

THE PRIORITY OF EDIFICATION IN OUR WORSHIP

SERIES: SPIRITUAL REALITIES IN THE CHURCH

By Doug Goins

I've been blessed with several weeks of rest and refreshment this summer. I had the privilege of spending ten days in the Colorado Rockies with my two sons, who are twenty-eight and seventeen. We spent a week camping together. Candy and I and the kids also spent a week at Lake Siskiyou, at the foot of Mount Shasta in northern California, for PBC's annual family camp. For me, that's vacation. Backpacking, camping, and being in the wilderness are the most refreshing, restful things I can do. I love the communion with the Lord in such settings and the way he speaks through his creation. On both of those trips I had some wonderful, intense, private times of worship and devotion with the Lord.

But I've had a growing anticipation of getting back into the regular rhythm of Sunday morning worship here at PBC. And that is as it should be. God created us for the personal, private moments of intense devotion and worship, and he also created us to be part of a family. Worship belongs in a community setting as well.

I love church services at PBC. I've been coming here twenty years. I would come to church here even if I didn't get paid to! I love being with all the folks here.

I heard a story a few months ago that I cannot identify with at all. It was about a fellow who came down to the breakfast table one Sunday morning and said to his mother that he wasn't going to go to church that morning.

His mother said, "Come on, you go to church every Sunday morning. You've got to go this morning."

He said, "No, I've been thinking about it, and I just don't want to go any more."

"Give me two good reasons why you shouldn't go to church," she said.

"Well, I realized I don't really like the people there all that much, and I don't think they really like me very much, either," he argued.

"That is ridiculous."

"Okay, you give me two good reasons why I should go to church."

"First of all, you're forty-seven years old," his mother said, "and second, you're the pastor of the church."

There were a number of believers in the church in Corinth who could have identified with this man's sentiment, because that church struggled with unity, with their sense of identity, and with their place and purpose in the church. They also battled over what should be the priorities in worship and the purpose of their worship service.

We're going to devote two messages to 1 Corinthians 14. In order for this to really make sense, you need to read the next message ([Discovery Paper 4534](#)) as well. First Corinthians 14:26 is pivotal: "What is the outcome then, brethren? When you assemble, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification." Here we see the purpose and priority for worship. When we come to church services, it ought to strengthen us, build us up, edify us. It ought to result in spiritual benefit and growth.

In chapter 14 Paul is going to isolate two features of the worship service in Corinth and discuss their

relative value. Verse 26 alludes to both. One is the spiritual gift of prophesying, which wraps itself around the two phrases "a teaching" and "a revelation." The other is the spiritual gift of tongues, and the gift of interpretation that necessarily goes with it.

We're going to focus on verses 1-25 in this message. They deal with the priority of edification in worship. That word "edification" is used seven different times in verses 1-26. In Paul's mind, edification is central. If we look carefully at the situation in the Corinthian church and at Paul's apostolic counsel, we may discover a bit about what our own purpose and priorities are in our worship services. The commitment we're going to see here-and I hope it's ours as well-is for worship to be meaningful to followers of Jesus Christ, and understandable even to people who are not yet Christians.

LOVE IS THE CONTROLLING FACTOR

Now, we need to see 1 Corinthians 14 in the context of chapters 12 and 13. Remember, Paul said at the beginning of chapter 12, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware." Then he proceeded to talk about the importance of the wonderful variety of gifts with which God has blessed the church. Each one of us is gifted according to God's will, and he has specific ministries for us in the body. In chapter 13 Paul talked about how *agape*, the supernatural love of God, is greater than any spiritual gift, and how it needs to be the context in which our spiritual gifts are expressed.

Now look at 14:1. He's tying chapter 14 back to both of these chapters.

Pursue love, yet desire earnestly spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophesy.

This first verse says that spiritual gifts are given as a channel for love. The basic reason that we're to express our spiritual gifts, to minister and serve, is for the benefit of other people. In this discussion of gifts, especially tongues and prophesying, love ought to be the controlling factor in our consideration.

