

Straight Talk About Speaking in Tongues

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First, you have to understand that I was born and bred a staunch Southern Baptist. Son of a pastor and missionaries. Got degrees in religion and psychology from an SBC college. I understand how the brain can be used to mess with you. I understand about mind control and subconscious programming - AND I understand about witchcraft and demonic controls. I'm a business man and a pragmatist. I'm just not the rolling around on the floor kind of a guy. I just don't go in for theatrics. I want NOTHING that isn't PURE Jesus.

But I've learned a lot in the last couple of years as the Holy Spirit has taken me on this wild adventure to unlearn layers and layers of stuff that I was taught and relearn them the way He wanted. In the last year and half, I've had the great privilege to fellowship with more than fifty different congregations of all different flavors. And I can state unequivocally that they ALL see through a glass darkly! No question about it. If they think they don't, it's because their vision is blurred by the big pride plank in their eye. But they all see through different PARTS of the glass darkly. That is, some are clear about Sin and some aren't. Some are clear about Gifts and some aren't. Some are clear about the Holy Spirit and some aren't. Some are right on the substance, but not the application. Because the Body of Christ is divided into 37,000+ denominations that aren't talking to each other, we can't get a coherent picture of the totality of Christ. Like putting together a puzzle without the picture on the box.

What I do is synthesize and congeal all the different stuff I've seen across the whole of the Body of Christ to see if I can get an approximation of the picture on the box.

As that relates to tongues (and other manifestation gifts of the Spirit), here is my take on this, for what it's worth.

First, the gifts are not On/Off switches, they are dials. That's really important because so many people think that you either speak in tongues or you don't and if you don't then you haven't received the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Some even believe that you're not going to heaven unless you speak in tongues. But I've met LOTS of people that speak in tongues and hardly ANY of them received the Baptism of Fire described in Luke 3:16. Hardly anybody is really walking in holiness and sanctification. So they're not obeying and they shouldn't be so comfy in their sense that because they speak in tongues, they're FULL of the Holy Spirit and therefore safe. I know some serious sinners that speak in tongues. It's a GIFT, and that means He'll probably let you keep it, even if you're a backslidden stinker.

People ask me if I'm "Spirit-Filled". I ask them, "Do you mean that at some point I had an experience with God and spoke in tongues or that I'm so crammed full of the Holy Spirit all the time that nothing else can fit? Cause it ain't the same thing." We're to "be being filled". Not a one time thing. If you pray for JUST enough Holy Spirit to speak in tongues, you just might get a little shot glass full of the Holy Spirit. If you pray for Wisdom and Sanctification and let God work the rest of the gifts out with you in His time, you'll probably get a GREAT BIG cup of the Holy Spirit and He'll teach you how to keep it full. And you'll probably get a whole bunch of the gifts, not just tongues. If you don't have, it's because you don't ask.

Anyway, back to the issue at hand. I had to get an understanding about the difference between a prophetic message given in tongues in front of the church (which should be interpreted) and a personal "prayer language" that you would use when you're alone. Some folks say that tongues are for the edification of the Body, therefore should never be done in private since there is no one there to interpret. But Paul says when he prays in tongues he is edified personally, even if nobody else is around. And since I need all the edifying I can get, well then I might as well ask for all the gifts that will help!

Why does it edify you to pray in tongues, even if you don't understand what you're saying? It's really very simple - you see, the Holy Spirit is praying FOR you. And He knows EXACTLY what you need. He's very efficient, so a lot of praying can get done in a lot shorter amount of time. The added benefit is that when the Spirit prays it's like an encrypted transmission to the throne that the enemy can't intercept and mess with. If you pray in English (or your native language) for peace or strength or for a person that's on your heart, the enemy hears it and will probably do what he can to dial up the pressure on those areas so that your prayers don't seem answered. And, when you pray in tongues, the enemy really, really doesn't like being around it. You can clear all the badness out of your house by just walking around it and praying in the Spirit. Some people sing in tongues and the Spirit writes the melody and gives them the words - and sometimes the interpretation. It's really pretty when it's pure!

