

1. Speaking the Gospel in Cogent Ways is How We Edify One Another

- a. Therefore
 - i. conjunction of inference regarding the unintelligibility of tongues and the necessity of understanding as beneficial to the Church
 - ii. This is the entire point of this passage: in the gathered Church, it is imperative that the Word of God be heard, understood, and reasoned in order to be edifying and useful
- b. The one speaking in tongues
 - i. this indicates that it is speaking amongst the congregation that Paul has in mind here, both regarding tongues and prophecy
 - ii. this is not personalized speaking in tongues, or personalized prayer, but public prayer when the Church is gathered for worship
- c. Should pray *so that* he might interpret
 - i. This does not mean that he should ask the Lord to give him the miraculous gift of interpreting something which he does not understand, but rather that he should pray in the common language *in order to explain the meaning of the unknown language*.
 1. Thus, Paul says to pray in a tongue (to God) ought to be followed in the gathering by a similar prayer in the common language, so that it might benefit all who are gathered
 2. The "that" conjunction is a conjunction of result, not purpose, in this case: the result of praying is explanation, not the purpose of praying is to interpret
 - ii. Again, the benefit to the Church is to be edified by the revelation of God's character and works *in an understandable way* (see 6-12)
 1. It is the explanation of the propositional truth within such a prayer that edifies others
 2. The Gospel truth, for which we give praise and thanks to God in prayer, is profoundly cognitive and needs to be understood.

2. Your Cogent Praises and Thanksgiving to God Produce the Fruit of Praise and Thanksgiving Together

- a. The reason that one ought to pray in order to explain is because by the explanation the mind is fruitful and produces "the amen" to the thanksgiving given to God (v16).
 - i. The fruit of the mind in interpreting prayers of one's spirit is the mutual praise and gratitude to God (*eulogia* and *eucharista*, v16).
 1. So that others can speak 'the amen' to such praise and thanksgiving.
 2. It appears that there was already a liturgical norm of speaking 'the amen' within the gathered church at the time of this letter.
 - a. Amen is articular, "the", implying a particular order of response
 - b. 'Amen' is a Hebrew word, not a Greek one, showing that the Churches were united in one root, borrowing from its Hebraic language/liturgy
 - ii. Paul reasons that he will pray with both his spirit (his inner desires, deepest longings) and with his mind (communicating, reasoning, parsing) (v15) so that others might gain from his expressions of praise (*eulogia*) and gratitude (*eucharista*) to God.
 1. Whether in prayer or song, worshipping in spirit and in truth (John 4:22-24)
- b. Who is the "outsider" in v16?
 - i. the word is *ιδιωτης*, or "unskilled" person
 - ii. In this context, I believe it refers to the one who does not understand the language being spoken, i.e. he is "unskilled" to understand
 1. Thus, it is not an unbeliever, per say, but may be a believer who would say "Amen" to the praise of God's glorious attributes and works when a prayer is spoken, but he cannot say "Amen" because he does not understand and continues to not understand (perfect verb form of *οιδα* in v16).
 - iii. It also seems to imply that there are those who are "skilled" or "knowledgeable" as to the language being spoken, whether believer or unbeliever (see v23) – this term refers to anyone who does not understand the language

