



Message Transcript **Striving for Spiritual Gifts**

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Amen. It's great to be part of what God's doing all around the world. Thanks so much for choosing to worship with us today. And as we've given God glory, as we've sung praises to him, as we continue to seek his face, let's go before him and get ready to hear his living and active word among us today. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we give you all the glory, all the praise, and all the honor for who you are. And Lord, we're here to celebrate you, who you are and your work in and through us and around the world. So, Lord, we pray today that you would have your way with us as we look into your word, as we hear your word spoken, Lord, may it be clear what your saying. And Lord, may we hear you directly. Lord, we thank you for your word.

We pray you'd have your way. And now all God's people that were ready to not only hear God speak, but are ready to put into practice what he said very loudly, agree with me by saying amen. Amen. I want to encourage you. Open up your bibles to one corinthians 14, one corinthians 14.

And we're really in this section of one corinthians talking about spiritual gifts and

what spiritual gifts are. So, just to give you a quick review of what we've been talking about, is that when we got to one corinthians twelve, Paul talked about the fact that the greatest gift ever given to the church is the Lord Jesus Christ. If you're here today and you know nothing about spiritual gifts, you don't even know what I'm going to be talking about today. You're like, what do you even mean? Let me tell you the greatest gift God ever gave.

He gave the gift of his only begotten son, that God the father sent his son into the world to be the savior of the world. Which means this Jesus Christ came in this world for one reason and one reason only, to be on a rescue mission for you to restore glory back to his father. Which means this. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, when he paid for the sins of humanity, here's what he was saying. That no matter what you've done, no matter who you are, no matter how you've resented me, left me, whatever, I want you to know, I love you with an unconditional love.

And I would love to have a relationship with you. Three days later, when Jesus rose from the dead, he authenticated that he was fully God and fully man and began to offer life to all who repented of their sins and confessed him as their lord and savior. And before I get into gifts, you have to know the greatest gift ever given to the world is

the Lord Jesus Christ. He came for you. He loves you.

Even if you don't want anything to do with him, it doesn't change the fact that God loves you. Now, for those of us who have trusted in Christ and believed in Christ, here's what took place when Jesus was on the earth. After he rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven. He's in heaven right now, but the extension of his body is the church on earth, those of us who believe in him. And so everything that Jesus did in the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and all the miraculous things he did and all of his ministry in his body that took place in those four gospels, what you see in the book of acts is what he does through his body, the church, now that he's in heaven, empowering his people, men and women, boys and girls, to continue his work on planet earth.

And what we talked about is that at the moment we trust Christ. We are baptized or immersed by his Holy Spirit into the body of Christ. And we're gifted. Everybody is gifted. And there are different levels of gifts, different types of gifts, different ways the gifts can be used.

But everybody in the body of Christ is gifted. Then there's what's called the filling of the spirit, which is when Christ is in me through his Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in my life. But what God wants to do is release the full of the spirit in my life and control who I am. And then I continue to grow on that by being filled with him over and over and over, where it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.

And that's what we've been talking about, that every believer is gifted by God to serve his church. And so what gifts are for is the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ for building up the body of Christ so that we can advance the kingdom in the world. That's what we said. And if you want to grow in your gifting and say, how do I learn what my gift is? And what do I do?

We took a look last week at first corinthians 13, which says the greatest way to grow in your gifting is to grow in your love for God and grow in your love for other people. If you pursue Christ in his love and you pursue love for other people, you will naturally grow in your gifting. God will manifest himself through you in unique ways that brings us to chapter 14. Let me tell you before we get into chapter 14, it is probably one of the most controversial passages in the entire Bible. If you're new to church, you may not even know what I'm talking about today.

I realize that if you've been in church for a while, you'll feel some tension based on your experience of what you've experienced. Here's my hope in one corinthians 14 that I would lay out a case for what the Bible says. I care what God has to say, not what I have to say. If you're here wondering, I wonder if I'm going to agree with Pastor Jeff. I don't care if you agree with Pastor Jeff.

I care that you align your life with what the word of God teaches and that you wrestle with this. I've been a Christian for 29 years. I'm still wrestling with a lot of what I'm reading today. You should have freedom to wrestle with that, too, and that's okay. But at the end of the day, what I want to do is build a case from what the Bible says, and then I'll talk a little more experientially as we go on in the message today.

So if you open your bibles up to one corinthians chapter 14, as Paul continues to address spiritual gifts, here's what he says. He says, pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God, for no one understands, but in his spirit, he speaks mysteries. But one who prophesies speaks to men for edification, exhortation and

consolation. And here's the first point I want to make when it comes to spiritual gifts, and this is where we're going to spend some time today.

And it's number one is this, desiring spiritual gifts is commanded by the Lord. Desiring spiritual gifts is commanded by God. I mean, notice what it says right here in the word pursue love. That's a command. Pursue love.

Nobody in the church is gonna push back on that one. Yeah, I'm commanded to pursue God and to pursue his love through me to others. That's a command. And notice the other command yet, or, and desire earnestly, spiritual gifts. Desire earnestly means to strive for, be dedicated, to exert yourself in.

It means this church. Not only is there nothing wrong with exploring spiritual gifts or wanting more spiritual gifts or growing in your spiritual gifts, it is a command of the Lord that you would do, that God wants you to grow in your spiritual gifting. That's what Jesus tells us. Especially he says in verse one that you may prophesy. Now, there's two different ministries Paul's going to address today, tongues and prophecy.

Two of the most controversial issues back in the first century. Two of the most controversial issues today in the 21st century. So I want to spell out what Paul says about these gifts, and I want to show you from the Bible what God has to say. And take some time to teach up front, because what I'm teaching, there will be other people that may come in and say, I disagree with that. And I just want you to hear what the scriptures say so you can make an informed decision about spiritual gifts.

Some of you come from backgrounds where all the spiritual gifts were operative, maybe even a bit crazy. And out there, some of you come from a moderate position and you say, I don't really care one way or another. And others of you come from cessationist backgrounds or such conservative backgrounds that you say they don't even exist. Shut the things down, okay? I want to tell you what God's word has to say about it, and then allow you through the spirit, to decide where you're going to land.

Notice what he says. First, he starts talking about tongues. He says, for one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God, for no one understands. But in his spirit, he speaks mystery. So what is a tongue?

According to first corinthians 14, two. First of all, a tongue is this. A tongue is a language that speaks to God. It's not a language that speaks to other people. A tongue speaks to God.