Paul says, "...Desire earnestly spiritual gifts..." That echoes 12:31: "But earnestly desire the greater gifts." Those greater gifts, as we saw when we studied chapter 12 ([Discovery Papers 4530-31](#)), are the gifts of edification, the gifts of instruction in the word, the support gifts. They are the gifts of apostle, prophet, evangelist, teacher, and pastor-teacher. We must have those gifts as the solid foundation on which the expression of all other gifts is built.

Apparently the Corinthian church had exalted the gift of tongues above the prophetic gift of the proclamation of truth, and what Paul wants to do in this chapter is restore a healthy balance to the public worship life of that congregation. In verses 2-5 he compares and contrasts these two gifts of speaking in tongues and prophesying:

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 and exhortation and consolation. One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself; but one who prophesies edifies the church. Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy; and greater is one who prophesies than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may receive edifying.

We looked briefly at the two gifts of prophesying and tongues in chapters 11 and 12. Let me quickly review what those two gifts are.

THE PRACTICAL BENEFIT OF PROPHECY TO OTHERS

In the broadest sense, the gift of prophesying is very close to what we would call teaching or preaching
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today. It means to reflect the truth of the word of God. Paul's concern is the ministry of the word in public worship, through which God speaks to his people. Prophesying is the ability to speak the mind of God, to stand before the word of God and reflect its reality to people. At times throughout Biblical history, there has been an element of prediction. But it is primarily the ability to see God's movement in history and then help people understand what he is doing now. John Calvin called the gift of prophesying "the peculiar gift of explaining revelation."

Paul says in 14:3 that there will be three obvious effects or results when prophecy is exercised in the church. The first is edification. That's a great word from the building trade. It means building or construction. A prophet is a home-builder. The word can be used either for laying a foundation, which speaks of stability, or retrofitting or repairing a building that already exists, strengthening it and shoring it up. So applying this word to our lives, it means that when prophecy is exercised, we will be spiritually strengthened and stabilized in our emotions and our understanding.

The second effect of prophesying is exhortation. That means to motivate, to come to a person's side and put an arm around their shoulder, to encourage that person, to give direction. This word exhortation doesn't mean that you shake your finger in somebody's face and holler at them. We sometimes have the idea that a prophet is someone who thunders from on high at people. But exhortation means you're on the same level; with your arm around their shoulder, you're saying, "Would you consider this truth?"

The third effect of prophecy is consolation, or literally, "near speech, talking very closely." It means to comfort somebody with tenderness and hope, to empathize with that person, to give sensitive counsel.

Putting those all together, we can see that prophecy is very personal and practical in how it touches us. You've probably had the experience of sitting under a message in which the Scriptures are being opened up, and it seems to speak right to your need, your questions, your confusion, your frustration, perhaps sinful rebellion in your life. You think, "My goodness, how did that speaker know about me?" Well, they didn't. The Spirit of God was at work through that prophetic gift, speaking directly to your heart. That's why Paul is so adamant about the centrality of this ministry in the life of the church. "...One who prophesies edifies the church."

THE INTERNAL BENEFIT OF TONGUES TO ONESELF

In contrast, those person who speak in tongues edify only themselves when they use that gift. Now, as we saw when we studied tongues back in chapter 12, it is the ability to speak an unlearned, foreign, human language. It can be understood by somebody who knows that language, but not by the person speaking it. There are different understandings of what the gift of tongues might have been in the early church and what it might be today, and I will talk a bit more about that in the next message. But let me give you some reasons why I believe the gift of tongues is the gift of languages.

First, the most consistent way the Bible uses that word "tongues" is to refer to human language. Second, when the Spirit was poured out on the church in Jerusalem at Pentecost, it was known foreign languages, sixteen of them (Acts 2), that were expressed. Third, the word that the apostle Paul uses for interpreter or interpretation was most often used for somebody in the first century who translated a foreign language that was being spoken, just as we talk about an interpreter or translator through whom someone speaks today. And finally, in verse 21 Paul quotes Isaiah 28:11, in which the prophet Isaiah predicted the gift of tongues: "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people." The context of this verse is clearly talking about known human languages that were spoken.

