Acts 2 (Part 3) • Spiritual Gifts and Demystifying the Gift of Tongues

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I'm calling this part 3 of our study in Acts chapter 2. And for this lesson, we're going to be going back over some of the texts that we've already looked at in the first 2 chapters of Acts. And you might notice if you happen to notice the slide that's up on the screen, I've titled this study. I don't always title them, but this one is, Spiritual Gifts And Demystifying the Gift of Tongues, so here we are.

I've been threatening that I'm going to do this for a few weeks and talk about this and I'm aware that whenever the subject of the gift of tongues comes up, some people naturally start looking for the exits. I just want you to be okay before you start flipping through your phone, looking for a new church.

I want you to know that we're going to approach this subject with the same devotion for accuracy and balance that we've attempted to apply to all of our studies through God's Word. And frankly, I hope you've been attending Calvary Chapel long enough that you've become convinced that, we're not going to play fast and loose with the Bible and blow smoke in your eyes to get you to think or believe something that isn't really there. I hope that you can always walk away from a Sunday or a Wednesday teaching in the Word and believe, know in your heart, that what was presented, was presented fairly and factually.

And I believe that these first 2 chapters of the Book of Acts are so important and deserve our attention because essentially they record for us what I believe to be a watershed event in the life of the church, which centers around a promise that occurs in chapter 1 of Acts. And if you'll look with me on the screen, I'll put it there for you. It says,

Acts 1:4-5 (ESV)

And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

And while staying with them he (and that's Jesus) *ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, "you*

heard from me; for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now."

And it goes on to say,

Acts 1:6-8 (ESV)

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

So when they had come together, they asked him, "Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

Then what we've just read about here in this section of Acts, chapter 1 is what Jesus called, The Baptism with the Holy Spirit. And He also gave us a reason for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Can we go ahead and put that back up there? You'll see it. He said, *"But you will receive power…"* That's the purpose, that's the reason right there *"…when the Holy Spirit has come upon you."*

The first question we have is, what power is He talking about? Well, He's talking about supernatural power. He's talking about the kind of power that is contained in spiritual gifts. And we call it supernatural because it means simply that it extends beyond the natural.

We all have natural abilities and natural gifts, but when we're serving the Lord and when we're taking the message of the gospel out into the world, it requires something beyond our natural ability.

He wants us to use our natural abilities for sure, but there are demands that are placed upon us when we're sharing the gospel that go beyond the natural because we're dealing with more than just the natural.

We're dealing with spiritual realities. We're dealing with spiritual dynamics. We're dealing with principalities and powers, and sometimes even demons rear their ugly head, and there are spiritual things that captivate people. And we need

to know how to address those issues and how to respond to those issues. Well, those are going to happen through supernatural gifting and that's what Jesus promised His disciples.

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit," comes on you. And we see this happening here in the Book of Acts. The promise is given us in Acts chapter 1. In just a moment, we'll reread how it was fulfilled and came upon the believers in Acts chapter 2. But where we really actually read more about spiritual gifts in the Bible, is in the Book of 1 Corinthians.

For our study here today, we're going to be delving a lot into Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, but let's begin here. Turn with me in your Bible to Acts chapter 2, and we're going to read the first several verses here.

But in Acts chapter 2, beginning at verse 1, it says, *"When the day of Pentecost arrived,* (and of course Pentecost was a Jewish religious feast) *they were all together in one place. [2] And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. [3] And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues* (or if you will, languages) *as the Spirit gave them utterance." (ESV)*

I'll have you stop there. Luke mentions here what really is our first introduction to the body of Christ experiencing spiritual gifts. And as I said, we look to the Book of 1 Corinthians really to give us further information, more understanding about these spiritual gifts.

In fact, when we get to the 12th chapter of 1 Corinthians, the apostle Paul begins to describe and actually enumerate some of these spiritual gifts. I'll put it up on the screen for you so you can see it together. 1 Corinthians 12 beginning at verse 8. It says,

1 Corinthians 12:8-11 (ESV)

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.