It doesn't speak to men. And notice what else he says about it. No one understands. No one understands. The speaker doesn't understand.

The people hearing don't understand, which is why later in this chapter, next week, we'll talk about the importance of the gift of interpretation in a corporate setting, if tongues are going to be used and for the body, but in his spirit, what does he do? He speaks mysteries. He's speaking mysteries in the New Testament, mystery is that which was revealed in the New Testament that we didn't know about in the Old Testament, the mystery of the gospel that God was sending his son Jesus Christ to die, the glory of who he is. In acts chapter two, we really see the first time that tongues are exhibited. And what happens in acts chapter two is the Holy Spirit is sent from heaven, from Jesus himself, like he promised.

And the Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples. Tongues of fire come on their head, and they begin to do what? They begin to speak in tongues. And some people say, well, that's just languages. They're speaking in languages, and it's clear that they are, because there's people from other nations that are hearing the language, and they're saying, wow, we're hearing this in our own language.

But notice what they're hearing. Acts 211 says this. It says, we hear them in our own language or in our own tongues, speaking the mighty deeds of God. In other words, their tongue speaking was not speaking to these people about Jesus. Their tongue speaking was praise and prayer to the Lord that this group of people happen to hear in their own language.

That's what a tongue is. And if somebody's speaking in a tongue, in a language that you know, you don't need the gift of interpretation because you already know the language, and that's what tongues are. And I want to tell you this, when it comes to all the spiritual gifts, of all the spiritual gifts I'm aware of, and you can count as many as you want. In the Bible, tongues is by far the most divisive of any that people talk about and people want to know, well, what do you say about it? And do we agree?

I agree that there are gifts of tongues, because the Bible says there's gifts of tongues. And in one corinthians, chapter 14, if there's any place in God's word that God could say, shut it down, it is no good, don't use this anymore. It would be the book of one corinthians. They were a self indulgent, selfish culture who cared nothing more than for exercising their gifts for their own edification. And Paul could have said, shut it down.

Don't do this. He does just the opposite. He says, eagerly desire spiritual gifts. He said the same thing at the end of chapter twelve and at the end of 14 that we'll get to next week. Here's what he says.

Therefore, my brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy and watch, and do not forbid the speaking of tongues. What does God's word say about tongues? Don't forbid them. Many of the people I know, that I love, that love Jesus that I listen to, would forbid the speaking of tongues in church. I will not forbid the speaking of tongues in church, because God says, do not forbid the speaking of tongues right now.

We'll talk next week about how are they to operate, because I know when I'm talking about this, some of you are like, oh, my goodness, it's going to be one of those crazy, freaky places. It's not going to be. That's not what's going to happen. Paul gives us order for what happens, but what he says is tongues are still a gift and earnestly desire them. And prophecy is still a gift and earnestly desire them.

So I'm borrowing from definitions that I'm putting together. This is not original, but here's how I would define speaking in tongues. I would say that speaking in tongues is the God given ability to pray or praise in languages or syllables not understood to the speaker or the hearers. That's what speaking in tongues is. It's the God given ability to pray or praise in languages or syllables not understood to the person speaking or to the person hearing.

That's what a tongue is. Now, could they be languages in some dialect? They could be. Could they be angelic? Tongues could be based on one corinthians 13, one we don't know.

But tongues are that they're prayer and praise in languages or syllables unknown

to the speaker or to those who are hearing. Now for those that would say, because you're going to hear several people say, they don't exist today, they don't exist today, they don't exist today. Let me tell you the arguments they're going to make. And I want to take a little time on this just because I want you to know I'm aware of all the arguments. I don't believe any of them, but you just need to hear what they are.

The first one is this. There's an exegetical argument. There's this biblical argument that tongues no longer exist today. And usually where people go is one chapter behind in one corinthians chapter 13 and in verse eight where Paul talks about the gifts of prophecy, tongues and knowledge. Here's what he says.

If there are gifts of prophecy, they'll be done away. If there are gift of tongues, they will cease. If there is knowledge, they will be done away. Now here's an english lesson so that you know it probably doesn't mean anything to most of you, but when he talks about prophecy and knowledge, he's talking about using a future passive. That's the type of verb tense he's using, which means this.

At some point in time, something is going to act on prophecy, something's going

to act upon knowledge, and when something acts upon those, they'll stop existing. Something's going to act upon them. Well, we just read in that section, when the perfect comes, when Jesus comes, he'll be done away with the way that tongues is talked about. When it says tongues will cease, that's a future middle. The middle is normally used to be like it'll act upon itself.

So many biblical scholars will say, see, tongues had like a shelf life, like a battery life. It's going to start being done away with over time. It's why you see it less and less, and it's just not going to work. Here's the challenge to that. If you know the greek language, you'll know that the word cease.

There are certain greek verbs that don't have a future passive. They only use a future middle. So, for instance, in Luke 8:24, you'll read about Jesus on the sea, and it says this, and the winds and the waves ceased. That's future middle. It means they ceased themselves.

Well, why did they cease themselves? Because Jesus rebuked the winds and the waves and said, be still. That's why. So it's a really weak argument to say that tongues

have ceased based upon that one verse in the Bible when it's really not used that way anywhere else. Secondly, people will say this, it's too early of an epistle.

It's one of the first epistles. It's one of the first epistles Paul wrote. And so what you see is it's really the only epistle in the New Testament that specifically addresses tongues. And the reason you don't see it in any further epistle is because it started dying out. That's why it doesn't exist.

My counter to that would be this. First Corinthians is also the only book in the New Testament that specifically addresses the Lord's supper and talks about the importance of the Lord's supper. And we don't read about that in any further other books. And I don't think anybody would argue that we don't need to take the Lord's supper anymore. It's still paramount to the church.

Okay, third, it would be this. Some people say, well, Pastor Jeff, when it comes to earnestly desiring spiritual gifts, it's in the plural. Gifts are for the church. They're not for the individual. He's talking about the church, not the individual.

Well, of course, but all of chapter twelve. What is chapter twelve about? There is one body and yet what? Many members. And there are many members, yet what?

One body. So what are the gifts for? The gifts are for, yeah, the church. What's the church made up of? Individuals that receive different gifts.

And we read in chapter twelve, not everybody has every gift. Certain gifts people don't get certain gifts, people do. Why? Because the Holy Spirit decides to dispense them in the way in which he wants to dispense them. And that's the purpose of gifts.

