
The Gift of Tongues (Historical, Purposeful, Evidential, Instructional)

The Works & Sign Gifts of the Holy Spirit

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Sermon: The Works & Sign Gifts of the Holy Spirit: The Gift of Tongues (Historical, Purposeful, Evidential, Instructional)

New Series Messages: “The Works & Sign Gifts of the Holy Spirit”

- Theme Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, 28
- Sermon: The Gift of Faith (Wonder-Working Power)
- Sermon: The Gift of Discernment (The Power to Detect Unclean Spirits)
- Sermon: The Gift of Helps (The Power to Serve the Church)
- Sermon: The Gift of Leadership (Anointed with Power, Position, and Promotion)
- Sermon: The Gifts of Healing (The Physical, Faithful, and Spiritual Touch of Healing)
- Sermon: The Gift of Miracles (Signs, Wonders, and Greater Works)
 - The Signs of Miracles (Proof of God)
 - The Wonders of Miracles (Works of God)
 - The Greater Works of Miracles (Salvation of God)

Lesson Text

Acts 2:1–4 (AV)¹ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. ⁴ **And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.**

1 Corinthians 14:1–4 (AV)¹ Follow after charity, and desire spiritual *gifts*, but rather that ye may prophesy. ² For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. ³ But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort. ⁴ **He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.**

1 Corinthians 13:1 (AV)¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

1 Corinthians 14:27–33 (AV)²⁷ **If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret.** ²⁸ But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God. ²⁹ Let the prophets speak two or three, and let the other judge. ³⁰ If *any thing* be revealed to another that sitteth by, let the first hold his peace. ³¹ For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted. ³² And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. ³³ For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.

Introduction

Today we will give the final message of this final series on the Holy Spirit; the Sign Gift of Speaking in Tongues.

Of all the gifts of the spirit, this one has received the most scrutiny from theologians and denominations of all persuasions. This scrutiny ranges from a litmus test of spiritual baptism, a principle belief of salvation, an evangelistic tool, and a sign of the fulfillment of divine prophesy.

To properly study this gift, it's important that we understand proper scripture interpretation.

Exegesis is the careful, systematic study of scripture to discover the **original** intended meaning. To hear the Word as the original recipient in both historical and literary context; as well as the content or meaning of the words.

In interpreting scripture, we must first and always look at what a passage meant back when it was originally written, and then how does it relate or apply to us today.

When it comes to the Gift of Tongues, there are many subjects and topics that can be explored: speaking in tongues, interpretation of tongues, praying or singing in tongues, evidence of being filled with the Holy Ghost, evangelism, groanings that can't be uttered, and more.

Although this message will not be an exhaustive study on the Gift of Tongues, we will take an exegetical look throughout the scriptures to learn four things, 1) Its history, 2) Its purpose, 3) Its use and evidence, and 4) Biblical Instructions.

Series and Sermon: The Works & Sign Gifts of the Holy Spirit: The Gift of Tongues (Historical, Purposeful, Evidential, Instructional)

I. The Historical Gift of Tongues

Let's first look at the gift of tongues from an historical perspective.

Acts 2: ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Many people use this passage to as an instructional passage concerning speaking in tongues as evidence of being filled with the Holy Spirit. But based on the rules of Exegesis, we must first look at the historical context.

The Historical context of this passage is the introduction of the Holy Spirit promised by Jesus:

- John 14:²⁶ **But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.**
- Acts 1:⁴ And, being assembled together with *them*, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but **wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me.** ⁵ For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.
- Acts 1:⁸ **But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.**

It is the fulfillment of the promise of the Holy Spirit that is the historical context of this passage.

Acts 2:¹ And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. ² And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

Noticed that it happened at a specific time on a specific day, for a specific group. The day of Pentecost (50 days after the Passover), a time when Jews would gather from all over.

Acts 2:⁵ And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. ⁶ Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. ⁷ And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? ⁸ And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Historically, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was introduced to mankind using the gift of tongues. Why? Because it was a sign, and other gifts (such as helps, wisdom, knowledge, or leadership) could not demonstrate the outward visible sign of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 2:¹⁴ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: ¹⁵ For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is *but* the third hour of the day. ¹⁶ **But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;** ¹⁷ And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

Acts 2:³⁷ Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? ³⁸ Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

The 2nd Chapter of Acts exegetically is not instructional use of the gift of tongues for the church today, but the historical introduction of the Holy Spirit through the gift of tongues to mankind.

II. The Purposeful Gift of Tongues

Understanding the historical significance of tongues, let's now look at its purpose.

1 Corinthians 14: ² For he that speaketh in an *unknown* tongue speaketh not unto men, but unto God: for no man understandeth *him*; howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. ³ But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men *to* edification, and exhortation, and comfort. ⁴ **He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself;** but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

We actually see two purposes for tongues in scripture: speaking a human language that is unknown to the speaker, and speaking a heavenly supernatural language known only to God.

