



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 Corinthians 14: 6-19

1 Corinthians

"Barbarians in the Church"

TRANSCRIPT

Thank you, Mark, and good morning. We are continuing our studies in 1 Corinthians in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 where Paul is discussing the subject of tongues. A subject that's very interesting to us in our day. We're going to look at a rather lengthy section of it, from verses 6 down through verse 19. 1 Corinthians 14, beginning with verse 6.

"But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking in tongues, what will 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 will 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.

"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 will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also. 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 person is not edified. I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all; however, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue." May the Lord bless this reading of His word. Let's bow together in a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we thank You for this time. We praise You for it. It is what You have ordered in the way the church is to function. We are to meet on the first day of the week. We are to open Your word. We are to read it, and study it. And so we pray Your blessings upon us as we do that. We look to You for the blessing because, left to ourselves, we may be able to read, we may be able to know the meaning of the words, but it will not reside within us. It will not penetrate our souls and really take root in us. We will not have a true understanding of it, apart from the illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit. And so, we pray for His ministry, that He will illuminate the page of Scripture. And what a blessing it is to have the page of Scripture, to have this book, this unique book; in all of the world, there's no book like the Bible. The 66 books of it, which are all equally inspired, all inerrant, all Your revelation to Your people. And so, Father, we give You praise and thanks for this book. It is the great blessing that we have in this world. The treasures, the riches of this world cannot compare with this book. And, as Paul instructs us in this passage, we are to give attention to it. Ministry is to be intelligible. It's to be understood. And we have this book in our language. We can read it. We can, by Your grace, understand it, and be changed by it. So, we thank You. We thank You for the Word of God. We thank You for Your revelation to us, and we pray at this time that You'd bless us as we look into it, and what we consider this subject that Paul spends so much time on in these chapters of the Book of 1 Corinthians. May we understand his meaning. May we draw the proper application for each of our lives from it. We pray that the Spirit of God would minister in that way to instruct us and build us up in the faith, and in so doing conform us to the image of Jesus Christ.

So, bless us spiritually, bless us materially as well. We pray that You would make provision for us in the material things of life, the physical things of life. We pray for those who are unemployed, bless them with employment, give them patience and diligence in seeking employment and open doors of opportunity for them. For

those who are sick, we pray for them. We pray that You would give healing and encouragement. It can be a very discouraging experience in life to be sick, to have a chronic illness, to be laid up for a period of time. It affects our spiritual condition. And Father, we pray that You'd give them encouragement in the midst of that, and then healing. Bless the doctors that attend to those who are undergoing procedures. We pray that they be successful, and bless the discouraged, Lord, just who are weighed down with the trials of life. We pray that You'd encourage them. And bless all of us with a sense of thanksgiving for what we have, because every one of us, in whatever situation in life we are, we are blessed by You. You are attending to our every need. You are blessing us even through the trials of life. As we pass through the valley of the shadow of death, You're with us. Before us, behind us, at our side, providing for us, even in difficult places in time. So, help us to know that, and rest in that, and bless us. Bless those who are in need with physical assistance and help, and bless all of us now with spiritual blessing. Bless us in the singing of our hymn, and bless the special music, and use all of that to prepare our hearts to worship and learn in this hour. We pray in Christ's name. Amen.

[Message] There was a time at the dawn of civilization when, according to Genesis 11, the world was united. It spoke with one tongue. That was good, but it was turned to a bad purpose, and that purpose was to make man great. So, when the people settled in the land of Shinar, they began the first great public works project. Everyone was employed building a tower. It would be colossal. Its top would reach into heaven. A metropolis would be built around it. And there, the whole human race would live to its own glory in the city of man. But God wasn't in it. You know the story. It's one of the best known in the Bible. God confused their speech. Suddenly, everyone was speaking a different tongue. No one would understand his neighbor, the building stopped, and the human race was divided by languages.