Okay, so gifts are for the church. And how does God manifest himself? Through individuals that make up the body of Christ. That's what all chapter twelve is about. Fourth thing you'll hear people say is that, honestly, Jeff, you got to understand that tongues were a sign of judgment to unbelieving jews who rejected the messiah.

So in acts chapter two, when you hear them speaking in tongues, it was just a sign that Jesus really was God and they'd risen from the dead, and God was giving his judgment to those people. And there is some validity to that. But when you get to one corinthians chapter 14, what's really hard to defend is in verse four, Paul talks about tongues actually edify the believer. In verses 15 and 18, he talks about how he's going to continue to use the gift of tongues. And in verse 23, if tongues are really assigned for unbelievers, then why does Paul say, when unbelievers are present, don't use the gift of tongues because they'll think you're mad.

If tongues were truly only a gift for nonbelievers, we would want to use tongues every time unbelievers come to our church so that they would see the judgment that God has for them. It's not the only use of tongues. Number five, I'll tell you this. Some people say, I don't want tongues. I don't want tongues.

It's too emotional. You're just. You can't control it. It's just an emotive thing. Nobody even knows what they're saying.

Nobody knows what they're doing. Let me tell you something. I'm a very logical

person. God is the God of logic, but God's also the God of emotion, too. God created our emotions.

There's nothing wrong with being emotive or emotional about that which you're passionate about. I mean, the day that I got married, when I. I can still remember what it was like with my wife walking down the aisle, I wasn't in a logical state. Like, I wasn't saying, oh, man, she really fits. Proverbs 31 very nicely.

Man, that is a nice dress. That fits very well. Oh, she did her hair today. Very nice. And when I was sharing my vows, I wasn't logical.

I was a motive, because I loved her, and there was nothing wrong. Nobody pulled me aside after the service and say, you know, I noticed that your eyes were a little bit moist when you gave your vows. I was a little too sappy for me. Nobody did that. Why?

Because there's nothing wrong with being emotional about that which you love. Okay? There's nothing wrong with being emotional as long as it's controlled by the, by the spirit. And then the final argument I hear all the time when it comes to tongues is this, hey, pastor, if you talk about tongues, you're just preaching your experience. That's all you're doing.

You're not rooted in the word. Let me tell you something. I'm rooted in the word. If I were teaching on evangelism and I shared stories about people I've shared the gospel with that have come to Christ, nobody pushed back on that and say, oh, I don't believe that. You're just preaching your experience.

If I talked about, hey, when I preach the word, people are edified. Oh, you're just talking about your experience. But why is it if we talk about tongues, they're like, oh, it's just your experience. I could argue the same way back to you. You're just preaching your lack of experience and telling everybody they need to have the same lack that you do.

Right? I mean, so at the end of the day, there's really no good arguments, in my

opinion, biblically, that says that the gifts have ceased. Now, if you believe that, that's fine. Just make sure you believe it from God's word. Okay.

I believe Paul is pointing out that gifts of tongues still exist in the church today. So let's talk about prophecy. What's that? He says in verse three. But one who prophesies rather speaks to men for edification, exhortation, and consolation.

So New Testament prophecy, what is it? It's not just forth telling. Here's what's going to happen. There's going to be a huge fire and flood. That's not it.

It is a word that is spoken that is known by the speaker, and instead of speaking to God, who are they speaking to? You're speaking it to other people for the purpose of edification, which, I'm speaking this to build you up for exhortation. I'm speaking this to help you take the next step of faith that you need to take or consolation. I'm speaking this. It should bring great comfort.

Real prophecy, a lot of times encompasses all three. It happens all the time. It can happen while a pastor is preaching. It can happen in your family. It can, it can happen in a small group.

It can happen at a restaurant where you speak a word. And sometimes you can be aware that you're doing it. Sometimes you may not be aware that you're doing it where it brings comfort or edification in building or exhortation. And many of us have, Christians, we've experienced that in our life, where somebody's talking to us on the phone or they've been around and they share something with us. And all of a sudden it was like, wow, that's just what I needed to hear.

That makes me realize Jesus is alive. And that was really comforting to me, or that helped me take a step of faith, or that was encouraging to me. Right. That's what prophecy is. So the way I would define prophecy is this way.

Prophecy is the God given ability to discern and verbalize a thought that God has brought to mind for a person or a situation at hand. Okay? It's a God given ability to discern or verbalize a thought that God has brought to mind for a person or a situation

at hand. It's when you're spending time with the Lord. And here's why I think these two gifts are really important, because I think both these gifts are a result of seeking the face of God in prayer.

I think tongues are a result of seeking the face of God in prayer. I think prophecy is a result of seeking the face of God in prayer. So you have to know what God is doing in your heart in order to exercise these two gifts. Okay? Now people will say, well, prophecy doesn't exist anymore.

And here's some arguments that you'll hear why prophecy does not exist. Number one is this. We have the word. We have the word. Why do we need prophecy if we have the word?

Let me just tell you what I believe about God's word. I believe all 66 books are inerrant, completely inspired by the Holy Spirit. They do not need to be added to. They do not need to be taken away from. I believe in the word.

It's this book, this word that's inerrant, that teaches us that prophecy is important. Okay? So I have no problem when somebody says, we have the word. Number two is they'll say this, the canon's complete. I wholeheartedly agree with that.

If somebody wants to add to this book and say, there's things that you don't know, Jeff, that I know about the world, I was like, ah, I'm not taking that. The canon is complete. Number three, people will say, this prophecy is just too subjective. I mean, how do you really know? We're gonna talk about that in just a second.

Cause prophecy can be subjective. I mean, how do I really know if that's a word? From the Lord. Or if you just had bad pizza last night and you're just kinda making something up, I mean, how do you know? And so many people will then conclude, therefore, prophecy is not needed for today.

I have the word of God, okay? It's just, it's just not needed. Here's why I believe prophecy is true because the word of God teaches that it's true. Here's why I believe it's true, because I believe people in the 21st century still ask the same questions people were asking in the first century. Like, there was no scripture in my Bible that

said, marry Kim on this date.

There was no scripture in my bible that said, move to Denver and start a church. There was no scripture in my Bible that helps us understand specifically, should I take that job or that job? And what should I negotiate my contract in? Should I, is it time to have children or not? And how should I speak into my son?

And where's the scripture on all that stuff? There's general principles. Sometimes the scripture is completely specific, but sometimes there's things that are going on in life that I just don't know what. And prophecy can be used by the Lord, and I believe that it is needed today. Right.

