

The Awe___ of Worship – 1 Corinthians 14

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This past week at Yankee stadium a young man arranged for the big screen to show him proposing to his girlfriend in between innings. It was going to be awesome. And now it was time. He knew what was going to happen. She had no idea. He gets down on his knee to propose. He opens up the ring box but much to his horror the ring was not there. The look on his face was one of great emotional dismay. It was awful. Those seated in the immediate area began looking for the ring. On the ground. On the seats. In the popcorn box. No one could find it. The ring was lost. It was awful. His girlfriend picked up a jacket and began to rummage through the pockets on the jacket. And seconds later the ring was found . . . in the cuff of her jeans. And his and her reaction went from awful to awe filled!!!. The bride to be was smiling from ear to ear. As we wrap up our study on spiritual gifts this morning we recall from 1 Corinthians 12 and 13 the diversity of gifts to given by the amazingly creative God to his people. God distributes these various gifts in different measure to his people so that working together something beautiful is formed, a mosaic, known as the body of Christ. And that is awesome. Since these gifts are given by God in his grace we have no need to boast or pout and want to quit. That would be awful. Which leads us to chapter 13 where we learn that love is the key that binds us together and where our love fails, God's love never fails and that is awesome.

And now as we jump into 1 Corinthians 14 it begins this way :1a **“Follow the way of love ”** The way of love is what happens as Christ love compels us. The way of love is to permeate and pour through and out every spiritual gift we have. Love is not just an emotion. It is not just a noun. It is an action verb. Love looks like something. It looks like this: Mark 10:45 **For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.** Christ's love compels us. Think of it this way the closer we are to Christ the closer we are to one another. Picture coming closer and closer to the cross from your seats. We would all get closer and closer to each other. The closer we get to Christ and to one another the more we see that all of our sins and all the sins of others that drive us nuts have found their redemption, their payment price. The animosity crumbles. That is liberating. That is awesome. *1 Peter 4:8-11* **Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. ⁹ Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. ¹⁰ Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. ¹¹ If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.**

How was the way of love demonstrated to you this morning at the welcome of worship? Now keep in mind the welcome of worship happens before the worship time actually begins. The welcome is building the ground floor. For a lot of us before we ever get out of our car we receive a wave from the welcome team. There are smiling faces on the host and usher team people to greet us. The people and the smells of the food of the Victory Café are inviting you over. Isn't that awe some. And you know what – they do that out of love and that is an awe filled thing! Don't the members of all of our support teams do an awesome job?!! (If you want to be a part of our teams talk with me after service and I will connect you up.) And understand whether you are on one of these teams or not when you welcome those you know and those you don't know, when you open a door, when you let someone go first in the Victory Café line, when you help with a small child, when you pray, you are welcoming like Christ through your service. This is the way of love. This is a great start to an awe filled worship experience.

Paul continues: (1 Corinthians 14:4-11, 23) **Anyone who speaks in a tongue edifies themselves, but the one who prophesies edifies the church. ⁵ I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be edified. ⁶ Now, brothers and sisters, if I come to you and speak in tongues, what good will I be to you, unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or word of instruction? Even in the case of lifeless things that make sounds, such as the pipe or harp, how will anyone know what tune is being played unless there is a distinction in the notes? ⁸ Again, if the trumpet does not sound a clear call, who will get ready for battle? ⁹ So it is with you. Unless you speak intelligible words with your tongue, how will anyone know what you are saying? You will just**

be speaking into the air. ¹⁰ Undoubtedly there are all sorts of languages in the world, yet none of them is without meaning. ¹¹ If then I do not grasp the meaning of what someone is saying, I am a foreigner to the speaker, and the speaker is a foreigner to me. **So if the whole church comes together and everyone speaks in tongues, and inquirers or unbelievers come in, will they not say that you are out of your mind?** The Corinthian Church was a new church. It was an up and coming church. They had the Corinthian Café. The Corinthian kids. The Corinthian chariot park team. The Corinthians choir. All that stuff. They were fired up. They were desirous of spiritual gifts. They especially yearned for the lazer lights, flashly, look at me gifts. They wanted the brand name gifts. They wanted the Coach, Gucci, the Hilfiger, they wanted the Dior, the Chanel, the Dolce and Gabbana, they wanted the Armani, the Louis Vuitton etc., Cuz they knew what we think we know - you get what you pay for right? And for them this stand out spiritual gift, the look at me gift, the red carpet gift was speaking in tongues. And those who had it were it and those who did not have it, were definitely not it. And so any number of people where feeling smug because they had the goods and some were feel like, well not much, cuz they didn't. So some of the worshippers felt like second class citizens, they had gifts but not "the gifts." It was awful. You know about the haves and the have nots right? They had fallen into a two caste system in worship and it was awful. Have you ever felt on either side of that have/have not line? Time to pick teams and you are on the have not side. It is definitely not comfortable on the have not side and when we are following the way of love it really isn't all that comfortable on that have side either because we know that we are blessed to be a blessing. Call Day back at the Seminary. Some of us got Calls and some did not. Even for those of us who got Calls it was not a great day because our heart hurt for those who didn't.