For to one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, (or in other words, words 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.* (or languages and he says) *All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as he* (the Lord) *wills.*

All right. Now, you can see that the spiritual gifts that are mentioned in Acts chapter 2, where it says they all began to speak in other languages or speak in tongues is listed right here with the gifts of the Spirit that Paul mentions in 1 Corinthians chapter 12, which is up on the screen. And so we know that there's a connection between these two passages.

Here's the problem though, when we start talking about spiritual gifts and we start going to the Book of 1 Corinthians to talk about them, most Christians who have read through or studied through the Book of 1 Corinthians, know that it is largely a corrective letter.

And what we mean by that, is that Paul wrote the first letter to the Corinthians essentially to correct issues that were going on in the church. He actually rebukes them several times throughout the course of this letter because what was happening in the church was problematic.

They were being very unloving. They were being very disorderly in their approach and usage spiritual gifts; particularly even the gift of tongues. And it was a mess. And so Paul had to write this letter to bring them back into order.

Well, that's all good and fine. But the fact that it is a corrective letter, I believe, has caused some Christians to conclude that this whole spiritual gift business is really just problematic. It causes disorder in the church. It causes issues and so you know what? Let's just not do this. Let's just not deal with this. Let's talk about the fruit of the Holy Spirit, that's better. Let's talk about love, and patience, and peace, and kindness. Those are great things to talk about and they are.

But the idea there is that the gifts of the Spirit are proven to us in 1 Corinthians to simply be a problem for the church. Well, unfortunately, that conclusion misses out on a whole lot of what God wants to do in the body of Christ. And it also ignores Paul's initial statement to the Corinthians about spiritual gifts. Let me show you that on the screen. He says in chapter 12, verse 1,

1 Corinthians 12:1 (ESV)

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed.

Now, if you have a different Bible translation, yours may say, ignorant, instead of, uninformed. *"I don't want you to be ignorant."* The first thing Paul says about spiritual gifts to us in the scripture is, I don't want you to be ignorant and uninformed about what these all are and how these operate.

And yet, what's interesting in the body of Christ, as someone who fields a fair amount of questions from people in the body of Christ, I can tell you that ignorance and being uninformed is the rule of the day. I mean, people are largely confused about spiritual gifts and there are many misinterpretations far too often.

We're going to start at the ground level here this morning and we're going to go through here and build on this as we go. And the first question we're going to ask, we'll put up on the screen, which is, first of all, what are spiritual gifts?

What are spiritual gifts?

Spiritual gifts are supernatural endowments given to believers by the Holy Spirit to equip and enable believers to meet spiritual demands and fulfill the Great Commission of reaching the entire world for Christ.

Well, here's the definition that I came up with.

Spiritual gifts are supernatural endowments given to believers by the Holy Spirit to equip and enable believers to meet spiritual demands and fulfill the Great Commission of reaching the entire world for Christ.

All right? I think that's pretty fair. Spiritual gifts are supernatural endowments given through the Holy Spirit. Well, now that we've defined spiritual gifts in a larger sense, let's zoom in a little bit and ask now a further question. What is the gift of tongues? Because this seems to be the one that causes so much problems.

What is the gift of tongues?

Tongues is the spiritual gift of being able to speak in a language unknown to the speaker for the purpose of prayer and praise.

First of all,

Tongues (very simply) *is the spiritual gift of being able to speak in a language unknown to the speaker for the purpose of prayer and praise.*

The word that is translated, tongues in the Bible is the Greek word, γλῶσσα (*glōssa* \GLOHSS sah\). And it literally refers to the organ in your mouth, your tongue. But it can also be translated among other Greek words, languages. And the Book of Corinthians is the book that answers most of the questions that we might come up with related to this particular gift and specifically the gift of tongues.