So here's the thing. When it comes to this, I would say both gifts result from and are strengthened by prayer. And here's the other thing. I would say these are gifts. They are not a sign of spiritual maturity.

Can I just be clear on that? They are not a sign of spiritual maturity. If you put somebody up here that had the gift of tongues and prophecy and somebody up here that didn't have either gift of tongue and prophecy, it doesn't mean that the person that has the gift of tongues and prophecy is more mature than the person who doesn't. As a matter of fact, the person who doesn't have those two gifts may be more spiritually mature. You say, well, how do I know who's more spiritually mature?

The one who loves Jesus and loves others more is more spiritually mature. That's what it is. So gifts are not a sign of maturity, whether you have a certain gift or don't. And here's the reason I say that, because while I believe all the gifts are operative, I do believe one corinthians twelve points out, not everybody has every gift. And sometimes for people that say, hey, do you speak in tongues?

Do you prophesy? If you say no, it's almost like, oh, you're not really a Christian, or you're not really filled with the spirit. No, it doesn't. It just means you don't have the gift. Right?

Paul tells us to earnestly pursue it eagerly. Desire it. If he desires to give it to

you, he does. And if he doesn't, he doesn't. But spiritual maturity is about exalting the Lord Jesus, wanting to build and love the body of Christ so he can advance the kingdom.

Are we clear? That's what he talks about. And here's the reason I say that, because a lot of times in church. I was at a Rockies game earlier this year, and this has happened several times while I've been at games, but my son nudged me. It's the first time he ever saw this.

But during the Rockies Cubs game this year, somebody jumped onto the field and started running, and the fans were going a little bit crazy. And I don't know how you think when you see something like that happen. Some people are, like, cheering for the guy, wanting him to be a success. I don't know what success would look like. Right?

Other people are mad because he's distracting from the game. And then there's these people like me. I know I shouldn't say this, but in my heart, I'm like, dude, I hope somebody gives them a forearm shiver right in the mouth, right? And then he goes

down. I mean, everybody's thinking, because why?

This is a total distraction to what should be taking place. And oftentimes we talk about gifts in church. That's what we think. They're just distractions. Why waste the time?

I'm not wasting time. I'm preaching to you. First Corinthians 14. Because if God thought it was important enough for us to talk about, they're not a distraction. They're actually for the team that's on the field to function even better than what the team currently is.

If used properly, if submitted to the lordship of Christ, if done in humility, it adds to our team. Amen. That's what he's talking about. And so when it comes to these gifts, desiring spiritual gifts, it's coming commanded by God. There's not only nothing wrong with you desiring these things, it's commanded.

Desire them, and then trust that the holy spirit will give you the gifts that you need

to have in the moment that you need to have them. Number two is this. Notice this. Gifts that edify the body of Christ are greater in value. Gifts that edify the body of Christ, or gifts that build up the body of Christ, they're in greater value.

Notice what Paul says. He says, one who speaks in a tongue, edifies himself, but one who prophesies edifies the church. It's just a simple statement. He's not denigrating tongues. He's not saying tongues are bad.

But he says when someone prays in a tongue because they don't know what they're praying, while they personally may be edified, nobody else is edified. So he's telling you that the most important gifts are the ones that build up the church. One who prophesies builds up the church, builds up individuals, builds up the body. Now, I wish that you all spoke in tongues. Really interesting for a guy that just got done telling them that not everybody has every gift that's rebuking them for their selfishness.

Why would he say, I wish you all spoken tongues? Because he believes in the gift of tongues. He goes, I know you all won't, but I wish you all did. There's nothing wrong with the gift, but here's what he says. But even more, that you would prophesy.

And greater is the one who prophesies than the one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets so that the church may receive edifying, what does it mean, greater in value? It means this. It doesn't mean the person who prophesies is greater in value. It means the gift has greater value for the church. Because if you understand what God is saying to the church, it builds up the church.

If you understand what I'm saying to you, it builds up you. If you don't understand what I'm saying, it's of no benefit to you. That's the whole argument that he's now trying to make in verses six through twelve. Notice what he says. But now, brethren, if I come speaking in tongues, what will it profit you?

Unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching? In other words, if I don't have anything from the Lord to speak to you, a teaching, a prophecy or revelation or anything like that, then you're not going to be, you're not going to benefit from it. It's a waste of your time. That's what he says. Yes, he says this.

Even lifeless things, either flute or harp, in producing a sound, if they do not produce a distinction in the tones, how will it be known what is played on the flute or in the harp? For if a bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare for battle? In other words, he's saying, listen, it's like an instrument. How many of you have young kids that have started playing an instrument that's a very painful experience if you've ever had. Like, when you start, like, there's a difference between a first chair trumpet and somebody who starts playing in the fourth grade.

There's a distinction between the two, even though they're using the same instrument. And what Paul's trying to say is, how will you know it's time to get ready for battle if somebody's just blowing the horn? There's a difference between somebody in the military coming up here and playing reveille on the trumpet versus me picking out a trumpet and coming and trying to blow on one today. One would call people to attention, the other one would drive people out of the church. That's the point he's trying to make.

Does that make sense? So he's talking about, prophecy is important because

people can understand what you're talking about. Tongues are important only to the extent that they could be interpreted by the body. But if not interpreted for the sake of the body, they're in less value when you gather corporately. That's what he's saying.

So he goes on to say in verse nine, so also you, unless you utter by the tongue speech that is clear, how will it be known what is spoken for? You will be speaking into the air. I mean, nobody's going to know if I'm speaking a language that nobody knows. I'm just speaking into the air. And that's what he points out in ten and eleven.

There are perhaps a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind without meaning. If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be to the one who speaks a barbarian. And the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. In other words, here's what he's saying. If I speak to you in a language you don't know, you're going to think I'm a foreigner.

If you speak as a foreigner in a language you know and I don't know, you'll be a foreigner to me. In other words, it is so important when we gather as a church that we understand what God is saying among us so that we can mature and grow in our faith.

I mean, it's kind of like this. I mean, if I stood up here this morning and I got up here and the first thing out of my mouth was, yes, unga le ha sierra vratipar. Right?

Probably nobody would amen that, right? Maybe some would. But if you're from southern India and you speak Tamil, you would know that I just said, Jesus Christ is lord. And you might say amen. But to the rest of you, you would be like, what the heck is he talking about?