Paul interjects into the new congregation – hold the phone. If guests come and they hear all these languages that they don't understand they are going to think you are messed up like when musical instruments are played without any distinction in the notes. That's why I am not on the music team because it would just be messed up. (Wednesday afternoon Pastor Ben grabs up his guitar and just starts strumming a little for the fun it. If on Wednesday afternoon I had grabbed up Pastor Ben's guitar and started to strum in love Pastor Ben would have said, Bill put down the guitar and just back away.) Are there things that in our worship that are messed up? Be nice. But one things I can think of that might be awful that I might do is break into the speaking of the Christianese tongue, using words like homiletics, hermeneutics, dogmatics, dispensation, or the piel tense of the Hebrew word. Those things are like speaking in tongues. Not many would understand. If we have something that are messed up in our worship, meaning things you don't understand, let me or Pastor Ben know. Because we don't want you to have an awful worship experience here, we want you to be awe filled worship experience which leads us to . . .

Verse 3, 12, 18-19, 24-25 **But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort. So it is with you. Since you are eager for gifts of the Spirit, try to excel in those that build up the church.** ¹⁸ **I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.** ¹⁹ **But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue.** ²⁴ **But if an unbeliever or an inquirer comes in while everyone is prophesying, they are convicted of sin and are brought under judgment by all,** ²⁵ **as the secrets of their hearts are laid bare. So they will fall down and worship God, exclaiming, "God is really among you!"** Paul brings out his measuring scale and says 5 words, just 5 words are better more weighty than 10K words in a tongue that people don't understand. Prophecy, proclaiming and teaching the truth would have a completely different effect than speaking in tongues. The Word of God is living and active. God's Word is powerful and it endures forever. It is the truth of God. It meets us where we are at. Have any secrets? If it a secret of shame because of what you have done or left undone. Know that God in his Word tells us he has taken away our sin and so there is nor reason for guilt or shame. Is it shame because of what someone has done to you know that God is holding you in his arms, close to his heart. That he delights in you and rejoices over you and promises you healing. Is it a secret of sinful lifestyle? Know that God will give you the power to turn from the sins and lies and lead you to a truly meaningful and fulfilling life. knows about your every pains, frustration, fears. All these things are not reasons to run from God, they are reasons to run to God because he is the healer of the deep down things. God is our hope, our rescue, our salvation. When we realize this, the result is this: **The result is God is really in this place.** Into your circumstance, into your situation, into your heart God says to you today: Isaiah 55:3 **Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love.** That is awesome.

Verses 39-40Therefore, my brothers and sisters, be eager to prophesy, and do not forbid speaking in tongues. ⁴⁰ But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way. Orderly worship is not about worshiping the recipient of any gift, nor worshipping the gift but worshiping the gift Giver. Orderly worship is communicating God's Word clearly to the culture in front of us. In its simplest form orderly worship is getting the order right of who we are and who God is. Orderly worship takes us to Jesus: **Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage ⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!** The bottom line is I have this malady called sin. It comes with a death sentence. But it is not like a get to live a good life and then just die in my sleep. Sin corrupts and ruins everything. Your morality may keep you out of jail but it is only the blood of Jesus that will keep you out of hell. God in his covenant of faithful love with you provided for you and me a get out of hell card free. Free for you and me that is. But it was not free for Jesus. It cost him everything; his position, his reputation, his standing, his glory, his life. But no one took his life for you he gave it up freely. It's like the song that says, "Where sin runs deep your grace is more. And where grace is found is where you are." Orderly worship takes us from the chaos and confusion of our lives to the chaos and confusion of what happened to Jesus on the cross and through his chaos we have calm. But neither Christianity nor orderly worship stops there: ⁹ **Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.** To the degree that we realize our true lostness and what God was willing to give up to get us back to him is the degree to which we are filled with awe. May all of our time together always move us from our awfulness and point us to Christ who is our not only our calm in the storm but our Savior, who exchanged our awfulness with his awesomeness. Amen.