

September 28

Scriptures: Read 1 Corinthians 14

Key Verse: “For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.” (1 Corinthians 14:33)

Overview

Fruitfulness, however, is not an end in itself. There’s a greater end in view: God’s glory. Even the “common good” is subject to this greater end. The ultimate goal of spiritual giftedness and fruitfulness is to point men and women to God. Paul puts it this way: when a person, still in his sins, comes into contact with a vibrant, functioning church, “he will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, ‘God is really among you!’” (v.25b). It’s not charisma that impresses the sinner; it’s the presence of God.

Maybe we church-goers need to get a fresh view of what constitutes spiritual ministry. Let’s get one thing straight: activity does not necessarily equate with ministry. We do so much, so very much, “in the name of God”. Unfortunately, much of our activity, if we’re honest with ourselves, is nothing other than what anyone who is a member of any other kind of social organization does. Committees, planning meetings, retreats, gatherings, special emphasis days, and holiday celebrations—all are done in the name of God.

And we always give that expected prayer at the beginning, like “grace” before a meal; as if God is obliged to bless when we ask Him; as if a prayer magically transforms human heart into heavenly light.

And to be frank, so much of our “spiritual” activity mostly tires us out. We become stressed and driven, and as we interact with other stressed and driven brothers, there is inevitable conflict and confusion.

Paul says the end result of making God glorious in our church ministry is not confusion, but peace. Maybe that’s how to determine whether or not you are truly ministering. Are you driven? Or are you at peace?

Prayer

Lord, this reading begins with an exhortation to pursue love and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that we may prophesy. Help us to remember that elsewhere Your Word says “the spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus Christ.” Fill us afresh with the power of Your Holy Spirit to share Jesus with the lost today.