

Gifts of the Holy Spirit - Part 2

by J. Vernon McGee

Dr. McGee emphasizes the importance of using spiritual gifts in love for the edification of the church body.

Duration: 44:47

Scripture: Romans 12:4

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Spiritual Gifts"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of using our spiritual gifts for the benefit of the body of Christ. He refers to the teachings of the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians chapters 12, 13, and 14. The speaker highlights the principle that although we are all different members of the body, we are united in Christ and should use our unique gifts to serve one another. He also mentions the significance of love as the greatest gift and encourages the audience to pursue spiritual gifts, particularly the gift of prophecy. The sermon concludes with the speaker sharing letters from listeners who have been impacted by the Word of God through radio broadcasts.

Transcript

How firm a foundation ye saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in his excellent word. What more can he say? Paul says in Romans chapter 12, For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them.

Scripture makes clear that we have all been given a spiritual gift, and that we are to use that gift as a function of the body of Christ. So today we are going to finish Dr. McGee's two-part sermon on the gifts of the Spirit. If you have your Bible handy, you'll want to turn with us to 1 Corinthians chapter 12 in preparation for Dr. McGee's sermon.

As we mentioned in our last broadcast, this sermon was given by Dr. McGee after his retirement as the pastor of the Church of the Open Door when it was in downtown Los Angeles. He served there, by the way, for 21 years as the senior pastor. Before we get to today's sermon, let's hear from some of our listeners.

Our first letter comes to us from a listener of our Mandarin broadcast, who writes, We listen to your Hong Kong broadcast programs every day, and we benefit a lot from them. We receive a lot of revelation on Bible reading, and you also teach us how to study the Bible. We only have a few people listening to your

program here, but still lack booklets on how to study the Bible.

Booklets on the Word of God, hermeneutics, Bible study, hymnals, and prayers are insufficient here. We hope to get more so that more people can benefit from them. We have many church meeting points and a few thousand Christians in our province.

The miracle of God is widely spread. The gospel is well respected by the people in our province. This is one of the great things happening in our church.

We always have new workers here. Sometimes our preacher has to walk very far to pray for the sick. After hearing from you on July 1, 1997, we started to listen to your program every day.

I always think about you. Whenever I heard the Word of God is being broadcast, my knowledge of God increased, and I began to love your channel. I'm completely alone with my faith now.

There isn't anybody that I could speak with about God and my problems. Nowadays, I'm very sad. Only the broadcasts of the Hungarian Evangelical Radio can comfort me.

Your programs feed my soul. Your broadcasts are very good. Everybody needs them.

I get a lot of encouragement from you. I love you. I love you.

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I love you. I love you. I love you.

I love you. I love you. I love God." I give thanks to the Lord for your programs and for your work in saving the souls of the people.

I am thankful that you are serving God. Thank you for your charity and service with love to others. I am very glad to listen to your programs in the evenings.

Without them I couldn't fight the battle of the life. All human support was taken away from me. Only the Lord in this broadcast remained with me, saving my faith.

I wanted many times to give up because I thought there was nothing to fight for, but somebody spoke to me by the radio and renewed my faith. My parents are not Christians, so it's hard for me. They hinder me, but the Lord can help me.

I ask that God may bless your life, and that the broadcast will lead as many people like me to Him. You must know you are a blessing for your listeners. My heart is full of thankfulness and love to God, who doesn't want us wretched sinners to be damned.

This listener in Denizli, Turkey, is really putting their faith to work as they stand up to share the gospel in an Islamic nation. He writes, A friend and I opened a coffee house. Our goal is to bring both Christians and non-Christians together under one roof for prayer, group discussions, talks, and slideshows.

We are lacking in the area of Christian terminology, and we can't answer many of our visitors' questions. Therefore, we temporarily request that you help us with your Christian knowledge and view. I, Ehan, am 25 years old and single.

For about two years I examined Christianity and then found the Lord Jesus Christ. Denizli has about 900,000 inhabitants. There is no church or prayer house for Christians here.

Unfortunate but true. Our goal is to show all Christians and non-Christians that there is one God. Will you pray for the ministry of this man's coffee house as he takes the opportunities to share his faith with his fellow Turks who have been blinded by Islam? Pray that the Lord will protect him in the midst of the difficulties that he may face as a Christian in a Muslim country, especially if he tries to talk to people about converting to Christianity.

