

The Spiritual Gift of Tongues

Grace Community Church

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Chris Patton

Introduction

Review

- Baptism In The Holy Spirit Takes Place At Conversion
- Tongues: A Gift To Be Eagerly Desired, Yet Not Granted To All

Purpose

- To clarify, from 1 Cor.14, what this gift is and how God intends for it to function both in our own lives personally as well as in the gathered church.
- To stir faith to ask God for this good gift.

I. Defining The Gift of Tongues

- The gift of tongues is a language of prayer and praise to God, given by God to the believer, primarily (though not exclusively) for the purpose of personal edification. The speaker's mind does not understand or comprehend the syllables uttered; however, their spirit is edified and built up.
- It is important to note that a word shared in tongues given in the public gathering of the church, is permissible only provided there is an interpretation.

II. A Language of Prayer and Praise

A. Tongues Is God-Ward Directed Speech

For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit. On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation (verses 2-3).

B. Tongues Is Prayer To God

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also (verses 14-15).

C. Tongues Is Praise To God

“I will sing praise with my spirit (verse 15)”

“[giving] thanks with your spirit (verse 16)”

It is noteworthy that in Acts 2 when the 120 disciples were filled with the spirit and spoke in tongues, Luke says they were declaring “*the mighty works of God.*”

III. Unintelligible Apart From Interpretation

1 Cor. 14:2

For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.

1 Cor. 14:9

So with yourselves, if with your tongue you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what is said? For you will be speaking into the air.

1 Cor. 14:14

...if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.

Languages in Acts 2

Are tongues known human languages then? Sometimes this gift may result in speaking in a human language that the speaker has not learned, but ordinarily it seems that it will involve speech in a language that no one understands, whether that be a human language or not. – Wayne Grudem

IV. Not ecstatic

Speaking in tongues is not an experience of “oral seizure,” as if God intends to perform a miraculous jiggling of your mouth and lips. Simply wait upon the Lord and speak forth the words He brings to mind, no matter how incoherent or silly they may sound. They are sweet music to your Father’s ear. – Sam Storms

V. The Main Purpose: Personal Edification

1 Cor. 14:4

The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.

VI. The Public Gathering & The Need For Interpretation

A. The Requirement

“If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn, and let someone interpret. [28] But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in church and speak to himself and to God (verses 27-28).”

Like the gift of prophecy, the gift of interpretation is a manifestation of the Spirit (see 1 Cor.12:10 below)

To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the ability to distinguish between spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he wills. (1 Corinthians 12:4–11)

“If they [tongues speakers] have not themselves experienced the gift of interpretation, and if no one is present who is known to have this gift, then they are to remain silent....Only when someone known to be gifted with interpretation is present may it be exercised in the assembly.” – Gordon Fee

B. Reason #1 For the Requirement: The Priority of Corporate Edification

The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues, unless someone interprets, so that the church may be built up (verse 5).

C. Reason #2: Unbelievers Will Think You Are Crazy

[23] If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds (verse 23)?

D. How Practically Can This Work?

VII. Final Encouragement

1 Cor. 14:5

“I want you all to speak in tongues”

1 Cor. 14:18

“I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.”

Encouragement: Ask God, in faith for this gift. Trust Him with the results.