest of us. So it says when you come together each of you has a psalm. What is a psalm? Psalm is an Old Testament scripture.

It's a traditional hymn for the Saints or a teaching or and then he mentions these tongues and revelations and interpretations. These were the different ways that they got their New Testament truth. He says whatever you do be sure it is up building.

It is for the benefit of the body, the group. He says if anyone speaks in a language let there be two or at the most three each in turn and let one interpret. Dr. Crizzle was talking about this passage one time in a sermon I was editing a few weeks ago and he said he told the story of one time when he was over in Europe preaching a sort of a revival or a crusade kind of thing sort of a smaller size Billy Graham type of event where they had a lot of people that came from the surrounding regions and so they had a translator there to translate him into German and then they had another one there to translate him into Ukrainian and they had another interpreter there translating into white Russian into a different language of that area and so he would make a pronouncement and then pause and the German translator would say the German phrase and then the Ukrainian guy would say it in Ukrainian and then the other guy would say it in white Russian and he said that he thought this is what Paul is talking about.

If someone is going to speak in a foreign language and it's going to be interpreted and you've got a mixed group out there don't be interpreting it into more than three languages. Dr. Crizzle said after about 20 minutes of that it had just completely worn him out because of the just the baggage, the weight of trying to say a phrase, keep it short enough that the third translator could remember it after the other two had spoken and say his piece and so Paul says you shouldn't be broadcasting in more than two or at the most three languages at a time. That's the way that it works.

So whether this was two different people like one of them has the Swahili gift and one of them has the Cappadocian gift or whatever and one of them stands up and the other one stands up and then a third one stands up. The idea is this is the same message in different languages. He says you don't need more than two or three at a time in turn and let one interpret.

If there is no interpreter let him keep silent. Let two or three prophets speak and let the others judge. In these days they didn't yet have the structure of a teaching elder or a pastor and different ones would get a revelation.

If they're going to prophesy in Aramaic or in Greek well there might be more than one that comes with a message or you could think of it as Sunday school in church and there might be two or three different ones who would have short expositions of God's truth. He says let them speak and let the others judge. This is still the role of the audience member.

Do not think that because it comes from your favorite pastor whoever he may be that it is God's gospel truth. You have to judge it. You have to compare scripture with scripture.

The Bereans search the scriptures daily to see if these things were so it tells us in Acts. You cannot do not plan on standing at the judgment and saying well Lord the reason I believed and did that way is because that's what Sam said and I just took Sam's word for it. He was the guy with the Greek and he went to seminary so I just abnegated my responsibility of analyzing it or trying to see if it was so or not.

I figured you know he's he's the one that you sent for me to listen to so whatever he says goes and so I'm off the hook. No you're not. You're not off the hook.

You have to analyze. I might be wrong infrequently. Let the others judge.

We all have the responsibility to discern and to come to an understanding for ourselves and to know why we believe what we believe. Don't just say well so-and-so says I read it in Matthew Henry or I read it in Adam Clarke or I read it in Jameson Fawcett Brown or I read it in Kylan Dalich or I read it in the Bible knowledge commentary so that's the way it must be. We each have been given the light of God's Holy Spirit.

We each this is why John says in his epistle you have no need that any man teach you. He doesn't mean you don't have the need for a sermon or for a lesson that's been prepared but when it comes to metabolizing it and digesting it and figuring out what it means in your life you have God's Holy Spirit and it's your job to ascertain the truth and to put it into practice. I cannot do that for you and you can't blame me when you get to the judgment and say well I would have done better than that if Sam had just done a better job of teaching it.

It's not the case. You must judge. If anything is revealed to another who sits by let the first keep silent.

They had a problem of everybody talking at once. Things have to be done decently and in order. You can all prophesy one by one.

Notice you can all speak the truth of God's Word. Just do it one by one. Don't babble incoherently.

Don't have a crowd fest. Each one speak. Each one.

Everyone can prophesy. Everyone can speak the truth of God that they have in their heart so that all may learn and be encouraged. This is why we discuss as a group and we listen to one another's questions and muse on the answers and so on because that is the way we all learn and we are all encouraged.

The spirits of the subject of the prophets are subject to the prophets. What does this mean? Have some self-control. There is a time to be silent.

This is one of the things I have difficulty with. I have an opinion about everything. I have a view.

I have a biblical understanding on everything. When I am elsewhere, not so much in this area, y'all are really nice and patient about letting me speak my piece, but in other contexts. When I was at seminary, every time we went to a new topic, while there was some part of it I thought they were messing up and I wanted to be, you know, sitting on a spring and just pop up like a piece of toast and say, well now this is what I think.

