

LET US EXCEL

UNDERSTANDING
THE GIFT OF TONGUES



PETER DOSECK

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by
Peter Doseck

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Peter Doseck

Peter Doseck Ministries
13815 Botkins Rd
Botkins, OH 45306

937.693.3554
peterdoseck.com
contact@peterdoseck.com

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Chapter One

Grace & Gifts

Gifts are amazing. We love to get them, but we love to give them even more. It's not enough to simply give a gift, we have to find the perfect box, have it wrapped just so, and put some thought into the card to be sure we please the one who will receive it.

The anticipation as we wait to give a gift, especially if it's a surprise, can be absolutely consuming, watching the clock, waiting for that moment when we'll pull the surprise from behind our back and tell someone, "I love you! I was thinking about you, and I got you this."

It's not so different with our Father God. There was a time when He planned to give a precious gift to a group of men and women who had been waiting for it. They tarried, and they stayed steady. Even though they knew something was about to happen, they couldn't quite put their finger on what it would be.

What would it look like? How would it be packaged? What would it say to them, what would it do for them, and how would it change their lives?

Only God knew, the one who chose the gift, chose the package, wrote the card, and made it just so for

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them. He labored and made the presentation all He ever dreamed it could be, and then it was time, time for the gift to be given and for His beloved to receive what He had longed to give since the foundation of the world.

A gift - a comforter, a helper, a graceful friend, a compassionate partner - His time had come, and suddenly His presentation was at hand.

Endowments of Grace

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

The Holy Ghost was the Gift, and He came bearing gifts for all who were in the room. It was a glorious day, one for the ages. Surely, nothing like this could ever be forgotten. Surely, all they experienced would keep them for a lifetime.

And yet, not so many years down the road the story of Pentecost began to fade, and the wonder of the Holy Ghost began to seem commonplace. Those who had been in the room when the Gift was given had been scattered, every man and woman to his or her work in the Kingdom, and it seemed there were more questions than answers in that day.

Men like the Apostle Paul traveled from church to

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church, from city to city, teaching and training, bringing back to their remembrance the beauty of the original Gift, and reminding them that He had given gifts to men and women through His indwelling presence.

We find part of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 12:1 where he said: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant." We know ignorance is a terrible thing, especially when it concerns something so amazing and so vital as the Holy Ghost and His gifts.

Paul continued in verses 2-4: "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

How someone could believe that the Holy Ghost would inspire a man to say something disparaging about Jesus is beyond belief, and yet this doctrine was evidently rampant enough in the Corinthian church for Paul to have to address it. There was need, there was error in their thinking, and Paul was determined to correct it.

As we study the passage above, we see that the word "gifts" is taken from the same Greek word that is translated "grace" in other scriptures. This reveals that the spiritual gifts are endowments of grace. They are the voice of the Holy Ghost, they are free, and they are designed by God to be used in our lives to help others come to the fullness of Christ.

Paul continued his teaching in 1 Corinthians

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12:7-11 which says: “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: but all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will.”

Of course we know the gifts of the Spirit are subject to the Holy Ghost; after all, He is the giver of them. Even so, there is a requirement on our side of this gift giving exchange. There is the God side of the equation, and there is the man side.

We cannot be lazy about spiritual gifts, thinking the Holy Ghost will drop them on us if we need them. No, nothing in the Bible just drops on us, but we must mix our faith with the promises in order for them to become a part of our lives.

Paul made our responsibility clear in 1 Corinthians 14:1 where he said, “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.” To desire means to be passionate about something, make it a focus in your life, and use your faith to apprehend it. We are commanded to desire spiritual gifts, not reject or ignore them.

In 1 Corinthians 12:31, Paul gave further evidence for this fact when he said, “But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” Too often, when people

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read this verse they skip right past the part where it says to covet the best gifts, and they focus on love, thinking it is a replacement for the gifts.

Love is not a replacement for the gifts of the Spirit, but it is to be joined with them, and it is to be the main reason for their use. 1 Corinthians chapter 13 reminds us that we can operate in every gift to the highest degree, but if we do not have love as our driving force we are nothing, useless, and even detrimental to the kingdom of God. Therefore, we must have a thread of love woven through every manifestation of the gifts in our lives.

