

## THE SPIRIT AND SPEAKING IN TONGUES

### Life in the Spirit

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In the series of Life in the Spirit, tonight we look at “The Spirit and Speaking in Tongues.”

Last week we closed the message with five strong descriptions relating to water and the person of the Spirit. We noted that the Spirit is spoken of as being outpoured and we think of walking through a heavy downpour. We have in relationship to the Spirit the word “baptism” used. Water into which we are placed. In regard to the Spirit we are said to be filled with the Spirit. Again the imagery is of drinking the Spirit. Then there is an additional word of letting the Spirit flow from us, “Out of your inner most being shall flow rivers of living water.” So outpouring baptism, fill, drink, flow. All describe that when the Spirit comes upon us he comes in a generous measure. It is a thoroughly dousing experience. We know that the Spirit is come because we are soaked in his presence.

The Spirit, in addition to soaking us in his presence, has saturated himself in us. So within and outside of us there is the element of the Spirit. What the Spirit is seeking to do in addition to glorifying Jesus Christ in our life and reaching the world for the Lord is the Spirit is seeking also to touch the depths of our being. If we think of our nature as body, soul and spirit as Paul suggests in 1 Thessalonians 5:23 we might for purposes of illustration think of ourselves as consisting of concentric circles. (The diagram I use is disposable. It’s the truth I wish to illustrate so don’t anybody get hung up on the technicalities here.) For purposes of illustration, our outward being is the body. In the Greek the word is *soma*. We have to ask if we want something to touch our body, to relax us and rest us, what would that be? That which effects our body, our *soma* is restful and relaxing.

There is an inner perimeter to us. The Greek word is *psyche*. That comes across in the English as soul. The soul generally is defined as the emotions, the mind, and the will. If we want to speak about the things that reach the soul, glorious music, an intellectual soul, a courageous decision. And of those components will touch and enlarge and relax and rest the dimension of my psyche.

But there is a circle within that circle which is the *pneuma*, the spirit. The nuclear core. God seeks to reach us there. In our heart when we’re at moments of rest in the presence of God we might do what the hymn writer has said, be lost in wonder, love and praise.

Perhaps the bulls-eyes within all of this dimension of the body, the soul and the spirit is this aspect that Jesus spoke about in John 7 when he said on the last day of the feast, “If anyone thirst let him come to me and drink. He who believes on me as the scripture says, rivers of living water will flow out of his [belly, womb. What it represented in our language is the gut or the core of the personality, where life really proceeds. The inner being of you.] Jesus says that when the Spirit comes upon you he reaches all dimensions of you but he comes in that essential core where you live, where everything proceeds out of it and as the Spirit comes and we drink of him, then out of that innermost being, that centering of our personality comes rivers of living water.

You’ve heard “streams” of living water. I did a little word study. I discovered that word always represents what it is used in the New Testament – the idea and imagery of a considerable body of water. Therefore the word “rivers” describe it.

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The same word in Matthew 25:27 is translated “floods.” “the floods came up against the house.”

And Paul in 2 Corinthians 11:26 talks about being in peril of waters as he’s been in trouble on the seas.

Revelation 12 speaks about the great river – the river of the water of life. And the Jordan River and the great Euphrates River, both considerable bodies of water in biblical days are described by this same word.

So what Jesus is saying when you’ve drunk of the Spirit then out of that inner centering in you is going to flow not a small trickle of water, not even a stream. But when the Spirit has truly penetrated our life then out of that inner core of our life is going to flow a surging and powerful stream of water, that essence of vitality and life and godliness and flow of the energy and character of God. Somehow the Spirit of God is going to take our personality and do something marvelous with it and have flowing out of that personality the life of Jesus, the personality and the power and the character of Jesus Christ that will flow out of that inner man as we walk with Christ and as we experience his Spirit. This is what Jesus meant. John 7:39 “By this he meant the Spirit that those who believe in him were later to receive.” Up to that time the Spirit had not yet been given since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

When does this flowing out of the inner man, these rivers, when does that take place? John says it wasn’t up until Jesus was glorified. That is, until he was ascended into heaven. The Spirit is not considered as given even though in John 20:22 the disciples received the conversion work of the Lord and he breathed on them and they received eternal life, they received the Spirit. But even that is not counted as the Spirit being given. What Jesus is referring to is the day of Pentecost when the disciples, 120 of them, for the first time drink of the Spirit who is outpoured and then out of that company, out of their inner being flows this river of the Spirit which reaches out in three directions – it’s a river of praise going upward to God in worship, it is a river going outward in evangelism, and it is a river going back inward in edification. When you look at the work of the Spirit in your life he’s always going in those directions – going up, going out, going in.