The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. One of the greatest things we can do is learn, like James says, to bridle our tongue. It doesn't just mean to bridle it for sin, but to squelch ourselves, give others a chance to speak, to finish their question, to finish their observation, to not just jump in and say, well let me tell you what I think.

And it's a, some of us have more of a problem with that than others and I am in a constant state of conviction. But the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.

Sometimes someone might have arrived at a, at an understanding. Have you ever noticed how there's some people who you can't tell them anything they don't already know or that they haven't already thought of? Nobody in this group applies, but I'm thinking of other contexts where you, like you've just come to a new understanding, you say, wow, I never saw that before. I said, oh yes, you know, we saw that year before last in our study of lessons.

So, and they just let the air out of your balloon. You know, to you, it's a wonderful, exciting revelation. Or some, I'll give you a real innocuous example.

Let's say that, that you hear a funny story and you start to tell it and somebody says, oh, I heard that. You know how that is just a, a fun killing thing to say? Sit on yourself. So what if you've

heard it? Do we need to know that you heard it? Be quiet.

Reign yourself in. This, the spirit of the prophet is subject to the prophet. So this is, this is what the Bible says in another place, is quenching the spirit.

People have tried to make a big technical study out of grieving and quenching and all that. You know what quenching the spirit is? It's putting out the spirit's fire, that healthy fire. We talked about the different kinds of fire.

There's a fire that does not consume and a fire that does. Well, here is the Holy Spirit taking the Word of God and illuminating and setting someone on fire, giving them an excitement and an enthusiasm and a revelation that motivates and encourages them. And they're sharing it with you and you get a nice big wet blanket and just throw it on their campfire.

You say, oh, you know, we all know that. We, I've known that for years. You just now figuring that out? Oh my, let me tell you what else.

Let me tell you what builds on that. Let me build a great big 12-story castle on top of your idea. And you just, you put out the spirit's fire.

You quench the spirit. You look up that quenching passage and look at the context. It's all about what you do in corporate worship.

It's what you do when you're together as a group. All these people that say, oh, it's different things that happen in your soul. Grieving is one thing and quenching is another and it's in your soul.

It's not. It's what you do to other believers. Spirit to the prophets, subject to the prophets.

And he says, you can all prophesy. You know what that means? It means you're all prophets and you all have a spirit and we all need to reign ourselves in from time to time. What is the guiding principle here? What is the theme of this whole study? The theme of this section of Corinthians? Love.

Look out for the other guy. Be thinking about the other person. Put others ahead of yourself.

You want to kind of bump yourself up a notch and say, oh, I know that. I've heard that. Yeah, let me tell you the punchline of that story.

We'll save a lot of time here. We don't do that. We say, isn't that great? That is exciting.

You might find that you have a little bit of excitement rekindled. Sometimes we have ideas come up that, sure, I've learned it or covered it in some far-off time, but I can't remember everything I learned. I stumble across papers I wrote I don't even remember writing and I read and I say, wow, there's a lot of good stuff in here.

Wish I'd have found this before I retaught this passage. I don't even remember. And it is an encouragement.

It's a reminder. We can all share in the warmth of the glow of that fire that God the Holy Spirit has kindled in someone's soul. So don't be the wet blanket.

Don't squelch somebody because you want to bump up a little. That's what he's saying. God's not the author of confusion.

He's the author of peace in all the churches of the saints. Now we're getting to the long-promised good part here. Verse 34.

Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak. They are to be submissive, as the law also says. If they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home.

It is shameful for women to speak in church. I want to read you something here. Again, this is Dr. Criswell.

He read this passage. He says 1 Corinthians 14, 34 and 35. Let your women keep silence in the churches, not permitted to speak.

Let them ask their husbands at home. Then he paused for a minute and he said, brother, that would stop any preacher. But I'm not going to shy away from it or skip it.

He had set himself to preach through verse by verse and he hit this and he said, if it's in the Bible, we're going to cover it. But he said, brother, that would stop any preacher. And it really will because we wonder about this.

Well, let me take you back just to complicate things a little bit. Go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. I'm going to pose a little question for you here.

Go to 1 Corinthians chapter 12. In fact, I think it may even be before that. Yes, it's 11.

1 Corinthians 11, verse 2. I praise you, brethren. You remember me in all things. You keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.

I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ. The head of woman is man and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonors his head.

But every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for that is one in the same as if her head was shaved. And it talks about if her head's not covered, then just shave it bald. Shameful for a woman to be shorn or shaved, then let it be covered.

