

When You're Persecuted for Praying in Tongues

When I sent my daughter on an inner-city mission trip in another state, I was shocked to later learn that her temporary home church did not believe in **miracles** or some **gifts of the Spirit**.

Indeed, this revelation was more shocking to me than the Hawaiian church where parishioners believe that a painting and a cross miraculously produce myrrh or the fake miracle scandal that rocked a church in Uyo recently.

In other words, it's more surprising that a Bible-believing church that claims to fully embrace the Trinity would shun the miraculous than it is to read about people who believe questionable miracles or even downright scams.

When it comes to **miracles**, it seems we have at least four camps in Christendom: those who believe the Word of God at face value, including the **gifts of the Spirit**; those who are easily deceived by gold dust, gemstones and miracle soap; those who want to believe in the miracle-working power of God so much that they see **miracles** where there are no miracles; and those who believe God stopped being God at the conclusion of the book of Acts.

For all my writing about merchandising **prophets** who seek to fleece the sheep with hyped-up **prophecies** and fake miracles, those who don't believe in the power of God to heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers and cast out demons (Matt. 10:8) also grieve my spirit. That's because although the motives of a cessationist are not dark and deceptive like a **false prophet** or false teacher, these highly vocal nonbelieving believers are nevertheless doing damage to the church.

My daughter was actually persecuted by some leaders and members of this non-miracle-believing church, which argues that some of the Holy Spirit's gifts, including speaking in tongues and the gifts of healing and miracles, were temporary and intended for confirmation in the early church before the New Testament was completed. The pastor had unkind words to say to my daughter—and at least one mother wouldn't allow her daughter to come near to mine because I believe in **praying in the Spirit**, casting out devils, waging **spiritual warfare** and all the rest of what mainstream **Pentecostals** and **charismatics** believe.

The **Holy Spirit** offers nine gifts, and Paul wanted to make sure we weren't ignorant of them. Let's review Scripture:

"There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all. But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each one for the profit of all: for to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, to another the word of knowledge through the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healings by the same Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another discerning of spirits, to another different kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually as He wills" (1 Cor. 12:4-11).

You can't pick and choose which gifts of the **Holy Spirit** you want to believe in any more than you can pick and choose which Scriptures to live by: "The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times" (Ps. 12:6). Jesus is the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8). The gifts of the Spirit did not cease when Luke crossed the last *t* and dotted the last *i* in the book of Acts. It's the **spirit of religion** that denies the power of God. Indeed, Paul warned Timothy:

“But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away!” (2 Tim. 3:1-5).

I am witnessing a disturbing trend, and it goes beyond miracle soap sellers, gold dust and gemstone collectors. I’m seeing more people who have a form of godliness but deny the power of God. As we move deeper into the end times, we need to build more faith in the **supernatural power of God** to provide for our needs, keep our bodies strong, keep our minds free from deception and the like. But it seems the enemy has already deceived many into thinking God isn’t who He says He is and can’t do what He says He can do. It seems many in the church are already deceived. And none of us are immune to being deceived.

God, open our eyes—all of us—to our wrong thinking and wrong believing so that we can see You rightly and respond to Your Spirit quickly in the name of Jesus!

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