Speaking in other tongues therefore as a subject in itself cannot be isolated from this river of the Spirit. It is a component to the river that Jesus spoke of when he described in John 7:37-38 the Spirit being outpoured and then rivers flowing out from us. Tongues is not the whole river. But the river cannot be understood without tongues. Nor can tongues be understood without the river. For tongues can so easily be a thing unto themselves and an object of conversation to themselves. But tongues is related to this flowing of this Spirit of God which is reach upward in worship, reaching outward in concern for the world and reaching inward to build up the inner man.

The common term, which has been used for speaking in tongues and the charismatic renewal has been the Greek word *glossolalia*. Three basic definitions have been given to *glossa* or tongue. Two of them are biblical and one of them is in error.

The first definition that has been given to “tongue” is simply that it refers to the organ of speech. You can read in the New Testament on several occasions where simply the word “tongue” is

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used. Like Lazarus for example was in Abraham's bosom and the rich man was in hell and he wanted Lazarus to dip his finger in water and cool my tongue. The word for tongue there is the same word used in Acts 2:4 "They spoke with other tongues." Organ of speech.

A second reference that has been put to *glossa* is that it is "ecstatic utterance." This is how sometime "tongues" has been translated in some editions of the Bible. Like the New English Bible, Barclay's Bible, Williams Bible, Goodspeed Bible and a translation by a gentleman named Ward. When you come therefore to 1 Corinthians 12:10, which describes the gift of tongues the word that they use is ecstatic utterance.

However ecstasy is never an appropriate word scripturally to speak of a person who is speaking in tongues. I want to be very exact on the meaning of the word "ecstasy." It is from two Greek words – "out of" and "being". Therefore ecstasy is a person who is *out of being*. And a person who is ecstatic is a person who is momentarily gotten leave of themselves and are in a trance. The word is used seven times in the New Testament, three times it is used of Peter and Paul who had great visions. Not speaking in tongues but great visions. Four other times it is used to describe people's reactions to miracles. There's another closely related word, which is always used to describe people's reactions to the power of God. But never does a person speaking in tongues is that persons described as in ecstasy. It is the persons who are observing the phenomenon of what God is doing who are unbelievers who are momentarily beside themselves, out of themselves, with wonder and awe.

I say that because there are some people who think that in order to speak in tongues you must get into a subconscious or unconscious state. When you have let yourself drift into this subconscious state or whatever it is that renders you in a receptive mode then when you are outside yourself the Spirit takes over and does everything. And you are for the moment out of your being.

Nothing could be further from a scriptural definition. The person who ministers in the Spiritual gift of tongues or in prophecy is in control.

It is the work of the Spirit that causes the unbeliever to have the ecstasy. And the believer is the one who is at all times functioning in the Spiritual gifts, in control.

The Spirit is in control but the believer also is functioning with rationality. So it is not as some have said that speaking in tongues is ecstasy or saying the same word long enough till you get yourself in a subconscious state. Some people I think are hoping that with a vain repetition of a phrase to render themselves in a receptive mode to somehow have the Spirit work deeper in them. Forgetting Jesus' words that we are to avoid "vain repetition".

A repetition doesn't have to be vain. Jesus simply says avoid vain repetitions. Repetitions that are used to conjure up the Spirit of God. The Spirit does not need to be conjured up. He's present.

The third way that *glossa* is used in the net is simply to speak a language. There are various descriptions of this in the New Testament. We have new tongues – Mark 16:17. Jesus promises the disciples they will speak with new tongues. We have Acts 2:4 which says they will speak with other tongues. And by the way in Acts 2 is the only time in the New Testament where

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clearly discernable human languages are spoken in the speaking with other tongues. They were languages not learned by the speaker but they were recognizable by the audience.

Then there are diverse tongues, 1 Corinthians 12:10. These represent different kinds of tongues. That is people speaking in tongues we recognize immediately there is a difference in people speaking. Sometimes within our own life as we speak we find ourselves speaking in a different way than maybe a past work of the Spirit in us.

Then fourth, there is what the King James calls “unknown tongues.” Although the word “unknown” is not in the Greek text. It is used five times in the King James text. All of them in 1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 14, 19, 27. The reason why King James uses “unknown” is that every time tongues in those verses are used it is used as a contrast traditional speech or intelligible speech. There’s perhaps a lot to be suggested from Paul’s comparison of speaking in tongues with speech that is coming out of the rational side of the being.

There has been a lot of research linguistically on people who have spoken in other tongues. I’m sure you’re aware of some of this research. One such researcher has said that in spite of artificial similarities, *glossolalia* is fundamentally not language. All specimens of *glossolalia* that have ever been studied have produced no features that would even suggest they reflect some kind of communicative system. Obviously that would differ from the Acts 2 kinds of tongues. He goes on to call *glossolalia* “a form of extemporaneous pseudo language.”