There are two important characteristics of the gift of tongues that come out of our passage. The first one is in verse 2: "...One who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men, but to God...." That is confirmed in verse 28: "...If there is no interpreter, let [the speaker] keep silent in the church; and let him speak to himself and to God." The fact of tongues' being an expression to God and not to men is very consistent with what happened in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost. That worldwide gathering who listened to the disciples speak in other tongues said, "...We hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God" (Acts 2:11). They were speaking words of praise and worship about and to God. So tongues-speaking expresses thanksgiving, praise, and worship; and probably in that setting they incorporated wonderful old-testament passages of Messianic hope, salvation, and promise.

We can learn a bit about the form and the content of tongues in verse 14 of our passage: "...If I pray in a tongue." Verse 15: "...I shall sing with the spirit..." (in his own spirit). Verse 16: "...If you bless in the spirit..." That's blessing God's name. Also in verse 16: "...Your giving of thanks..." (to God). In verse 17 that is repeated: "For you are giving thanks well enough..." So any expression of the gift of tongues will be rich with worshipful prayer and singing and speaking, and it will be addressed to the Lord, thanking him, blessing him, praising him for his great saving grace and mercy. Again, it's not addressed to men, and unless the speaker or somebody else in the church is gifted to interpret the tongue, everyone there will be excluded from participation in the praise and worship.

Now, tongues is a good thing. Verse 4: "One who speaks in a tongue edifies himself..." Verse 5: "Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues..." There is a wonderful benefit to the person praising God in a language they've never learned and don't even understand themselves. Apparently there is refreshment in their spirit, the core or the central essence of their humanity. They cry out and worship God, but it's not formed in conscious thought or articulated into words. They know they're worshipping, but they don't know how.

But while speaking in tongues is a wonderful experience, the one speaking in tongues is the only one benefiting. That was the problem in Corinth. There was much speaking in tongues with very little concern for the other people who were there. The point Paul will develop in this chapter is that tongues without interpretation is self-centered. It ignores the needs of other people. Apparently the Christians in Corinth were so enamored with this gift that they had forgotten the truths Paul reviews in 1 Corinthians 13—that they were to pursue love, which was to control and define every expression of gifts in their church. They were edifying themselves with their gifts, but they weren't concerned with the edification of the whole church. They were glorying in this supernatural manifestation, being able to speak a language they had never learned, but they seemed to be unaware of its place or purpose. They were just enjoying their own personal, internal worship life.

PROPHECY COMMUNICATES TRUTH; UNINTERPRETED TONGUES DON'T

The Corinthians' expression of tongues was detrimental to their listening to the prophetic exposition of the word of God. So now Paul is going to face the problem head-on. He is going to amplify his comparison of tongues and prophesying. He will look at their relative value in terms of the speaker, in terms of other people, and finally in terms of nonbelievers who might be a part of that fellowship in a given worship service. In verses 6-19 he is going to stress the inferiority of tongues in the building up of the whole church if they're not interpreted. To start, in verses 6-12 he is concerned about the fact that there's no clear message that can be understood in tongues.

But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what shall I profit you, unless I speak to you either by way of revelation or of knowledge or of prophecy or of teaching? Yet 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 on the harp? For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle?

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. There are, perhaps, a great many kinds of languages in the world, and no kind is without meaning. If then I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be to the one who speaks a barbarian, and the one who speaks will be a barbarian to me. So also you, since you are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek to abound for the edification of the church.

The last directive means to pray for and commit oneself to ministries that do clearly communicate truth: instruction and proclamation. Paul uses four words in verse 6 to summarize this ministry of instruction that offers clear spiritual communication, and each of the four words emphasizes a different aspect of the content.

First there is *revelation*, which deals with ultimate reality or truth. Remember, Paul said he was taught the word of God by Jesus Christ directly. Then he wrote it down for us as an apostle, so now we have revelation in the enscripturated word of God. Second, we talked about the gift of *knowledge* when we studied chapter 12. That is the exposition of revealed truth; studying God's word, systematizing it, categorizing it, being able to present it cogently to people. Third is *prophecy*, which is the focus of this chapter. And fourth is *teaching* or instruction, the general application of Christian truth directly from God's word.

Paul illustrates why clear communication is so important using the realm of musical communication in verses 7-9 and using the realm of human conversation in verses 10-12. The challenge to a musician playing a flute, guitar, or trumpet is to play distinct notes that communicate a musical message. Just making noise with an instrument doesn't benefit anyone.