What I want to focus on here is verse 5. Every woman who prays or prophesies with her head uncovered dishonors her head. Well, now, wait a minute. If the woman is not to speak in church, how is she prophesying? Is she standing in the backyard at home prophesying? Prophesying is speaking the truth of God to other believers.

You know, the tree falls in the forest, there's nobody to hear it. Was there a sound? The old question. Well, if you're prophesying, there's nobody there to hear it.

You're not prophesying. It has to be an audience. It has to be a group present for you to prophesy.

Well, now, which is it? Can the woman prophesy in church or not? If she has her head covered, and you know this thing on head covering great dead seas of ink have been spilled. The head covering, if you've ever seen authentically filmed movies of Jesus and the apostles and back in the day, whenever they get ready to pray, what do they do? They take the shawl and they put it over their head and they cover their head and they pray. That's why they have the yarmulke even today.

You're supposed to have your head covered because it is a sign of submission. And the woman with her shawl over her head, this was kind of like the third finger, the left hand ring deal today. It said, I am submissive to the authority of my husband.

That's what the head covering meant. And if you go through this passage and just keep that understanding, if a woman stands up and is brooking, is bucking the authority of her husband, her husband says, Wilma, sit down. And she says, I've got something to say.

She dishonors her husband by standing up without his permission, without his blessing, without his authority being in view. She shames him. And he says, if you're going to do that as a woman, then you might as well shave your head bald, which is what they did to prostitutes who did not get married and who shamed themselves and everybody who came in contact with him.

He says, if you're going to shame your husband, well, let's just treat you like a prostitute, because you're doing the same thing. You are completely negating and putting shame on the whole institution of marriage. Prostitution is an attack on marriage, and so is a woman who belittles and sets aside the authority of her husband.

That's what the head covering means. So he says, a man praying or prophesying having his head covered dishonors his head. This is the difference in Judaism and the church.

We don't put anything over our heads when we lift up holy hands and pray in the church. Yet in Israel, they did and do in Judaism. Why is that? Because now we have Christ.

Christ has changed our mode of access to the Father. He has rent the veil. He has given us access.

Let us read Hebrews 10. Let us draw near with a full heart, full assurance of faith, body sprinkled with water, our consciences having been cleansed and so on. Let us go boldly to the throne of grace and ask for grace to help in time of need.

So there is a sense in which Christ is our head. The head of every man is Christ. The head of the woman is the man.

The head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying having his head covered dishonors Christ. He is back in Judaism.

He is saying Christ has not made a difference in the way we access the Father. The way to acknowledge the work of Christ and the role of Christ as our High Priest is for men to stand and pray. He says, lift up holy hands and pray.

Did you know that in the Old Testament when they came before the presence of God, they fell on their face, didn't they? How many times does it say they fell on his face? Have you ever tried raising your hands to God when you are on your face? It is not really easy to do. You don't raise holy hands to heaven when you are on your face. You just can't get them up very high and it looks weird.

We stand, the privilege of standing. You know, after we sing the doxology in this church, we remain standing for prayer. That is a church age privilege.

And every time we do it, I think about the Lord Jesus Christ dying to give us that privilege. We do not have to fall on our face before the Father. We stand because we are covered under the umbrella of the authority of Christ.

So a man standing and praying in church is a recognition and an acknowledgement and a glorifying of the work of Christ. But a woman has a layer of authority, either her father or her husband, normally. And so it says when a woman is going to stand up and shame her husband by talking out of turn, she might as well just shave her head like a prostitute.

That is what he is saying. But the point here is verse 4 and 5. Praying and prophesying. This covering and uncovering, that symbolic covering, that means there is a group around looking.

It would not matter if she had her hair in curlers, if they use those in the ancient world, if there is nobody there to see. Her head covered or uncovered when she prophesies or prays is in a group because it is a symbolic action. But the point here is, it says a woman praying or prophesying with her head uncovered dishonors her head.

The idea being that if she does it with her head covered, she is okay. So 1 Corinthians chapter 11, a woman can pray and prophesy as long as she gives due acknowledgement to her husband and honors his authority or her father if she is a young woman. That is the idea here.

And you will notice down in verse 10 if there is any doubt, this is the reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head. That is what the head covering is. It is because of the angels.

You go all the way back to Genesis 6 and we don't have time to go into all that. So now go back to 1 Corinthians chapter 14 and we get to verse 34. Let your women keep silent in the churches.

They are not permitted to speak. They are to be submissive as the law also says. If they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home.