A charismatic writer picks up on this. “This kind of pseudo language is probably some form of precognitive speech.” Speech before you think it out. When you were saying utterances and did not know what the words were when you were younger. Precognitive speech, “Which is not filtered through the mind for orderly arrangement and which, when delivered, may sound like a language but is really lacking in any form, syntax of specific vocabulary. It is not ecstatic. Although emotion may or may not be experienced during the speaking with tongues. The mind is functioning although it’s not leading the process. In normal rational speech the mind is always leading the process. But in speaking in tongues the speaker knows what he or she is doing but may not know the meaning of what is being said. It is speech that has been given not only to men but to angels to be used in worship. Paul speaks of it as a language of men and of angels. It is effusive prayer in which the heart and soul are poured out to God.

Therefore this aspect of tongues is a praying to God from the non-rational side of our being. That’s an important form of communication. All of us recognize that when we try to communicate to someone that we love them, we can say “I love you,” but there’s a non rational form of communication where our mind is not involved and a kiss is a way of saying, I love you.

How do we communicate to God if we’re not communicating on our verbal, rational side? Scriptures are providing us through the gift of tongues an opportunity to pour out our heart to God in prayer. And to not let our mind be leading the process but let our Spirit lead the process and what comes out is not a grammatical, syntactical language structure but a pouring out of the soul. Indeed when you open to the Old Testament you’ll find some pre-Pentecostal experiences in the psalms as well as Hanna’s experience in 1 Samuel where she is so desperately before God that the answer her prayer for a child, that when the priest Eli comes upon her, she gives the appearance of a person being drunk. Eli cannot understand what she’s saying. He can’t grab hold of it. He asks her, What are you doing here? She says, “I have been pouring out my soul

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unto God.” There’s no better way that I have for explaining speaking in tongues than this very dimension. That it involves a pouring out of the soul unto God.

You can do this with the mind obviously. But God has appointed that we pray to him and praise him both with the mind and with this dimension of our being that touches our non-rational side.

So speaking in tongues is simply first of all a reference to the tongue and secondly it is a reference to a language of which there are different components mentioned in scripture.

We want to look at the whole dimension of how then is tongues used in the New Testament? There are four ways that tongues function in the believer and in the church.

The first way that *glossolalia* or tongues function is in relationship to the baptism in the Spirit. We look at the book of Acts for discovering this. The first reference is Acts 2:4. “They all were filled with the Spirit and spoke with other tongues as the Spirit gave them to utter.” All spoke in tongues. Many use an interpretation, which says that the first occurrence of something is the determining and controlling way of understanding that spirituality. Here on the day of Pentecost we find that when all were baptized in the Spirit the scriptures do not say, then some prophesied and some did works of healing and some exercised discernment and some gave utterances in tongues and some interpreted tongues and some gave wisdom and some gave a word of knowledge. But you have in Acts 2:4 this *glossolalia* as being part of the experience of all those who received the Spirit. I would suggest that as we look at other instances in Acts and the baptism in the Spirit that *glossolalia* or tongues was a part of them all.

The second reference to the baptism in the Spirit is Acts 8:16-17 where the Samaritans have Peter and John come to them from Jerusalem and they had already believed in Jesus and had been baptized in water but had not yet received the Spirit. So Peter and John lay hands upon them that they might receive the Spirit.

Then suddenly in Acts we find that there is no reference to tongues on that occasion as happened on the day of Pentecost. We are quick to assume that Pentecost must have been a unique experience since they didn’t speak in tongues in Samaria. But I think that’s a little too simplistic in looking at the text. There are some clues within the text itself that something happened with the Spirit came upon the Samaritans.

One thing, Simon saw that the Spirit was given. Remember last week in dealing with the promise of the Father we noted that the content of that promise was something that you have seen and hear.

Another phrase that’s used specifically of the Spirit in chapter 8:16 is that he had not yet fallen upon them. The New International Version says, “for the Spirit had not yet come upon them.” But the Greek word was literally “to fall upon” and it’s a very physical word. It’s used in Luke 15:20 for the prodigal son who comes home and falls upon his father’s neck. It’s used in Acts 20:10 when Eutychus, the boy who listened to Paul’s longwinded sermon, fell out of the window, dead on the ground. Paul came down and *fell* upon him. Giving mouth to mouth Spiritual resuscitation. In Acts 20:37 when Paul was saying goodbye to the Ephesian elders, they *fell* on his neck. And in Acts 10:44 at Cornelius’ house. While Peter was speaking these words the Holy Spirit *fell* upon all of those who were hearing the word and they began to speak

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with other tongues. In Acts 11:15 says the Spirit *fell* upon Cornelius “as upon us in the beginning.”

