

Hopefully, reading the Bible will generate plenty of questions! I (Steve) will do my best to give 1 paragraph ideas and musings to the questions raised – but these will not be the ‘only’ answer in many cases (I am not omniscient, nor even anywhere near as knowledgeable as many others I know). I will also know some things better than others – for example, I am better acquainted with Marks gospel than the others and John’s writings more than Paul’s. Ask me about Jeremiah and Job and I’m virtually clueless, I’ll have to seek others thoughts! Some may disagree with my thoughts given as answers – that is absolutely fine, disagreeing respectfully is important (demonstrating this at college, one fellow tutor and I let students observe us debating the various ‘John’ writings in scripture – gospel, 3 letters and Revelation, the extent to which they may be the same or different authors – we disagree, but are not arrogant enough to proclaim that one of us is definitely right to the exclusion of the other). There are some things which it is definitely important to be sure and ‘right’ about – such as who Jesus is, and others where it is not really important (such as which John wrote Revelation). There are some things which it is important to be certain about. There are some other things where we do not have certainty.

So, following are my imperfect, human musings to the questions Bible School students have raised. If others have better, wiser, or even just alternative thoughts (but biblically based and thought through) - let me know, we may incorporate them.

I’ll get as far as I can with the questions in the time I have available – so do bear with me if one or two remain unanswered for a while.

Several questions re the role of women in the church from Paul’s writings, especially the latter parts of 1 Corinthians.

This does create problems for us – if we read the whole of 1 Corinthians we see that Paul says different, even contradictory things. There are several views on this. Some say that 1 Corinthians is several letters joined together and Paul changed his mind between letters (but that argument does not fit with the flow of the letter). Others emphasise the cultural differences between now and 1st century life (e.g. what people would think of men with long hair and women with uncovered heads in the 1st century?). Others emphasise the idea of ‘gossiping’ as in a market square during church times and say that this is what Paul is speaking against.

However ... What we see in Galatians and throughout the early church was a radical involvement of women as equals – Paul (Galatians ch3) said that ‘There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus’. It is impossible for us to comprehend quite how radical that was – a slave was the same as his master before Christ? A woman was the same as a man before Christ? – this was HUGE – and that does not fit with what we read this week in 1 Corinthians.

The most convincing argument I have seen is that of Lucy Peppiatt in her book ‘Women and worship in Corinth’ where she argues that Paul is quoting from a letter sent TO him by the Corinthians, then answering it, then quoting again, then answering it – a book which is well worth reading.

Andy did a talk on this topic at Riverside, ‘Is it OK for women to lead’ – talk 49 on this page: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/riverside-vineyard-talks/id731871826>

In this, the main argument Andy gives is that if Paul is saying in 1 Cor. that women shouldn't lead, he is being pastorally inconsistent with himself, simply because there are many other texts when he refers to women in leadership that he has put in place! This suggests that the instruction to the Corinthians was specific to what was going on there at that time.

Will the new heavenly body we are given be physical / tangible or spiritual?

Both.

We see from John's Revelation that he identified the scene as having people – 'the saints' – us! So, I guess that the body will be quite similar. John saw people of every 'nation, tribe, people and language' – so I guess we'll each have the same skin colour that we have now.

However, if Jesus' resurrection body is a glimpse of what our resurrection bodies will be like – there are differences – he appeared in a locked room, yet he ate fish, built a BBQ and people touched him. Philip, when meeting the Ethiopian suddenly found himself somewhere else – it is possible that we may not need Uber's with the new body.

In the Spring term, one video spends a few minutes speculating on this from the biblical evidence we have ... Don't miss it.

A 'living sacrifice' – are we to be walking zombies on earth?

No.

A sacrifice was final, committed, no turning back!

A sacrifice was dedicated to the god or God to which it was being sacrificed.

A sacrifice had a purpose (e.g. appeasement of sins or seeking to ask 'the rain god' for rain etc)

A few questions about Jesus sending out the 72.

I hope that we answered most of those in the session – from Noah's sons and grandsons, the Jews thought that there were 72 races on earth – so this is Jesus sending people metaphorically to a global mission.

He sent them barefoot – as priests (who worked barefoot) – to be the 'go-between' bringing man to God and God to man.

And now ... We do the same.

I don't know why they were sent in 2s (one question), nor why they were instructed to ignore people en route – just get to the town destination (another question).

What does 'pursuing the gifts of the Holy Spirit' look like in practice?

Great question

I think that it is likely to be about being open to receiving gifts as God gives – not just the ones we want; I think it is likely to include aspects of always seeking more – there is never a point where we can put our feet up and say 'job done'; probably also about actively asking God for more – gifts, works of service, ways to represent him in the world.

Andy's thoughts: In the Vineyard, we've generally thought of the gifts as being situational (available when you need them) rather than constitutional (I have a gift of...). Wimber used to teach about gifts, ministries & offices and I think this is really helpful. All Christians can experience all gifts, (1 Cor 12), but we find there are some we experience more often = a ministry (more the language of Romans 12). An office is when a ministry is recognised by the local church (e.g. Eph 4)

Speaking in tongues. What is Vineyard's view of this?
Several questions on the gift of tongues.

I cannot see a specific Vineyard teaching on this, but the evidence of the Bible is that this is a gift of the Holy Spirit. The gift named as 'tongues' seems to have 3 types in the Bible:

1. Where people speak in a language they have not learnt in order to communicate with those who do speak that language (eg at Pentecost)
2. When people speak a message publicly, usually within a church service, which someone else is given the gift of interpretation for that congregation and that moment
3. An individual speaking in a 'heavenly language' (usually – ie non-human) as part of either praise or (what I find most useful) when I really do not know what to pray for a person or a situation. This is something over which you have control regarding when to start and stop and how loud you speak (some excesses we have seen tend to forget that). For me, I tend to speak silently, i.e. in my head – it doesn't annoy or distract the person next to me and doesn't draw attention to me And it also doesn't make me look like a total wierdo if I am doing so on the train nor tube.

From Andy: tongues is a gift of the Spirit and we're instructed to eagerly desire spiritual gifts. In this sense, a no-brainer!! I think a much better question is how do we have order in our services thus helping those not yet come to faith (as well as the Christians), and at the same time, embrace all that the Spirit wants to do. This may be more what the question is directed towards.