It is shameful for women to speak in church. When it says the law also says, this goes back to Genesis chapter 3, when God in the garden after the fall says the husband is going to have the rule over you. Same thing he mentioned a couple of chapters back.

Let them ask their husbands at home. Shameful for them to speak in church. But what is the context of speech here? You can all prophesy one by one that all may learn and all may be encouraged.

He didn't say anything about men up in verse 31. But he says let women keep silent in the churches. They are not permitted to speak.

They are to be submissive as the law also says. What he is talking here is about speaking out of turn. Speaking outside the bounds of what he has already said and defined in verse 11.

He doesn't have to go back to the head covering thing. He has already said all can prophesy one by one. All can learn.

All can be encouraged. Why would he say that they can only learn something at home? Why would they even come to church? Why wouldn't they just stay home and wait for the husband to get back and let him tell them everything? If they want to learn something let them ask their own husbands at home. It is shameful for women to speak in church.

This is talking about no prayer at all. No prophesying at all. We know that there were women who did pray publicly, who did teach.

Barnabas was taught by Priscilla. There were women who were fully able to teach and teach a man. People say well it just means they can't exert authority over the men.

That is getting more at the heart of it. It is the shameful aspect. It is shameful for women to speak in church.

This is Corinth. Let me tell you something about Corinth. Corinth, they've got this great big Acropolis which is dedicated to the worship of Athena.

They have these Vestal Virgins. They have this whole woman oriented religion. One of the ways that Christianity was distinguished from the pagan culture of their fathers and to their husbands and that they did not stand up like the priestesses and run the worship services and engage in all of these practices.

The women ran the religion of Athena in Corinth. They were it. They wore the white robes.

They took men into the back chambers and gave them a religious experience shall we say. They prophesied the oracles of Athena to everyone. It was all run by the women.

Paul says you want to be sure and make a distinction in your worship that you recognize God's order. It doesn't mean that they can't make a peep, that they can't ever pray, that they can't ever teach, that they can't teach a Sunday school class. But he says when does it become shameful? It becomes shameful when it violates the authority structure that God has set up.

In the church there is a teaching elder or a pastor who stands up and teaches. If some lady were to come and visit, none of the ladies who attend here would do this, but say we had some visiting lady and all of a sudden she stood up and said I have got a word from God and she interrupted me and started trying to tell us something new. That would be a shameful thing.

This was starting to happen in Corinth because they were borrowing from their culture and borrowing from their religious experience. A lot of these Corinthians had been worshiping up on the hill for years. So the women thought hey, I can do like the Athenian priestesses do up there and I can kind of get into this thing.

Paul says no. If they have got anything to say, if they want to talk about how to change the worship service, let them talk to their husbands at home. It doesn't mean that they cannot speak.

He has already said they can speak if they acknowledge the authority of their husband. And don't shame him. Your first source of guidance is your husband as a woman if you are married.

Now if not, well you get to bypass that layer and you can go straight to the pastor or go straight to God. But for a married woman, it is going to look funny if she is constantly asking these questions and standing up and making pronouncements and doing things and leaving her husband in sort of an embarrassed position. Like well honey, I could have answered that question for you.

I could have told you that. We could have learned that together. It could have been something that drew us closer together and so on.

It doesn't mean that a married woman could never ask a question, but never in a way that disadvantages the husband or makes it awkward or shames him or belittles him or denigrates him in any way. Paul says it is more important to acknowledge that structure of marriage and what God has provided in and through the marriage and for the husband to exercise his rightful

place as spiritual head of the house than it is for the lady to get an answer to any particular question. There are priorities.

Love is more important than showing off your gift. Look at me. I can speak Parthian.

It is more important that there be love. The same thing that wives love for the husband and husbands love for the wife is more important than the answer to any given theological question. So I hope that is clear.

It is a difficult thing. People wrestle with, should we have women pastors? No. Why? Because there is no, in autonomous local churches, which is what the Word of God teaches about, we don't have any biblical authority for denominational authority, denominational assigning of pastors and so on.

In an autonomous local church, there will be a teaching elder, a man. A woman cannot be the husband of one wife, can she? Well, you are out, because the Word of God says if someone wants that position they need to be a one woman man. That is the criteria.

So it is a man. It has to be a man. That is just the way God set it up, just like the Levites.

But when it talks about them keeping silent, this is in the realm of talking in tongues. This is in the realm of standing up and talking as one in a sequence who are going to teach. When you have a husband sitting there, and if anybody ought to be standing up, it would be that man taking that teaching role, taking that authority role.