Now this listener hears our Tamil broadcast which can be heard in India and the neighboring country of Sri Lanka. The listener writes, I have been very ill and the worries and anxieties of life have killed every desire and ambition to live. I did not know that I was special in the eyes of God.

For years I was a laborer in a textile mill. But unfortunately I was struck with paralysis and cannot do any work. All treatments proved to be futile.

Feeling utterly useless I was weary of life. At this junction I happened to listen to your broadcast. Since the medical world forsook me I thought why not attempt asking for divine healing.

I started seeking the Lord diligently through the Bible program. A few days later I began to find some changes. There was considerable improvement in my health.

Since then I have given up on the thought of committing suicide because of the radio program. Since I accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my Savior, I regularly attend the Sunday service in a nearby church. Yes, I am a real witness to my family as well as to my village.

Well let's turn now to a listener of our Korean broadcast who says, Hallelujah! I listen to your program through the Bible every day after the early morning prayer meeting. I open my Bible and follow the reading as I listen and I am extremely blessed. I appreciate you very much.

Several days ago I was especially blessed after listening to your program so I wanted to share the blessing with you by writing a letter. However, it is not easy for me to write to you this first time and so I hesitate to write. I was encouraged by the word, Be Strong and Courageous, which was given in Joshua.

It has been one year since my husband's small business was faced with bankruptcy. Even though I thought I trusted God and relied upon Him in my mind, when real trouble came I lost my mind and became depressed and discouraged. But now I thank God as I feel that my faith, which looks upon the living God, is growing as I listen to the radio every day.

I was especially encouraged with the word, Joshua 1.9, Be Strong and Courageous, do not be terrified, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go. It is just like the word was given for me. I pasted the scripture on the wall and read it out loud whenever I had the opportunity.

If I had not undergone this hardship my faith would have not grown this much and I would not have prayed as much either. Therefore I am really grateful to God, it is only through faith that I can behold Him. As I listen to FEBC Korea, which is God's station, I pray for the listeners like me to be comforted and encouraged who are suffering from hardships.

I really thank all of you who make the program through the Bible. Please remember that your program has a great impact on my soul. Thank you for your work for such a good program.

This letter comes to us from a listener of our Arabic broadcast and it says, I am writing to thank you for your efforts in explaining the Bible. I am a university professor, had some scientific researches, and directed many students in post-graduate thesis. I am 35 years old, all of my colleagues admired and respected me.

I believe this is all from the Lord Jesus. I read hundreds of books and spent all my effort in that field, yet the problem is I never read the Bible. Yes, I used to go to church Sunday evening.

I am very ashamed and angry with myself. How can I spend my life without reading the Bible? My family and I had to flee from our country for urgent reasons. We left everything behind and took nothing except the clothes we were wearing.

We are all educated and successful people. We came as refugees to Turkey. Now we are facing a hard life where nothing is helpful, neither degrees nor money, nothing except faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

I feel sorry, I know that God can take what he has given us at any time. How am I going to answer the Lord about neglecting the reading of the Bible? It's hard to express how I feel, but I am coming to you wanting the power of the Lord to start anew. And finally, as we come to a letter from this listener in our Farsi broadcast, which can be heard throughout Iran, she writes, I am an Iranian-Armenian lady.

My two daughters and I have lived in Switzerland for one year and two months. I have permanent residency. Of course I came here with my husband, but one month ago he died from an illness.

At that time, my youngest daughter was only five days old. My other girl is one year old. Since my husband's death, we have been suffering greatly and faced many challenges and loneliness.

Please help us. I do not need financial help, I need spiritual and emotional help. As the result of the death of my husband, I feel guilty.

I always ask, why did this have to happen? People tell me that this was my destiny, but I cannot accept that. I feel that the death of my husband was also my responsibility. I listened to your program by accident and it brought me much joy.

Now, my daughter and I pray together every night before she goes to sleep, and I read the gospel in Persian with her to get comfort. Now let's go to the Lord in prayer. Heavenly Father, give us the wisdom that we need to use the gifts that you've given to us that we may build upon the body of Christ in love.

We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen. I personally think the most important gift in the church is preaching, is teaching the Word of God. I feel that that's the most important gift.