And here's the larger question that we're going to begin with,

Are the Gifts of the Spirit (including the gift of speaking in tongues) operational today, or were they only functional in the 1st century church?

Are the Gifts of the Spirit (including the gift of speaking in tongues) operational today, or (are they, as some believe) were they only functional in the 1st century church?

And I'm willing to bet that there are some of you here today who have been raised perhaps, or have been to a church in the past where you were taught that the gifts of the Spirit are no longer functional today. Were only functional for the original apostles, and when the apostles died out, the gifts of the Spirit died out because they were no longer necessary. That's the question we want to look at.

And let me just, by full disclosure, tell you that the Bible does say that the gifts of the Spirit will pass away. It does say, that they will come to an end. In fact, it says it right here in 1 Corinthians. Let me show you this from chapter 13. Paul writes,

1 Corinthians 13:8-10 (ESV)

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; (he says) *as for tongues,* (and he's talking about the speaking of tongues, the gift, he says) *they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when the perfect comes,* (and I want you to take note of that phrase, *when the perfect comes*) *the partial will pass away.*

You can see from this passage up on the screen that Paul tells us there is coming a time when prophecies, gifts, other things like tongues, and others will pass away. And even tells us when they will pass away. He says, *"...when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away."*

All we have to do is correctly identify what the apostle means when he says, *"...the perfect."* And then we understand the timing behind when spiritual gifts will pass away.

And I'll just tell you right now, there are 2 basic schools of thought as to the identification of, the perfect. And the first school of thought is that it means the completion of the Bible. In other words, when the biblical canon was completed, when all that was to be written in the New Testament was finished, then there was no longer any need for spiritual gifts because the Bible gave us all we needed to know.

The revelation was done and the perfect, the completion had taken place. And now spiritual gifts are no longer needed. They have ceased to exist. And from that word ceased, we come up with a name for people who adopt this position. They are called Cessationists. Based on that idea that the gifts of the Spirit have ceased to function. A Cessationist, once again, says the perfect, refers to the completion or the perfection of the biblical canon.

The second school of thought regarding the term, the perfect, refers to the perfection of man or even the perfection of all things for that matter.

And so we're going to read on here in 1 Corinthians and we're going to see what Paul says and whether or not he's going to lead us to an understanding of the meaning of the perfection. Does he say in the following texts, does he say that this refers to the completion of the biblical canon, or does he say it is the completion of us?

1 Corinthians 13 is where we go. Verse 12, where Paul says,

1 Corinthians 13:12 (ESV)

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then (and the word, then, refers to when the perfection comes, alright, *then*) (we're going to see) *face to face. Now* (Paul says) *I know in part;* (but) *then* (and again, then, means when the perfection comes) *I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.*

Well, what is Paul saying here? First of all, he's admitting to you and me that there are things that he does not fully comprehend. He says, we see as in a mirror dimly. It's like a bad mirror. You look, but the reflection isn't that great. He says, that's the way we know now, right?

But then he goes on to say, when the perfection comes. Now, he begins to describe how it's going to be. He says, *"I shall know fully."* Now some people stop there and say, well, that means the Bible is going to be written and I'm going to know everything I need to know fully. But you see, he describes that fullness of knowing and he compares it to how he is known. Did you catch that?

He said, *"I shall know fully,* (look on the screen) *even as I have been fully known."* In other words, he's saying, there's coming a day when I'm going to know as I am known, meaning by God.

All right, let me ask you a question. How does God know you? How fully does God know you? Well, I think you would probably agree. He knows you perfectly. The Bible says he knows you even to the very number of hairs on your head, or lack thereof, for some.

The point is, He knows you completely, He knows you fully. Paul says, when the perfection comes, I'm going to know the way God knows me. He's already telling you that the perfection relates to him.

He's saying that I am going to be perfected to the point where my understanding, my knowledge is going to be equal to how I am personally known.

And I think it's clear, personally, that the perfect refers here and is best interpreted as the perfection of the believer when Jesus returns.

