

Paul Spoke in Tongues—So Why Do We Fear This Gift?

Two years ago when I was preaching a revival at a church in Florida, a boy named Roczen was filled with the Holy Spirit during a service. He was only about 5 years old. But a week later he felt such boldness that he asked his pastor if he could pray for the entire church. When he prayed for the congregation from the platform, several other people were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Roczen is a normal boy who loves to play with his Matchbox cars and video games. But he has a close relationship with Jesus, and he regularly prays in his prayer language. I watched this weekend as Roczen laid hands on my 12-year-old grandson and prayed for him to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

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Many Christians today are skeptical about the gift of speaking in tongues because it has never been a part of their experience. And other Christians teach that speaking in tongues is no longer a valid spiritual gift for today—even though they acknowledged that the apostle Paul had this gift and told his disciples in Corinth not to forbid using it.

I've had a prayer language since I was 18 years old. No one taught me how to pray in tongues. In fact, I was raised in a church that didn't teach about spiritual gifts. In fact, the first person I ever heard speaking in tongues was me, at the moment Jesus baptized me in the Holy Spirit.

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I don't think of myself as superior to anyone because I have this gift. Most people have never heard me pray in tongues because I do it privately. But because I've written about it and often preach about it, some people have questioned it or even accused me of promoting false teaching.

One prominent fundamentalist leader published a book in 2013 in which he claims the gift of *glossolalia* (the Greek word for speaking in tongues) was only valid in New Testament times. This same leader mocked my experience. He believes all supernatural manifestations of the Holy Spirit described in the book of Acts, including healing, stopped after the Bible was compiled.

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