And a great many people want a pastor to spend his time counseling, doing administrative work, doing everything in the world, and they could help him in those things. They could take the load off so he could spend more time teaching the Word of God and more time studying the Word of God. The average preacher today doesn't have time to study the Word of God.

And if he does everything everybody wants him to do. And so the gift of help, it's not exciting, isn't it? The gift of help is not exciting like tongues or prophecy. And after all, the gift of preaching, I think it's an exciting gift.

I think it's the most wonderful gift in the world. I never miss a date. I don't thank God that he permitted me to be a preacher.

It's what I wanted to be, and I thank him for it. But it is an exciting gift, but it has dangers. I'll tell you that.

You can be shot at more as a preacher than you can doing anything else I know of. But it's wonderful to give out the Word of God. Now, may I say to you that there are many gifts, just as the body has many members.

Just think of the members that are in the body. I can think of a gift like this. Did you know that Dorcas had a gift, and her gift was sewing? And she made dresses for the widows in the church.

And if she hadn't made dresses, they wouldn't have anything to wear. And that's the reason when Peter came to town, they had a fashion show. They had the widows come by, and Simon Peter says, you mean to tell me Dorcas made that dress? Yes.

And she's dead. Her body's up there. Simon Peter says, we need her in the church.

He has a gift. He went up and raised her from the dead. May I say it was a very important gift.

Somebody says to me, now you mean sewing could be a gift? Sure could. You're sewing for missionaries, or sewing for the poor, or doing something to get the Word of God out today. And I think that God has given gifts to believers to work in the church, not for you to exercise selfishness, but for you to exercise for others, for profit, that the church might be built up.

Now I'm going to move on down here. He says here, but covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. Now for years, in fact, until recently, I felt like you could covet earnestly the best gifts.

But I see now that that would contradict everything he said before, because he's made it very clear that the gifts are given sovereignly by the Spirit of God. Verse 18 said it, but now hath God set the members, every one of them in the body as it hath pleased him. He's the one that gives the gift.

If you and I are doing what God wants us to do, we're doing something for the benefit, the profit of the church, by the way. Now I can't go into all the detail here, but I think that the better translation and the form of the Greek here could be either in the indicative or it could be as it is here, covet earnestly and admonition. But what Paul is really saying is, you are coveting the wrong gifts.

And the word covet is used in a bad sense. You are coveting these showy gifts, these exciting gifts. And now Paul says, and yet show I unto you a more excellent way.

Now he's going to say that no gift is to be exercised except by the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Oh, don't miss this. Don't lift 1 Corinthians 13 out of the Bible and call it the love chapter and put it in a placard on the wall.

Doesn't belong there. It has to do with gifts. Now, will you listen to him? I'm going to show you a more excellent way.

Gifts are to be exercised by the fruit of the Spirit. Now he uses certain gifts as illustrations. The first one is what? Well, the one they'd gone off on, tongues.

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not love. And that is the first fruit. In fact, there are those that believe that all other fruits come stem from love.

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering. When this charismatic movement first broke out many years ago, I ran a series of messages on it. And believe me, they came from everywhere for that series.

All of these tongues people were there. And several of them came down to me and they said, Dr. McGee, we're going to pray that you get the baptism and that you speak in tongues. And I'd stop each one of them and I'd say, look, don't do that.

Don't pray that I speak in tongues. Pray that I may have the fruit of the Spirit in my life. I'd rather have the fruit of the Spirit than the gift, my friend.

It's to be exercised in love. Now, notice he says you may speak in tongues. Fact of the matter is you may be able to speak with the tongues of men and of angels.

You may be able to talk like the angel Gabriel. And if you have not love, Paul says, I'm becoming a sounding brass and a little jingling bell. That's all in the world that I am if I do not have love.

And that, may I say, would have something to do with some of the letters that I've been getting. They're not written in love. I can tell you that.

Now, will you notice he says, though I have the gift of prophecy, I might be able to preach up a storm and understand all mysteries and all knowledge. And though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains. And I haven't seen anybody moving mountains recently either.

And have not love, I'm nothing. I'm a zero, regardless of the gift, if it's not exercised in love. May I say to you that changes the whole complexion, does it not, of gifts? And this makes 1 Corinthians 13 very important.

Now, listen to him here. Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, I have the gift of giving. You could have that.