It's interesting that in Acts 2 the Spirit is described as being poured out. But here Peter is saying describing the experience says that the Spirit *fell* upon us. And the Spirit *fell* upon Cornelius. And the Spirit *falls* upon the Samaritans. There's something physical to it. Something arresting. It is not simply *passé*. You received the Spirit when you are converted then there's no dramatic Spiritual experience the rest of your life. You just sort of sail along. It's very evident from looking at Peter's words that the early church expected that when hands were laid upon people there was some physical accompaniment. Some sign, some evidence that the Spirit had come.

In Acts 9:17 we have the third instance of the baptism in the Spirit. That is Saul. When he is converted on the road to Damascus then the Lord sends to him Ananias to lay hands upon him that he might receive the Spirit and receive his sight.

Here again we are not told that Paul spoke in tongues on the occasion. But by using the process of induction we come to the conclusions in 1 Corinthians 14 that tongues were a regular part of his prayer life. He spoke in tongues he said, More than you do. When he came in 55 A.D. some 25 years after his conversion experience to a group of 12 followers of John the Baptist at Ephesus the first question he asked them, “Having believed did you receive the Spirit?” then he laid hands upon them and they received the Spirit and spoke with other tongues.” It is almost inconceivable to me to assume that an apostle of the church would not have had the same experience as the apostles who followed the Lord after the flesh. We know that certainly there had to be a time when this became a part of his experience since tongues was such an important part of his prayer life.

Then there is the experience of Cornelius, the fourth experience in Acts – chapter 10 and 11 – where the Spirit comes upon Cornelius and his family and they receive the Spirit. The Spirit falls upon them and they speak “all with other tongues.”

Then finally the fifth experience in Ephesus, Acts 19:1-7. Once more they receive the Spirit and speak with tongues.

So of the five instances clearly in Acts where people receive the Spirit, three times it is explicitly mentioned that people spoke in tongues. In another, a fourth, the experience with Paul, surely at some time he began this. It is logical to assume that his beginning experience would be identical to that of the day of Pentecost. And at Samaria, likewise the Spirit falls upon them.

There are some who say but this doesn't prove the case that all in the baptism of the Spirit speak with tongues since only three out of five instances mention speaking in tongues. But to say that that then would draw one to the conclusion that all do not speak in tongues is to miss out on understanding on what kind of historian Luke is. Luke leaves some things unsaid because he takes them for granted.

For example, it would be the position of most every believer except perhaps the community of Quakers that water baptism is a part and component of the initial Christian experience – repent and be baptized. We would understand from that based upon the book of Acts teaching that all who believe are baptized in water. I don't think anyone except perhaps the Quakers would

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assume that New Testament people were not people who at their conversion were baptized in water. That's an understanding. But if you go through the book of Acts, you will find in the 26 specific instances where there are conversion accounts in Acts either of groups as a whole or of individuals one by one only 9 times does Luke even mention that a person was baptized in water. Is he then giving us a ration that approximately one out of every four believers who come to the Lord need to be baptized in water? No, that's not what he's doing. It is such a common thing that in the church it's commonly understood that you repent and are baptized. That the account in Acts 13 and 14 of Paul's first missionary journey which saw thousands of people won to the faith out of that whole missionary journey he doesn't mention water baptism one time.

But what Luke is doing is helping us to see that the day of Pentecost kind of experience was recreated at Cornelius' house, recreated 25 years later at Ephesus and it was the experience of Samaria and the experience in Saul's life as well. There are some who say you cannot take doctrine out of the book of Acts because in order to have a doctrine of tongues associated with the baptism of the Spirit you will have to find the teaching in the Epistles. Because the epistles contain what is called didactic teaching. That is simply a word, which means to teach in a systematic way like I'm trying to do tonight. There are those who say if you expect tongues to be associated with the baptism of the Spirit, Paul would have surely taken this theme up in one of the epistles and dealt with it if he felt it was important. But we must remember that many themes were not dealt with in the epistles that were very important in the life of the church. The reason why they weren't dealt with is that they were not matters of controversy in the church.

For example, there is no didactic or systematic teaching in the epistles on the Trinity. We take our understanding of the trinity out of the historical sections – the gospels and Acts as well as references in the Epistles. There is no didactic teaching or systematic teaching on the virgin birth. We get that out of the gospels. But no one of us is going to throw the virgin birth out because it is not systematically taught in the epistles. Nor is there any sequential or didactic teaching in the epistles on how we are to baptize somebody whether sprinkling, immersion or whatever. But we don't throw that out because it is not taught. In fact there would not even be systematic teaching on the Lord's supper in the epistles were it not for the fact that the Corinthians were having a problem with it. That's why it was discussed.