I wonder if Paul ever thought of that when he was writing chapter 14. I suspect that he did because the Corinthians were repeating Babel in their church. There were differences, of course. God wanted them united and working together. He gave them the gift of languages to help, not hinder them, in building the church. But they were misusing the gift. No one understood the tongues they spoke, and the result in Corinth was the same as it was in Shinar. Confusion. It does no one any

good to speak languages that are not understood. No one learns anything from that, and no one is edified by it. Paul tells them that in verse 6. He asks them: what if I should come to you speaking in a foreign language? What would the result of that be? They were hoping that he would come. They were hoping for a visit from the apostle where he would answer their questions, he would teach them, he would solve their problems. But, how could that happen if they could not understand him? He asks: "What will I 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 use those gifts, those gifts of revelation, those gifts of instruction, how will you be profited? So, the only benefit they would get from his visit would be through those various gifts of speech in which he would communicate truth to them in a way that they could understand it. Tongues without interpretation does not do that. They're sheer sounds. They signify something. They're in a language. Something is being said, but it's not being communicated. No one knows what is being said. Not even an apostle can speak tongues profitably apart from interpretation or translation. Without that, the gift is useless to everyone. Even if the apostle Paul himself is speaking.

So, his lesson to them is: interpret. Be clear. As great a gift as tongues is, without someone to translate the language that is spoken, it's just noise. It doesn't make sense, and it doesn't edify. That seems obvious enough, but to make the matter even clearer, even plainer, Paul illustrates it in two ways: from music and from the military. Longfellow called music the "universal language." And it is a kind of language. It speaks to us on the level of our emotions. It affects our mood if its sounds have order and clarity. But Paul asks: if the flute or harp don't produce distinct tones, if there's no melody or harmony, if they're just sounds, how will it be known what is played on them?

There's an obvious illustration of that, and if you've ever been to the Dallas Symphony, then you know what he's speaking of. Do you know the point that he's making? The orchestra comes out on stage and for the first few minutes, the musicians tune their instruments. It's not a symphony. It's a cacophony. It's just sounds. Violins, trumpets, drums. That was Babel. All kinds of languages, various families of languages that no one had ever heard before that time, and no one understood. It was just a confusion of sound. And that was the church meeting at Corinth. It was chaos. Nothing was being taught, at least nothing understandable was

being taught. Things were being said, maybe very good things, but nothing was being learned because no one could comprehend what was being said. It was completely unprofitable.

To illustrate how serious that was, Paul reminds them of the importance of the bugle in battle. If it doesn't have a distinct sound, the soldiers won't know if they are being given a signal to advance or to retreat. The confusion could result in defeat and even death. It's no less serious in the church where we deal with eternal matters of the soul. And in verse 9, Paul makes the connection. He says ministry is pointless if it's not understood. He says, all you're doing with your gifts of tongues is speaking into the air. That's like the boxer that he spoke of back in chapter 9 who swings wildly and beats the air. He doesn't land punches, and he doesn't win fights.

Well, so too, words that are heard but not understood don't convey meaning. They don't accomplish the purpose for which they're spoken. They don't edify the saints, and they don't win the lost, not if the gospel isn't heard. So, if a lost person comes, he won't hear the gospel. He won't, because he won't understand what's being said. And those who are saved but who need to be built up in the faith, they're not edified. Because they're not hearing the truth. That's tragic.

And it's not just the hypothetical situation. Later in verse 16, Paul refers to the "ungifted" being in the church. Now, it doesn't really define who the ungifted are, but it would seem, since every believer has a gift, and these don't, they're ungifted; they're most likely not believers. They're probably inquirers, people who have been drawn to the gospel. So, they're not just unbelievers. These are people who, through the work of the Holy Spirit, have an interest in these things, and they are here in the church. They come to the church to learn. They want to know more about this person of Jesus Christ and what He's done, and the changed lives that He produces. They're interested, genuinely, but they can't learn, because they don't understand anything that's being said.

Paul illustrates that further in verses 10 and 11 from ordinary life. There are, he says, a great many kinds of languages in the world. And of course, they knew that very well in Corinth. Corinth had two major harbors: one on the Adriatic side of the isthmus, and the other on the Aegean side. So, as a result of that, east and west mixed. Europe and Asia and Africa came together there in Corinth. There were all kinds of languages spoken. And, Paul says, all of those languages have meaning, but

they're useless unless the hearer understands them. A merchant, and there were probably a number of merchants in the church of Corinth. A merchant would go down to the harbor and would have known how true that was if they were trying to do some business with a man from another city who spoke another language, but he couldn't understand them. They couldn't communicate. As a result of that, no business would take place. It would be completely frustrating.

