

Introduction

“I want all of you to speak in tongues.” - Paul, in 1Cor.14:5

Many believers are concerned and confused about ‘tongues’ today, numbers of Charismatic Churches have almost eliminated it from their services altogether. Rarely now do I hear pastors and ministers preach about this gift of the Spirit or even offer to pray for people to receive this gift. Yet it remains a key, possibly the most important key to living a successful Christian life. So.....

- * What about the gift of tongues?
- * Why do some believers fight this gift so vehemently?
- * What place does this gift hold in the modern church?
- * Has this gift been done away with altogether, as some preach?

What is the benefit (if any) of praying in tongues. If there is no power in the gift of speaking in tongues, why does the devil and some Christian fight against it so hard, after all, you don’t kick a dead horse. If there is no power associated with tongues

then it should have out died centuries ago. These, and many other questions have concerned me for some times. Today many believers are puzzled and confused about tongues – they don't know what to believe. Even many Christians who have been baptised in the Holy Spirit cannot offer a biblical answer as to why we pray in tongues. In fact I have asked pastors the same question only to receive some vague answer such as; “Well we do it because we are Pentecostals!” But that's not why we do it! That's a result of speaking in tongues! Do we eat vegemite just because we are Australians? No! Much of the problem stems back to a lack of sound biblical teaching on the subject. How many messages have you heard on this lately?

“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.” (Acts 2:1-4).

Notice something very important here in verse 4, the first thing the Holy Spirit did on the Day of Pentecost was affect or change the tongue! **The very first gift of the Spirit was tongues. Science has proven that we use less than 1/10 of our brain's capacity, so what is the remaining 9/10th there for? Is it possible the gift of speaking in tongues is a key to unlocking this God given ability. “For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him: however in the spirit he speaks mysteries.” (1 Cor 14:1-2).**

I remember when I was first baptised in the Spirit; I slipped along to the local Pentecostal Church from the Baptist Church I attended. What I witnessed scared me, I thought these people were

all nuts and should locked up, babbling away in some strange language with their high-pitched voices. Some months later a group of FGBMFI men tried to get me filled with the Spirit, I mean they meant well but were, well let's just say 'over zealous'. They took me outside and started smacking me in the stomach as they yelled. "It's down here inside of you, waiting to bubble up! Come on now, bring it up! Bring it up!" They kept yelling.

"I'll bring it up alright, if you don't stop hitting me – but it won't be the spirit that comes up!" I groaned. As I say, they meant well and despite our stupidity I did manage to get baptised in the Spirit and soon started speaking with the tongue of angels. From that moment on my life changed forever!

Like most believers I had virtually no teaching on the subject and even to this very day could count on one hand the messages I have ever heard on what really happens when we pray in tongues – in the Spirit. It was years before I read Kenneth E. Hagin's book on why we speak in tongues. Sure there were volumes written on 'How to be filled with the Spirit', or 'Gifts of the Spirit' but precious little on a practical, down-to-earth, no bull explanation on what really happens. I was amazed to find out, some years ago, that probably less than 5% of the millions and millions of Christians – ever spend any time exercising this amazing and precious gift! Is it any wonder why we have such a powerless, confused church?

Most, no I'll rephrase the, the vast majority of Christians do not even know how to recognise the difference between the voice of the Spirit and their own mind speaking to them. Many take any idea that flashes through their mind as being from the Lord. That is a very dangerous precedent! There are at least 3 voices that can communicate with our mind.

- * The Lord (spontaneous words that bring edification, encouragement and correction).
- * The devil – (brings pressure, fear, condemnation, compulsion to act).
- * Our own mind (usually rational, logical but also can be selfish and make excuses for our shortcomings).

In this book I address these problems in a simple, practical and down-to-earth manner. Here are some of the things I look at.

- * Tongues are the key to entering the realm of the Spirit.
- * Tongues are also a vital key to the anointing.
- * Tongues affect every area of our life – Spirit, Soul and Body. It brings edification to our spirit, truth to our minds and life to our bodies.
- * Tongues is a language - not just gibberish.
- * Tongues can be controlled, like any of the other gifts.

If you study the lives of some of the most powerful ministries of modern times, such as Smith Wigglesworth, Kenneth E. Hagin, David Yongi Cho, John G Lake, Joseph Prince and others – one thing stands out. They all placed a strong emphasis on speaking in tongues.