This is an area where we are led to assume that the early church was not having a problem. In fact we can take doctrine from the book of Acts based upon the clear teaching of the scriptures themselves. But Paul writing to Timothy, 2 Timothy 3:16 says "All scripture is God breathed and is useful for doctrine." All scripture, including the book of Acts, is useful for doctrine. Luke represents the truth that God is revealing himself in history. A part of understanding God's ways is to understand how he moved through the historical processes he created. Among those of the 120 on the day of Pentecost – Samaria, Saul of Tarsus, Cornelius and the disciples at Ephesus.

We would understand and expect from this understanding of the scripture that tongues is an aspect and component of that river which is welling up with the baptism in the Spirit.

This is however not the only use for tongues in the New Testament. It is also one of the nine spiritualities of the Spirit, sometimes called the gifts of the Spirit.

We're going to be looking at these next week in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14 the word *charisma* is not used of these gifts. It is "Spiritualities." Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:30 of these gifts, "Do

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all speak in tongues.” The obvious answer to that is no, not all speak in tongues. There are some who say, There’s your answer right there. Not all speak in tongues therefore tongues is not always a part of an experience with the baptism of the Spirit. But that’s not the way Paul is answering the question about the gift of tongues as it is used when the saints are gathered together. And someone in the body stands up and gives an utterance. Then someone else will interpret it. The difference between tongues on that occasion and tongues in the personal use is that Paul is dealing with the spiritualities or the gifts in 1 Corinthians 12 that relate to the common good. In reference to these gifts which relate to the common good the question is, Do all speak in tongues? And the answer is no. Paul will later turn right around and say, I would have every one of you speak in tongues. I’d rather you prophecy. On the personal level I’d like every one of you to. But in the church prophecy. For he who speaks in a tongue edifies himself but he who prophecies edifies the church. Therefore in a public setting prophesying or preaching the word of God or testifying to the word of God is far more appropriate than many people rising and giving utterances in tongues.

Paul in his own personal life says in 1 Corinthians 14:18 “I thank God I speak in tongues more than all of you but in church I would rather speak five words of understanding.” Therefore in the church when there is an utterance of tongues – and by the way I think we have incorrectly called it “a message in tongues.” That is not a scriptural reference and it is kind of a Pentecostal tradition that somebody is giving a message in tongues. But if I understand he that speaks in an unknown tongue speaks unto God, tongues therefore is not God sending a message to us. It is from our spirit, prayer going up to God. Therefore it is not a message God is giving us as much as it is an utterance of prayer or praise or petition or intercession going up to God.

So tongues is associated with a special gift when we’re gathered together.

Then thirdly tongues may be and is a personal language of prayer to be used freely in our personal life. And appropriate for the personal life. 1 Corinthians 14:2 says, “He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaketh unto God.” Prayer is that which addresses God. Prayer is composed of praise. It’s composed of thanksgiving. It’s composed of petition. It is composed of confession. It is composed of intercession. Therefore when we pray, when we speak to God in an unknown tongue, I’ve found myself at times being very aware that I was praising God in a way that my rational mind could not comprehend. I found myself interceding for others and for countries and for whole areas and whole needs in a way that I didn’t understand how I was interceding but the Spirit was praying through me in that moment. I found myself thanking God. I think we could find ourselves confessing as well those deep dimensions of our personality that even our rationality does not understand. There’s much about our personality that we do not know. Hidden marks that have been left upon our life from the past. We need to be built up from devastating scars that maybe even we have blocked out of our consciousness. He that speaketh in an unknown tongue speaks unto God.

Paul says in Romans 8:26-27 that there are times when we’re going through tough times that we don’t even know how to pray as we ought. But the Spirit intercedes for us with groanings, which cannot be uttered, signs to deep for words. Or perhaps he is here speaking of that ministry of the Spirit through tongues which helps us in intercession.

Since tongues is speaking to God it is never the language of evangelism. Some have looked at the day of Pentecost had said, The early disciples didn’t have enough time to learn all the

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languages of the world so God gave them the new languages so they could preach him to avoid all those years of study. That's not the case. When they're all done speaking with tongues in Acts 2, the unbelievers are confused. Some of them are amazed. And some of them are mocking. What quickens their heart and what penetrates and brings results for the gospel is that the tongues have attracted the attention but it's Peter's message in the Aramaic language which they understood that produces the response. Tongues were never used for evangelism. They're addressed to God.

It's true if there had been unbelievers in the service – and we have heard accounts and there have been written accounts of this – that they have heard an understandable language. Signs of the Spirit's presence. It's not the language of evangelism. It's the language of prayer. But as the language of prayer it may reach out sometime and confront someone with a powerful sign of God's presence. Tongues is speaking to God. It's a personal language of prayer.