When the Spirit prays, it may not be for a decision about your job or a new car - it may be for a gifting or a call or for divine appointments or the stranger on the bus or something you wouldn't even think to pray. Sometimes the Holy Spirit doesn't even use words. Sometimes all that can come out is groaning or crying or mournful screaming in pain. Those are just some of the various flavors of how the Spirit can pray through you.

It's like this. If the Holy Spirit is in you - which He is from the moment you commit your life to follow Jesus - then He

can pray FOR you THROUGH you if you'll just get out of the way. Although it wasn't until November 23, 2004 that I had a personal experience of the "Baptism with the Spirit and with Fire" variety, I can think of many times over the decades previous when I would be on my face praying and crying with a huge burden on my heart and nothing but groans would come out. In fact, nearly every Christian I've spoken with that really loves Jesus, whether Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian or otherwise can remember times after they got "saved" when they were praying and something else seemed to just take over or help them pray. Not that a language came out necessarily, but maybe just a deep moan from the pit of their stomach but they knew it was God. I know some people that pray in English, but it's not really them praying anymore. Or some that just weep when they intercede for others. I don't care what any charismatic says, that's "tongues" and it counts. Which means you had it BEFORE somebody laid hands on you to receive the "Baptism" - which means it's NOT an On/Off switch, it's a DIAL and everybody that has the Holy Spirit is automatically NOT on Zero.

After my experience with God and the vision He gave me and the mission He launched me into, because of the burden He put on me, that deep groaning was all that I could get out when I was praying. Since then, I've learned to recognize and get out of the way of all the other "flavors" that the Holy Spirit might use to pray through me - including a variety of languages of Man (with or without personal interpretation), sometimes just tears, sometimes screaming and wailing, sometimes just a deep sigh. But I can tell the difference whether it's the Holy Spirit or just me, and when it's Him, then that's what you call "Praying in the Spirit." And from God's perspective they are all linguistic. He understands the "words of our groaning." (Psalm 22:1)

The short of this is that I believe that when you first receive ANY of the Holy Spirit, your "tongues" dial (and the other ones) turns from ZERO to whatever He wants to put it on. If you want more and ask for it, He'll dial it up and you may get something instantly or over time or of any of a huge variety of flavors. Basically, the more transparent you are - the more you get out of the way - the more the Holy Spirit can do whatever He wants through you and the more dangerous you are to the enemy. The more you seek Him and get out of His way, the higher your dial gets turned.

Now, you still have to test the spirits. Don't get me wrong. I'm not in favor of chicken clucking or airplane sounds. You don't want to do anything out of your own flesh or to imitate someone else just to fit in! That's just mocking God. Essentially, you're taking the Lord's name in vain when you "fake" tongues or use it outside of His guidelines. Or when you don't test the spirits and allow something bad to get in so you can have an "experience".

There are satanists and witches that can speak in all kinds of tongues. Demons know all the languages of Man so it's no big deal for them to influence someone that is receptive. Hearing someone speak in tongues is NO evidence that God is in them! Without the gift of discernment of spirits or hearing God really well and asking Him specifically about someone, you are pretty much flying blind to know if it's from God or not in someone else. You should watch for the fruit, but sometimes in a public meeting with strangers there's no way to see that. I've personally dealt with demonic tongues on multiple occasions in Christians who didn't know it wasn't from God. But someone they didn't know laid hands on them and gave them something icky (and they allowed it or sought it). Always ask the Lord to guard you with the Blood of Jesus against anything bad coming from anybody that would lay hands on you!

So, to summarize, why pray in your own strength when you could just get out of the way and let the Holy Spirit pray THROUGH you? Isn't it just prideful in the extreme that you think you can pray better than the THIRD of the Godhead that lives in you?! If you have Jesus, you can pray in the Spirit. Just ask Him to teach you how and believe that He wants to. You don't need some big showy huddle down front at the church with lots of people praying on you and shaking you. Just ask in faith and believe that He wants you to learn how to pray in the most efficient possible way. He's a good Dad. He's not going to give you a stone if you ask for bread.