Purposes Of Speaking In Tongues

- * Spiritual edification - 1 Corinthians 14:4, Jude 20
- * Strengthening our inner man - Ephesians 3:16
- * Speaking divine mysteries - 1 Corinthians 14:2
- * To magnify God - Acts 10:46
- * Praying according to the will of God - Romans 8:26,27
- * Giving thanks - 1 Corinthians 14:17
- * A sign to unbelievers - 1 Corinthians 14:22; Mark 16:17

Read this book several times and then start to put it into practice in your daily life – you will never be the same again! If you are prepared to spend the time you will begin to notice a spiritual awakening in your life. This may turn out to be one of the most important books you have ever read!

Dr. Col Stringer

Chapter 1

Praying In The Spirit

The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly. (Proverbs 20;27).

To be led by the Spirit it's essential to spend time praying in the Spirit and being quiet before God. "Be still and know that I am God." the scripture says, but the knowing comes after the being still! The Hebrew word for "rest" is 'adman', which includes the meaning that being silent is a key to receiving help from the Lord. As I said - be still and know that I am God. The knowing comes after the being still.

We must learn to be sensitive to the Spirit, learn to listen and locate where it is these words originate. We must recognise in a practical way that these words do not flow from the mind but rise out of the spirit. After praying in tongues for some time one must stop, stay quiet and listen. That same voice will continue to speak inwardly after the tongues have ceased. 1 Corinthians 14:1-2 says: "Pursue love, and desire spiritual gifts, but especially that you may prophecy. **For he who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God, for no one understands him: however in the spirit he speaks mysteries.**"

When we speak in tongues we not only communicate directly with the Father but we speak mysteries in the Spirit. Later we can then ask for the understanding or interpretation of those mysteries. Notice here that this the ‘language of the Spirit’ - tongues is a language, not mere gibberish. This passage is also showing how I can do something on purpose to lift myself up out of the soulish realm and into the realm of the Spirit.

The more we pray with our spirit language, the more opportunity we allow the Lord to program our spirits to direct our thinking and actions. Proverbs tells us; “the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord.” A candle lights the way, a path through the darkness.

When we pray in tongues, mysteries are being revealed to our spirit man. The apostle John declared that the Holy Spirit would show us things to come, bring all things to our remembrance, enlighten and empower us to glorify Christ, manifest His life, and do the works that Christ did (John 16:7-15; 14:12,26).

All works of God are accomplished by His Spirit and His Word. We can renew our minds, our thinking His by studying and meditating Scripture and listening to anointed biblical teaching and preaching. **But speaking in tongues is the greatest gift that our Lord has given to the church because it activates God’s grace and power, and enables us to access the wisdom of God.**

Why Speak In Tongues?

- * Why do some Christians fight tongues so vehemently?

- * What place do tongues have in the modern church?

- * What is the benefit (if any) of praying in tongues?

As I have already said, if there is no power in tongues why do some Christians fight it so hard, after all you don't kick a dead horse. If there is no power associated with tongues then it should have died a natural death centuries ago!

Losing Heart?

“Therefore I ask that you **do not lose heart at my tribulations** for you, which is your glory. For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, **to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,**” (Eph 3:13-16).

Paul is writing to the church at Ephesus encouraging them not ‘lose heart’. How many believers do you know who are ‘losing heart’ today? The pressure of modern life is horrific, drugs, suicide, domestic violence, crime, terrorism, financial crisis and new sickness’s and diseases are just a few of things with which we have to contend, plus the added distractions of an aggressive anti-Christian media. Numbers of Christians are disillusioned, depressed and no longer fellowship anywhere. But in his letter to the Ephesian church Paul shows us the way we can be built up or infused with power. Notice the term he uses ‘strengthened with might’, that breaks down to something like being ‘infused with power’.

The Amplified Bible puts it this way: “So I ask you not to lose heart at my sufferings on your behalf, for they are your glory and honor. For this reason ... I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth [a]derives its name [God—the first and ultimate Father]. May He grant you out of the riches of His glory, to be strengthened and spiritually energized with power through His Spirit in your inner self, [indwelling your innermost being and personality],...”

While the NIV says; “I ask you, therefore, not to be discouraged because of my sufferings for you, which are your glory.” The ASV version calls it ‘faint not’. The TCNT says; “not be disheartened.” Another use the term ‘don’t lose courage...”

The Meaning Of ‘Losing Heart’.

