Jonathan Srock / General

All about Speaking in Tongues Life Group

Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Teaching (45 minutes)

What Is a Prayer Language

- After being baptized in the Spirit, although many Christians do not have the spiritual gifts of speaking in tongues or interpretation, you may find yourself praying in tongues in your private prayer time. This is your prayer language, sounding the same as you were baptized in the Spirit.

Praying in the Spirit (1 Corinthians 14 Part 1)

- We will be talking a lot about 1 Corinthians 14 because it specifically discusses speaking in tongues the most in the New Testament. Paul will guide us through many of the issues that have to do with speaking in tongues.
- I'm breaking 1 Corinthians 14 discussion up into 3 parts. The first part begins today, where we learn about our personal prayer language as speaking in tongues when we pray.
- Paul discusses the difference between speaking in tongues in a service as a gift, speaking in tongues in a prayer language, and prophecy. Many misunderstand this chapter to mean Paul is saying not to speak in tongues in a service. That is not the case, as you will see in these sessions.
- The context for 1 Corinthians 14 is a church service, comparing the gifts of speaking in tongues and prophecy. Paul's comments about speaking in tongues have to do with their effectiveness in a service.

- At first glance, it appears I am cutting up the chapter, but I want to to see the nuances of what Paul is teaching about the gift of tongues, praying in tongues, tongues in general, and the gift of prophecy.
- Paul says people can pray in the Spirit by speaking in tongues. Let's take a closer look at these verses.
  - General verses about speaking in tongues (Applying gift of tongues, praying in tongues, or speaking in tongues) (1 Corinthians 14:2; 4, 18)

    1 Corinthians 14:2 ESV
    For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God; for no one understands him, but he utters mysteries in the Spirit.

    - Speaking in tongues is not for anyone else but you and God. No one, even you, cannot understand what you say.
    - One function of speaking in tongues is to utter mysteries to God. In this sense, speaking in tongues is not meant to be interpreted.

    1 Corinthians 14:4 ESV
    The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.

    - Speaking in tongues builds up your spirit, but it is not useful in a church service without interpretation.
    - That's why Paul favors the gift of prophecy over the gift of speaking in tongues (unless the gift of interpretation is used). As speaking in tongues builds one person up, prophecy builds up the whole church.

    1 Corinthians 14:18 ESV
    I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

    - Paul did not for bed speaking in tongues as a practice. The Corinthians 122 path themselves up when they spoke in tongues, but Paul reminded them he did it more than any of them.
    - If speaking in tongues was forbidden, Paul would be committing a forbidden practice. Speaking in tongues has its place in your personal life and as a gift used in the church service.

- Specific verses about the prayer language of speaking in tongues (1 Corinthians 14:14-17, 18)

  1 Corinthians 14:14–17 ESV
  For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also; I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say “Amen” to your thanksgiving when he does not know what you are saying? For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being built up.

  - Keeping the general principles of the practice of speaking in tongues in mind, Paul teaches us that personal prayer language of tongues is not for a church service (however, if you are praying in tongues quietly to yourself in a service, this is permitted).
  - Because speaking in tongues is unintelligible to those around you, it must be interpreted to be of use to the Christian body.
  - The Holy Spirit can help you distinguish between uttering God’s mysteries through your personal prayer language to encourage your spirit and a message for the body in the gift of tongues followed by the gift of interpretation.
  - NOTE: The Spirit often gives the gift of interpretation to those who have the gift of tongues. If not, you must make sure someone with the gift of interpretation can interpret the gift of tongues, or you should remain silent.
  - When praying in tongues, your mind is unfruitful because you don’t understand what you are saying. Praying in tongues builds up your spirit. It is Spirit to spirit communication.
  - You can pray with your spirit and your mind at the same time. I often do this by continuing to think and pray in my own language while allowing the Holy Spirit to speak in a tongue through my mouth.
  - Paul further explains why speaking in tongues is useless to those around you in 1 Corinthians 14:16-17.

1 Corinthians 14:18 ESV
I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you.

- Once again, in the context of Paul favoring the gift of prophecy over the gift of tongues in a church service, he does not tell people not to speak in tongues, use the gift of tongues with interpretation, or forbid the practice of speaking in tongues because he practices speaking in tongues more than any of the Corinthians.
- Paul is not saying this to show off but to show the Corinthians, and us, the proper use and place for speaking in tongues.
- That is, praying in tongues is always permitted as long as you distinguish between praying in tongues and the gift of tongues during the service. The gift of tongues is only permissible during a service when followed by the interpretation of what is said.
- It's important to realize the Holy Spirit leads in the service and He will prompt you to use the gift of tongues.

Romans 8:26–27 ESV
Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

- When Paul says the camps. Helps us in our weakness, he refers to our weakness to know how to pray within God's will.
- He elsewhere says that the Spirit knows and searches even the deep things of God, and He knows us completely (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).
- He is the perfect Person to help us pray within God's will. He intercedes for us with "groanings too deep for words." Some suggest the connection between our spirit and the Spirit in prayer comes through speaking in tongues.
- The word "groanings" here does not necessarily refer to speech. Paul uses the word four times in Romans 8. He uses at first or creation, then for God's (Romans 8:22), the saints (Romans 8:23), the Spirit (Romans 8:26), and it is the Greek word behind "distress" in Romans 8:35.

- The word “groaning” refers to a sound like sighing were what we think of as groaning. It does not necessarily resemble a language.
- The Spirit is the bridge between what we pray, what God’s will is in the matter we pray for, and our hearts and His mind. Praying in tongues seems like a natural reaching out from us when we don’t know how to pray to speak to the Spirit (our spirit to the Spirit).