- c. You may be giving thanks in a language that others don't grasp, but you will not be edifying, so pray *vocally* with your mind so as to communicate to others your gratitude and God's worthiness of praise for His great provision (hence the prayers).
 - i. There is something to be said here about public prayers as instructing instruments
 - 1. Paul uses the adverb, “well”, to describe how one might be praying
 - 2. There is a “wellness”, a health, an appropriate gratitude of ‘giving thanks’ which may be truly from the heart and in line with the goodness and ‘mighty deeds of God’
 - a. In other words, what makes a particular ‘giving thanks’ something that can be described as being done ‘well’?
 - b. Or, is it simply that one is truly giving thanks to God at all that can be described in such a way?
 - 3. We learn how to pray by hearing prayers
 - 4. We learn of God by prayers and praise purposely verbalized well
 - a. Do not fear to praise, plead, and give thanks publically in such a way as is beneficial to those around you
 - b. Sometimes we fear being instructive in our prayers, but a prayer can be genuine and thoughtful towards others at the same time
 - i. In fact, the command to be silent in regards to tongues strongly implies that such control over languages both in prayer and praise, for the sake of others, means that tongues are not “overwhelming” or “losing control”, but rather to be controlled for the sake of others and not merely our own expression to God
 - ii. Yet, if our prayers of gratitude are not heard and understood by others, then others are not edified by them, and Paul considers this unhelpful in the congregation (again, the gathered church, not the private expressions to the Lord)
3. Therefore, Pray in Such a Way That Others Understand and are Edified
 - a. Paul's personal example indicates his participation in the very thing which he exhorts them
 - b. He thanks God
 - i. He speaks tongues more than all of them
 - 1. Again, I think that Paul was uniquely gifted with languages
 - a. We know that he was fluent in a number of languages by how well read he was, how historically informed of various cultures, and was made a Pharisee at a young age
 - 2. I think that he, thus, spoke more languages than most others and could thusly proclaim, praise, and pray in languages not fit for a particular culture
 - ii. He is grateful to God for this benefit and opportunity of expression
- c. Contrast: BUT 'in the Church',
 - i. literally, in the 'gathering' (usual word for Church)
 - ii. Here is particularizing these admonitions for the gathered Church, i.e. public worship services, etc.
- d. he wishes to speak
 - i. 5 words with his mind
 - 1. so that (purpose) I might teach (*κατηχεω, catechize*) others
 - a. This phrase informs what “with my mind” means: purposed to instruct and be helpful to those who hear
 - 2. The gospel is profoundly cognitive in the following ways:
 - a. It is profoundly Christ-centered and Cross-centered
 - i. “I resolve to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ *and Him crucified.*” (2:2)
 - ii. “He has become to us wisdom from God, righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1:30)
 - iii. Christ’s historical works, independent of our faith, of death and resurrection, are the center pin which holds all things together

- iv. Christianity is unlike other religions in that Jesus didn't just deliver a greater revelation of God, but He IS the revelation and salvific work from God
 - “We are not saved by theological ideas about Christ; we are saved by Christ Himself” (D. Carson)
- v. In this way, if you deny the historical person of Christ, then you lose Christianity – “if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. (1Co 15:17 ESV)
- b. It is profoundly theological
 - i. Christ's death and resurrection were “for our sins” (15:3), and our sins are *the* problem in the Universe because they are against God
 - ii. It is GOD who works historically to redeem through judgment, to save from His own terrible wrath, who declares His own greatness through both judgment upon sin which demeans Him and His works and salvation to those whom He has graciously called through faith in His Son
- c. It is profoundly biblical
 - i. Christ is the promised seed of Eve, the Noah who redeems from the waters of death, the reverser of Babel, the true prophet, the Lamb, the Judge, the King, the Deliverer, the Inheritor of the promises
 - ii. Christ “died for our sins *according to the Scriptures*...was buried...was raised on the third day *according to the Scriptures*” (15:3-4)
- d. It is profoundly historical
 - i. Jesus was raised in body, not merely in spirit
 - ii. The gospel is not some vision somebody had, or a philosophical idea which one can adhere to, but a series of historical acts of an historical person
 - “God could have poured out judgment on mankind in the Garden, therefore the only reason there is any history is because God has purposed to send his Son into the world, to pour out judgment on him and thereby bring salvation. Jesus is the only reason there is human history, and therefore he is the goal of human history. Thus everything God says and does in history explains and prepares for the salvation of his Son.”— Tim Keller, *Preaching the Gospel in a Post-Modern World*
- e. It is profoundly universal
 - i. The gospel of the historical God-man who redeems sinners by His perfect life, atoning death, and physical resurrection makes salvation possible for all kinds of people from all kinds of cultures in all kinds of eras
 - ii. Because it is historical and centered on the God-man, Jesus, then it is not particularized to those who have any kind of greatness of focus, will, or power
 - iii. All who humbly repent of their own efforts, depend on God's mercy, and believe in God's Son for salvation and authority are redeemed
- ii. rather than 10,000 words in a tongue
 - 1. a foreign language, divinely gifted or learned by effort, human or angelic, does not imply a greater eschatological unity
 - 2. It doesn't matter how many words one might fervently speak to God. It is better to speak a few mindful words of the gospel so others can hear, believe, agree, and give thanks and praise to God with you.

How is it that we edify one another? We edify one another through the mind by *speaking the gospel!*

Paul does not diminish one's personal *spiritual* time of prayer, gratitude, and praise of the Lord, whether in communicable language or not. However, he also notes that the Church is not edified through such experiences, but is only edified through the work of understanding, intellect, reasonable thought *communicated* so that others can hear and understand.