Here's another question we have, though. Are there any other Bible passages that would corroborate this idea that when the perfection comes… And we're talking about when Jesus returns, and, when Jesus returns, we know He's going to establish His kingdom on earth for a period of a 1,000 years. It's called the Millennial Kingdom and it's going to be an incredible time.

Is there any other Bible passage that talks about the perfection of knowledge during that time? Yes, there is. In fact, the prophet Isaiah speaks of this. Let me show you this on the screen. It says,

Isaiah 11:6-9 (ESV)

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.

The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, (that's not natural) *and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall graze; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.* (that's not natural) *The nursing child shall play over the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain;* (now look at this last part) *for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*

In other words, I will know fully, even as I am fully known. There is going to be a work of the Spirit to bring that perfection of knowledge during that time. Paul is talking about his perfection.

And I got to tell you, there's nothing in what Paul has gone on to say in 1 Corinthians that would lead us to believe that the perfection refers to the completion of the biblical canon. There's just, there's nothing there that would suggest that. And everything else suggests the perfection of the individual.

Since the perfection of the individual hasn't happened yet. I don't know if you've noticed when you looked in a mirror lately that the perfection of the individual has not happened yet. And it's not until that does happen that the gifts of the Spirit will pass away, our only conclusion is, the gifts of the Spirit are still operational in the body of Christ today.

And, I'll tell you something. Cessationism, the belief that the gifts of the Spirit have passed away, that's a pretty new belief. Do you know that's only a little over a 100 years old. Prior to…, and it all came about through right around the turn of the last century, 1900. There was a revival that took place here in the United States of America. It's called now, the Azusa Street Revival. Some of you who know your history know about it.

And it was a powerful move of God to well, just revive the church and spiritual gifts were very much a part of the Azusa Street Revival in those early days. But

there were some believers who didn't like it. And they thought it was all pretty disorderly and wrong and they came up with a belief called, Cessationism and that's where Cessationism really began.

But for the earlier or previous 1900 centuries, the church never doubted whether spiritual gifts had ceased to function. In fact, we've got proof of this in the writings of early church fathers and others who came about through the centuries.

In fact, here's one. How many of you guys know the hymn, A Mighty Fortress is Our God? You guys know that one? One of my favorite hymns, it really is. That was written by Martin Luther, the reformer, who was born in the 15th century. And, as most of you know, was responsible for the Reformation when he essentially served notice on Roman Catholicism, that they had messed up everything, and gotten a lot of things wrong in the Bible.

It is Luther that the Lutheran Church is essentially named after. Anyway, that's not the point. The point is Martin Luther lived a long time ago. But if you look at the lyrics of the third verse of, A Mighty Fortress is Our God, you'll see something interesting. Let me put it on the screen. It goes like this,

> That word above all earthly powers
> No, thanks to them, abideth
> The spirit and the gifts are ours
> Through Him who with us sideth

That word above all earthly powers
No, thanks to them, abideth
The spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him who with us sideth

Martin Luther passed away in 1546. And you can see, here's a man living in the 1500s who's just like, it was just common. Yeah, the Spirit and the gifts they're here, they're ours. We have them. There was no question until cessationism came up around the turn of the last century or the 1900s. Anyway, this is the part where all the Pentecostals get excited and say yeah!!!.

Well, just hang on a minute because by the time I'm finished you may not be very happy with me because I got to tell you. I believe that, to a large degree, Pentecostals and Charismatics have ignored the Word of God concerning the operation of the gifts of the Spirit and particularly the function of the gift of speaking in tongues. And I say this from amount of experience because I've told

you guys in the past that when Sue and I got serious about walking with Jesus, the very first church we attended was a charismatic church, which had a lot of old school Pentecostals attending it. And we were there for a number of years.

