

A group of men in a room, possibly a church, with a fire overlay. The men are wearing simple, earth-toned clothing. One man in the center is looking upwards with a prayerful expression. The room has a window in the background. The overall atmosphere is one of spiritual fervor.

THE HOLY SPIRIT & THE GIFT OF TONGUES

**Taken from Rooted
By Shayne Holesgrove**

*Grace
Life*

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

After Jesus' resurrection from the dead, He commissioned the disciples to reach the world with the message of the Gospel, to make disciples (believers who are established in the Word and living fruitful lives) and demonstrate the power of the God (Matthew 28:18-20 and Mark 16:15-18). The disciples had witnessed a great miracle (Jesus' resurrection) and had experienced the Good News first hand; they certainly had something to share with the world. But Jesus knew they would not be able to do it in their own strength.

In John 15:5 (KJV), Jesus says: "I am the vine, you are the branches: He that abides in me, and I in him, the same brings forth much fruit: for without Me you can do nothing."

After giving the disciples the commission to go into all the world with this message of grace, He told them to wait in Jerusalem for the empowering to do the job (Luke 24:46-49). Jesus was talking about receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is God empowering us - God giving us His ability to live a supernatural life.

"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."... 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 ends of the earth."

Acts 1:4-8 ESV

To accomplish anything supernatural for God, we need supernatural ability. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is where the believer receives the supernatural ability of God to do the same works that Jesus did, and even greater works (John 14:12). One of the reasons why so many believers are not seeing supernatural results is because they are not operating in the supernatural ability of the Holy Spirit. How can we expect to achieve anything significant for God without His empowering? We need the baptism in the Holy Spirit!

Jesus said that the purpose of receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit is for us to be effective witnesses of Him in the whole world. The Holy Spirit enables us to be effective ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20) and effectively share His love and good news.

When we look at the life of Peter we see how the baptism in the Holy Spirit can transform a life.

When Jesus was arrested, we see that "...all the disciples forsook him, and fled" (Matthew 26:56 KJV). This included Peter. Remember that when Jesus asked the disciples "Who do you say I am?", Peter answered by saying that Jesus is "the Christ; Son of the Living God". Jesus told Peter that this was a revelation Peter had received from God (Matthew 16:13-20). Even with a divine revelation that Jesus was who He was, Peter was a coward and publically denied Jesus three times while Jesus was on trial (Matthew 26:69-75).

Peter was one of the disciples who received the empowering of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room in Jerusalem (Acts 2:1-4), and it was Peter who (after receiving the empowering of the Holy Spirit) took the lead among the disciples and stood up with boldness to give the first public sermon:

"When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance (as the Spirit enabled them). Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia,

Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians--we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine (drunk)." But Peter, standing with the eleven, lifted up his voice and addressed them: "Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and give ear to my words..."

Acts 2:1-14 ESV (Brackets mine)

The Holy Spirit enabled the believers to be effective witnesses to all these people from different countries. He also enabled Peter to have boldness and stand up and preach to the crowd. Peter was no longer a coward who feared for his life, but now had boldness to stand up and even say to the crowd, "you crucified Jesus, and God made Him Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). The result of the Holy Spirit's empowering of Peter and the believers, was that 3000 people believed the gospel, received Jesus and were baptised in one day.

Before the Holy Spirit came, there were only a couple hundred disciples. Not many at all. And only 120 disciples obeyed Jesus' command to wait for power in Jerusalem. But when the power came there was significant increase.

So why do so many people who are baptised in the Holy Spirit not have the same results? Why aren't signs and wonders following all believers who are empowered by the Holy Spirit? The answer is simple: there is a difference between having the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit having you. The difference is "surrender". Most Spirit-empowered believers do not yield to the Spirit and allow His power to work in their lives. This is also probably the result of not knowing and understanding what power they have. Understanding brings fruitfulness.

"That the communication of thy faith may become effectual by the acknowledging of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus."