Tongues edify the believer. 1 Corinthians 14:4. I don't understand how they do that. But I do know that I find it impossible in my own spiritual life to pray in tongues when I am angry. I find it impossible to pray in tongues when I have sinned. I find it impossible to pray in tongues when I've got it in for someone. That would suggest to me that tongues really is of the Spirit. Because I find it only possible to really purely pray in tongues when things are right between me and the Lord and when things are right between me and someone else. Then I find that praying in tongues really builds up. It ministers to me and to you on a subconscious level. Laughing is a non-rational side of our being but when we have rarely laughed wholesomely how good and rested we feel. Speaking in tongues is that which has been designed by God to build up our inner spirituality.

Then I think tongues is a means by which our non-cognitive, non-rational side reaches out to God. That's why Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14 "I will pray with the Spirit and I will pray with understanding. I will sing with the Spirit..." Here he's speaking of praying and singing in tongues as compared to praying and singing in language that he knows. He knows that in our relationship with God, the non-cognitive, non-rational side of us needs to be caught up in God as well. So tongues is a personal language of prayer.

The fourth thing that tongues represent in the New Testament is that it is a sign to unbelievers. 1 Corinthians 14:20-22. This is a notoriously difficult passage to interpret because on the one hand Paul is saying tongues are a sign to the unbeliever. Then he turns right around and says prophecy is for believers. Then he says, But if an unbeliever comes and hears you all speaking with tongues he won't understand. But if he hears you all prophecy the secrets of his heart will be disclosed and he'll fall down on his face and confess that God is truly Lord. So on one hand he's saying it's a sign to unbelievers. Then he turns around and says if you see unbeliever there, prophecy. Don't speak in tongues. So we're left with a kind of conundrum. What does he mean by it being a sign to the unbelievers?

Some think Paul here is using irony. And that the Corinthians were people who judged the success of a service by if everybody was speaking in tongues. That's evidently what the Corinthians were doing. They were judging the spirituality or the success of a service by how much tongues were present.

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Paul may have been doing a kind of a thing of the Old Testament on them. He quotes a passage out of Isaiah. He says, “By stammering tongue and strange lips I will speak to you.” What he is referring to is the captivity of Israel and says because your hearts have been away from God I’m going to send somebody speaking a strange language on you and that will be a sign of God’s judgement. There are some things, looking at this passage, that what Paul is saying to the Corinthians is tongues are a sign to the unbeliever – unbelieving Israel. If you need tongues as a sign of God’s presence then you’re an unbeliever. Because God’s presence is manifested in more ways than simply expecting that it isn’t a real spiritual service unless there have been tongues. So maybe that’s what he meant – using irony. Paul is perfectly capable of using irony and satire.

But another legitimate way to understand that is that Paul is talking about the dimensions of tongues which clear languages are understood by a listener. Such as the day of Pentecost when it is a sign. It was not on the day of Pentecost a means by which people came to salvation. But it was a sign of God’s presence. Therefore when an unbeliever comes in and a tongue is spoken which is understood in a language by someone who knows that language it will indeed be a sign.

Since the occurrence is rather rare, and I think anytime believers get together and speak in other tongues there is both precognitive speech which we talked about earlier – that is, speech which is language of angels. It is not a recognizable human language. But there are also I believe that are being spoken as we speak in tongues I few could have all the nations of the earth gathered and a representative from each tribe and nation, all the thousands of languages present, I think of any meeting of Spirit filled believers we’d have someone maybe from some primitive tribe say “I understand my language.” We don’t know whether we’re praying in an earthly language that has grammar and syntax and vocabulary or if we’re praying in that kind of precognitive speech which is just the gushing of our soul and the pouring out of our heart to God.

That kind of a systematic teaching. Let me come to some conclusions.

I mentioned in my pastor’s letter and in the church bulletin this morning that I wanted to share with you something that happened to me here at the altar last Sunday night. The baptism in the Spirit relates not only to our worship to God but it relates to our mission as Christians. It is this in-filling of the Spirit that is an empowering experience. We live lives as very shy people. People ridden with inferiority complexes. People that find it difficult to screw up the courage to go witness to someone. So we need the Spirit of God to fill us. One of the ways that the Spirit gives us power – I used to think power was like blowing things up. I’ve had people take the word power from the Greek word *dunamis* from which we derive the English word dynamite. I see people blowing up! Explosive power. But I’ve discovered that the more adequate definition of *dunamis* is “capability.” Giving us the authority and the capability to do whatever God has called us to do. We cannot do things for God if there’s not a centering of peace and joy in our hearts. So the Spirit is meant to build up that inner man which will make us then comfortable in going out.