In fact, I was even on staff at that church as a youth pastor for a season. And I've watched this stuff. I have seen this stuff up close. And then I went to Bible college in an Assembly of God Bible College so I've seen Pentecostalism up close. And I've also dug into the Word of God and I've seen where Pentecostals frankly went astray. And I'm not saying that, I mean, they're lovely people, they're brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ. And some of you in this room may consider yourself of that ilk and that's wonderful. You are my brothers and sisters in Jesus and I love you. But there have been areas where they have erred.

And that's what I want to show you a little bit as we go through some passages here, particularly in 1 Corinthians, because while Cessationists have missed the boat altogether, Pentecostals have many times missed the word.

And we're going to begin by looking on the screen at a passage in 1 Corinthians 14 verses 1 through 3. Look with me there. Paul writes,

1 Corinthians 14:1-3 (ESV)

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. 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.

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. 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.

Now we're going to leave this passage up for a minute and I don't have time to exegete the whole passage. But I'm going to highlight just a couple of statements that the apostle Paul makes that I think you need to take note of. And we'll actually highlight them on the screen.

The first one you'll see there is,

1 Corinthians 14:1-3 (ESV)

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ***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.*

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. ***For one who speaks in a tongue*** (in other words, someone who uses and operates it with the gift of tongues as Paul writes) ***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.*

And this is one of the first areas where Pentecostals err. It is not uncommon in a Pentecostal church, because I've seen it many, many times. For someone to begin to speak during usually the musical worship time and a lull between songs. Someone will begin to speak in tongues loudly for the entire room to hear. And after that's finished, everyone will wait for a little bit and then an interpretation will come forward.

But often what happens in Pentecostal churches, is the interpretation, or what you hear as supposedly the interpretation, is a message to the body of Christ.

I'm here to tell you that is flatly unbiblical because Paul says right here, that he who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men. And that means that the interpretation of that tongue would also speak not to men.

Paul tells us here that those individuals are speaking to God. And what that means is, that the gift of tongues is always directed heavenward, not peopleward. I don't think peopleward is even a word, but I just made it up and you know what I mean. It is always heavenward. (Pastor Paul motions his hand in an upward position).

The gift of tongues goes this way, all right? (Pastor Paul motions his hand in an upward position) Not this way. (Pastor Paul motions his hand in a forward position, to the audience).

This way is prophecy, or a word of knowledge, or a word of wisdom. That's this direction. (Pastor Paul motions his hand in a forward position, to the audience)

But Paul (the apostle) makes it very clear that the gift of tongues goes heavenward in either prayer or praise.

The second thing that we're going to highlight from this passage is the statement that Paul says regarding the person speaking in tongues that,

1 Corinthians 14:1-3 (ESV)

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. 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.*

Pursue love, and earnestly desire the spiritual gifts, especially that you may prophesy. For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but ***he utters mysteries in*** (his) ***the Spirit.*** *On the other hand, the one who prophesies speaks to people for their upbuilding and encouragement and consolation.*

And the reason Paul calls them mysteries is because he doesn't know what he's saying. He's been given a gift to speak in a language that he doesn't understand and so the language is unknown to him. That's why Paul calls it a mystery.

But that's not the part of what he's saying here I want you to focus on, I want you to really focus on those words, *"...in the Spirit."* The man who speaks, using the gift of tongue, speaks in the Spirit, or if you will, with the Spirit.

And he's telling us here that it is through the Holy Spirit that someone is speaking. In other words, the Holy Spirit, as we read earlier in Acts chapter 2, gives utterance. Okay. It is the Holy Spirit who gives utterance. It doesn't come from the person who is speaking in tongues, it doesn't come from them. It comes from the Spirit. Alright. It's very important that we understand that.

Now here's the question that I get related…, when I start telling people that somebody speaks in tongues and they don't know what they're saying. People who have never experienced that gift or whatever, they're always weirded out by that. They're like, I don't get it. And so here's the question I get.

If the Gift of Tongues is for today, WHY would God give a gift to someone that they themselves can't understand?