It's the same in the church. He says in verse 11, "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." Now, some versions translate that "foreigner." That's not a bad translation, but it's really not the best translation, because the best translation here is the very literal translation, *barbaros*, barbarian. The word imitates the sound of the barbarian's speech. It is bar, bar. That's what they would hear. And, to the cultured Greek, that sounded, the language of the barbarians, of those who weren't Greek, sounded very uncultured. It was like babbling. It was harsh. It was rude. This is a derogatory term that described anyone who didn't speak Greek. The Greeks felt very proud of their language, of their culture, of everything about themselves. Nothing was worse for a Greek than being a barbarian. They were the uncivilized. They were the unwashed.

So while Paul was mainly illustrating the result of unintelligible speech, that it communicates nothing, I think he's also touching on their pride. I don't know if that was his purpose, but it certainly would've been the effect, that this description was rather demeaning to them. They felt very good about themselves, these Corinthians did. They thought they were wise. He's dealt with that in the earlier part of the book. And this was a city where philosophy was very important. But they also felt very sophisticated. They could speak all kinds of languages, at least those with this gift of tongues could. They could speak supernaturally, and they did that in the meeting of the church, and it would seem since pride is such a problem in this church that they did so largely to show off to those to whom they ministered.

But, it not only did not minister to anyone; it did not show them off in a good light either. Later in verse 23, he describes what was happening in their meetings. Numerous people were speaking tongues all at the same time. It was completely unintelligible. It was chaos, and must've seemed to people who were there, who were visiting, as though a horde of barbarians had entered the church. In fact, that's really

what he says later on. He says when unbelievers visit the church, they will say, "You are mad." Well, there's a real lesson in that, a lesson about pride and selfishness. Attempts to advance or promote self often end in just the opposite, in failure and shame. That's not really the point that Paul is making here. That's not the chief lesson that he's giving, but I think that is an implication of what he's saying. It tells us the result. He's showing us here the result of a proud ambitious attitude about life. It doesn't end well. We want to exalt ourselves rather than let God exalt us at the proper time, and we end up failing. It results in shame.

It did in Babel. They were going to build a tower to make a name for themselves. They made that name all right, but it wasn't the one that they wanted; it was a name of folly. Babel. Confusion. When we think of that, we think of the folly of it all. We don't think of the greatness of man. We think of the failure of man. That's what it illustrates, and that happened in Corinth. They wanted to be sophisticated. They wanted to be well-thought of. Instead, they behave like barbarians.

So, Paul makes the application in verse 12. He says they were "zealous for spiritual gifts." Now, that's good. He's not criticizing that. That's a compliment. They were zealous for gifts. They should be. They were. They recognized the importance of the gifts and they were eager to use the gifts. He doesn't tell them to stop doing that. He doesn't tell them to stop being zealous. What he advises is that they cultivate the most useful gifts. "Seek to abound for the edification of the church." That's Paul's great concern here. That's Paul's great concern throughout the chapter. Edification, building up the body in the faith. That can only be done through intelligible, understandable speech and instruction.

So, they were to develop the gifts of teaching. They were to promote the ministry of prophecy. And when they used the gift of tongues, they were to use it properly. So, in the next verses, he explains that tongues must be interpreted. Verse 13. "Therefore let the 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." It's not altogether clear what he means exactly, but it seems that some who had the gift of tongues had also the gift of interpretation as well. So, they were to pray that they were able to do that. It would seem that's what he's saying, but even so, pray that a person with the gift of interpretation will do that. Paul's point is clear in that regard. It's clear enough. It's

what he has been emphasizing throughout, that in order for ministry to be helpful, for it to be edifying to those who are in the church, that ministry must be intelligible, understandable, doesn't even profit the person using the gift. If he only prays in his spirit, but his mind doesn't comprehend, I take this to mean the human spirit, not the Holy Spirit. In which case, in some sense, he is exercising this gift, but not understanding what he is doing, not understanding the words that he's saying. It's a foreign language to him, too. So, completely understandable to the person who's using the gift, the one who's speaking.