I once had a very embarrassing experience doing that. I played the trumpet from fifth grade through college. I eventually got to be pretty good, but in the fifth and sixth grade I wasn't very good yet. I was attending a tiny school in a small town in Indiana with grades 6-12 all together. So as a sixth-grader who was barely six months into trumpet playing, I was in the high school band. I had a uniform and the whole thing. It was a very heady experience. But I really wasn't mature enough to have a position in the high school band. I was the last trumpet, too, a short, fat kid clear at the end of the row. At the dress rehearsal before our big fall concert, there was a grand pause in the piece of music we were playing. In a grand pause the tempo is broken, and there's a big, dramatic, totally silent moment. I chose that moment to blow out the spit valve of my trumpet, very loudly. It was an indistinct sound, of no benefit to anyone. It really was funny and disruptive, and the instructor asked me to leave the rehearsal.

That's part of the point Paul is making: You can have all the fun in the world making all kinds of noises, but if it doesn't communicate something edifying, there's no point to it. He makes the same point when he talks about human languages in verses 10-12. There are many different languages on the face of the earth (these verses give us another confirmation that the gift of tongues in the new testament is the gift of languages). Every language has meaning, but only if you know the language.

Danny Hall, Rich Carlson, Brent Becker, and I went to Romania last spring. We could have preached our hearts out in English, anointed by the Spirit, incredibly awesome as preachers, but if we hadn't had a translator who was putting our words into the Romanian language, we would have been, in Paul's words, blowing into the air. It wouldn't have had any impact at all, because no content would have been communicated.

INTERPRETATION INCLUDES ONE'S MIND IN PRAISE

Now in the next section, Paul encourages the Corinthian Christians that the true, Biblical gift of tongues can be exercised for the benefit of the entire congregation, but he says that even interpreted tongues have less value in the whole scheme of things than the gift of prophesying. Paul reminds the Corinthians that it's better to be a blessing to the whole church than to experience some kind of personal spiritual excitement from exercising the gift of tongues. First of all, in verses 13-15, he tells the individual who is speaking in tongues to pray for the power to interpret so that communication will be intelligible even to him.

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. What is the outcome then? I shall pray with the spirit and I shall pray with the mind also; I shall sing with the spirit and I shall sing with the mind also.

Again, if the believer speaks in a tongue, the inner person of his spirit may enjoy the experience, but the mind is not a part of it. It's a good thing to pray and sing in the spirit, but it's better to include the mind, to understand what you're praying and singing. That's where interpretation comes in. It first benefits the one speaking in tongues, so he can understand what he's saying. Paul is saying, "If I'm going to express praise and worship in tongues in church, I want to be able to interpret what I pray or sing. I'm going to pray and

INTERPRETATION ALLOWS OTHERS TO PARTICIPATE

Then he applies the same principle to other believers in the church service, and he basically says that tongues without interpretation excludes people, and that's not what worship is about. Worship includes everyone. Look at verses 16-17:

Otherwise if you bless in the spirit only, how will the one who fills the place of the ungifted say the "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since he does not know what you are saying? For you are giving thanks well enough, but the other man is not edified.

Paul's assumption is that people are participating, listening, wanting to be able to respond to what is said in praise and worship in the service. But if they don't understand what is being said, then they can't participate. Obviously they had much freedom in Corinth; there were a lot of "amens" during the preaching and worship. But "amen" means "I agree with that; so be it." Paul says you can't say that if you don't know what is being said.

He also expresses concern about the ungifted person. All of us, if we belong to Jesus Christ, have been gifted with salvation and with the Spirit, and we've been given spiritual gifts. So the ungifted person probably is a seeker, somebody who is not yet a believer, but who is in the process of investigating and exploring. Paul says that if they don't know what is going on, then that will impede the process of their investigation.

PAUL'S OWN EXPRESSION OF THE GIFT OF TONGUES

Verses 18-19 are autobiographical. Again Paul makes the strong point that tongues are a good thing, but prophesying is much more important.

I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue.

Obviously he's using hyperbole to get the point across.

It's important to ask when and how the apostle Paul used the gift of tongues. Let me suggest a possibility for your consideration. First of all, there are two things that we need to add about tongues that we haven't stressed yet.