But the reason why Jesus told the 120 to wait in Jerusalem until they had been endued with power from on high was he wanted them to go as witnesses of his in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the uttermost part of the world. I believe the 120 were there in that upper room that day not simply to receive a personal Spiritual experience. But I believe they were there because they had embraced what Jesus had said. Although they maybe didn’t fully understand it, they were

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offering themselves as a corporate body to do the Lord's work in whatever way the Lord would appoint. They had begun already to identify and accept the mission, which he had given them. "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria. Those were specific places. Jerusalem is a specific place bounded by walls. It has an entity. A geographical and historical and cultural entity. You'll be My witnesses here. Then you'll be witnesses in Judea, Samaria, uttermost parts of the world. As they were in the process of embracing that mission the Spirit came upon them and filled them with praise and then out of that praise came the power to be the witnesses.

What struck me here in prayer as I was looked out over the sanctuary and through those doors was if we as a church will embrace the statement that the Lord makes to us: I'm going to send you out to Costa Mesa and to Newport Beach ... Will you as a church embrace that? That's your specific target. The Lord sent us to this area which has a geographical identity, a cultural identity, very definite population ethnic differences. If this church would embrace that as their mission and seek the Spirit, they would have an individual experience and realize that the baptism in the Spirit is part of the corporate plan and the Holy Spirit's mission for God's people. It is in the company of one another that we receive the Spirit. Not just individual, isolated instances. But we all receive the Spirit and the Spirit comes to thrust us out to do the mission of the Lord.

I want to challenge the church, that all of us embrace God's purpose in this community that we are the people along with other fine churches. We must each one of the churches embrace the fact sincerely from our hearts: God, thrust us into this community for you!

Then as we embrace that mission we say, "Lord, how do we do it? I'm not an evangelist. I don't know how to go knock on doors and witness to someone." Then praying here too, I felt the Lord answer that right away. "Don't worry about that!" In the book of Acts it was the Holy Spirit that opened the doors. That's what's so exciting. The church didn't anticipate a single level of entry. Nobody in the church was saying, "Wait until God gets a hold of Saul of Tarsus. We're going to witness to that guy and get him saved!" No. Saul of Tarsus was God's work. Nobody was saying, "How are we going to get into Cornelius' house?" The Holy Spirit was opening the doors. And the Ethiopian eunuch going back to Gaza, on his way down to Africa after he had been in Jerusalem. Who's going to witness to him? The Spirit of the Lord spoke to Phillip and an angel reaffirmed the message. "Go down and meet that guy!"

Time and time again it was the Spirit popping the doors. I'm convinced that that's how the Holy Spirit would have his church act. Not that we get passive and set down and say, "Lord when you get good and ready and open the door, we'll get up and go through the door." It's not that kind of going through doors. But it's an aliveness of the Spirit of God. Recognizing that there are many people in this city. Many homes that people are lost and lonely and they're ending this night by looking at a bottle and hopping for a few moments to douse their pain in a bottle or some white powder. They're suicidal. They're miserable within. They're without him who is the life and the light of the world. The Holy Spirit says to the church, I will come upon you with power. I'll open the door. Just offer yourself to me. Be candidates for my power. Expect me to move! The Holy Spirit will come.

One last thing I want to say directly to you who have not received the baptism in the Spirit. You perhaps need a refilling in the Spirit's presence. How do we do that? I think scriptures present

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to us some very clear guidelines. We ask. Luke 11:5-13. Immediately following the Lord's prayer where Jesus uses the parable about the father who gives good gifts to his children. And about asking and seeking and knocking. Jesus says if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will the Father give you the Holy Spirit.

When I was praying for the baptism of the Spirit as a young person I understood Ask, Seek, Knock in a totally different way. My thinking on the Holy Spirit was as distorted and warped as anyone's thinking could ever be growing up in a Pentecostal church. Maybe the Spirit was letting me experience all the warping so I could later come to help people who had gotten warped too. But I really didn't think the Holy Spirit wanted to have anything to do with me. I not only had to ask but I had to beat the door down. Ask, knock... He wouldn't respond to a gentle knock so I had to pound. Ask, seek, knock. I began to realize that the Holy Spirit is a relationship. Therefore he isn't something you just ask for once. That's why Jesus uses the progressive, present tense. Go on asking, go on seeking, go on knocking. There is never any time in our life where we simply come to rest and say I've received all the Spirit of God I'll ever need. I can set back now. We never have enough of God's Spirit. We'll have enough that we need for today but we'll never have enough unless we replenish the supply of his presence in succeeding days. So Jesus gives us this pattern. Whatever your need is for the work of the Spirit, if you're not full up to the level of your need of the Spirit today then ask, and seek and knock. And go on asking and seeking and knocking until you're full and satisfied with that moment. Then there will come another moment where you'll need more of the Spirit. Ask. It's all right to say, "Father, you promised the Spirit. You promised the baptism in the Spirit, I'm here to ask."