I can tell you, my walk with God hit warp speed when I started letting Him pray for me! Now I spend anywhere from four to eight hours a day praying in the Spirit (in one form or another as He leads). And since the Spirit is praying, my mind is idle, so I can go about my business or drive or pray in my mind for something else. It's like double-barrel praying! (I Corin. 14:14-15)

There are those that say that tongues are dead and it's not for today. They are insulting and demeaning and marginalizing the deep, daily experience of about 800,000,000+ Jesus-lovers all around the world. They are calling brothers and sisters in Christ liars and cheats and/or unstable tools of satan. They are saying that - since He did something THEN that He doesn't do now and made a promise that it was for us, but didn't mean it - God changes and His Word is not reliable. Since the VAST majority of growth in the church world-wide is because of the tongue-speaking charismatic arm of the spectrum, those who are staunchly entrenched in their mainline, fundamental denominations are really arguing from a losing position. If they're really going to put their money where their mouth is, then they should scrub out of their lives EVERY tongue-speaking preacher, musician, missionary, theologian, teacher, writer, etc. And since they would be left with VERY little music, art, literature, radio or TV and practically no effective missions efforts locally and abroad, they probably need to rethink their devise ways. Maybe reread Galatians 5:19-21 (especially that part about strife and division and not inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven).

There are those that say "tongues" (glossolalia is the technical term) are indeed a real manifestation of God and MIGHT be for today but they are ONLY languages of Man used in public for evangelization - and since there is no evidence whatsoever of ANYONE speaking in a language of Man in the last 1900+ years, then it's not for today." This statement is a giant crock of dog doodie. It is a bold faced lie and is uneducated and uninformed and unresearched. I am personally familiar with people that have prayed in tongues and been told by others present that it was perfect Japanese. I'm aware of two people in other countries that had an urgent need and prayed and God gave them ENGLISH! I'm aware of Wycliffe Bible Translators deep in a jungle somewhere who have the Lord give them a prayer language to help reach the people group they're working with. The 1901 Pentecostal renewal that started with Parham's Bible school in Topeka, KS showed documented evidence by newspaper reporters of his students spontaneously speaking in dozens of languages of other countries that were previously unknown to them. At the Azusa Street Revival in 1906 to 1909 there were hundreds of documented cases of adults, and even children, speaking, writing and singing in, unknown to them but known to others present, or documentable languages. There is evidence throughout church history of outbreaks of tongues for specific evangelistic purposes to overcome language barriers.

Further, I think that is our ONLY hope of reaching all people groups with the Gospel anytime soon, since the process of learning and translating the Bible into the remaining 6,000 +/- languages and dialects is going to take a REALLY long time at our current rate of spending. Don't believe this lie, it's a crock. Do some research. God is still alive and moving. He established the language barriers at Babel, He can remove them anytime He wants. And He is still doing it all over the world, all the time. And He can do it through and in you if you will let Him and believe He wants to.

Don't be afraid of God. He knows what He's doing. He's not going to give you a stone when you pray for bread. Just ask and believe in faith it's possible. Stop putting Him in a box. Just get out of the way and let Him be God.

If it helps, pray this:

Lord, if there is more out there that you have for me than I realize, would you please reveal it to me? I want to be effective in my prayer life and I want to be closer with You. I want to hear Your voice and have the kind of intimacy that the David and Paul and Moses and Jesus had. I want to hear you clearly. Please let Your Holy Spirit flow through me in whatever way You think best. Teach me how to pray. I love You and I trust You. Do it however You like ... but right NOW would be nice. In the Name of Jesus I send this petition to the Father, knowing it's inside Your will and that You WILL answer it. Amen.

Got questions? Just ask.

Wanna argue with me? Feel free, I've heard it all.

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Lots more stuff online to help you unclog your pipeline to God.

www.FellowshipoftheMartyrs.com