And though I give my body to be burned, and you can't ask a person to do more than that. And if I have not love, it profiteth me nothing. Another big zero.

I could be a martyr and still be a big zero if I'm not doing these things in love. Now, notice he's going to give the characteristics of love here. Not definitions, but characteristics.

And let me hurriedly lift out one or two. Love suffereth long and is kind. I wish I could talk about each one of them.

Love envieth not. Love envieth not. Listen, love doesn't go around and say, look, boy, I wish I had your gift.

I tell you, I don't have much of a gift. And I wish I had your gift. Love envieth not.

Now, that's not all. Will you notice this? Love vaunteth not itself. Love doesn't come around and say, as they've been saying to me, oh, Dr. McGee, if you had the experience I've had, and I wish you didn't, I'll pray that you get it.

If you just had what I got, you'd have something. Love doesn't vaunt itself. It's not puffed up.

If you've got a gift, may I say to you, it'll make you humble. You're not going to go around boasting that you've got something no one else has, because it has to be exercised in love if the Spirit of God is in it at all. Now, we're still not through.

Doth not behave itself unseemly. It doesn't make a nut of itself. Have you ever noticed that the Lord Jesus never acted like a nut? He was no religious fanatic.

Everything he did, he did in such a wonderful way. And Paul was that guy. Paul said, I'm a fool for Christ's sake.

But he didn't act like a fool. May I say to you that you won't be a nut, and there are a lot of nuts today. And listen to this, seeketh not her own.

If you have a gift, and if you even had the gift of tongues, you would never say, it doesn't seek its own. Now, I just use this gift for my own devotion. My friend, you don't need a gift for your devotion.

God will understand you no matter how you talk. In fact, if you don't even talk, he'll still understand you. You don't need it for your devotion.

What nonsense, to talk like that. You see, it seeketh not her own. That's love.

I wish I could go on in that, but now I must drop down. Will you notice what he says in verse 8? Now, follow me here very carefully. He says here, love never faileth, but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail.

Whether there be tongues, they shall cease. Whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. Now, this is a very important section, so don't miss this.

Here you have the permanence of love. Love never fails. But what about prophecy? And what about tongues? And what about knowledge? Now, the interesting thing is, and I was going to give you a Greek lesson, but I won't do that.

In this one here, where it says, whether there be prophecies, they shall fail. The word that's used there, and the word that's used down for knowledge, it shall vanish away, are identical. And they're known in the rhetoric as transitive verbs.

Now, you remember when you studied grammar in school, a transitive verb has to have an object. And when it says here that the prophecies are going to fail, well, we know in part, we prophesy in part, but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. Then he uses that again, that transitive verb.

Same verb. It'll be done away when what comes? The perfection comes. What is the perfection? It's when the Lord Jesus Christ comes.

Then prophecies will be through, and knowledge will be through. But wait a minute. What about tongue? He hasn't mentioned tongues.

Just listen. You get around to it. Listen to it.

When I was a child, I spake as a child. I understood as a child. I thought as a child.

But when I became a man, I put away childish things. Now, will you notice four times the word child is used. What's going to stop tongues? You're going to grow up.

The infant church is going to grow up. If the infant church had tongues, needed tongues, but they're not even needed today. When I was a child, I spake as a child.

I played the night my little grandson, before I came over. In fact, I had to babysit a while this afternoon. And I do enjoy that.

I talk with him. He isn't but 20 months old. And he is talking in tongues.

He's picked up now one or two. When he sees something that's bright, it's pretty. He does pretty well with that.

But a Christmas tree is a deed of all crazy things. He can't quite make it there. And he's speaking in tongues.

Now, he's a child. But one of these days, he's going to grow up. And when he's going to grow up, he's going to quit talking in tongues.

And he and I are going to make sense then. But we don't make much sense then. I can't quite communicate to him.

And he doesn't quite get through to me always. When I was a child, I spake as a child. What will stop tongues? Well, nothing's going to stop them.

Well, you're just going to grow up. And you'll quit using, you see. That's exactly what he said.

What Paul is saying now to the Corinthians, he says, look, let's get down to business. Grow up. Put away your toys.

And cut out this nonsense. And be man. Now, that brings us on down here to this next one.

Now, we see through a glass darkly, then face to face. Now, I know in part. But then shall I know even as also I'm known.