If the Gift of Tongues is for today, WHY would God give a gift to someone that they themselves can't understand?

And I get that. That is a very common question. But can I just tell you? There are times in our lives when you just have to let the Holy Spirit take over because you don't know what to say or how to say it.

And whether it's a time of praise or whether it's a time of prayer. I mean, haven't you found yourself praying and you don't know what in the world to say or how to pray for a situation? Haven't you found yourself in that position? Cause I have lots of times and there are times that a person just has to let the Holy Spirit go for it.

And I just become that vessel, that vessel through which the Holy Spirit can speak. It's like a woodwind instrument, just that breath that plays through and give sound. And when a person speaks in tongues, it's the Holy Spirit blowing through them and making that sound, whether it's praise or whether it is prayer.

And essentially what I'm saying to you is, the gift of tongues gives the believer, the ability to commune with God without the limitation of language. Because language also often carries with it the idea of limitation. I just don't know what to say. I don't know how to say it. And when I'm talking to somebody who speaks another language, it's really pronounced.

I mean, I don't speak your language so we're struggling here. I'm doing sign language and, things with my hands to try to get you to understand. It's just the fact of the matter. Language has limitations, but when the Holy Spirit is given the freedom to pray through me, suddenly there are no limitations. When the Holy Spirit is given the freedom to praise through me, there are no limitations. Language now is not an issue. It is not a barrier.

As for the reason, again, for the gift of tongues, there's another reason that is behind it. And that has to do with the fact that when an individual who is gifted with the ability to speak in tongues does it, that individual builds themselves up. Let me show you this on the screen from 1 Corinthians 14, Paul writes,

<u>1 Corinthians 14:4-5 (ESV)</u>

The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself…

The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself…

And there's nothing wrong with building up yourself. Now that's not the context that Paul is using when he makes this statement, but it's still true nonetheless. When an individual functions with that spiritual gift, there is an edification process that takes place and we all need to be built up from time to time. And that is one of the purposes of the gift of tongues.

Let's look at another insight about this gift from 1 Corinthians 14, beginning in verse 14. Paul writes,

1 Corinthians 14:14-15 (ESV)

... 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.

... if I pray in a tongue, (meaning with the gift of tongues, he says) *my spirit prays* (I want you to take note of that) *but my mind is unfruitful.* (why, because I don't know what I'm saying) *What am I to do?* (he says, well sometimes, he says) *I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; ?* (he says) *I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also.*

Sometimes I'll do it with understanding, we all do that. We sang today in our worship time and I hope you understood all the words and you were singing with your understanding.

But there are times, Paul says, when I will sing to the Lord using the gift of tongues and even though my mind is unfruitful, I know that I'm lifting up praise to God without the limitation of language. He's making some interesting points about the gift of tongues, but I want you to specifically notice when Paul says, I will pray and I will sing with my spirit.

Did you catch that? Did you see it on the screen? I will pray or I'll sing with my spirit. In other words, he's saying to you and me that when the gift of tongues is being used, the spirit of the individual is also bringing forth that prayer and praise.

Now you might be thinking to yourself, well, now wait a minute here, pastor Paul. Just a minute ago, you were saying that when someone speaks in tongues, it's the Holy Spirit praying through them or, the Holy Spirit even praising through the individual. And I did say that. And yet now (apostle) Paul is saying, I pray with my spirit, I sing with my spirit, so which is it? Is it the Holy Spirit doing it or is it me?

It's both, because Paul assumes that you're also remembering what he said in an earlier chapter of this letter, back in chapter 6, up on the screen.

1 Corinthians 6:17 (ESV)

...he who is joined to the Lord becomes on spirit with him.

...he who is joined to the Lord becomes on spirit with him.

And you see, understanding that helps you to understand that whether he's talking about praying in the Spirit, he's talking about the work of the Spirit praying through you and also your spirit praying and singing as well. All right. Very important thing to remember.