Some part of his mind was engaged in speaking a language, but he wasn't able to understand what he was saying. So, unless it was interpreted, he himself couldn't benefit from the message or prayer. FF Bruce puts it this way: "I may have a sense of religious exaltation, but my prayer is not intelligent because I do not understand what I'm saying. I'm doing it, but I'm not understanding it." Well, there are a couple of things I want to say about that, about this prayer that he speaks of. First of all, it was public. This is not private prayer. It's not the subject; that's not the context. These chapters, chapters 12, 13, and 14, are about the meeting of the church. It's not about going into a prayer closet where you're alone in speaking these languages and edifying ourselves. That's not the purpose of the gift and that's not the context of the subject here. This is about the meeting of the church. This is all public. Secondly, this prayer is a known language. That's biblical tongues according to Acts chapter 2. Paul was not criticizing the church for doing what people today call "tongues." It's speaking what some call gibberish, not a real language, making sounds. He wasn't correcting counterfeit tongues, as some have suggested. That's not his subject. He's not thinking, "You need to stop doing this non-language." They weren't speaking a non-language; they were not engaged in counterfeit gifts. And the fact that biblical tongues is a real language, not just melodic sounds, largely, if not completely, rules out the modern charismatic movement as legitimate.

He's not telling them to stop speaking something that wasn't a biblical gift. He's saying you're using the gift, but you're using it improperly. You're speaking languages that are known languages, and that's proper, but you're not doing it correctly. The problem here was they didn't have interpreters. And so, it was unintelligible. Paul wasn't forbidding the use of the gift of tongues. He was all for that. He was all for Spirit-inspired languages in prayer and worship, but he insisted

that it be done in an intelligent way. And that really is the great emphasis here. This passage gives the rightful place to the intellect in the Christian life. And that's an important lesson for the church today when feelings are given such weight and importance.

Now, having said that, I want to emphasize: emotion has its place. We shouldn't be against emotion. We are emotional creatures. We are made with feelings, and it's proper to express them. That's good. But, feelings, emotion, never takes the place of knowledge. Things must make sense to be helpful or fruitful. And Paul's emphasis here is, in the next verses is on that. When he says that a person who prays or sings must understand what he does. His prayers or his hymns, and he mentions singing in verse 15. Must be intelligible. It must be interpreted for them to be of any help to anyone. They must be intelligible.

I appreciate it very much, Marilyn's hymn, her solo, this morning, and I appreciated it because I understood it. I understood the words. Now, it helped that she has a beautiful voice in which to communicate it, but if she sang with a beautiful voice and sang beautiful music, but we didn't understand anything she said, it wouldn't be very helpful. It might be a nice experience, but it wouldn't truly instruct and help. We were lifted, as it were, to the throne of grace because of the great things we were reminded of about our Lord and what he suffered for us. And that's what Paul is saying here in verse 16. Otherwise, you must be intelligible, he's saying. "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?" How can anyone be blessed by what has been said? How can anyone agree with what has been prayed? How can anyone say "Amen" to it and acknowledge the truth of it if he can't interpret the meaning of it, if he can't understand it? It must be clear.

It seems, I think, a little bit, like Paul is beating a dead horse here in these verses. He keeps going over and over this point. He keeps repeating the necessity of intelligibility of giving ministry that is understandable. But, he's doing that for a reason. He's doing that for a purpose. Edification depends on understanding. So, he emphasizes that. He stresses that. And he says in verse 17 of those who pray in a tongue without interpretation or translation, "For you are giving thanks well enough," but it's being said. You're saying the right things, but the other person is not edified.

He can't be edified if he's ignorant of what you're saying. As a result, the whole purpose of the ministry is missed, which is to edify the other person. The gifts were given, or for the common good, and that's what Paul said back in chapter 12 and verse 7. Really sets the stage, so to speak, of the guidelines for our understanding of everything that's taking place here, everything that he's dealing with.

Private use of gifts, this is all about the common good. That's what the gifts were given for. All of them were given for the common good, to build up the body. So, Paul sums things up in the last verses of the passage, verses 18 and 19 and emphasizes the importance of intelligibility, understanding over experience, of teaching over tongues, uninterpreted tongues.

But, lest anyone think Paul was opposed to the gift of tongues, and when I say the gift of tongues, again, what I mean is the supernatural ability to speak known languages unknown to the speaker. He's not studied these languages. He doesn't know these languages. That's why it's a miraculous thing that he can speak these languages. But if anyone thinks Paul is against that, he disabuses us, or them, of that notion in verse 18. He says, "I thank God I speak in tongues more than you all." Paul had the gift of tongues, and he used it a lot. He doesn't tell us where he used it. He doesn't say that it was his prayer language. I would assume that he used it according to all of the rules that he has laid down in this chapter for the Corinthians, and that he used it in the same way that it was used at Pentecost. He says in verse 22 that it is a sign to unbelievers. So, I assume that it was a valuable medium for the apostle in evangelism. He could speak to pagans on his worldwide travels in a way that communicated truth to them and confirmed it in a supernatural way. Here's a man who's speaking our language and he doesn't know. That was quite an amazing thing. People would recognize it.