Verse 22 from the next paragraph says, "So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe." He tells us that tongues is a sign gift to be exercised for the benefit of non-Christians. That was its purpose at Pentecost, as we see in Acts 2. It arrested attention as the disciples declared the magnificence of God to the thousands of Jewish pilgrims from all over the world in their native languages. Their praises were immediately followed by Peter's preaching of the gospel as he interpreted the events to the crowd. So the expression of tongues, like any good sign, directed the attention to the saving message of Jesus Christ, which is the more important issue. A billboard arrests attention, but surely you don't get hung up with the sign itself. Its advertisers want you to think about the message it's pointing to. That's the purpose of any sign in our culture today. Tongues awakened people to the presence and the power of God at Pentecost, but it was Peter's prophetic preaching that explained who this God was and called the people to believe what God had said in his word. So first of all, tongues is a sign to unbelievers; it's not for the benefit of Christians gathered in public worship.

Second, there are only four places in the New Testament that describe what happened when the gift of tongues was manifested. In each case it was a public, signatory demonstration. Acts 2 is the first one. The second is in Acts 10, in Caesarea, the home of Cornelius, the Gentile Roman military officer. The third is in Acts 19 in Ephesus. The fourth is here in the church in Corinth. It's the only church mentioned in the New Testament where tongues was an issue as a part of their life and worship.

Now, in light of that, how could the apostle Paul have exercised his gift of tongues more than any Corinthian Christian? Let me suggest this: If you trace Paul's travels in the book of Acts, you find that he always went first to the Jewish synagogue in every city he visited, if he could find a synagogue. As a visiting Jewish rabbi he would preach there, until he was thrown out. Now, perhaps Paul exercised the gift of tongues in those settings, because there was an opportunity for visiting teachers to offer public praise to God in the synagogue service. In the Diaspora the Jews had scattered around the Mediterranean basin, and portions of the service could be expressed in the native vernacular instead of the Hebrew language. So the Jewish people scattered around the ancient world would have heard worship offered in the native Gentile tongue of their region, and by a rabbi who had never learned the local language. That would be tremendously arresting. It would be a powerful sign, perhaps preparing them to hear the gospel of their Messiah, Jesus Christ. This seems to be confirmed in the closing paragraph as Paul summarizes the purpose of tongues and prophesying in the building up of the whole church.

But before the summary, in verse 20 there's a call to mature thinking about this issue of tongues and prophesying:

Brethren, do not be children in your thinking; yet in evil be babes, but in your thinking be mature.

A preoccupation with tongues without concern for their place and purpose, or their effect on oneself or others is childish. Paul says we're to be innocent or childlike when it comes to evil or sin, but not in our use of spiritual gifts. Some of the Corinthian believers had come to believe that speaking in tongues was evidence of spiritual maturity. But Paul is making it clear in this chapter that this gift can be exercised in an unspiritual, immature way. Twice he uses the word "thinking" in verse 20. That word means the faculty of wise, thoughtful, rational investigation. Mature faith will never stress the noncognitive or nonrational over the cognitive or rational. I'm not saying the noncognitive and nonrational have no place, but the cognitive and the rational must be central to the life of the church.

TONGUES ARE A SIGN, BUT PROPHECY CHANGES HEARTS

In the final four verses Paul in summary evaluates the place of both tongues and prophesying and tells us how to be mature in our thinking about these gifts.

In the Law it is written, "By men of strange tongues and by the lips of strangers I will speak to this people, and even so they will not listen to me," says the Lord. So then tongues are for a sign, not to those who believe, but to unbelievers; but prophecy is for a sign, not to unbelievers, but to those who believe. If therefore the whole church should assemble together and all speak in tongues, and ungifted men or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are mad? But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or an ungifted man enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all; the secrets of his heart are disclosed; and so he will fall on his face and worship God, declaring that God is certainly among you.

Paul's primary concern in this closing paragraph is the unsaved person who happens to come into the worship service. He emphasizes once again the superiority of prophesying over tongues. A message in tongues, even if it's interpreted, could never bring conviction of sin to the heart of a nonbeliever. In fact, Paul says, the non-Christian might hear a number of people speaking in tongues and think that they were all crazy, and leave before he ever had a chance to hear truth from the enscripturated word of God. As we saw

earlier, speaking in tongues wasn't used for evangelism, either at Pentecost or in the meetings of the early church. At most, it was a pre-evangelistic tool to draw attention to the gospel.