Let's look at one more passage from 1 Corinthians chapter 14 up on the screen. It says,

1 Corinthians 14:18-19 (ESV)

I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. (yes, the Apostle Paul had this gift) *Nevertheless, in church* (he says) *I would rather speak five words with my mind in order to instruct others, than ten thousand words in a tongue.*

Now, this is a very important passage that I've put up on the screen there for you and this is another area where Pentecostals kind of mess it up. Because they would rather speak the 10,000 words in a tongue than 5 words of instruction.

When I was being raised, there wasn't a whole lot of instruction sometimes. Teaching wasn't a primary element of our church services. Spiritual gifts were a primary element of our church services many times.

But what's Paul saying here? He says, listen, if I had to choose, if you gave me the limitation of only saying 5 words, to get up here and say 5 words, I would take those 5 words over 10,000 words spoken in tongues.

What's he telling you about the priority of when we come together as the church? The priority ought to be instruction, right? That's the spirit of what he's saying. That's why that’s what we do here at Calvary Chapel. We come together

and our primary function is to worship and to receive the instruction of the Word of God.

It's not to spend our time, with all kinds of spiritual gift type phenomena. It's just…, it's not the point. Spiritual gifts, frankly, I mean, there needs to be a place in the church for spiritual gifts to be nurtured and cultivated and that sort of thing. But when we begin to use spiritual gifts and walk in spiritual gifts, it should be out there in the marketplace of life.

If we're coming together as the body of Christ, we're doing all this things with the spiritual gifts and then we walk out there and we never ever operate in the power of the Spirit, it has ceased to become a function of the great commission. And now it's just for our mutual enjoyment when we come together as the body of Christ.

Boy, that was a great church service today. Do you see how many people spoke in tongues? That was amazing. Yeah, you see, that's not the heart of the apostle Paul.

He says, when I come together in church, I'd pick 5 words of instruction over 10,000 in a tongue. That's what we're going to do.

That's what we're going to continue to do here at Calvary Chapel, Ontario. It's going to focus on instruction, right? It's very important that we understand the emphasis that Paul is giving here to instruction. And the fact that he's deemphasizing the operation of spiritual gifts when the body comes together, because that's not really the function.

All right, we're going to do some quick questions and even quicker answers as we begin to close out our time here this morning. Up on the screen,

Do I have to speak in tongues to be saved?

Do I have to speak in tongues to be saved? In a word, no. Salvation is based solely on your faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Amen. And if anybody tells you different, you can tell them just go haunt somebody else because I'm not taking it.

Number 2.

Is everyone supposed to speak in tongues?

Is everyone supposed to speak in tongues? Paul already answered that. Let me show you. 1 Corinthians chapter 12. He says,

1 Corinthians 12:29-30 (ESV)

Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret?

By the way, those are called rhetorical questions and they all demand a, no, answer. All right.

Number 3.

Is tongues the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

Is tongues the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit? It depends on who you ask. When I went to Bible college, that's what they taught me. That speaking in tongues was the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.

And then I found out that Jesus had something else to say on the matter. Acts chapter 1, verse 8.

Acts 1:8 (ESV)

"...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..."

"...you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..."

I think that's the initial evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. It's power. However, it manifests itself. That's not my business. That's not my call. It's God's call.

The Bible says He imparts gifts according to His will. Okay. What's the initial evidence of the baptism of the Spirit? Power, spiritual dunamis. That's that Greek word again.

Number 4.

Does the Holy Spirit take control of the believer to speak in tongues?

Does the Holy Spirit take control of the believer to speak in tongues? The answer is no, He does not. It has to be an act of the will of the individual. And someone who has the gift of tongues can speak in tongues whenever they want to. They can turn it on and turn it off whenever they want. And I'm telling you that's true because I have the gift of tongues, and I've had it since the 1980s. Yes, that's right, I'm as old as dirt.

And my wife has also. We both received the gift of tongues in the 1980s; early 1980s. And yeah, so I mean, it's something that weirds people out a little bit, but it's true.