- Singing in the Spirit As Worship and Praise (Ephesians 5:18-21)

  Ephesians 5:18–21 ESV
  And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery, but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

  - Unlike what some teachers suggest is a comparison between being drunk and being controlled by the Spirit, Paul actual says the opposite here. There is a contrast between getting drunk and beIng filled with the Spirit. There’s also a difference between not doing something and doing something.
  - Evidence of being filled with the Spirit here Paul lists as addressing one another and Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Psalms refers to the Old Testament book. Hymns were filled with doctrinal and biblical imagery about Christ, and spiritual songs would be like our songs and forces today.
  - These are activities infused with the feeling of the Spirit. It easy to understand these to be done sometimes through speaking or singing in tongues, although Paul does not specifically say that.

Ephesians 6:18 ESV
praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,

- Paul calls us to pray at all times “in the Spirit.” How do we pray in the Spirit? Many scholars understand this to be praying in tongues, a prayer language.

- We lift up all our needs as in Romans 8:26-27 to the Spirit who intercedes for us. There's nothing wrong with praying in tongues, especially when we don't know how to pray for other saints.
- What else would Paul mean by praying in the Spirit? It seems this is the best application for what Paul is referring to.

Jude 20 ESV
But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit,

- Jude is the only other New Testament writer to directly reference praying in the Spirit. He includes with building yourselves up in the most holy faith.
- Paul already told us that building ourselves up happens when we pray in tongues. These are two very closely related ideas.
- I think the best reading and interpretation of what you to say is that we can build ourselves up in our most holy faith by praying in the Holy Spirit.

The Purpose of Tongues in Prayer

- Edify Your Spirit
  - That when we pray in tongues, Paul says we edify our spirits (1 Corinthians 14:4).
  - Building your self and edify your spirit is important. It is food for your spirit. The Holy Spirit can encourage you in deeper ways than any of us can imagine.
- Spirit Praise
  - Singing in the Spirit, or singing in tongues, is a beautiful expression every spirit to Spirit connection during worship.
  - Not only do our spirits benefit from this practice, but we are also glorifying God as the disciples were on the Day of and the cost (Acts 2:12).

    - It is one of the healthiest expressions we can make in worship to God. Just as we don't know what we pray in the Spirit, we don't know what we are singing in tongues, but surely it is even higher and deeper worship than we can offer in our understood native language.
    - We often experience barriers when we worship God with our minds and native language. We can only go so far. Our emotions help us along, praising God for the impossible things he does in our lives. Singing in the Spirit may be able to bridge the gap between our mental and emotional capacity to praise God.
- Your Lack of Understanding
    - Oftentimes when I'm praying for others, I do not have the words to speak or no what to pray for them. When I pray in my prayer language, a sense of peace often comes over me.
    - I feel an assurance that I am praying exactly what this person needs. All I can understand is that when I pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit is interceding through my prayer and matching it with God's will for that person.
    - This gives us an incredible peace because we don't have to know what has to be said in prayer to agree with God's will. We let the Holy Spirit do what He does best.
    - I do not know all the details of this person's life that I need to know to pray the prayer of faith that is powerful while it is working. I can trust the Holy Spirit to do that. And my faith is placed in the Spirit's intercession rather than my own.
- Deeper Connection with the Spirit
    - When we pray in the Spirit, praying in tongues, our spirit connects with the Spirit and we speak the mysteries of God (1 Corinthians 14:2).
    - It is the most spiritually healthy thing to do – to connect your spirit to God's Spirit in the deepest connection possible. You don't have to know what's being said, but it brings great peace.

- It is food for the spirit for us to regularly spends this connection with the Spirit. It's a deeper connection than we will ever know from any other relationship.

Can You Control When You Speak in Tongues in Prayer?

- Many times you will need to control it. It will happen when you're deep in thought or worship and praise. The Holy Spirit takes over and prays and worship through you.
- There are other times when you come and initiate praying in tongues. As long as you don't make up the syllables and words, the Spirit can take over after you initiate it.
- It must be a spiritual interaction. You should not initiate speaking in tongues just to impress others around you. This promise from the Father is a grace in our lives. Like all of God's grace is, we should not abuse it.

Does Praying in Tongues Keep the Devil from Understanding Your Prayers?

- Some teachers teach that praying in tongues keeps the devil from understanding your prayers, especially those against him.
- Since we do not know what we are praying when we pray in tongues, there's no way to really know if this is true or not. It's most likely that our prayers in tongues are to glorify God and worship Him, or to pray so that the Spirit can interpret our prayers into God's will for others.
- Some point to Daniel's answer to prayer being delayed as a reason why they would want their prayers to be "encoded" by tongues.
- When we pray in tongues, we're praying to God, not men, and therefore, probably not anyone else either (1 Corinthians 14:).
- Satan was an angel in heaven, so if it is the tongues of angels, who probably would understand it. If he can, he cannot stop it or change what we are

praying. He would probably be afraid to hear our prayers of faith and know that God will answer them.

- Him praying in tongues in spiritual warfare, but the devil cannot stop God to answer to that prayer. Whether he can understand it or not, he cannot stop it.
- What if everyone's prayer language is unique to that person, like the white stone given to everyone who overcomes in Revelation (Revelation)? Then he probably cannot understand it. It is personal and private communication between us and God.
- The Bible does not speak to this question or topic. We probably do not know one way or the other.

When to Pray in Tongues

- Most people pray in tongues in the prayer times may have with God. This can happen in your "prayer closet," or whatever you pray regularly.
- It can also happen during worship, especially in corporate worship. We must be careful not to interrupt the service with what may not be the gift of speaking in tongues, but just our personal prayer language. This is what Paul seeks to distinguish between (1 Corinthians 14:2, 4, 14-7).

Discussion (30 minutes)

Application (10 minutes)