Philemon 1:6 KJV

When we begin to acknowledge the good things that are already in us in Christ Jesus, and start believing them, we will begin to see faith at work in our lives and the power of the Spirit unleashed in us and through us. We don't need more Holy Spirit and we don't need more power. We already have everything we need for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him (2 Peter 1:3). All we need to do is start discovering and believing what we already have inside of us.

Ways to receive the Holy Spirit:

In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist said that Jesus would baptise us in the Holy Spirit. Receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit is as simple as asking Jesus to baptise us in the Holy Spirit.

Another way you can receive the Holy Spirit is when you hear the Word (the gospel) and faith rises in your heart to receive (Romans 10:17).

“While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God...”

Acts 10:44-46 ESV

One of the most common ways we see people receiving the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts, is through the laying on of hands of believers who have already received the empowering of the Spirit.

“...Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

Acts 8:17 KJV

“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spoke with tongues, and prophesied.”

Acts 19:6 KJV

But don't I already have the Holy Spirit if I am a believer?

“In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.”

Ephesians 1:13 ESV

When you believed the Gospel and got born-again, the Holy Spirit came to live in you. At salvation you received the Holy Spirit as a seal. This means that He came into your spirit and sealed your salvation so that no sin (in your soul or body) could contaminate and negatively affect your spirit - which is now pure, holy, righteous and blameless. Receiving the Holy Spirit as a seal is the New Birth and this is what makes you a New Creation (2 Corinthians 5:17). But there is a separate experience for the believer where we invite the Holy Spirit to empower us to be effective witnesses and to live supernatural lives.

“Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God (*they had become believers*), they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”

Acts 8:14-17 KJV (Italics mine)

This passage of scripture shows us that a group of people in Samaria had received the Word of God and become Believers, but that they had not yet received the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

“And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples (this means that they were Christians). And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to

come after him, that is, Jesus." On hearing this, they were baptized (in water) in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking in tongues and prophesying."

Acts 19:1-6 ESV (Brackets mine)

It is possible for you to receive Jesus and be born-again without having received the empowering of the Holy Spirit.

Receiving the Holy Spirit

Some people wrongly believe that before you receive the Holy Spirit you must deal with sin in your life and sort out a few things because "God won't use or fill a dirty vessel." This is RUBBISH! If God could only use perfect people, He would have no one to use. If you could clean up your act and "become holy" before receiving the empowering of the Holy Spirit, then you wouldn't need the Holy Spirit. The truth is that we need the empowering of the Holy Spirit to start living out the victorious Christian life.

If you have not yet received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, I encourage you to simply ask Jesus, right now, to baptise you in the Holy Spirit. Then just relax and focus on Jesus. In Matthew 7:7 Jesus said that when we ask, we receive. In verse 8 it says that "everyone who asks receives". In Luke 11:13, Jesus said: "if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?". God wants you to have the Holy Spirit more than you want it. When you ask, the Holy Spirit is yours. All you need to do is believe that in that moment you asked, the Holy Spirit was given to you.

As soon as you pray and ask Jesus for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, begin to praise Him and thank Him that it is yours. Some people experience something physical with the baptism of the Holy Spirit and others don't. Don't wait for a feeling to believe you've got it. Jesus said that when you ask, you receive. So believe that it's yours!

Digging Deeper

BAPTISM IN THE HOLY SPIRIT

1. Read Acts 1:8. What is the purpose of the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

2. Read Luke 24:46-49. Why did Jesus tell the disciples to wait for the empowering of the Holy Spirit before going in to all the world and sharing the good news?

3. What are three ways to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit?

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

4. Read Acts 19:1-6. Is it possible to be a Christian and not to have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit?

5. Have you received the Holy Spirit since you've believed?

You can pray now by yourself, or if you're in a small group you can pray there, for the baptism of the Holy Spirit. If you would like one of our leaders to pray with you, we'd love to. Please contact us on telephone +27(0)21 880 0168 or via our website www.gracelife.co

THE GIFT OF TONGUES

“And these signs will accompany those who believe... they will speak in new tongues.”