And if you wind up shaming your husband, you are wrong in six different ways. So, what do we conclude about the role of women in the church? Can you teach in the church? Can you teach an adult Bible study or an adult Sunday school class that has men in it? Sure. If you are married, you need to be sure that your husband is in no way embarrassed or pulled down or shamed in that.

If you have questions as you prepare your lesson, you ought to go ask your husband. It is a matter of respecting the authority structure that God has in place. One of the worst things you can do if you have a grievance is to bypass your immediate superior and send it over his head.

Right? Whether in the military or in a civilian organization, you have a grievance, but you don't tell your immediate superior and give them a chance to say something or do something about it. You bypass them and put them on the carpet with their boss. Well, this is the idea.

You don't bypass that authority. If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. If anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant.

Therefore, brethren, verse 39 gets back to the main point. Desire earnestly to prophesy and do not forbid to speak in languages. Let all things be done decently and in order.

There has to be the function of love. There has to be the function of mutual respect. No one should be embarrassed.

No one should be humiliated. No one should be shamed. We're coming together for up building, not tearing down.

And that is the criteria. That is the measure. If you have a question, you say, well, what are the technicalities of covering the head and praying and prophesying? Here's the measure.

Whatever we do, if it's tearing somebody down, it's got to stop. If it's not building people up, it's got to stop. The only reason we're here is to be built up in the Lord.

Everything we do should contribute to that goal. And anything we do that does not needs to go by the wayside. So, as we get back to Acts chapter 2, as we wrap up for this morning, and you see this speaking in languages, and Peter says this is what was spoken of in the prophet, it is the coming of the Spirit of God onto God's people.

What is the result? Peter preaches Christ. Peter points out the truth and speaks the truth in love to Christ. He's not abusive.

He's not condemnatory. He doesn't tear them down. But he says, men and brethren, God sent His Son and a lot of you all missed it.

And you need to change your mind. You need to recognize that He fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures. And all the house of Israel, verse 36, needs to know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

Both Lord and Messiah. When they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and they didn't say, how dare you pick on us? How dare you denigrate us? How dare you abuse us? They said, men and brethren, what shall we do? Help us out here. We want to try to do the right thing.

Peter said, change your mind. Let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, with a view toward the remission of sins. This is unto, eis, e-i-s is the preposition in Greek.

It doesn't mean get baptized so that your sins are remitted. It says when you accept Christ and your sins are remitted, baptism is a sign of that. You look at what God has done as you go through the baptism process.

Let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, with a view toward the remission of sins. The reason you're getting baptized is you're acknowledging remission of sins. You're recognizing it.

It's a teaching tool. And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is to you and your children, to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.

Well, we have two subjects to cover next Friday night in Acts, and that is baptism and calling. Calling and election. There's nothing like going through Acts to bring up all of the thorniest problems in the Word of God.

So be sure and tune in Friday night when we cover what Peter broaches here in verse 38 and 39. But for this morning, let the measure be love. Faith, hope, and love abide.

These three. The greatest of these is love. How do we measure what we're doing? How do we measure? We say, well, I have a right to do this.

Paul says, yeah, right, I've got the right to lead about a wife, but I don't. I've got the right to be fully supported by the churches, but I don't. I have a right as an apostle to those things, but I don't avail myself of those rights.

Why? Love. I don't want to create a stumbling block. I don't want to distract you.

I don't want you to start getting worried about the support. I don't want you to start looking at my wife. Paul says, I do what I do out of love for you, and I will deny myself things that are fully my right because, he says, I love you.

And that is the measure. That is the guiding principle of doing what we do. What is its effect on others? Unfortunately, the charismatic crowd has not evaluated the effect of what they do in terms of love and what it does to the church and what it does to the reputation of Christ and how it affects our testimony before unbelievers.

And they have missed Paul's entire point, in addition to missing a lot of the specific guidance of needing an interpreter and only one speaking at a time and all the rest of it. They've missed the biggest point of all. Pursue love.

Move rapidly and decisively toward that objective. Well, plenty for us to think about. Let's close in a word of prayer.

Father, thank you for giving us this clear guidance from your word. We thank you for the Lord Jesus Christ and the example of love that he set for us. Greater love hath no man than the love he demonstrated for us.

While we were yet sinners, he died for us. He has made it possible for us to be renewed to a relationship with you, to be given the opportunity for wonderful things in this life and in the next. We pray that God the Holy Spirit will impress those truths in our hearts, hour by hour, day by day, in the weeks ahead, so that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be glorified in our lives.

We pray it in his name. Amen.