So, when Paul went to a place like Illyricum in the Balkans, and spoke the gospel to villagers in Celtic dialect that he'd never studied, maybe never heard. They would have seen in that a wonder. Something miraculous had come. So they had heard the truth, they heard the gospel, and they had confirmation of the reality of it, the truth of it, by this supernatural gift that he had.

Paul wasn't against tongues. He was for it when used properly. But when used improperly, it was useless and he says that in verse 19. "However, in the church I desire to speak five words with my mind so that I may instruct others also, rather

than ten thousand words in a tongue." If I can stand up in a meeting of the church and deliver a magnificent message in perfect Mandarin, but no one understands a word of it, what's the use of that? A short, simple message that people can follow is always better. That's Paul's lesson. It is essential in the ministry to be clear, to be understood, to be intelligible. And he repeats that lesson over and over again in this passage because the people needed to hear it. They weren't practicing that, and they weren't interested in practicing what Paul was telling them to do.

The Corinthians were enamored of tongues. It was a spectacular gift, and it certainly was a spectacular gift. It was exciting for them, at least for many of them, to hear these languages spoken supernaturally, and certainly it was exciting for those who spoke the languages, those who had the gift, because it drew great attention to them. They were doing something marvelous in everyone's eyes. But they were more interested in, evidently, in impressing people than edifying them. The result was: people weren't being built up in the faith. Real ministry wasn't happening. Just confusion.

It was Babel revisited with all kinds of languages. Pride and confusion had brought work in the church to a halt. People weren't being built up by the ministry. So they weren't growing of course. Their problem, you remember, back in the early chapters. He had to give them milk. He couldn't give them meat. They weren't getting good instruction. So, beyond the lesson on tongues, Paul is giving a lesson on ministry in the church, the purpose of ministry, and the motive for ministry. It is to be selfless. It's not to impress, but to edify. There's a lot of vanity in the pulpit. That's human nature. We all struggle with those kinds of things. The things we see in Corinth aren't unique to Corinth. They're true of all the churches. We all struggle with these things to one degree or another, and vanity, no doubt, is a problem in the pulpit. When a man stands up, and he's before an audience, and he can impress people with his knowledge. That's kind of heady stuff, and I'm sure it's true in Sunday school classes as well. Hopefully not here, but I'm sure that happens.

What we need to do is examine our motives. Why are we doing what we do? It's not about the teacher. It's about what's being taught. HA Ironside mentions that in his commentary how some ministers like to use the pulpit to show off their learning. He quotes Spurgeon who said, "I'm afraid that many of my ministerial brethren must imagine that when Scripture tells them to feed my sheep, it means 'feed my giraffes,'

for they put the food so high that people would have to be giraffes to reach it." And then Ironside wrote that, a few months earlier, a woman brought a little boy to him who was about 10 years old. He was her grandson, and she wanted the boy to meet him. She said, "I hope you aren't offended about what he said." She had told him what a great preacher Dr. Ironside was and he wanted to hear him. But after the sermon, the boy said, "Grandmother, he's not a great preacher. I could understand every word he said." And of course, Ironside considered that a great compliment. That's the point of ministry, to be clear.

Sometimes we have to really get out of the way to do that. It's not about us. It's about the Word of God. And so, to keep things simple, we may have to diminish ourselves and not appear so eloquent and knowledgeable. Ironside said that when he got up to preach the Word, he tried to do it in such a way that the youngest child, as well as the oldest saint, could understand every word. That's a good rule. It doesn't mean that we tried to preach down to people. It doesn't mean that we tried to preach simplistic homilies, little lessons that just sort of stay on the surface and don't really penetrate into the Scriptures and plumb the depths of God's word. A healthy ministry is wide and deep. It spans the whole counsel of God. It gets beyond the milk of the word to the meat of the word. That's the only way we can grow.