Thus, this passage is about speaking, communicating, announcing the particulars of the message of God's great reconciliation through Christ Jesus and all its glorious motifs, so that others hear, understand, and are exhorted to act and persuaded to hope in Christ, for this is what humanity was created for and in what they flourish in eternal life. This type of proclaiming/hearing theme is the common methodology of Church life together. It is the means of prophecy, instruction, praise, teaching, and growth in the Scriptures. This was particularly true in cultures where many people did not read (thus needed to hear the Word proclaimed) or in languages where the written Scriptures did not yet exist. In fact, the potency of the Word proclaimed, rooted in the Word written or as the (at that time) yet-to-be Canon, is evidenced by the commands to proclaim, witness, testify, announce, herald, and praise. These are all verbal terms.

Yet, along with the verbal terms, but never without them, we must not diminish God's revealed symbols of meaning, words pictured by enactment, dramatized through festivals, rituals, dramas in blood and odors of fire, waters sprinkled and beautiful stones set in breastplates of a mediator. All of these images and symbols have meanings which supersede and fulfill their telling. The blood of the lamb pre-images the story of the Son of God whose blood reconciles God and Man. The beautiful stones display the treasure of God whose heart delights in His chosen people, whom He redeems through the Mediator, Jesus, the same Son whose blood was spilt. The Passover preaches through drama. The smoke of the altar proclaims the prayers of the saints and the sufficiency of Christ. Every element chosen by God to display and exhibit the message which the prophets spoke, the priests played in the preaching. In like manner, the celebration of the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, graces us with the constant retelling of the climax of the story, the Cross, through the tactile script of taste, touch, smell, and sight as our ears hear the message of God reconciling sinners to Himself at His own precious expense. Through the Word preached and enacted we understand more and more the glory of God's insurmountable grace towards those who believe in Jesus.

This relationship between understanding of the mind and the hearing of the Word is a constant in the Scriptures. Romans 10:12-17 clearly reveals that people believe in their hearts what they have heard with their ears and understood with their minds (v19). It is the word of Christ preached, heard, and believed upon by those whom are sent to proclaim a message, a collocation of historical facts of what God has done through Jesus Christ.

Thus, the work of the Church is not to be manipulative of emotions, as if the experience of emotional conditions were the goal. There are methodologies which appeal to the emotional experience of men, which seek to move emotions by worldly means to attain some kind of experience. I denounce that as not only unbiblical, but harmful to the Church. It does not edify. In fact, I would argue that it harms the Church by teaching as the confirmation of God the means, methods, and manipulations of man. Gaining a "decision" for God by means of self-centered affections and worldly promises is not the regeneration of heart and God-delighting humble faith which is revealed to be of God in the Scriptures. By manipulating emotions and experience to seize the will of the heart, we have strayed from the mind of truth, the proclamation of God's works and worth, avoided the offensive revelation of God's Word like original sin, eternal judgment, the universal inability of man breached by the sovereign grace of God, and the hope of justification through faith alone, in Christ Jesus alone, by God's grace alone. These glorious truths engage the mind and convict the hearts of men, not by their emotional consequence but by their claims of truth and submission to God as the final Truth-revealer.

Now, this does not mean that the Christian's walk and experience is to be without emotion, a stoic display of disconnected, dispassionate headiness. That has more aligned with Buddhism and its destruction of personality by attempting to loose oneself from all attachments. No! Christianity is emotional because God is emotional. God experiences joy, sorrow, wrath, and delight; affections which are rooted in His very

character and expressed as He relates to others. Our emotions, however, are not always rooted in what is true, but merely in what we believe to be true. God's emotions never rule Him like ours do us. His are never because He has believed a lie, as ours often are. Yet, a Christianity where believers are not patient and kind, a Christianity where believers characteristically envy, are proud and boastful, rude, easily angered, and keep a record of wrongs is no Christianity at all.

I must serve the Law of God with my mind, even as my desires are prone to unbelief. I must, by the Spirit of God applying it, hear the Word of God reasonably so that its Truth may correct the lie which my heart is believing. For example, if Tom stole my lunch and wrath is flowing up from within me, I am not feeling merciful. How can I love like 1 Corinthians 13, with kindness, loving mercy, not keeping a record of wrongs? I must identify *why* I am angry in terms of what I am believing to be true. What do I feel that I have to have right now to be OK? Maybe I believe that I need lemon yogurt and a bologna sandwich to be OK? More likely, my heart believes that I must have respect to be OK. I am angry, not because I am not receiving bologna, but because I am not receiving respect, honor, and power. Thus, I am believing that without Tom's respect, I will be nobody, a withering worthless nothing. Yet, what does the gospel teach (catechize) to me? What honor do I have in Christ? What respect do I possess in Him? God has "raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." (Eph 2:6-7) What *must* I receive from Tom? Can I show him mercy when I believe that my seat is in the heavens with Christ? What more honor do I need now? What respect? What position?

