**Bible Study The Gifts of the Holy Spirit part 3, 22nd June 2023**

What is the purpose of speaking in tongues?

1. One purpose, as we saw last week, is that speaking in tongues is evidence that someone has been filled with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2.4; 10.45-46; 19.6**).
2. On certain occasions, when the language was understood by someone else, it was a sign to unbelievers. As we saw two weeks ago one of the reasons that spiritual gifts are given is in order to build up the body of Christ. However, spiritual gifts can also be used in evangelism (**Hebrews 2.3-4; Mark 16.15-18**).  
   On the majority of occasions tongues is not understood either by the person speaking in tongues or by others who may be present. However, when we speak in tongues it is an actual language which could be understood if someone who speaks that language is present. In this instance speaking in tongues is sometimes a sign for unbelievers which could lead to their conversion. This is exactly what happened on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2.4-8**).  
   Read some examples:   
   Harold Horton, Gifts of the Spirit p. 147  
   Ralph Harris, Spoken by the Spirit p.15,38,57,88
3. A prayer language given by the Holy Spirit which can be used in private. a) When someone prays in tongues he prays with his spirit (**1 Cor. 14.14-15**). When we pray in our own language we are praying with the mind but sometimes this puts limits upon us.  
   In **Romans 8.26-27** Paul speaks about times when “we do not know how to pray as we ought” but the Spirit “intercedes for us”. There are often times when we don’t know how to pray but if we pray in tongues we know that we are praying according to the will of God.  
   Read an example in “Spoken by the Spirit” p.35  
   b) When someone prays in tongues he edifies/build up himself (**1 Cor. 14.4). Eph. 6.18; Jude 20**). This is something that Paul did a great deal (**1 Cor.14.18**). This private use does not require an interpretation because it is being spoken to God (**1 Cor. 14.2**).
4. A public utterance which is interpreted and so the church is edified (**1 Cor. 14.5, 6-13**).

In **1 Cor. 12.29-30** when Paul asks: Do all speak in tongues? the expected answer is “No”. However, the context is to do with public worship rather than private prayer. Paul follows on by asking “Do all interpret?”

When it comes to speaking in tongues in private I believe that this is a gift which the Holy Spirit wants to give to everyone so that we can not only pray with our mind but also pray with our spirit. Paul wanted all of those in the Corinthian church to speak in tongues (**1 Cor. 14.4-5**).

**1 Cor. 12.11** says that all the gifts “are inspired by one and the same Spirit, Who apportions to each one individually as He wills.” However, we also have a part to play:  
a) Earnestly desire the spiritual gifts (**1 Cor.14.1 & 12.31**).  
b) Pray for the Gift of the Holy Spirit (**Luke 11.13**) and the gifts of the Holy Spirit (**1 Cor.14.13**).  
c) Take a step of faith. The Holy Spirit fills us and He enables us to speak in tongues but we are the ones who actually do the speaking. **Acts 2.4** says that they “began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.”  
Interpreting tongues or prophesying requires us to take a step of faith.   
**Romans 12.6** speaks about prophesying “in proportion to our faith” and as we use the gifts of the Spirit our faith will grow.