The prophecy…, Paul talks about prophecy. He says the prophecy is subject to the prophet. Well, it's the same is true for tongues.

Number 5.

How can I receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

How can I receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Such as the gift of tongues or whatever, whatever. And there's no really need to focus on one particular gift. But the way you receive the gifts of the Spirit is through the baptism of the Holy Spirit as we saw in Acts chapter 1 and 2.

And the baptism of the Holy Spirit is given for the asking. Just tell the Lord, I want to be empowered. I want to have the power. I need power to witness, and to live my life for you, and I pray that you would baptize me with the Holy Spirit.

And let me just say one last thing about the gift of tongues that is important I think to probably understand.

Both the understanding of the gift of tongues and the operation of the gift of tongues, like many other things, is an assault to our human pride. I mean, even salvation is an assault to our human pride. You go around telling somebody you're a sinner and there's nothing you can do about it, period.

The only thing you can do is trust Jesus and what He did on the cross, sorry. There’re going to be assaulted. I mean, their pride is going to be assaulted. It's like there's nothing… That's not true. If I'm good enough, I can go to heaven. There's no such thing as being good enough. You cannot be good enough to go to heaven. Well, that assaults people's pride. Well, you know what? The gift of

tongues assaults people's pride, too. Because it is a process whereby I have to surrender and we don't surrender things very easily.

When it comes to salvation, I have a hard time surrendering eternity to this, to the belief that I have to trust somebody else for what He did in order to get to heaven.

And with the gift of tongues, I have to surrender my vocal cords and just say, Lord, you got the floor. Here we go. Boom!. And that is always going to assault a person's pride. In fact, this whole thing about the gifts of the Spirit, it just it messes with our minds because we are such natural people.

And what I mean by that is we're so tied to the natural, we're so connected to the natural that we end up thinking that the natural is all there is. And then we get saved and we start learning about this. This element of the Spirit, and that there are these supernatural things, and there are angels and demons, then they really exist.

I've never seen any, but I know they exist because the Bible says they exist. And yet you see, I have to say that goes beyond my natural ability to determine the reality of that thing. Right? I mean, how are you going to scientifically prove the existence of angels, for example? You got to get an angel to come and submit himself to some scientific research. That isn't going to happen.

Immediately our sense of pride and our sense of, well, I'll believe it if I can see it, has to go by the wayside. Suddenly now I'm forced into a whole different realm of acceptance and agreement with the Word of God. And understanding that there's a spirit realm that I don't see, but it's very active.

It's very…, and it's all around me and who knows? There's probably angels in this room right now, but we just don't see them. But am I going to, am I going to believe the Word? Am I only going to believe what my 5 senses, my natural ability to discern reality tells me. Is that where I'm going to stop? I'll believe it when I see it. I'll believe it when I can touch it or do like Thomas, when I can feel his scars, then I'll believe it. That's just the natural man, but we have been called beyond the natural.

Guys, in Christ, we are called into a supernatural understanding of life and the kingdom of God and we need to be prepared for it. And in order to help us be prepared, God has given us spiritual gifts and we need to be open to them. That doesn't, that's not going to make you weird. It's just going to make you equipped. Amen. Let's stand together.

If you need prayer this morning, we'd be more than happy to pray with you, for you, whatever the case might be. We'll have some folks up front here ready to pray.

Thank you, Father. Thank you for your Word. Thank you for your love.

Thank you for sending your Son to redeem our lives by His work on the cross.

Thank you for loving us when we were unlovable and thank you, Lord, for equipping us for the unexpected and the unknowable, apart from your Spirit.

Thank you for making us aware of the supernatural, that which transcends the natural. And thank you, Lord, for equipping us to deal with those issues through spiritual gifts.

We just want to be open, Lord, to everything that you have for us.

We thank you and praise you in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior, and all God's people said, amen.

God bless you. Have a good rest of your day.