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three. But the greatest of these is love. Now, in chapter 14, you have the exercise of the gifts.

Follow after love and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy. Now, Paul is saying this in chapter 14. All he's doing is applying the principles and the theology that he's put down in chapter 12 and 13.

And Dr. Rodmarker and I have worked together on these three chapters. We've had a great time. And Dr. Rodmarker says, well, he says when Paul finished chapter 13, anybody could write chapter 14.

And I told him, I said, well, I'm sure glad Paul did it because it sure saved me a lot of trouble. I wouldn't have known how to write it. And maybe Dr. Rodmarker would have.

I don't know. But the thing is, follow after love and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that you may prophesy. Now, Paul says the thing that is important is this, that you ought to desire spiritual gifts.

I'm not criticizing you for that, but try to get a gift that will build up the church that you prophesy. And may I say this, that he's emphasizing preaching. And we're living in a day when preaching is being played down.

Our seminaries are not training young men to preach. And that's the reason there are no preachers today, by the way. This young crop that's coming along, most of the seminaries not even training preachers.

They're being counselors, you know, great counselors. And they take a little course in psychology and they got all the answers. Or they today are going to be administrators.

But they do not exegete the word of God. We are living in that kind of a day today. And Paul is putting the emphasis on preaching.

Now, don't misunderstand me. I think that the greatest gift in the church is preaching. That is, giving out the word of God.

Now, don't misunderstand me. It's not the preacher. It's preaching.

That is the greatest gift in the church today. Giving out the word of God. And every gift should be used to get the word of God out today.

And that is the gift of health. Paul mentioned that. What's health? Helping get the word of God out.

I have a layman, he's done wonders for our radio. Just recently, just the past week or two, he's done wonders. He said, you know, he said, I can't teach and I can't preach.

But he says, I got some money and I'm going to use it to get the word of God out. Says that's what, you know, he's got something I haven't got. You know what that is? Money.

I don't have it. He's got it. Now, what you have in chapter 14, therefore, is Paul revealing what he is.

A master teacher. A master teacher always begins with the pupil, with people where they are, and attempt to lift them where he wants to bring them. Now, Paul is doing that.

The Lord Jesus was that kind of a teacher. He always took people where they are. You remember if that crowd there that day, he says, a sower went forth to sow.

Then they could look around on a thousand hills in Israel and see sowers sowing. He began where they were. What's he talking about? He's talking about spiritual truth.

He's lifting them from the plane where they are to the plane where he wants to take them. Now, Paul is beginning here with the Corinthians where they are. And believe me, they're babies.

They're carnal. Now, listen to him. For he that speaketh not in an unknown tongue, there's no such thing as that.

If you'll notice, unknown is in italic. It's just glossoleot, which means tongue. For he that speaketh in a tongue speaketh not unto man, but unto God.

Now, what's Paul saying? Paul is saying, you Corinthians, you are using this tongue thing to speak to God. And you're not to use it that way. For no man understandeth him.

Howbeit in the spirit he speaketh mysteries. But he that prophesieth, listen to it, speaketh unto man to edification, exhortation, and comfort. Now, he says, you're not building up the church by speaking in tongue.

You're not building up the church at all. You stand up there and say things. Who's being edified? Who is being exhorted? Who's being comforted by that type of thing? All emotional stuff.

He says, that's not helping a bit. He says, get off of that thing that you're on. And give that thing up.

But he that prophesieth, now he says, he that speaketh in a tongue edifyeth himself. That is, he does it. You're doing it for yourself.

You think you're being helped by it. That's what he's saying to them. But he that prophesieth, listen, edifyeth the church.

What's the purpose of it? If a gift is exercised in the fruit of the spirit love, it seeketh not its own. It's not trying to build up himself. He's using it to build up the church, my beloved.

And that's a dead giveaway. I'm sure we got 50 letters from people say, and they're lovely folk. Don't misunderstand.

And I do think they're deluded today. And I wish I could help them. They say, oh, Dr. McGee, we don't use the gift of tongues publicly.

One lady says, I do it in my private devotions. It helps me. Makes me feel so good.

And I can pray better. May I say to you, that's not the purpose of the gift. You must be on the wrong track, sister, if you're going out in that direction.

Because that's not the purpose of the gift. The purpose of the gift is to build up the body, is to edify the believers, is to build up the church. Now, he says, I would that you all speak with tongues, but rather that you prophesy.