1 Corinthians 12:31 is the only place in the Bible where we are instructed to covet, which is very strong wording. If you dig into a Bible dictionary a little bit you will find that it means exactly what we think it means – to be jealous for and zealous after the gifts, and not just any gifts, but the best gifts.

What would the best gifts be? The ones that are needed in a given situation. It's very simple, but we have made it complicated because it's easier to ignore something complicated than to embrace something simple that puts the onus of coveting and going after it on us. It's a commandment for us to covet earnestly the best gifts, and I for one am determined to do it as passionately as I possibly can.

Grace for Purpose

Ephesians 4:7 says: “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.” This describes the grace given to each of

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us, the grace that equips us for our lives and our calling. It is a divine infusion of grace that enables us to fulfill our purpose, and it allows everything we do in Him to have a supernatural touch.

Verses 8-12 go on to say: “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

Again we see gifts that are given to the body of Christ, and they, like the spiritual gifts of 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, are also endowments of grace for supernatural purposes. The five-fold ministry gifts that we see listed here – the apostle, prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher – are divinely given by God according to His sovereign will, and the outcome is nothing less than the hand of God Himself.

Who could perfect you? Only God. Who could move you to edify one another in love? Only God. Who could cause you to come to the fullness of Jesus Christ? Only God. Man could never do this; only God can.

Grace and spiritual gifts are one and the same, and they are given to us by God because He knows without them we cannot fulfill our purpose in Him. His lovingkindness is everlasting, and He wants us to succeed in all we do for the kingdom of God;

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therefore, He has given each of us just what we need so that we can become all He has called us to be.

2 Corinthians 6:1 says: “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.”

A simple definition of grace is “God’s willingness to do for you what you cannot do for yourself.” If we would describe the word vain, we might call it “futile, empty, and unusable.” So, if we put it all together we would say, “Don’t receive the willingness of God to do for you what you cannot do for yourself, and then set it aside and ignore it so that it becomes futile, empty, and unusable.”

We should never receive the grace of God and the spiritual gifts He has given us, and then live an empty, defeated life where victory should be ruling. His grace and His gifts are given for a purpose, and we must be sure we are always moving forward to fulfill that purpose.

The Thorn

2 Corinthians 12:1-4 says: “It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”

Paul wrote this scripture as a personal testimony.

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Surely, we know Paul did not go to Heaven on his own, and we are even more certain the devil did not send him there. God took Paul to Heaven, and He allowed him to hear what He wanted him to hear.

Verses 5-7 say: “Of such an one will I glory: yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities. For though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth: but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me. And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.”

Let’s review. God took Paul to Heaven, and He gave him an abundance of revelations. Why would God give him something, and then send a devil to buffet him over it? That would be like a governor giving someone a million dollars, and then sending the state police to arrest him for having the money. That would make no sense in the natural, nor does it make any sense in the spiritual.

The last verse of this passage clearly says it was a “messenger of Satan” that was sent to buffet Paul, not a messenger of God. “Oh, but God allowed it,” someone might say, to which I will say, “No way!” Jesus told us in Luke 8:17: “For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.”

Since it was God’s intent to reveal secrets to Paul, surely it was not His intent to cover them back up once they were revealed. He would not send a “thorn in the

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flesh” to prevent a revelation He gave Paul. No, He gave him the revelation because He wanted it to be known.

It was Satan who wanted the revelation covered up, and he sent a messenger, a force, a thorn in the flesh because he didn’t want people to learn what Paul had heard in Heaven. It was Satan’s messenger of trouble, not God’s.

Verses 8-9 go on to say: “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

We remember that grace is God’s willingness to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We also remember we are not to receive the grace of God in vain, and we are not to allow it to lie around useless and empty.

Verse 10 concludes this passage by saying: “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” Where did the strength come from? From the grace given to him to carry out his life and ministry purpose.

In essence, here’s what God told Paul. He said, “I already gave you sufficient strength to deal with this problem when I gave you all the grace and spiritual gifts you will ever need for your life and purpose. I knew you would face weakness, and so I gave you this grace in advance so you would be equipped to overcome every trial. Now use what I gave you.”

God had judged Paul’s life from the beginning to the end, and He had given him enough grace to deal with

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anything and everything that would ever come his way.

Is it the same for us? Of course it is. We have been given grace – which we know includes every spiritual gift God has bestowed upon us – enough grace to get through everything the enemy might send our way.

It's safe to say most of us have never even faced a small portion of what Paul had already faced and overcome before he wrote about the thorn in the flesh. If we read 2 Corinthians 6:1-10, we will see all of the things Paul had already overcome in his life, major things that would make most of us squirm just thinking about them.

In this scripture Paul was bragging on the grace of God, and he basically said, "If you put me in the fire, I will come out unburned. If you put me in the water, God will raise up a standard. If the adversary comes out against me one way, God will scatter him seven ways. If you try to put me down, God will bring me up. If you put me in a prison, I will come out. No matter what you do to me, I will prove that I am a man and a minister of Christ Jesus because I use His grace, and I do not let it lie empty and vain in my life."

Bravo Paul! But then came the thorn, and he had to swallow hard and remember what got him through the other stuff. He had to remember that the same grace would get him through the thorn issue just as surely as it got him through every other issue.

Bravo Paul, but how about Bravo Us? Will we stand up to the circumstances we face and brag on the grace of God in our lives, even when we face something harder than anything we've come up against before?

Paul had what he needed to be an apostle and

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preach the gospel, and when he used the grace given to him – the spiritual gifts, the enablements, and the divine preparations – he was able to overcome every enemy. If we will understand that we have been given grace just like Paul had – spiritual gifts, enablements, and divine preparations – enough for us to succeed and fulfill our call and purpose, we will also be able to overcome every adversary.

There are nine spiritual gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12:7-11, nine gifts of grace that God has designed to help us succeed and fulfill our purpose. Each gift has a classification, an administration, and a manifestation. Each gift is an endowment of grace, and each one is for you and me.

God designed the spiritual gifts sovereignly, knowing the end from the beginning, and He gave them to us to show the world that God is dwelling in us, to confirm that Jesus Christ is God's only begotten Son, and to empower us to overcome every situation that will arise as we live our lives for Him.

We have what we need, but the question is, will we use what we have and overcome, or will we receive the grace of God in vain and let it remain dormant, useless, and empty in our lives? I choose to overcome. How about you?

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Chapter Two

Oh Those Tongues!

After reading the chapter title I can almost hear someone say, “Here we go!”, with an eye-roll, as if we are about to embark down a road full of potholes and traps. This is how many Christians think when it comes to the manifestation of speaking in tongues that marked the Day of Pentecost.

They have run into controversy in their church or among their Christian friends when it comes to this gift, and they have decided to duck and run when the subject comes up rather than discover the truth. Here’s the truth. Most people in the body of Christ have not developed themselves very much in the use of tongues, and that lack of understanding is what creates most of the controversy surrounding the gift.

This one supernatural enablement, this one grace was the first spiritual gift manifested when the outpouring of the Spirit came 50 days after the ascension of Jesus. Since it was the first, I have to believe it is foundational, and if it is foundational, it would seem logical that we learn as much as we can about it before we rise up to move in the rest of the gifts.

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The gifts of the Spirit have been given to help us be all God has called us to be. They are grace gifts, freely given, and not to be received in vain. It's time for us to learn, rise up, and skillfully use what we have been given.

The Beginning

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

Here we see the amazing experience of the infilling of the Holy Ghost. His abiding presence produced the sign of a new day in the lives of the believers who were filled: they all spoke with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. A miracle!

Notice they all were filled, and they all spoke with tongues; not just a select few, but every single person in the room – man or woman, young or old – they all spoke with tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. There were 120 people gathered when the Holy Ghost came, and apparently they made so much noise, the people in Jerusalem heard them, and they came together in a crowd, extremely curious about what was happening.

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

Someone might assume the 120 were speaking in the languages of the men and women who heard them. Trouble is, the Bible says they all heard them speak in their own tongue. In other words, every person listening to the 120 speak that day heard all 120 of them speak in their own personal language. It wasn't that five were speaking this language, and five were speaking another, and five another, and so on. Everybody listening heard everybody speaking in their own language.

Verses 9-11 list at least 16 languages that were represented in the crowd, not to mention all of the dialects that existed in each language. All of them, every single person in the gathered crowd, heard the 120 speaking in their native language. This is what the Bible means when it says: “...how hear we every man in our own tongue?”

There were two dramatic miracles on one historic day. One was the men and women speaking in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, and the second was the men and women gathered around them who heard the interpretation of

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tongues in their own languages. One was a miracle of speaking, and one was a miracle of hearing, but why were the people of Jerusalem so stirred?

1 Corinthians 14:21-22 says: “In the law it is written, With men of other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord. Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.”

The 120 who spoke in tongues manifested a sign to the unbelievers in Jerusalem. The crowd that gathered consisted of Jews who were faithful to keep the feast of Pentecost, but none of them were believers in Jesus Christ, so by definition they were unbelievers. Tongues was a sign for them that something new had transpired, and their view of God would never be the same.

The Evidence

Was the Day of Pentecost the only time believers were filled with the Holy Ghost and spoke in tongues as a result?

Well, Peter had an unexpected encounter in the 10th chapter of Acts that gives us one answer. Peter did not trust the Gentiles. He believed with his whole heart that the Jews were the only heirs of salvation, so when God sent him a vision and thrust him into a Gentile household to preach the gospel, he was about to discover how wrong he was.

Peter began to preach to the people gathered in the

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home of a Gentile named Cornelius. We pick up the story in Acts 10:44-45 which says: “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. 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. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.”

There it was again, the same sign that occurred on the Day of Pentecost, and it was enough to convince Peter that the Holy Ghost had filled Cornelius and his companions. It wasn't because the people glowed, or danced, or did some other extraordinary thing. No, the only evidence manifested that day was a group of Gentiles speaking in tongues and magnifying God.

We find a similar story in the life of Paul in Acts 19:1-6 where the Bible says: “And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

“And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and

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prophesied.”

It’s not surprising that Paul would ask people if they had been filled with the Holy Ghost after they believed, because he himself had been saved on the road to Damascus, but he was not filled with the Holy Ghost until Ananias laid hands on him three days later.

This reminds us that it is possible to be a believer, one identified as a disciple, and not be filled with the Holy Ghost. It also confirms that just as it was with the Ephesian believers, with Cornelius and his friends, with the 120 on the Day of Pentecost, and with the Apostle Paul himself, when someone is filled with the Holy Ghost we can expect the same sign today that they all manifested when they were filled: we can expect folks who are filled with the Holy Ghost to begin to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance.

Some would ask, “Could I be filled with the Holy Ghost and receive it by faith even if I don’t speak in tongues?” My answer is, “No.” The reason I say this is because evidence is evidence, and by definition evidence is an outward manifestation of an inward change.

It’s the same answer I would give someone if they asked me if they could be saved without having any fruit as evidence. To this I would also say, “No.” Jesus told us we will know them by their fruit, by the outward evidence of an inward change. I expect evidence when someone tells me they got saved, and I expect evidence when someone tells me they got filled with the Holy Ghost.

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It is an expected outcome of salvation that we will begin to walk in love, joy, peace, patience, and the rest of the fruit of the spirit. We expect that we will no longer live our lives for ourselves, but we will begin to live for Jesus. We will of course grow and change from faith to faith, and from glory to glory, but we will also expect to exhibit the beginnings of Christian fruit in our lives from the moment of our salvation.

It's exactly the same with the infilling of the Holy Ghost. It is an expected outcome of being filled for us to begin to speak in tongues as the Spirit gives the utterance. We will grow in the gift, as we grow in the fruit of the Christian life. We will have a beginner's experience, but we will go from faith to faith, and from glory to glory, growing in the gift as we grow in Christ.

Tongues is a manifested sign of the indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost. It is the first grace gift ever unveiled to the world, and now it is about to be unveiled a few more degrees to each of us.

Seek to Excel

Paul said in 1 Corinthians 14:20, “Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.”

In other words, what we learn at the first is not the end, but only the beginning. So, what we learned in the first account of the infilling of the Holy Ghost in Acts chapter two is not the end of the story, it’s just the beginning.

1 Corinthians 14:12 says: “Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church.”

To excel means to progress, mature, and become skillful. We need to become skillful in the gifts. We need to progress so that we excel in them for the purpose of helping others, and for the spreading of the gospel of Jesus Christ with signs following. We cannot be satisfied to stay in a beginning state.

Let’s go back to the first day when the Spirit of God rushed into the room with the 120 and changed their lives forever. The Bible says they “spoke with tongues”, and I notice the word tongues is plural, not singular.

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It was tongues, as in a gift with multiple expressions. It wasn't one tongue and done, but it was tongues, as if there was an array of different uses and manifestations just waiting to be discovered. Trouble is, since that day most Spirit-filled Christians have been satisfied to know about one or two kinds of tongues, but have never bothered to dig deeper into what God has given them.

Usually the misunderstanding starts with the first time someone speaks with tongues. If I asked a room full of people what they received on the day they were filled with the Holy Ghost, the majority of them would say, "I got my prayer language." This is what most people have been taught, but in actuality that's not what happened the first time you spoke with tongues.

When you were filled with the Holy Ghost, and you spoke with tongues as He gave the utterance, what you had was a sign, and its purpose was to be the evidence of your infilling. It was the Holy Ghost unveiling His presence in you, almost as if He was proclaiming, "I'm here!"

I like to call that first experience with tongues our evidential language. The question is, do we continue to speak in our evidential language, using the same words that we spoke in the beginning, or do we progress and discover differences in how we speak in tongues now versus how we did then?

I believe there is the language of our initial infilling, the evidential language of the presence of the Holy Ghost, but I also believe there are many more languages we can discover if we will peel back

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the pages of the Bible and search for them.

Language of Mysteries

Remember, we are to seek to excel in spiritual gifts, meaning we are to progress in our usage and become more skillful than we were when we first encountered them. So, let's begin our search for more insight in the book of 1 Corinthians, where Paul taught a church body about the gifts of the Spirit.

1 Corinthians 14:1-2 says: "Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. 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."

Here we find another kind of tongue identified, and we could call it the language of mysteries. In this case, we don't speak about God and His wonderful works as we did in our evidential language, but we speak to God about spiritual mysteries.

Notice this is not a natural language because it says "no man understandeth him". It is not a foreign language, nor a learned language, but it is a language of the Spirit that only God can understand.

The language of mysteries is an utterance given to a man or woman for the purpose of speaking to God about the mysteries of his or her life, about the mysteries of the future, the mysteries of one's call, the mysteries of a situation, or even the mysteries of the gospel and how it is being fulfilled.

Mysteries are things we cannot know or understand

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without the help of God, so this kind of tongue is a very significant form of praying in the Spirit where the Holy Ghost uses our own mouth to speak the secrets of Heaven over us. I love this language!

We've only read two verses, and already we've added another language to our list of tongues that are described in the Bible. We have our evidential language, and we have a language of mysteries.

Languages of Edification

1 Corinthians 14:4 reveals another kind of tongue when it says: "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church."

We could call this the language of edifying ourselves. This is also classified as an unknown tongue, so we know no man can understand it, but it is a different usage altogether than the language that speaks to God about mysteries.

In this case, you are praying words that edify and build you up, strengthen you, and solidify your faith. We know this from Jude verse 20 which says: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost."

The Holy Ghost is the Comforter, and He knows just what we need and exactly when we need it, but it is up to us to yield our time and our tongue so that He can do what only He can do when we need edified. I wish that we would all give more time to this language so that we can stay encouraged and be used by God to encourage others.

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We've read one more verse, and we've discovered one more language. So now we have our evidential language, we have a language of mysteries, and we have a language of edifying ourselves.

1 Corinthians 14:5 reveals yet another kind of language. It says: "I would that ye all spake with tongues, but rather that ye prophesied: for greater is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the church may receive edifying."

This tongue could be called the language of edifying others because it is a tongue that can be interpreted to edify someone else.

In this case we would not be speaking about the wonderful works of God, nor talking to Him about mysteries. We would not be edifying ourselves, but we would be giving forth a tongue in a group setting where it would be interpreted, and that interpretation would give edification to those in need.

Wow! That's about four minutes worth of reading, and already we have four spiritual languages that can be manifested in our lives, not only for our benefit, but for the benefit of others, hallelujah!

Worship and Blessing

1 Corinthians 14:26-28 says: "How is it then, brethren? When ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying. If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and

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that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.”

The first thing I see in this passage is that Paul expected people in the church to be known for their gifts. Do you see that when they came together, he presumed they would know who the interpreter was? This is an important reason for us to seek to excel in the gifts, so that we can be useful in the church.

I also notice we have one more tongue identified here. Paul told them if they had no interpreter, they were to keep silence in the church; in other words, they were not to speak out for all to hear without an interpreter, but they were to speak to themselves and to God. This is different than the language of edifying ourselves, because it says we will speak to ourselves, not edify ourselves. What’s the difference?

We find the secret in Acts 10:45 which we read before. It says: “For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God.”

Notice we can magnify God in tongues. We could call this the language of worshiping God. What’s wonderful is that we can do this at home and in church. We can worship God with our whole heart, mind, soul, and strength in an amazing language that we are privileged to express. We may keep silent as far as speaking to the crowd and being interpreted, but we can praise God well in our silence.

Paul continues his teaching in 1 Corinthians 14:16 which says: “Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing

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he understandeth not what thou sayest?”

Did you know tongues can be used to bless our food and give thanks for it? It absolutely can. We could call this the language of blessing. You can pray in English over your food, but you can also pray in the tongues over your food, especially if you are somewhere strange, and you are concerned about the quality of what is set before you. What would prevent the Holy Ghost from speaking to poisons or contaminants in your food? Not one thing, if you are willing and wise enough to pray in tongues before you eat.

There are so many ways we can pray in the Spirit, so many ways to allow Him to work through us with the gifts He has given us for life, purpose, and good old fashioned victory.

Intercession

Romans 8:26-27 shows us one more language of the Spirit. It says: “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. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.”

When we come to the end of ourselves, and we don't even know where to begin to pray, we can tap into the language of intercession, the intercession of the Holy Ghost for us. We can rest assured that in these times He will help our infirmities, and He will

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make intercessions with groanings that cannot be uttered, which means articulated or understood.

Amazing. The hands on the clock have barely moved, and already we have several different uses of tongues. We have our evidential language, a language of mysteries, a language of edifying ourselves, a language of edifying others, a language of worshiping God, a language of blessing, and a language of intercession.

Surely, if God took the time to define these seven languages in the scripture, He must expect us to recognize and use them. He must expect us to understand spiritual gifts, and He must expect us to grow in our usage, becoming more skillful today than we were before.

Yesterday you may have thought there was one prayer language in your life, but today you are learning there are many, and they are all available for you to excel in and use in your daily life.

Skillful in Prayer

I Corinthians 14:14-15 says: “For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”

Let me ask you this: can you change what you are praying about when you pray with your understanding? Of course you can. If you are praying about healing, you can change your prayer to one of thanksgiving and praise, and after that you can move to a prayer for revival; all in the same prayer session, and all at your discretion.

What you wouldn't do is pray for healing, and expect God to interpret that you really meant to pray for revival. “Well God already knows,” you might say. Yes, He already knows, but we still have to pray specifically. That's just how it works.

So would it surprise you to know that you can change what you are praying about in tongues, moving from one language to another with a simple request? You absolutely can.

What did Paul say? “I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also.” Notice

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the common words, “I will.” You can choose what you are praying about when you pray in tongues, just like you can choose what you are praying about when you pray in English.

“Oh no I can’t!” you might reply. “It’s as the Spirit gives me the utterance.” You’re right. He gives the utterance, which means the chosen words, just like you give the utterance and choose your words in your natural language. You don’t choose the words He will give you in tongues, but you can ask Him to give you a certain kind of utterance.

Do you need edified? Then why would you think it’s wrong to ask the Holy Ghost to give you an utterance in the language of edifying yourself? It’s not wrong; it just hasn’t been taught, and many people don’t know they can ask.

Remember, we are becoming more skillful in the gifts, and we are headed to a place where we will excel in them, handling them like men instead of like children. Ignorance in prayer is a terrible thing, because prayer is our connection to Heaven. It’s our lifeline, and it ought to be taught how we can be skillful in prayer.

We have to get past the notion that we can open our mouths, let the Holy Ghost give us words, and have no responsibility in the prayer time that ensues. We must be more focused, more aware, and more deliberate when we pray in tongues, asking the Holy Ghost for the utterance that fits the situation we are praying for.

Ask, and it will be given. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened unto you.

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Power of the Giver

Too often we have prayed to the end of ourselves, and we have accepted what I call “self-faith”, or what we think we can accomplish on our own. We have known only so much about praying in tongues, and we have accepted that however far our knowledge could take us, that would be the limit for how far we could go.

We have missed the beauty of the gift because we have forgotten the power of the Giver. We have settled for man-made prayer when the language of mysteries was available to us. We have settled for being discouraged when the language of edifying ourselves was just one breath away.

We have allowed others around us to be down-trodden when the language of edifying others was there, just waiting for us to ask for it. We have blessed our food alone, worshiped to the limits of our intellect only, and forgotten that the gracious language of the intercession of the Holy Ghost is available at a moment’s notice.

Having been endued with grace, having been endowed to speak as if God is speaking to our situations, we have languished in prayer when we should have been forging ahead in battle, taking every victory in hand.

Why do we settle for self when we pray? Why do we depend on the percentages of the world, or expect only the accomplishments we can gain for ourselves?

Do you want to pray for the salvation of a loved one? Then why don’t you ask for an utterance for that

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person, one that will break through the blindness and open their eyes to the light of the gospel? If you don't have enough faith to deal with the devil behind the person, I would encourage you to invoke the Holy Ghost, who is the Spirit of faith, and ask Him to give you a language that is far superior to your own, so that He can move what only He can move, and get your loved one into the kingdom of God.

The Holy Ghost knows exactly why people are not getting saved, and He can use your tongue, giving you an utterance of His design, to mend whatever the enemy has done to them to put them in a state of blindness about Jesus.

It's time to stop going as far as self can take us, casting off the grace of God, and presuming it's all about us getting it done. It's not about us; it's about the Holy Ghost and going as far in prayer as He can take us.

We want powerful prayers, but we want them to come easy. We want victorious results, but we want them to come in our time and our way. Victory will never come if you try to take the easy way out.

For instance, if you want revival in your family, your church, and your city, then you have to understand that revival has nothing to do with a man, a ministry, or a church. Revival comes when men and women are relentless in their pursuit of an outpouring of God's Spirit called the latter rain.

Revival comes when grace-filled prayers in the Spirit fill the room, not faithless mutterings, doing only what we can do. If we do what we can do, we will have just what we have, and we will not have

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anything more until we change our ways. For the world to be saved and our nation to be transformed, we must give up human proclamations and ask the Holy Ghost for an utterance for revival!

When the Holy Ghost moves on you to employ the endowment of grace He has already given you, and when He gets you to depend on His grace gift instead of your own human prayers, there will be nothing that can contain revival. It will come to your life, your family, your church, your neighborhood, your city, and your nation.

I call your attention to the altars of your church. Are they empty before your service starts? If they are, why is it so? Could you not get up 15 minutes earlier, get to church 15 minutes earlier, and get to the altar to ask the Holy Ghost for an utterance for revival for 15 minutes before the service begins? I think you could, and I think you will.

If you will use the altars of your church as a meeting place for you and the Holy Ghost for 15 minutes every Sunday and 15 minutes every Wednesday, and if you will go there disowning your ability, and instead reaching out to touch the endowment of grace that is there waiting for you, the willingness of God to do for you what you cannot do for yourself will rise up, accessing the language of the Spirit for revival, and the infusion and engrafting of a language that cannot be denied will flow through you so that revival will come. It will come!

The kingdom of God is not about individuals; it is about God's will being fulfilled through individuals. It's entirely up to us. We can receive the grace of God

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in vain, or we can receive it for its intended purpose and allow it to flow through us for the benefit of others. Let it flow!

Know Your God

You remember when Israel went up against Goliath? The king and his army did not know what to do. The giant was too big, he was too well equipped, and he was too vast of an enemy for them to conquer. Or so they thought. They rejected the grace of God provided for them in the covenant promises, and they let a defeated foe mock them day after day after day.

Hadn't God told them that one could put a thousand to flight, and two could put ten thousand to flight? Where was the God of that promise? He was right there, waiting. In the eyes of God, Goliath was already dead, but in their eyes he was more alive than anything they had ever confronted.

The king and the leaders were discussing how they could make a deal, how they could get out of the situation alive by using the power they had in their own hands. They weren't even thinking about what God could do.

Then came David. A lone shepherd boy heard their discussion, and he was furious. Why weren't they talking about the God of covenant? Why weren't they planning their victory over a defeated enemy? Why were they shuddering at the sight of a mere man, frightened about what would become of their families when they went down to defeat?

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In David's eyes they were allowing themselves to be disgraced by an adversary who had no God, who had no covenant, and who had no right to be doing and saying what he had been doing and saying to God's army, God's men, and God's covenant people.

David stood before the king, a simple, ruddy teenager, and he proclaimed that God was with him, and God was about to honor His covenant promise through him. Why was he so confident? Because he had a personal understanding of the grace of God. David knew the promises, and He knew his God.

You know the story, how David went in the strength of his covenant with God rather than in the might of the armor Saul offered him. David stood strong, determined to fight the Philistine - that uncircumcised, outside-the-covenant man that he was, a manifestation of the devil's plan, showing forth his hate for God and covenant men.

David fought Goliath the only way he knew how, not going man's way, and not fearing the enemy's way. He shouted to the giant, "You come against me with a spear and a sword, but I come against you in the name of the Lord!"

David threw one God-driven stone, one grace-infused, smooth stone that went right past a helmet of bronze and penetrated the skull of a mere man. God got him the victory, and grace brought salvation to a whole nation through one young man who dared to receive it and use it as it was intended to be used.

God has not left us. He is for us, and He has given us the same kind of grace He gave David. It is built on a better covenant with better promises, and it has

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produced spiritual gifts that we all have access to, including the many languages of the Holy Ghost that are waiting for you to employ for victory.

Let's get beyond ourselves and tap into the supernatural endowment of God's grace. Let's not settle for 10% when 100% is available. Let's not settle for empty murmurings when a precise language of the Spirit is at our disposal.

May the grace of God touch us and return to where "Not my will, but Yours, O God, be done." Let's rise up and give our tongue to the will of God and the endowments of grace that will bring us through to the fullness of salvation, so that we and our household shall be saved, God will heal our land, and revival will ignite our world.

Hebrews 4:13 says: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Is anything hidden from God? Not according to this verse. There may be things that are hidden from you, but there is nothing hidden from Him.

If you will ask for an utterance in prayer, one that will fit your present problem, He will speak to the hidden issues, address the knotty problems, and cause disruption and disarray among the principalities and powers that you don't even realize are driving the chaos.

Remember when Jesus prayed for Peter, and He told him why: because the devil desired to sift him like wheat? Jesus knew about the impending attack, and He stood in the gap for him. Peter had no idea

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what was happening behind the scenes, but Jesus did.

When we go to our prayer closet, it's time to stop doing the same old same old. There are a million problems that have been bypassed and unsolved in the kingdom of God because Christians have been ignorant in prayer for far too long.

It's time to excel, it's time to grow, and it's time for us to be skillful in prayer so that we can live in a supernatural manner. The first few languages we've uncovered in this book are just the beginning because 1 Corinthians 13:1 says: "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."

Every believer can speak in angelic languages as the Holy Ghost gives the utterance, if they know what to ask for and when. We can speak to righteous angels and to demonic entities in the languages they understand and must obey. There are so many more languages for us to discover, tongues of men and angels that are at our disposal.

2 Corinthians 13:14 says: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

You can press in and commune with the Holy Ghost with a new level of understanding. You can build a friendship with Him so that He can take you to places you have never been. He wants to work with you and be your partner in prayer, and your partner in life.

I urge you to trust God, begin to pray more skillfully in the Holy Ghost, and watch what happens. I believe it will produce a dramatic change in your

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prayer life which will produce a more powerful,
rested, peaceful you. Glory to God!