Tongues did have a very specific message for the nonbelieving Jews of the first century. That passage Paul quoted from Isaiah is the only passage in the Old Testament that predicts languages in the New Testament. That passage is a reference to the invading Assyrian armies who were coming in judgment on the nation of Israel. Their language was barbaric, unrecognizable. God would rather speak to his people always in clear, spiritual communication, and he tried to do that with Israel through the prophets. But Israel wouldn't listen, so God had to speak through these unknown languages to get Israel's attention. It was a word of judgment when they heard the Assyrian language being spoken.

We know that the Jews always wanted miracles. They were power-hungry for signs and wonders. Jesus lamented that fact in his ministry, and Paul, in the first chapter of this letter, lamented the same thing. The Jews were always looking for miraculous signs, and it's hard for truth to penetrate that kind of desire. At Pentecost, the fact that the disciples of Jesus spoke in tongues was a sign to the unbelieving Jews who were there celebrating Passover. Again, that miracle didn't convict their hearts. It took Peter's prophetic preaching in Aramaic, which they all did understand, to bring them to the point of conviction about their sin and conversion, to new life in Jesus Christ.

That's why Paul concludes with a call to restore prophesying to its rightful place at the center of the worship life of the church. Again, he says, "...I desire to speak five words with my mind, that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue." The power of the word of God intelligently and clearly spoken is the focal point of these last verses. A non-Christian visitor should be able to form an opinion about Christian life that is shaped by a prophetic ministry that explains and expounds the will of God, rather than by an experience that makes them think the worshippers have all taken leave of their senses.

And there is hope that they will respond in saving faith and become part of the family of God. Listen to how Eugene Peterson paraphrases that hope in the last two verses:

"...If some unbelieving outsiders walk in on a service where people are speaking out God's truth, the plain words will bring them up against the truth and probe their hearts. Before you know it, they're going to be on their faces before God, recognizing that God is among you." (1)

In my twenty years here at PBC, I have seen a number of individuals who came into this place as unbelievers and sat here week after week being confronted by the clear word of God. Larry Ripper is one of them. I heard Larry's testimony recently. He sat here as an engineer for six months, fighting the truth. Eventually it broke through. More recently, Willy Rempfer sat under the compelling word of God every week for about four months until he was finally drawn to faith in Jesus Christ.

I told you at the beginning how much I love our Sunday morning services of worship at PBC. I know I'm going to hear God's truth, his plain words, whether they're being read, sung, dramatized, prayed, or preached expositionally. We have a rich heritage of the centrality of God's clear, prophetic word in our life and worship. No matter who is leading in worship or preaching at PBC-and if you've been here awhile you know there's a great variety of people who are offering leadership from this platform-they are committed to accurately reflecting God's words and God's ways, because it's his communication that makes our communication necessary. We've got to speak, and we can't speak anything else but what he has already spoken.

I want to read in closing a great word from John R. W. Stott about the connection between the word and worship. It's from his tremendous book *Between Two Worlds*.

"Word and worship belong indissolubly to each other. All worship is an intelligent and loving response to the revelation of God because it is the adoration of His name. Therefore, acceptable worship is impossible without preaching, for preaching is making known the name of the Lord, and worship is praising the name of the Lord made known. Far from being an alien intrusion into worship, the reading and preaching of the

word are actually indispensable to it. The two cannot be divorced. Indeed, it is their unnatural divorce which accounts for the low level of so much contemporary worship. Our worship is poor because our knowledge of God is poor, and our knowledge of God is poor because our preaching is poor. But when the word of God is expounded in its fullness, and the congregation begin to glimpse the glory of the living God, they bow down in solemn awe and joyful wonder before his throne. It's preaching which accomplishes this, the proclamation of the word of God in the power of the Spirit of God. That's why preaching is so unique and irreplaceable." (2)

Notes:

1. Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message*, © 1993, 1994 by Eugene H. Peterson. NavPress Publishing Group, Colorado Springs, CO. P. 362.

22. John R. W. Stott, *Between Two Worlds*, ©1982, Wm. B Eerdmans Publishing, Grand Rapids, MI. P. 82.

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