For greater is he that prophesy than he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret that the church may receive edifying. Now, Paul says, if you can show that the gift that you've got is being you, speaking in tongues to edify the church, and then somebody will interpret. Paul says, I'll buy.

And what does that mean when Paul says, I speak in tongues more than all of you? It just simply means that when Paul spoke in tongues, he's not speaking in an unknown tongue. And I never realized what this really meant until I was in Turkey. And when I was there, we traveled from Ephesus out to Sardis, Philadelphia, out to Laodicea, beyond Colossae.

All of these going into the interior of Turkey. And across there from Tarsus came Paul the Apostle. I said to the Turkish guide, how many tribes do you suppose have been in this area across here? He says, I imagine that there have been over a hundred tribes, all of them speaking a different language.

Have you ever stopped to think, Paul on his third missionary journey walked all the way from Tarsus all the way into Ephesus. And as he came to every tribe, how did he speak to them? He didn't have an interpreter, and the Wycliffe Bible translators weren't there. So how did he do it? He spoke in tongues.

That's the way Paul spoke. He was edifying the church. Paul says, I speak in tongues more than you all.

You want to talk about tongue? And he didn't know those languages. That's what happened on the day of Pentecost. Remember, each man heard them speaking in his own tongue.

Paul had the gift of tongues, my friend. I wish I had it like that. I wish I'd give anything in the world.

When I was there in Turkey, if I could have just talked to those people. I found myself in a town. I want a cold drink.

Nobody understands English. And I don't understand Turkish, I can tell you that. We didn't get very far.

And if our God, he was to meet us there, and if he hadn't come in and met us, I'd have starved to death, sitting right there, not able to communicate a thing. I'd love to have been able to speak in tongues. I told a friend with me, I said, I sure would like to speak in tongues right now.

And then the tongue would be Turkish. I'd like to let them know. Now, may I say that that was the way Paul did.

Now, he develops that. But now, let me move down to verse 20. Brethren, be not children in understanding.

Does that word children sound familiar? It's talking to those that were babes in Christ. We're giving a little baby talk, you know, as speaking in tongues. He says, now, brethren, be not children in understanding.

But he says, if you want to be a baby, be one in malice. And that's something we could develop ourselves along. Be ye children, but in understanding, be men.

Be a man. Be grown up. Now, will you notice what he says here? And this is worth noticing.

In the law, it's written with men of other tongues and other lips. Will I speak unto this people? And yet for all that, will they not hear me, saith the Lord? He's quoting Isaiah 28, verse 11. I'm going over and read it.

For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people, to whom he said, this is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest. And this is the refreshing, yet they would not hear. Now, the prophet Isaiah said, he said, God has spoken to his people through prophets, through the law, through the elders, through the judges, through the leaders, through the kings.

And prophet after prophet has come. And these are stiff-necked people. They would not hear.

And God sent them away into captivity. Now, God says, I'm going to make one more effort to reach you. I'm going to speak to you with people of other tongues.

And they're in Corinth. You can't imagine how prominent Jews were in the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire used Jews to infiltrate every people that they captured.

The Jew is not really a Western. He's an Oriental. And he could infiltrate those people and set up shop and be in business there before you'd know it.

And the Roman Empire used them. They were very prominent in the Roman Empire. And we know that in Corinth, there was a prominent synagogue.

They've even found the ruins of it there. It's one of the largest buildings that was there. Now, these Corinthians, you know, they've been converted, just a little group there.

And these Jews are saying, look, in the synagogue. They said, look at that bunch of little Gentiles down there. They think they're God's people.

We're God's people. They didn't know God had cast them aside. And those that knew the word, and many of them did, they said, look, they are speaking to us just like Isaiah said.

I'll speak to them with people of other tongues. And yet, with all of that, they'll not hear me. And friends, when 70 AD came, the nation went into captivity.

For the last time, they were scattered, and Jerusalem was destroyed. And from that day to this, there's never been the need for the gift of tongues. And I do not know anybody anywhere that's using the gift of tongues as God intended it to be used to speak to the nation Israel.

Do you know anybody using it like that? That was the reason it was given. I'll speak to them with other tongues. And those people in Corinth, they didn't hear.

