

3 Reasons Paul Commands Us to Speak in Tongues

All Christians have the Holy Spirit within them (Rom. 8:9). But not all have confirmed it by speaking in tongues.

They may have confirmed it with other manifestations, and they should; but that does not constitute grounds for neglecting Paul's and Jude's commands to manifest the baptism with the Holy Spirit by speaking in tongues (Eph. 5:18; 6:18; Jude 20) 20-40 years after the day of Pentecost.

The baptism with the Holy Spirit is the reception of the Holy Spirit as confirmed by speaking in tongues. Tongues is the beginning of a new way of life in which we are commanded to stay filled with the Spirit. Herein lies the key to greater maturity and faith.

Consider why Paul would tell Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit since they already received the Holy Spirit at conversion.

First, when Christians fall into temptation and do not repent, though they do not lose the Holy Spirit, they may lose spiritual effectiveness. This failure greatly limits their spiritual growth. Perhaps the reason why Paul tells Christians to be filled with the Holy Spirit is so they can regain this effectiveness and continue to grow.

Second, many Christians are content with salvation, not realizing how much more the Holy Spirit wants to give them if they will seek to confirm the reception of the Holy Spirit by speaking in tongues. Paul and Jude also call this "praying in the Spirit." If we give the Holy Spirit freedom to work in our lives, He will magnify Christ to us, fill our inner being with the love of God and help us to pray effectively. These are the means of growing and maturing spiritually. Thus we become

effective instruments in the kingdom of God, bringing glory to Him.

Third, speaking in tongues requires faith. God would not have commanded in His Word, "Have faith in God" (Mark 11:22, MEV) and "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18, MEV), if humans were incapable of obeying these commands.

The Scripture challenges people to trust in God and trust in God's Word. Before salvation comes to a sinner, that sinner has placed his or her trust or faith in many things, perhaps good works, people, jobs, religious forms and rituals, fame and reputation, or even money. The first work of the Holy Spirit in conversion is to reveal Christ as the only One worthy of trust and faith. Our first step of faith brings us salvation, or regeneration. Every succeeding experience that we receive from God also comes only in response to faith.

Faith is the essential ingredient in our relationship with God. When Peter walked on the water, he walked victoriously as long as he kept his eyes on Jesus. When he took his eyes off Jesus, though, and looked at the water, he began to sink. When Jesus reached out for Peter's hand, He asked, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matt. 14:31, MEV).

Doubt and fear are the opposites of faith. When sinners come to receive salvation, the devil tries to put doubt in their minds.

The devil may tell the sinner, "You are too big a sinner," "You have rejected God too long" or "You aren't worth it." Sinners can receive the experience of regeneration only when they take a stand on the Word of God and refuse to believe those doubts the liar throws their way.

In receiving the baptism with the Holy Spirit, believers must take the same solid stand on the Word of God. Every attack of the enemy must be resisted with the Word of God in the same way Jesus used the Word of God to overcome Satan in the

wilderness by declaring, "It is written." That same lying enemy likes to come to those seeking the infilling of the Holy Spirit and whisper, "It is not for you." But the Word of God declares that the promise of the Father is to "pour out [His] Spirit on all flesh" (Acts 2:17, MEV). It is for every believer—no exceptions. God commands, "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18, MEV). No one can contradict God Himself.

Without faith, says the writer of Hebrews, we cannot please God (11:6). The Book of James adds that nothing is received except by faith. Many people, through ignorance, have been afraid of the personality and ministry of the Holy Spirit and His supernatural work. The remedy for fear, says John, is love: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18, MEV). People don't naturally love strangers, but the more we get to know people, the more we can appreciate them and even love them.

In the same way, the Word of God reveals the personality and work of the Holy Spirit. The better we become acquainted with God's Word and what it says about the Holy Spirit, the more we will have confidence in Him and His work. The more confidence we have in Him, the easier it will be to love Him. From that love comes faith.

The Master knows how hard it is for the human heart to trust the unknown, so He gave an example. He asked, "If a son asks for ... a fish [from any of you who is a father], will you give him a serpent instead? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him?" (Luke 11:11-13, MEV).

Believe and receive today. Then you may move on to greater maturity and faith in Jesus Christ.

James F. Linzey received a Bachelor of Arts degree in biblical studies at Vanguard University of Southern California (1979)

and a Master of Divinity degree at Fuller Theological Seminary (1983), where he studied Church Growth under C. Peter Wagner and signs and wonders under John Wimber. He hosted Operation Freedom television and radio programs on the baptism with the Holy Spirit around the world. He authored The Holy Spirit and A Divine Appointment in Washington D.C. and is the chief editor of the Modern English Version Bible translation. He served as an Air Force and Army chaplain for 24 years, attaining the rank of Major, and authored "The Space Force Hymn (Creator of the Universe)." Visit his websites at [and](#) .

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