Lose Heart (1573) in Strongs; (**ekkakeo** [equivalent to egkakeo, enkakeo] from **ek** = out of or intensifies meaning + **kakós** = bad) strictly speaking means to act or behave badly in some circumstance. It can mean to give in to evil. It can convey the idea of to be weary in or become tired of doing something.

The **UBS Handbook** notes that...Not to be discouraged may be expressed in a number of ways, often idiomatically, for example, “....not to lose heart,” “....not to give up,” “not to run away,” or “not to think that all is lost” (The United Bible Societies’ New Testament Handbook Series **or** Logos)

It is worth noting that every NT use of **ekkakeo** is preceded by negative particle (“not”) - Do not become discouraged. Do not lose your enthusiasm. Do not lose heart. Do not grow weary or tired. Do not flag or faint. Do not grow slack. Do not despair. Beloved, perhaps God’s Spirit might use one of these phrases to stimulate you to keep on fighting the good faith, remembering that until we see Him face to face, it’s always too soon to quit!

Ekkakeo can mean to be a coward, to lose courage or to lose the motivation to accomplish a valid goal or to continue in a desirable pattern of conduct. To become discouraged and give up. **Ekkakeo** conveys the idea of becoming exhausted or fainthearted in view of a trial or difficulty and therefore giving up (“**throwing in the towel**” to use a modern expression). This attitude is the opposite of Paul’s charge that we be “steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, **knowing**

(let this truth motivate you to keep on keeping on!) that your toil is **not** (*absolutely* is not) in vain in the Lord” (1Co 15:58).

At the end of the great Apostle Paul’s ministry he can write: “I have fought the good fight (struggle), I have finished the course (race), I have kept the faith. In the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (2Tim 4:7-8). I would dearly love to be able to say the same thing, wouldn’t you?

Once I arrived home from Singapore with some serious symptoms in my body. I just couldn’t seem to get my healing, try as I might. Mark 11:23 had always worked for me in the past, but now despite all of my confessing and praying the symptoms remained firmly entrenched in my body.

Have you ever been between a rock and a hard place like this? How many of you know that you can try to do everything right but for some reason you sometimes cannot seem to produce the results. Sometimes there seems to be some faith failures. I might *believe* I’m saying and doing the right things but for reasons unknown I just can’t produce the necessary results. Yet I know it’s not God’s fault. It was at this moment of frustration that God started to deal with me. He said, “Son there’s pressure coming on the earth, in fact more pressure than you could ever imagine. Such pressure, that if you’re not built up in your inner man you won’t handle it! From now on you are not going to be able to get away with the things you have been!”

I’m not talking about sin I’m talking about simply coasting in our Christian life, going through the motions but never really spending any time building the inner man. In the passage we have just read from Ephesians, Paul asked God to do some-

thing on our behalf. He asked that God would grant us according to his riches in glory to be strengthened with might in the inner man. Now may I ask you a question? If I came to your home and took a look at your daily schedule, how much of your time would I find that you spent building your inner man? Not time spent in study to get a message to preach to somebody else. Not time spent preparing messages to demonstrate our Biblical knowledge. I'm talking about how much time you put in on a daily basis to building up your inner man. That and that alone is what will decide whether we stand or fall in the day of test and trial. The Holy Spirit really took me to task over this. He told me the enemy was releasing tremendous pressure upon the earth and it was only those who were really built up in God's Word, only those who had a vital relationship with Him that would be able to stand.

The Example Of The Diving Bell

The example He used to illustrate this was a diving bell - the deep sea diving bells that go down hundreds of feet below the surface of the ocean. The reason these vehicles can dive to such great depths is due to the pressure encapsulated inside the diving bell. As long as the pressure on the inside of the bell is greater than the pressure on the outside - there is no pressure. They can go to great depths of the ocean with no problem. They can go to depths that naturally we can't. However if the bell should dive to a depth where suddenly the external pressure exceeds that of the internal pressure, it will be crushed like an egg shell.

How many of you know I'm not talking about diving bells but life! As long as our inner man is built up with the Word of God it does not matter what comes against us. It does not matter what the world throws against us. Nor does it matter what the devil tries to do because there is a greater strength on the inside. But the moment the external pressure becomes equal or greater

to that inner strength it's no longer a matter of IF we crack - it's WHEN it happens! Now we can coast along for a while, as many of us do, but eventually the pressures of life catch up with us.