Mark 16:17 ESV

Jesus said that one of the signs that would accompany a believer is that they would speak in new tongues. Throughout the book of Acts we see that when a believer received the empowering of the Holy Spirit, it was often accompanied by the gift of tongues.

a) Read Acts 2:2-4. What happened after the believers were all filled with the Holy Spirit?

b) Read Acts 10:45-46. What happened after the believers were all filled with the Holy Spirit?

c) Read Acts 19:6. What happened after the believers were all filled with the Holy Spirit?

“Speaking in tongues” is a spiritual gift of the Holy Spirit. It is when the Holy Spirit enables a believer to speak in a language that they never learned; either another human language or an angelic language (1 Corinthians 13:1).

Paul said that he would like all believers to speak in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:5). Many people believe that the gift of tongues is only for some believers, but the Bible shows us that every believer can speak in tongues. Paul also said that no one should stop or forbid anyone from speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:39). Jesus said that believers would do it and Paul said that it was important, but why? We will look at this in a moment.

“For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful.”

1 Corinthians 14:14 KJV

When you pray in tongues, you are not praying with your mind, will or intellect. Rather it is your spirit praying. And although your mind will not understand what you are saying, your spirit does.

“For he that speaks in an unknown tongue speaks not unto men, but unto God...”

1 Corinthians 14:2 KJV

When you're praying in tongues your spirit is speaking to God, and God understands perfectly what your spirit is communicating. When we do not know what to pray, or how to pray, we should be praying in tongues - because while our minds are limited, our spirits have the mind of Christ (1 Corinthians 2:16) and are not limited by wrong thinking or unbelief. Praying in tongues is praying the perfect will of God, and it counters unbelief and wrong thinking.

“For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people. To whom he said, This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing: yet they would not hear.”

Isaiah 28:11-12 KJV

All the way back in the book of Isaiah we find a prophesy foretelling one of the benefits of the gift of tongues: that through praying in tongues we allow God to speak to us (this refers to revelation knowledge, which we will look at in a moment), and we allow Him to refresh us. If we're weary, by praying in tongues we invite Him to help us rest. Whenever we need rest or refreshing, we need to pray in tongues. It is a spiritual exercise which benefits us physically and emotionally. It helps us to easily access the power and life of God which is in our spirits.

“The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself...”

1 Corinthians 14:4 ESV

When you pray in tongues you're building up, or edifying, or encouraging yourself. Whenever we feel down or depressed, tired or weary, all we need to do to unleash the ability of God to build us up and encourage us. We do this by praying in tongues.

“But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

Jude 1:20-21 KJV

Whenever we feel like our faith is weak, all we need to do is pray in the Spirit (which is praying in tongues) and we'll find that we're building up our faith. Whenever we're in a situation where we need a miracle, we should be praying in tongues to bypass what we see and feel in the natural; in order to see what God sees and believe it.

Whenever we don't feel or really believe the love of God, we should pray in tongues too. Praying in tongues keeps us in the love of God. This is significant because faith works by God's love (Galatians 5:6). If we're convinced of God's love for us, then it's easy to believe His promises. That's when our faith begins to work.

Once you have received the empowering of the Spirit, you can speak in tongues. You don't have to, but you get to. God won't force you to speak in tongues - it's something that you must desire. Having seen all the benefits of speaking in tongues, I am sure that you want this gift!

“And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”

Acts 2:4 ESV

Scripture shows us that “they spoke” in tongues, as “the Holy Spirit gave them utterance.” This is the first thing you need to realize about speaking in tongues: the Holy Spirit enables you to speak in tongues and He inspires the language in your mind, but it's *you* speaking out what He is inspiring. It is Holy Spirit-inspired, but not Holy Spirit-controlled. They spoke in tongues “as the Spirit gave them utterance”. Once you receive the Spirit, ask for the gift of tongues, and then step out in faith and

Speak out what the Holy Spirit puts on your heart. It will sound strange and you won't understand it, but remember that it's your spirit praying in an unknown language which your spirit and God understand.