Or if you know Koine Greek and I said, enarche en halagas kuruksant lagan, you would know that I said, in the beginning was the word, preach the word. And you'd be like, amen, brother. But if you don't know Koine Greek, why would you care, right? Or if you're from the Netherlands and you heard me say, toto je dem tori ral nampan, you would say, yeah, this is the day the Lord has made. That's awesome.

But if you didn't, you'd be like, what the heck is he talking about? I had a young guy that heard me preach last night, and he's like, hey, why did you have to do three times? I mean, after a second time, I understood what you were saying. It kind of felt like the Jeff Show. I'm like, then you got the point, right?

Because if I'm coming up here just blabbing stuff that doesn't make any sense to you, it has no benefit in your life. That's what Paul is saying. So in verse twelve, he sums it up. So also, you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church. In other words, if you're really zealous for spiritual gifts that you're being commanded by God, you should seek the gifts that bring the greatest exaltation to Jesus, the greatest gift to the body.

And that's what you should be seeking, not just individual gifts that are a blessing to you. That's what Paul is saying. Does that make sense so far? And so that's why he's talking about prophecy in tongues and he's juxtaposing those. Now, it's really interesting because when Paul says in verse two or verse four, rather, one who speaks in a tongue edifies himself, but one who prophesies edifies the church, some people will say, well, that's why tongues are bad, because it just edifies yourself, and it's not really good.

Jude 20 says this, build yourself up in the most holy faith. That's edifying yourself. Like, there's nobody that would push back if I said, hey, I spent a lot of time this week

just seeking the face of God in prayer. I was edifying myself. Nobody would be like, that's so selfish, Pastor Jeff.

Or if I told you how I spent time this week in God's word and letting God study me as I was studying his word and was growing in his faith, nobody would say, oh, Jeff, that is so selfish of you to do personal Bible study. But when it comes to tongues, people are like, whoa, that's just so self. It's not selfish. It's self edifying. And there's nothing wrong with self edifying, because I'm telling you, the more I pray, the more I know God's word, the more passionate I am for Jesus, the more I can be a blessing to the body of Christ.

So some people say, well, are those gifts for today? I would say yes. So now that I've kind of laid a foundation, I want to share some stories today from my own life so that you can understand where I'm coming from. Okay? So I got saved in the summer of 1989.

Okay? Wasn't familiar with tongues, wasn't familiar with prophecy, never been around it. If people would have talked about it, I would have kind of written them off as

just freaky, weird people. I just didn't. I wasn't around it.

I went to promise keepers in 1996 at a clergy conference in Atlanta, Georgia. And I didn't even know. I mean, I was a young guy, and I didn't even know if they'd let me in. I thought you had to have, like, a pastor credential or something for to get in. I'm like, I'm just going to go.

And I ended up not only getting in, I sat in the first seat in the first row for three days, and several speakers spoke to my life. And it was great. And there was a guy by the name of John Maxwell. Some of you have heard him. And at the time, he was a pastor of a church in San Diego.

And he told the story about a friend of his name, Bill Claussen. And Bill had come into his church when John was a young pastor, and John was running a busy schedule. And John said to him, how can I help you? And he said, well, you can't help me. I'm here to help you.

He's like, well, how are you going to do that? He goes, God's called me to pray for you every day to accelerate his work in your life. So John Maxwell went on to give his whole talk on prayer and the importance of having prayer partners in your life. And here's what he said at the end of the message. He said, I just want you to turn around to somebody in the audience.

I want you to pick a prayer partner that for the next 30 days, you'll just pray with. And so I started turning around. I'm like, who am I going to get? And I saw this white haired gentleman that was sitting there, combed all the way back, and it seemed like everybody was trying to crowd around him like they wanted him. So I'm just kind of looking around, and he looked at me.

He's like, I want you. He said, okay. So he went to sit down in these chairs, and he says to me, he goes, no, the intercessor always stands. And I'm like, I don't even know what that means, but okay. And he laid hands on me and began praying things for me from my heart that only I knew.

And at the time, like, I wanted to be a football coach. That's what I wanted to do

more than anything in the world, I want to be a football coach. And I told the lord I'd give him two years as a youth pastor, and then I was gonna go on and be a football coach unless he called me to ministry. And that day in Georgia, as he laid hands on me, he started prophesying over what God wanted for my life and how he wanted me to be a pastor. And from Jeremiah started saying, you're gonna be a pastor of pastors, and you're literally gonna send people all over the world.

That was 22 years ago, right today. Amen. Now, I didn't know what God was going to do. I still don't know what God is going to do. I still feel like I'm in the middle of my story.

I hope I'm in the middle of my story, but I'm telling you right now, that encouraged my heart. I mean, that spoke to me so deeply that God was saying, no, I know you love football. I know you love that. But this is where I'm calling you. This is where I want you to be.

I want you to be my coach for this team, my church. And so that's how God's led me, man. That was the first time that ever happened. And so he prays this deep, big

prayer over me, and then it was like, my turn to pray for him. And I'm like, dear God, I pray for Bill.

He's a nice guy. Help him. I mean, I didn't know how to pray like that. I didn't even know what to do. I was just kind of embarrassed.

And he kept sending me notes and encouraging me, and it was prophetic in my life. There was another time, a few years later, I was going to be a counselor for a camp on a weekend at a church. And I knew it was a charismatic church. And again, I mean, I still didn't have any gifts. I didn't have any gifts of prophecy or tongues.

Prayed about it. But I was journaling the night before we were at this camp, and I was praying. I was like, lord, I don't get it. I don't speak in tongues. If that's a true thing, I want it.

If it's not, I don't want it. Lord, I don't know anything about prophecy. How come I don't see people getting healed? How come I don't see people casting out demons? I

mean, I've never seen people, like, raising from the dead.

I mean, I've never seen any of this stuff that I read about in your word, but if it's true, I want it. And by the way, I'm sick and tired of going to seminary because I hate going to the library. That's not how you created me. And there's all these people that are going to hell, and I'm going to the library. I'm like, I just want to quit school, right?

So the next day, we're in this church. There's only 18 people in this large church. It's all of us as counselors that are sitting down front here, and this guy that's going to be the speaker for the weekend, he says, hey, I just want to minister to you guys before the weekend because you're going to be taking care of kids. And I'm like, cool. He's going to preach a little bit, teach a little bit.

And I'm sitting there and he just says, you guys can kind of spread out. I just want to talk to you. And it was the weirdest thing I'd ever experienced. I mean, it felt like the room was heavy, like I couldn't stand up. So I went and just sat on the platform.