Have you ever wondered why some great men of God suddenly snap? One day they are powering on for God and the next they suddenly crack under the pressure and are gone. That's when we find such people going off the deep end, running off with the church money or some member of the opposite sex. Part of the problem is that we are content to coast in our spiritual life. It's the same as knocking your car's gears into neutral on the freeway. You can rev the engine all you like, it may sound good, may even look OK for a time. But really it is all hot air and noise, there is no power being produced. It's coasting, sooner or later you are going to pull over to the side and stop. And so Paul says here that; "we would be strengthened through His spirit in the inner man".

Timothy too had his time of problems and Paul had to deal with him. In fact he writes to him in 2 Tim. 4:7: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith". In other words "Timothy this word works"! He indicates in verse 6 he was ready to be offered up, he was ready to go but not before proving that God's Word is true and totally reliable. In 2 Tim. 4:11 he says: "persecutions, afflictions which happened to me at Antioch and Iconium, at Lystra - what persecutions I endured. **And out of them all the Lord delivered me.**"

Notice clearly what Paul says here, "*out of them **all** the Lord delivered me*". Not out of some of them, not out of a few, not even 90% - but out of them all! There is victory in the Lord, complete and total victory. The Word of God is the answer to every problem you have or ever will have!

But God Told Me To Do It!

Paul knows something about standing in times of pressure. He wrote a large portion of the New Testament and can certainly teach us something. Part of the problem, I believe, is that many Christians are trying to do things in their own strength, rather than resting in God's Grace. It's a sad fact but many Christians do not know how to walk in the Spirit or how to recognise His voice. So many people today play religious games. "But God told me!" has almost become a religious cliché!

It saddens me when I hear some Christians, even some ministers talk about hearing God, about doing the will of the Lord, being "led by the Spirit" but in reality they just go out and do what they want to do. Rather than seek God many go by feelings, circumstances, what others say or think. Sadly many Christians today do not know how to tell the difference between the voice of their spirit and their own mind. I ought to know because this is exactly how I lived my life for many years.

Well how do I learn to hear from God? How can I be led by the Spirit? How can I walk in the Spirit and not fulfil the lust of the flesh? It seems all so confusing, mainly because we have had such little practical teaching in this area. Confusion in the pulpit, confusion in the pews!

Paul says in Ephesians 6:10: "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord." No, not strong in the body. Many spend hours a day building up their bodies. No, not strong in mental power. Others spend their lives in the pursuit of degrees. (Some have more degrees than a thermometer). But in the day of crisis none of these will do much good. "...be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might."

Verse 18 continues: “praying always with all prayer and supplication **in the Spirit** ..with all perseverance..and for me, that utterance may be given to me, ..to make known the mystery of the gospel”. (Emphasis mine). There are three key phrases here of great importance;

(1) ‘in the Spirit’.

(2) ‘utterance may be given me’.

(3) ‘make known the mystery of the Gospel’.

We are dealing with things of the spirit, not the flesh. In fact we are a spirit, we have a soul and we live in a body. The Bible says God made man in His image - God is a Spirit! Inside our bodies is a duplicate “spirit body”. We have eyes of the spirit, hands, fingers even a spirit mind and tongue! The Bible talks about the “mind of the spirit”.

In the book of Second Kings we find the story of Elisha and Gehazi at the city of Dothan. We pick the story up in chapter 6 verse 15: “And when the servant of the man of God arose early and went out, there was an army, surrounding the city with horses and chariots. And his servant said to him, “Alas, my master! What shall we do?” So he answered, “Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them.”

But hang on a minute, there are only two of them and thousands of Syrian soldiers! But look at verse 17: “Elisha prayed, and said, “Lord, I pray, open his eyes that he may see”. Well his physical eyes were already open, it was what he saw that frightened him half to death! “Then the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw. And behold the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.”

With a slight adjustment the Lord opened the servants spiritual eyes and for the first time he was able to see into the realm of the spirit! I wonder what that adjustment might have been? Could it have possibly been altering the man's brain waves? (We will have more to say about this later).

What about the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:22? "So it was that the beggar died and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. "And being in torment in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. "Then he cried and said 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.'

- * The man was dead, yet he had torment - emotions.
- * Secondly he saw Abraham - his physical eyes were in the grave?
- * Thirdly he asked that Lazarus might dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue. That tells me he had at least a finger, tongue and eyes of the spirit. Something was holding it all together, you don't have eyes and tongues running around on their own!