But, the great truth of God's word can be and must be explained clearly. That takes time. That takes effort on the part of the teacher. I was talking to Mark Newman about a week ago about teaching and what you discover as you teach, and how it's not easy to simplify things, to simply them and be correct. In fact, there's a great deal to be learned by teaching children, teaching them the truths of God's word. It's even a little more difficult. In fact, sometimes a lot more difficult to teach a children's class than an adult class, 'cause you have to simplify and make it clear, and be very direct. That, as I say, takes effort on the part of the teacher. But that's what's necessary.

Paul used the illustration earlier in verse 7 of the musical instruments. Well, take that as an example of how we teach, to play the violin well takes lots of practice. It takes years of practice and diligent practice and work. It's no different in the ministry. It's really no different in anything. A doctor, a lawyer, whatever. Whatever one's profession is, one must work at it to refine one's gift. And so, in the ministry, it takes time, it takes study, it takes thought, it takes the use of the mind. And Paul puts

a lot of emphasis in this passage on the mind, on understanding. That's true for every teacher. But that's equally true for the congregation. We have to use our minds in order to grow.

I know we suffer from the challenge of the week when we come to service on Sunday. Men work hard, people work hard, and sometimes they don't want to sit through a lengthy message where they have to think, but that's what we need to do. That's how we grow. We must use our minds to do that. We need to think. We need to learn. We will not grow if we don't do that. The knowledge of God's word and doctrines, the doctrines of the Word of God are the foundation of a solid, well-lived life. We need to know God's word. We need to know the doctrines of it. But we want warmth. We want life. We want the fire of Pentecost, and we should. That's not wrong. That's good. But the only way to have that, to have real fire and life and light is through an intelligible ministry of the teaching of the Word of God. Not just from this pulpit or from those classrooms, but in your own personal study.

Remember those two disciples on the Emmaus road, after the resurrection? Luke records it in his last chapter, Luke 24. They meet Jesus on the road. They're going home. They're discouraged. They don't know who this stranger is, but He joins them. And, He talked to them as they walked along. Then they come to the destination and they have a meal, and as Jesus breaks the bread, He disappears. Then, their eyes are opened, and then they realize who they were with. What did they say at that moment? Do you remember? Wasn't it exciting hearing Him speak in tongues? Didn't you love it when He began singing to us? No, they said, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?" The Word of God will warm our hearts. It will cause our hearts to burn. It will give us the greatest joy and it will lead to the purest worship. That, and that alone is the means of genuine Christian emotion. There are other things that stir the emotions, and I don't detract from them. You listen to a stirring hymn, and a good hymn writer, or the one associate with him who writes the melody. It takes great gift to do that, and there are good melodies and not so good melodies. Some of the hymns we sing kind of drag and they're not, you wonder if the hymn writer was sanctified when he wrote that. But, a good hymn has a good melody, and that is part of it, no doubt. But without the clarity, the words, without communicating the truth that is to be sung, there is no real edification and no, in my opinion, genuine emotion.

No, we get that from the Scriptures. We get that from knowing what God has done for us, who He is, knowing His greatness, knowing His faithfulness. That's how we learn of God. It's through His word, and that's how we grow in our love for Him. And the Savior, and our love for Him. We learn of free grace that we are saved through faith alone and Christ alone. When we learn that, that will set our hearts aflame, if we're taught clearly. The intelligible is what's important. The unintelligible or even the light, the easy, doesn't do that.

So, let me put things very simply and clearly in just a few words to conclude. We are all born into this world lost, like a lost sheep, and at war with God, just as the race was at the Tower of Babel. But God, in His grace, sent His Son into the world to find the lost, and redeem them from sin and wrath. He did that by dying as a sacrificial lamb on Calvary's cross, suffering the penalty that we deserved, suffering it in our place. And all a person must do to be saved is believe in Him. It's that simple. Trust in Him. If you're here without Christ, we urge you to do that. Attach yourself to the crucified Savior who is alive and enthroned in heaven. Attach yourself to Him through faith and you will be forgiven at that moment, and forgiven forever, and made a child of God. And then by God's grace, grow through the study of His word. May God help all of us to do that and live a well-lived, well-ordered life to His glory. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we give You great thanks for all that we have. You've given Your Son for a lost race, and You redeemed us by His precious blood. But You've not left us in a redeemed and unenlightened state. You have given us Your word. We have the Scriptures. May we value the Word of God and study it, and –