

1 Corinthians 14:13

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.

Analysis

Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret—Paul's practical command: the tongues-speaker should *proseuchesthō hina diermēneuē* (προσευχέσθω ἵνα διερμηνεύῃ, "pray that he might interpret"). This assumes

1. interpretation is a distinct gift from tongues
2. it can be sought through prayer
3. the same person can potentially exercise both gifts.

Paul doesn't say "stop speaking in tongues"; he says "pray for interpretation." This transforms tongues from self-edifying to church-edifying speech.

The command places responsibility on the tongues-speaker: if you're going to exercise this gift publicly, ensure it edifies by seeking the interpretation gift. Love (chapter 13) compels this: don't settle for self-edification when you could serve the body.

Historical Context

This instruction suggests some Corinthians were content to speak in tongues without interpretation, valuing the experience itself. Paul insists on accountability: if you exercise the gift publicly, make it profitable for all.

Related Passages

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Romans 1:17 — The righteous shall live by faith

Study Questions

1. Why does Paul place the burden of seeking interpretation on the tongues-speaker?
2. What does it mean to 'pray that he may interpret'—is interpretation automatic or sought?
3. How does this verse show Paul's pastoral wisdom (not forbidding, but regulating)?

Interlinear Text

διόπερ	ο	λαλῶν	γλώσσῃ	προσευχέσθω
Wherefore	G3588	let him that speaketh	in an unknown tongue	pray
G1355		G2980	G1100	G4336

ἴνα	διερμηνεύῃ
that	he may interpret
G2443	G1329

Additional Cross-References

Mark 11:24 (Prayer): Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

1 Corinthians 12:30 (Parallel theme): Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret?