



Small Group Questions: Sunday 3rd December 2023
Gifts of the Spirit: Week 3 – The Gift of Tongues
1 Corinthians 14:1-25

Discuss: What are people's various experiences of the gift of tongues?
In 1 Corinthians 12:10 Paul says that they are different kinds of Tongue.

Read: Acts 2: 1-24

- Q. What sort of tongue is described?
- Q. What does this miracle enable Peter to do?

Read: 1 Corinthians 14:1-25

- Q. What sort of tongue is described by Paul in this passage?
- Q. Who is being communicated with when the gift of tongues is used?
- Q. What seems to be the problem in the church in Corinth?

There appear to be two purposes.

1. Self-edification
2. The edification of the church

- Q. What examples are there in the passage of tongues being used for self-edification?
- Q. Does Paul pray in tongues and how does he appear to use the gift?

Read Romans 8:26-27 – It is possible that Paul here is referring to the gift of tongues. In what way is this beneficial to the one who prays?

- Q. How does Paul say the gift of tongues should be used within the congregation? (they should pray for an interpretation and use their mind and their understanding).

Is the gift for everyone?

Read Ephesians 1:13-14, followed by Ephesians 5:18-19

In Ephesians 1, we are reassured that when we believe, we are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5 also says that we are to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The verb "be filled" is famously a present tense verb which means to do it regularly, in other words 'be filled continually with the Holy Spirit.'

At the start of the sermon, I encouraged us that it is good to desire 'more' of God and, as Simon Ponsonby puts it, this does not undermine all that the cross has accomplished, but rather, 'mines the cross of all it's riches.'

Paul says of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, in 1 Corinthians 12:11

'All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines.'

So it's for God to distribute the gift just as He determines, and it's certainly not for me or anyone else to determine how God does that.

We are encouraged to eagerly desire the gifts of the Holy Spirit, especially the ones that edify the church, because the main aim is love. 1 Cor 13 says: 'If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.' And the start of our passage this morning, Paul says 'follow the way of love...'

FINISH WITH PRAYER

Perhaps you might want to pray for a fresh infilling of the Holy Spirit
Perhaps you want to pray for boldness and courage to step into the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
Perhaps you might want to wait in prayer and be receptive to what God might be saying for the strengthening, encouraging, and comforting of the group.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Verse 22 is a confusing one and seems contradictory to what Paul is saying overall. Here are some thoughts from Tom Wright:

Vv20 – 25

Paul is reprimanding them for their childish thinking and wants them to grow in maturity with regard to how they worship together. At present they are behaving selfishly, without a care for the 'unbeliever', who coming into their service would be repelled by them, thinking they are either mad, or like the other cults where people would fall into trances and utter babblings. He quotes from Isaiah 28 where Israel was not persuaded to turn back to God by the languages of foreigners that they couldn't understand, and in the same way unbelievers won't be persuaded by the gift of tongues unless it is made clear what is being said through interpretation – then it will be 'a sign for unbelievers.'

Tom Wright says:

'He (Paul) seems to be saying that prophecy – speaking God's word intelligibly, both under spontaneous prompting by the spirit and after mature and careful thought – is designed to further the work of bringing people to faith. He envisages a situation where 'outsiders' hear powerful words, preaching, exhortation, specially given wisdom, and so on, and find themselves captivated by it. The prophetic words shine a spotlight that goes right into their innermost selves, bringing a sense of unworthiness, conviction and judgment. [...] they will fall down in worship to the one true God whom they have recognized as present in and with the congregation'.