There were stairs going up to the platform of the sanctuary. And I sat there, and I remember he went and touched this one girl right on her shoulder, just whispered in her ear, and she just broke and started crying. Her husband was standing right next to her, and he started crying. I'm like, this is the weirdest thing I've ever seen. I don't know what's going on.

And as I've told you before, I'm not really emotional of a person. That's not really how I roll. But I just felt like I was going to start crying. Well, about the fourth time after he did this thing, he saw me sitting on the stairs, and so he comes over behind me right? Now, keep in mind what I journaled the night before.

He lays his hands on my shoulders, and when he did and began to speak. I just lost it. I mean, he started weeping. First words out of his mouth. Stop looking for signs and wonders.

You will cast out demons. You will heal people. You will see the dead rise. But

rejoice because your name is written in the lamb's book of life. Now, I've cast out demons.

I've seen people healed. I've never seen the dead raised other than spiritually. I hope that's coming right. But it spoke to my heart. God heard me.

Then he said this. And continue to study God's word. Because of the ministry God has called you to, you'll need to be able to rightly divide the word of truth. So I stayed in school. Right.

Is that prophetic? 100% it is. It changed the course of my direction. Now, some people are like, that's just so subjective. What do you do with that?

Pastor Jeff? Here's what I would say. Turn your bible to one Thessalonians chapter five first. Thessalonians chapter five. And verse 19.

Right after Jesus gets done saying, or Paul gets done saying, rejoice. Always pray without ceasing, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Notice what he says. Do not quench the spirit. Do not quench the spirit.

How are you going to do that? What's the next verse? Do not despise prophetic utterances. Don't despise them. Don't treat prophecies with contempt.

Don't say prophecies don't exist. Well, then what do I do with them? Here's what he says, but examining everything carefully. Hold fast to that which is good. In other words, when there is prophecy that comes, hold fast to that which is good.

Spit out the rest. Take the meat. Spit out the bones. I've had good experiences with prophecy. I've had some ridiculous experiences with prophecy.

Right. I'm telling you, the good ones today. We'll talk about some of the bad ones

next week. All right? When we talk about how they operate.

Right? So what happens when you have prophetic utterances? You grieve the spirit of God. When you despise prophetic utterances. Well, I don't want to be in a church where the spirit of God speaks.

Hey, I do. Well, that's just a little crazy. Here's what I think is crazy. I think it's crazy to be a group of people that say we believe fully in the word of God, when the word of God teaches prophecy in tongues. But we'd rather say that doesn't exist and experience the power of God.

That's crazy, right? So what do we do with these things when they come? We check it with the word of God. If it doesn't align with the word of God, flat out not true every single time, right? I remember when we were out here, we've been out here, like, a year, and Kim called me on the phone one day, and she's like, hey, isn't Denver a desert?

And I'm like, we're from the midwest. We didn't know. I'm like, yeah, it kind of is. It's kind of a desert. She's like, do you remember that prophecy?

They prayed over us when we were engaged, and I did, because there was a group of people when we were engaged. We were in a meeting one time, and people were praying over us, and they prophesied over us that Kim and I were going to move somewhere to a desert, and we're going to be an oasis for people that were going to come from miles away to be nourished on the word of God. And then she's like, do you remember what they told me? And I'm like, no, tell me what they told you. And so they said, remember they saw that little Nike sign over me and said, just do it.

Cause, Kim, you're not gonna wanna go. And that played itself out perfectly. Man, that's a prophetic word. And we didn't even remember the word until it happened. And then when it happened, it was like, how encouraging is that to know God had that in mind long before it happened?

That's a prophetic word, right? Or how about this? You know, a few years back, we were trying for child number three. Child number three is not coming. Child number

three is not working.

It's month after month now. It's year after year, and every month my wife's getting desperate. She's saying, I know God has someone for us. I just feel like there's a third. I just know it now.

She's like, I feel like there's a fourth and fifth, but I know it, right? And one day, she's like, she called me on the phone, and she's like, you'll never guess what somebody told me. And there was somebody in our church that said that she had a vision of holding this little baby girl, and she was holding her in her arms, and she kept looking for her mom. She's like, I was looking for her mom. I was looking for her mom.

Who's the mother? Who's the mother? And she said, kim, you walked up, and I gave the baby to you. And Kim knew at that time. And when Kim told me at the time, I'm like, we're having a little girl.

I know we're getting pregnant now. Right now. She tried to explain the prophecy and she said, I think what it means is in church, we're going to have some spiritual births and God's going to grow things. We're like, nah, we're having a little baby girl. So that day, we named my daughter Elle Elizabeth, which means she is God's promise.

A month later, she got pregnant. 20 weeks later, we're in the doctor's office, and we already knew we were having a little girl. So we let our daughter Brooke, do you want to find out what you're having? We're like, we already know what we're having, but you can tell our daughter. And we had a card there that said, hey, you're going to be a big sister to your baby girl.

To a baby sister, right? I mean, we knew that. That's prophecy, right? That's encouraging. Now, I've been on the giving end.

I've been on the receiving end. I was at a camp recently where the men line up and they give prophetic words, and I've been on the receiving end of that and receive some good stuff. But in this camp, I was on the prayer team, which is where I'm most

comfortable. So I'm training guys how to pray and let's ask God to work. And it was exciting.

Well, three minutes before they did the prophecy time, I got called. They said, jeff, we need you. We need another guy to do prophetic words. I'm like, I'm not really skilled in that, you know? But if you want me, like, what do I really do?

They're like, just listen to Jesus pray. If he gives you a word for somebody, just tell him. I'm like, okay. And so that day, I was sitting on this stump out in the wilderness. Guys were lined up about 10ft away.

I didn't look at them because I didn't want, want to, like, try to figure them out and try to say something clever. I just prayed and I would just tell them what was on my heart, so I'd beckon them forward. Then I'd stand up and open my eyes and see who they were. And it was really encouraging words. It just kind of blessed them.

And guys were like, man, that's what I needed to hear. And I felt alone, and that's what I needed to hear. And it was kind of a cool experience until one thing happened as I was sitting on that stump. I got this picture that I was supposed to tell the next guy, and I'm like, I'm not telling the next guy this. There's no way.

Because the picture I got in my head was that the next guy, whoever he was, like, I saw this guy covered in this white sheet, okay? And over the top of his head was like a shower faucet, and blood was, like, pouring down over everywhere. I mean, like a horror film. And when he moved to the right, the shower went with him. And when he moved to the left, the shower went with him.