Then secondly I think we need to examine our hearts. In the book of Acts many times people receive the baptism in the Spirit so quickly that they didn't examine. But I found that it's the case that the Holy Spirit likes to fill a clean vessel. He is the *Holy Spirit*. Psalm 139:23 says "Search me, O God and try me. See if there be any wicked way in me." There is value to laying our lives before God and saying, "Lord, I want your Holy Spirit in the most deep way I've ever experienced in my life." Or "I want the baptism in the Spirit. But there is unconfessed sin in my life. There's things that I need to make restitution for and restore." That's good and proper that we do that. I think we can carry that to extremes. But the Holy Spirit wants our lives to be clean. Examine your heart.

Then I think the third thing that's important about receiving the baptism in the Spirit or refilling in the baptism in the Spirit is release. Ask, examine, release. The Spirit is welling up within us. Jesus has promised to fill us with the Spirit. The Spirit seeks to well up with us. That's why speaking in tongues is so very much akin to an artesian well. It begins and then begins to flow as part and parcel of receiving the baptism in the Spirit. Someone has asked, Can you receive the baptism in the Spirit without speaking in tongues? Can you be baptized in water without getting wet? I don't know that water makes the baptism but it's difficult to be baptized without getting wet. There's a sense in which the Spirit's presence by speaking another language is that inward release which the Spirit wants.

Many times we suppress what the Spirit wants to pray through us. We set on it because we say to ourselves "But I'm not unconscious yet! I'm still aware of what I'm doing." It is a choice we make. Not something that happens to us by surprise but the Spirit is welling up in us wanting to pray through us in a language we do not know. Because we want be sensitive to the Lord we're

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afraid that we're going to do something carnal or something that will displease God. When we talk about praying to God, I believe we're talking about a private line. I believe that we're talking about the kind of line that the devil doesn't bug. The Holy Spirit is very pleased with the prayer to God, which comes, both from our rational side and from our non-rational side. From our Spirit as well as our mind. "As the Spirit gave them to utter." It is the Spirit all along who is giving us but we are the ones who do the utterance. Don't overly agonize this thing and wait to get into some kind of spiritual euphoria. But in an atmosphere and context of asking the Lord and examining the heart and praising him, then as the Lord begins to quicken you, then release what is in your heart to God. Pour out your heart to God. You will find that that will grow and grow and grow.

The last thing I want to say about receiving the baptism in the Spirit is Exercise. Don't treat the baptism in the Spirit as something that just happens once and then it's all over. But exercise. Paul says to Timothy about his ministry in 2 Timothy 1:6 "For this reason I remind you to stir up the gift which is in you through the laying on of my hands. Stir up the gift says the King James. The New International Version says, "fan into flame." The word for "stir up" is a Greek word that represents a piece of hot coal, an ember, a spark. If you've got a charcoal fire you know what this is like. A charcoal fire needs to be fanned into flame. This is the word Paul uses. Rekindle. He's saying to Timothy about his ministry gift, "It's possible in the ministry to let the gift die down. The coal is still hot. It's still got fire in it. But it's not blazing at the intensity that it needs to in regard to any kind of ministry for the Lord's work. We need those times when the wind of the Spirit of God is rekindling the gift. That's true with the baptism of the Spirit as well. Kindle, rekindle. Keep filled with the Spirit so that the blessed experience of the baptism of the Spirit isn't something that remains in the long ago past. But today. Rekindle the gift.

Is it possible that in the services this evening there are some who regularly attend church, you're faithful in your duty as a Christian but your heart has grown cold to the Lord and you're not spiritually and emotionally in a position that you want to be. You're not with God where you want to be and the kind of person that you know God wants you to be. You're not there at this moment but you want to be. Stir up the gift. Let the Holy Spirit take the fan of his presence over the fire of your life and kindle you up full of the Spirit. So that you might not only be on fire but you might be flowing. Water might be flowing out of you. It's interesting those two symbols – fire and water. We could be both at the same time on fire and cool in water. Let the Holy Spirit come upon us.

Father, we seek the gift of the Spirit in our life continually. We realize that the Spirit is exactly that. Your gift to us. Not something we earn or pile up points to get. But a gift you're bringing us. There is not a one of us here this evening Lord that does not need to be revived in our heart. There's many of us that need to be revived in our attitudes and have the purity of first love restored to us. All of us need more zeal for you. There are hidden recesses of our heart where people are hurting and burdened. They've tried many ways to be free. There are some needs Lord in our life that only an experience with you can answer. No matter how much we try to toss down our system as an answer that will never be the answer until we just come into your presence and have you thoroughly soak us with yourself. And get us all wet in the Spirit. And let what is dryness in our heart become instead a river flowing. A river of praise. A river of adoration. A river of health and fruitfulness. Fill us, Lord, with your Spirit. We present ourselves as candidates to you. Fill us continually with your Spirit we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.