The first purpose refers to xenoglossia which is where one **speaks** an actual **language** they have never learned.

- Acts 2: ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
- Acts 2: ⁷ And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? ⁸ And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

Although I've heard anecdotal stories of people preaching in a foreign country with an interpreter all of a sudden begin to speak in tongues of that foreign language, other than in the book of Acts, we don't see this gift being used throughout scripture this way.

The second purpose, which I believe is for us today, is for the individual spiritual edification.

1 Corinthians 14: ⁴ **He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself**; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church.

Paul teaches us that this gift helps us when we don't know how to help ourselves: Romans 8:²⁶ Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

Paul also teaches us that this gift is a part of our armor and protection: Ephesians 6:¹⁸ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;

III. The Evidential Gift of Tongues

Now let's look at the gift of tongues from the perspective of evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 13: ¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

How many of you have heard the phrase "Baptized and filled with the Holy Ghost with evidence of Speaking in Tongues"? We do see references to this in several passages:

- Acts 2:⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.
- Acts 10:⁴⁵ And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. ⁴⁶ For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God...
- Acts 19:⁶ And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Although I go into great detail on these passages of scripture answering the questions "What it means to be filled with the Holy Ghost?" "Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?" and "Should all Christians speak in tongues?"

Suffice (it) to say, should the gift of tongues be used as evidence of having the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 13: ¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

Paul teaches us here that the gift of tongues of men and angels would profit us nothing if we have not charity or love. So, if the gift of tongues should be used as the evidence of being baptized with the Holy Spirit, why would Paul indicate that without love tongues are useless?

But as we know from our study on the Fruit of the Spirit, gifts are not used as evidence of the Holy Spirit in scripture, but rather fruit. Jesus himself says as much.

John 13: ³⁴ **A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.** ³⁵ **By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.**

Gifts are given to us all according to the will of the Spirit, but they come without repentance and should not be an indicating that a person is filled with Holy Spirit (walking, living, or controlled by the Spirit of God).

Jesus clearly states that what will be our evidence of discipleship is not tongues, but our love.

IV. The Instructional Gift of Tongues

Finally, what does the bible teach us concerning the use of tongues?

Not I'm not saying that all Christians should, could, or will speak in tongues at some point of their Christian Journey. Exegetically, the bible is not clear, and we should not say what the bible did not say. But we can tell you what the bible said concerning its public use.

1 Corinthians 14: ²⁷ If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue, *let it be* by two, or at the most *by* three, and *that* by course; and let one interpret.

Too many Christians have focused on the Historical perspective of the gift of tongues, misused the purpose of tongues, and improperly used or thought of them as evidence of being filled.

But when it comes to the gift of tongues, our use should not be historical but instructional.

First, this gift should not be used as evident to prove (a litmus test), but power to edify: 1 Corinthians 14 ⁴ **He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself;**

Second, this gift should not be used without the fruit of the Spirit: 1 Corinthians 13: ¹ Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

Thirdly, publicly it should be with interpretation: 1 Corinthians 14: ²⁷ If any man speak in an *unknown* tongue *let it be* by two or at the most *by* three and *that* by course; and let one interpret.

Finally, this gift should always be used orderly: 1 Corinthians 14: ⁴⁰ Let all things be done decently and in order.

Midweek Study Lesson Plan (Sermon: The Gift of Tongues (Historical, Purposeful, Evidential, Instructional))

Lesson Text

- Acts 2:1–4, 5–8, 1 Corinthians 14:1–4, 1 Corinthians 13:1, John 13:34–35, 1 Corinthians 14:27–33
- Book: [The Complete Guide To Understanding The Holy Spirit](#): Read “Sign Gifts, Healing”

Sermon Outline (Notes)

I. The Historical Gift of Tongues

II. The Purposeful Gift of Tongues

III. The Evidential Gift of Tongues

IV. The Instructional Gift of Tongues

Questions

I. Getting to Know “Me”

1. As you look back on this last decade, in what ways did God move in your life?
2. What are your resolutions or goals for next year? What is your plan to accomplish them?

II. Into the Bible

1. Gift of tongues aside, what are the advantages of a believer who speaks/prays in tongues?
2. Read Mark 16:15-18. Jesus specifically said in Mark 16:17 KJV, [17] And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;”. Does every believer have **THE ABILITY** to speak in an unknown tongue? **WILL** every believer speak in an unknown tongue? **SHOULD** every believer speak in an unknown tongue?

III. Life Application

1. What is the result of believers speaking in tongues but not having the fruit of the Spirit evident?
2. What did you hear in this week’s sermon that is new, surprising or challenging to you?