And that's all I saw. I've been a Christian for a long time. I'm like, there ain't no way in the world I'm going to say that to this guy. And then it just wouldn't go away. And so I kept praying.

And I kept praying. I'm like, lord, this can't be you. I mean, this is the silliest thing. I mean, this is dumb. I mean, and it wouldn't go away.

And finally I got to a place like, well, you know, whoever comes forward, I mean, it's 12:00 right now. The camp ends at two. I can sneak away. I'll never see this guy ever again. Okay, God, I'll say it.

And so I beckon the guy forward and I stand up and I open my eyes, and wouldn't you know, he goes to our church and he's 15 years older than me. I'm like, darn it. So I told him what I told you. I said, well, hey, this is what I see. And I said, okay, does that make sense?

And I sat back down. And as I sat back down, I was just kicking myself, like, you idiot, you're going to lose him. You're going to lose his family. People are going to think you're a freaky pastor. I mean, it's over now.

So I'm trying to figure out how to get out of camp, and 20 minutes later, that whole thing ends and somebody comes up to me and says, hey, did you hear about that prophecy that you gave? And I'm like, well, which one? They said the blood one.

I'm like, oh, great. Now words spread.

And I'm like, no, didn't hear about it. He said, he just shared with us what you shared with him. He has been a Christian for a long time, and he's been coming to this camp, and he knows Jesus loves him, but he always feels like he loves other people more than he loves him. And his prayer had been before this time and the whole weekend long, that if Jesus just had one drop of blood for him, that would be enough. And you told him that he was covered in the blood.

Amen. Amen. So he was here in the last service? We've met. I've talked to him.

I've told him how scared I was and all this stuff. I'm not an expert on prophecy. I don't get it. I just know it's real and I know it works. That's prophecy.

I would love to see more encouragement, more edification, more consolation in our church and how God could use us in that way. It doesn't mean we walk around saying, God told me to tell you. God never told you to tell anybody anything. He told

you to tell people what's in the word of God. Amen.

If God gives you a word for somebody, it's very humble, it's very sincere, it's very, hey, this is what I think when I pray for you. Does that even make any sense? And then that person gets to choose whether it made sense or not. They get to take the meat and spit out the bones. They could say no.

It doesn't even resonate with me at all. And that's cool, right? You're not the authority. Jesus Christ is. So what about the tongues gift?

I want to talk about tongues a little bit, too. Again, it's not a sign of maturity. It's a gift. I prayed for the gift of tongues for years and years and years and years. Never got the gift of tongues never got the gift of tongues.

Could be in places where tongues are being spoken. Never felt like I was less of a Christian. Never felt less than. Neither should you. But I just didn't have it.

But I kept praying for it. Okay, well, wouldn't you know, in the summer of 2007, I'm praying in my office one day, and these words start coming out of my mouth that are unknown to me. My heart is totally full. I'm feeling warm inside. I'm excited, and I'm like, whoa, what was that?

And I'm like, that can't be tongues. I mean, that's just gibberish. I don't even know what I'm saying. It can't be. But it felt so right.

And when I was doing that, I felt like I was worshiping Jesus. So for about three months, I kept saying, lord, if this is you, I want to grow in it. If it's not you, I don't want anything to do with it. Just help me. Because I come more from a background where if you believe this stuff?

You, like, have demons channeling through your body or something, and I didn't want to do that. October 7 of 2007, I ran the Chicago marathon. It was the third marathon I had run, and this was the only one I had legitimately trained for. Like, I'm

going sub 4 hours. I mean, I was at a place, if you called me on the phone, said, hey, let's go run 20.

Done. Let's go do it. I'm in good shape, right? And in 2007, I was running the marathon. We prayed before that day that God would be glorified before we went and ran the marathon.

That's what we prayed. And we started in the back so that we could pass people, because it's psychologically good when you start cruising by people. And that's what we were doing. And I ran with a friend. We ran all summer long.

Some days he was better, some days I was better. Both same pace. We knew what we were going to do that day. In Chicago, temperatures went up to 88 degrees, nearly 90 degrees. That day, humid Chicago marathon ran out of water.

People were passing out because they were dehydrated and all that stuff. And if

you know me at all, I'm super competitive, so I'm like, I don't care what happens. I'm finishing this sucker. But normally at about mile 17, I would start to feel a little fatigue. I started feeling fatigue at mile two, right?

And I kept asking my friend, are you feeling this? He's like, no, I feel okay. Are you feeling this at mile five? No, I feel okay. At mile 13, I saw my wife, and I'm like, pray for me.

I don't even know if I can finish this thing. At mile 15, I started telling my friend, if you're feeling okay, you just need to leave. Because we started to do the walk run thing, which we had never done. And I was mad. I'm like, mad, like, why are we doing this?

And for 3 miles, I kept saying, just leave. And he started quoting top gun. And he was like, you never leave your wingman and all this kind of stuff. And so for 3 miles to mile 18, I kept telling him, just go. Finally at mile 18, he looks at me.

He's like, you wouldn't leave me, would you? And I'm like, well, if you would ask me for the last 3 miles, I for sure would. And so he takes off. So I'm kind of walking, running in downtown Chicago in between mile 18 and 19, saying, lord, I trained. I prayed.

What the heck is this? Right? It wasn't but minutes after that, I was jogging on the race course, and I noticed there was a guy that was down, but this was different than other people that were down. This guy wasn't down because of dehydration. This guy was down, down.

This guy was unconscious and had blood coming out of his mouth. And they were shooing people off to the side of the race. They're like, everybody get over, get over. So I'm getting over. I notice people are starting CPR on him, and I just felt prompted to go pray for the guy.

So I kind of wheel back around, and I get down on my knees, and I start praying by this guy's head. And when I knelt down to pray in English, all those same words that were in my office kept coming out of my mouth all over this guy. In a way that kind of

freaked me out a little bit, to be honest, because I'm like, what are you doing? You know, like. But it felt right.

So I kept praying. I got a tap on the shoulder, and somebody's like, what are you doing here? And in English, I said, well, I'm just praying for the guy. Okay, you stay. Everybody else, get away, right?

So I prayed for him again. I went down to pray. Language is coming out. I didn't know what I was saying. Ambulance pulled up.

Paramedics pulled up. I'm done because I don't know what to do. I turn around and leave. I hear this in my heart for the rest of the race. Jeff, the most important thing in this life is being prepared for the next.