Revelation Knowledge

Tongues can also help us receive revelation knowledge: a supernatural understanding of Scripture or a supernatural insight into a situation or a person's life. If you need insight into your business, studies or even a practical issue that you need help with, simply pray in tongues and God will show you something that will help you.

I have operated in the gift of tongues like this often and for many years. When praying for people, I usually pray quietly in tongues and while praying in tongues, God reveals things to me which I can pray for the individual, or encourage them in. At times when I have done this, what I pray over the person or what I say to them is so accurate that I have even had people ask "How did you know that?". I've also used the gift to solve problems or find things that I have lost, but the way I enjoy using the gift the most is to minister to others. One time (before I was in full time ministry), I was ministering to a young guy I had never met before. After praying in tongues, I started telling him specific details about his childhood and encouraged him that in every tragedy that he went through, God was there and God protected him. That was just a little bit of what I shared with him, but while I was ministering to him, he wept like a baby. He was overwhelmed that God really did know what he was going through. It changed that young guy's life forever! You can operate in this gift like this too.

"Howbeit we speak **wisdom** among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak **the wisdom of God in a mystery**, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory."

1 Corinthians 2:6-7 KJV (Emphasis mine)

Paul said that wisdom which he taught was not wisdom of this world but the wisdom of God, and he said that he spoke "the wisdom of God in a mystery". To understand what this means, let's look at another verse in the same book:

“For he that speaks in an unknown tongue speaks not unto men, but unto God: for no man understands him; howbeit in the spirit he speaks mysteries.”

1 Corinthians 14:2 KJV

I believe that the wisdom that Paul had and ministered from was the result of speaking in tongues. He said that when you pray in tongues, you're speaking mysteries - and the wisdom that he had was in a mystery. When you pray in tongues you are speaking forth the wisdom of God. But that wisdom is no good unless you understand it.

“Wherefore let him that speaks in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret.”

1 Corinthians 14:13 KJV

When you pray in tongues you don't know what you're praying, and what you're praying is the wisdom of God. In order to know and benefit from that wisdom, you need to ask God for the interpretation. This applies to when you are praying in tongues privately.

For years, I would pray in tongues for a while and then stop and ask God, “Lord, please give me the understanding”. Shortly afterwards I would see something I didn't see previously, or know something I never knew before, or understand something new. As I matured in the gift I stopped asking for the interpretation, and it seems to just come naturally as I pray in tongues. The more you use this gift the more free-flowing it becomes.

Giving a message in tongues in a church setting

The Bible tells us that when operating in the gifts of the spirit in a church setting, we need to make sure that everything is done “decently and in order” (1 Corinthians 14:40). We have just spoken about using the personal gift of tongues. Now we are talking about using the gift of tongues to deliver a message in a church setting. This

is generally where a believer will come forward and ask the pastor permission to share a word in tongues. Scripture shows us what should happen next:

“If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God.”

1 Corinthians 14:27-28 KJV

In a church service there should never be more than three people who share a word in tongues. Then someone who has the gift of interpretation (another spiritual gift) should share what they believe the Lord is saying through that tongue. It is good to note that it is not the gift of translation (word for word) but interpretation (general idea of what is being communicated). Paul also states here that if no one is present with the gift of interpretation of tongues (meaning that the leadership would know if there is someone with the gift of interpretation), then the person wanting to communicate the interpretation of the message in tongues should rather be quiet in the church, and enjoy the benefit of speaking to God in tongues privately.

“What then, brothers? When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, or an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up.”

1 Corinthians 14:26 ESV

In using any gift in the church, we are instructed to do it with the motivation and intent of building up others and the church. We are to never use the gifts of the spirit to condemn, manipulate or control others.

Digging Deeper

THE GIFT OF TONGUES

1. Read Isaiah 28:11-12 and list three benefits of speaking in tongues.

i. _____

ii. _____

iii. _____

2. What does 1 Corinthians 14:4 say happens when you pray in tongues?

3. What are two benefits of praying in tongues, listed in Jude 1:20-21?

i. _____

ii. _____

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