So, you see, the gospel proclaims to our minds the great truths of God's work, the historical (both past, present, and future history) facts of God's "great and glorious works" so that we might *eulogize* (speak good words about) and *eucharist* (give good thanks to) Him as we hear and believe such precious truths and lay aside the unbelief of them which so easily entangles our feet and trips us up. In this manner, with the gospel holding the center, we behold the urgent need to create a Christian community that is profoundly counter-cultural. What does this love say about inter-generational relationships? About race? About forgiveness and reconciliation in our personal relationships? About how we think of our brothers and sisters in our highly diverse corners of our heavenly Father's world?

This truth, that God transforms our hearts and affections by the renewing of our minds through the proclamation of Christ, the eternal Word of God, is the guiding principle of the philosophy of ministry at EBF. Every ministry, from the cradles of the nursery to the caskets of the funerals, is rooted in the ministry of the Word of God proclaimed and exhibited. Sometimes it's one-on-one, the commands, exhortations, encouragements, promises of the gospel spoken and applied to the personal situations of a life stretched thin in a world of broken shalom. Other times it's the broader applications of the gospel truth to small groups, whether Bible studies together or home groups. Finally, it is the Word of God preached to whole Church on Sunday mornings, in the celebrations of Maundy Thursday or Christmas Eve, etc. In each of these ways, our goal is to minister the Word of God in a way that is heard, understood, and believed, so that the Body of Christ is built up into the knowledge of the eternal Son of God, thus unified in the incorruptible faith, to the maturity befitting the always and ever sons and daughters of the holy God.

We do not believe that one can persuade people to the truth by means of attracting them with the world's values, the Flesh's desires, or the Enemy's tactics. D.A. Carson relates a story from an Ivy League colleague about what drives most of the young women whom she disciples every week: "She mentioned three things. First, from parents, never get less than an A. Of course, this is an Ivy League campus! Still, even on an Ivy League campus, grades are distributed on a bell curve, so this expectation introduces competition among the students. Second, partly from parents, partly from the ambient culture, be yourself, enjoy yourself, live a rich and full life, and include in this some altruism such as helping victims of natural disasters. Third, from peers, from Madison Avenue, from the media, be hot – and this, too, is competitive, and affects dress, relationships, what you look for in the opposite sex, what you want them to look for in you. These demands drum away incessantly. There is no margin, no room for letting up; there is only room for failure. The result is that about 80 percent of women during their undergraduate years will suffer eating disorders; close to the same percentage will at some point be clinically depressed. The world keeps telling

them that they can do anything, and soon this is transmuted into the demand that they must do everything, or be a failure in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. Even when they become Christians, it is not long before they feel the pressure to become the *best* Christians, as measured by the measurable like attendance at Bible studies, leading prayer meetings, faithfully recording their daily devotions. But where is the human flourishing that springs from the gospel of grace, God's image-bearers happily justified before God on the ground of what Christ has done, powerfully regenerated so that they respond in faith, obedience, joy, and gratitude? The conventions and expectations of the world are pervasive and enslaving. The gospel must be worked out for these women, and demonstrated in the life of the church, so that it issues in liberation from the wretched chains of idolatry too subtle to be named and too intoxicating to escape, apart from the powerful word of the cross." (*Prophetic from the Center*)

We believe, with our 1st generation brothers and sisters, that "the gospel is the power of God for salvation, for the Jew first and then for the Gentile." (Rom 1:16). We believe it is the gospel, proclaimed and applied by the Holy Spirit, which produces fruit *in believers*, as Paul teaches the Colossian believers in very similar emphasis as the Corinthians:

"We always **thank** God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we **pray** for you, ⁴ since we **heard** of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵ because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have **heard** before in the **word of the truth, the gospel**, ⁶ which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is **bearing fruit and increasing**-- as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, ⁷ just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf..." (to the Colossians 1:3-7)

We must labor earnestly, not to derive relational values *from* the gospel, as if the gospel laid a foundation upon which we must build, and still less by focusing on the vanity of sounding spiritual with unintelligible groaning or the mystic murkiness of inner experience, but by precisely and prophetically preaching, proclaiming, encouraging, promising, teaching and living out in our churches the glorious good news of our precious Rescuer.