The most important thing in this life is being prepared for the next. I mean, over and over, the most important thing in this life is being prepared for the next. About half

an hour later, they shut the race down. Rumor had it that a guy had died. I assumed it was that guy.

I called my wife, told her I was okay, but it was going to take me a while to finish and finish the race. And we got home that night. I looked up on the Internet, and sure enough, Chad Scheiber, at age 35, dropped dead on Ashland Avenue right as I was praying over him that day. So I was like, God, what in the world was that? So it said that he had a funeral at a certain church service.

So I looked it up online, and it said, as soon as I pulled up the thing, it said, assemblies of God church. And I'm like, oh, these people know about tongues. Cool. I'm calling them, asking them, what's up? So I called the pastor the next day.

I said, hey, I'm an evangelist. I called the secretary. I said, hey, I'm an evangelist. I need to talk to your pastor. She thought I was trying to get a speaking gig.

So she's like, he's really busy right now. And so I said, I get it. Just tell him. On Ashland Avenue yesterday in Chicago, I prayed over Chad Shiber as he died. So he took my call, and I started explaining to him the story that I explained to you.

And all I hear on the other end of this phone is, praise the Lord. Hallelujah. Praise the. That's so incredible. Awesome.

And I'm like, can you please explain to me what happened? I went to Dallas seminary. We're not taught that there's. He's like, what I believe is, you were praying exactly what needed to be prayed. His angels were carting him away to Jesus.

I said, so he was a believer. He's like, yeah, he's a believer. He was training to be an elder in our church. He's one of the most well liked people. Have you told his wife about this yet?

I'm like, I don't even know any of y'all. He said, will you come to the funeral and

share? Because here's what happened that day. The race got stopped at mile 18, right after I passed it, and they routed everybody back to the finish line. His wife was running.

The race was a mile behind him, so she got routed back to the finish line. Waited for him for a while, wasn't coming back. Went and took a shower, came back, and he still wasn't there. Went back to her room, still waiting for him. Knock on the door, thinking it's her husband, Chad.

The door opens and says, hey, your husband's dead. And the pastor said her biggest concern was that she wasn't there praying over him when he went to meet Jesus. Would you please come share the story? So I came and shared the story. Guys, from that moment on, when it comes to tongues, I can speak in tongues when I want.

I don't have to speak in tongues. Other times, I pray mostly in English, just so that you know. But if you're saying we're going to be, like a tongue speaking church, I planted the church. We've been a tongue speaking church since we planted the church.

But why don't you talk about it anymore?

Because it's not for the body. It doesn't edify anybody else. I'm telling you, God has given me a language to love him even more, and I use it sometimes. But here's what I would say when it comes to speaking in tongues is you earnestly desire. If you earnestly desire the gift of tongues, here would be a strong encouragement.

Be able to pray in English first. I mean, some of you are like, I'm just going to pray for tongues. That'll be magic. No? How about saying Jesus is Lord in English?

Because, again, gifts are not a sign of maturity, right? It's just a gift, right? So I believe prophecy in tongues still exist. I don't believe they're a sign of maturity. There are plenty of people that have lived on this planet that will not have the gift of tongues, that will not have the gift of prophecy, that are more mature than many people who have right, but earnestly desire them.

And that's why Paul goes on to say this. When it comes to your gifts, this final

point, and I'll go quickly, consider how using your gifts will best benefit others.

Whatever gifts God gives you, no matter where you're at, no matter where you work, no matter who you're around, no matter what church you're a part of, think about how your gifts can best benefit others. This is what Paul says. He says this.

Therefore, let one who speaks in a tongue pray, that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. In other words, if you have the gift of tongues, pray for the gift of interpretation. So you know what in the world it is that you're saying. He says, why?

Because when praying a tongue, my heart is full, but my mind is unfruitful. You would think that the very next thing Paul would say, therefore, I'm not going to speak in tongues anymore. He says just the opposite. Notice what he says. What's the outcome then?

I'll pray with the spirit, and I'll pray with my mind. I will also sing with the spirit, and I will sing with my mind also. In other words, Paul is saying, tongues are fine if used properly, but use your mind, too. How to use our mind in the word of God? I pray

the word of God way more than I pray in tongues.

I pray the word of God because the word of God is true and everlasting. I like praying in English. I like knowing what I'm praying about. I like telling the Lord how worthy and awesome he is and how I'm in need of him. Amen.

He says otherwise in verse 16. Here's the concern. If I bless in the spirit only, how will anyone who fills the place of the ungifted, which is somebody who can't interpret it, say the amen? At your giving thanks, since he does not know what you're saying. In other words, if a person is giving a word in a tongue and nobody knows what it is, you can't say, amen, brother.

Amen, sister. They don't even know what you're saying, right? For you are giving thanks well enough, which is good. But the other person is not edified. Therefore, he says, I thank God.

Paul praises God that I speak in tongues more than you. All tongues is a great gift for Paul. He loves it. He's glad he's using the gift. However, in the church, I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than 10,000 words in a tongue.

In other words, in a corporate setting, I'd rather say Jesus Christ is the Lord than 10,000 words in an unknown tongue. Why? Because the purpose of the church is exalting Jesus and building others up. So what does God tell you to do? He tells you this.

Be humble. Be sincere. Earnestly desire the gifts. Desire how the Lord might use the gifts to build up others, and use any gift that God gave you to exalt the Lord Jesus, build others up. Now, I know this is a lot to take in on a Sunday morning, and I know everybody comes from a different background, and some of you are here like, I don't even know what the heck you just got done talking about.

Here's what I would say to you. Jesus Christ is Lord, and he loves you unconditionally. He wants to have a relationship with you. That's what you need to pick

up from today. Amen.

And for some of you that come from this background over here, that background is not bad. And for some of you that come from this background over here, that background is not bad. Here's what's good, the word of God. And for you to wrestle with it and be obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ in whatever he should shows you. Amen.

But we want to be a church that expresses the fullness of all the operations of the gifts and experiences, the fullness of God's power, done in humility, done in service to exalt the Lord in every way. Amen. Amen. Would you stand with me as we pray? Lord Jesus, let today be an opportunity for us to grow in our understanding as to who you are, Lord.

If we're challenged, let us go back to the word. If we're encouraged, let us go back to the word. But again, Lord, let you be exalted so that we can build one another up. And advance your kingdom. We give you all the praise.

In Jesus name, amen.