But many of them knew what was taking place. God was giving them a final word. And in 70 AD, the temple was destroyed.

Now, verse 22, as far as I know in the Bible, this is the only verse or only passage that tells us the purpose of tongues. Here it is. Now, will you notice it? Wherefore, tongues... And this is a good purpose clause.

What was the purpose of tongues? Wherefore, tongues are for a sign not to them that believe. And so you see that today, tongues actually can't be used in the church. Because you wouldn't be speaking to Israel to begin with.

But it's a sign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not. That is, to the nation Israel. They were not believers.

But prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe. Therefore, he says, cut out the tongues in the church because it's not helping anybody. And the purpose of the gift is to build up the church.

Now, listen to him. He's not through. If therefore the whole church be come together into one place and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned and unbelievers... Not Jews now, but Gentiles.

They're not believers. They come in. Will they not say that you're mad? Don't use tongues in the church.

And because if unbelievers come in, they'll listen to you. And they say, my, what a bunch of Nazis are. Listen to them talking like that.

And that is not the purpose of tongues at all. But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all. He's judged of all.

So that he's able to hear the gospel. And that's the purpose because in the very next chapter, Paul's going to define what the gospel really is. What you're to believe in order to be saved.

May I say to you that we need to recognize today, and I think we ought to be very kind. But my feeling is that many sincere people have gone off into this movement today. Now, how do you explain them speaking in tongues if it's not a gift today? I'll explain it on a psychological basis.

Because I have examined several of the groups, and one group teach the new ones to speak in tongues. And they use the funniest system that is imaginable and strictly psychological. They meet in a circle.

And the leader says, now everybody say, Ba, ba, ba, ba. Everybody says, ba, ba, ba, ba. Now he says, let's everybody say, la, la, la, la.

And everybody says, la, la, la, la. Now say, ba, ba, la, la, ba, ba, la, la. And you just keep going like that.

And in a moment, well, you take off. It's just like a plane going down the runway. In a moment, you're up there, brother.

You're hitting high C in that type of thing. And it's strictly psychological. I've had several letters that I've examined very carefully for that.

One man said to me, I didn't want to speak in tongues. He says, I fought it. I thought that is interesting.

Why do you have to fight it if you don't believe it? You see, he did believe it. And secretly, he wanted to. And he got in with a group.

He told me how the thing went. Strictly psychological. And several of these folks, we have several letters from people who went into it.

And then it's embarrassing. They've come out of it. They said, we found out we were out on the wrong limb.

And we could be sawed off there pretty easy. We were not getting anywhere. And I do think that today, and the fastest growing move today among Protestants is Pentecostalism.

And there's some wonderful people among them. Don't misunderstand me. And I do minister in the group.

I've preached in Memphis, Tennessee, in the church there. And very candidly, that is the thing that disturbed me, that the pastor there is a personal friend of mine. And when I preached last time, I asked for hands for those that would accept Christ.

About 15 went up. Well, for me, that's good. I thought it was wonderful.

He didn't think so. He got up. He said, now I know.

And it's fine that these few this morning have accepted the Lord. But I know there are hundreds of you here. You want all that God has for you.

You need the baptism of the Spirit. My gracious, we offer the gospel all together now, you see. And now, if you want the baptism of the Spirit, you come forward.

And he had a couple hundred forward. And they were down there. One of the finest looking couples I ever saw was over in Memphis, Tennessee.

I went down to the couple afterward. I mean, just soon as the service is over. I introduced myself.

And I said to them, I said, let me ask you a question. I said, why did you come down here this morning? And they said, well, we want all God's got for us. And I said, I go along with you on that.

I want all God's got for him. I said, do you think coming down front here, you'll get it? Oh, yes, we're seeking the baptism. I said, you are? I said, let me ask you, have you trusted Christ as your Savior? Yes, we've trusted him as Savior.

Well, I said, didn't you feel like you when you trusted him? He's so wonderful. He's been made everything to us. And we're blessed with all spiritual blessings.

Don't you feel like that coming to him and not coming down here, seeking something that maybe you'd get it that route? Well, they said they didn't know. They hadn't heard it that way. Well, I said, how long you been coming down here? Well, they said, we've been coming down here several years.

I said, do you come down every Sunday? They said, almost every Sunday. And I said, and you haven't got it yet. And they said, no, we don't have it yet.

Well, I said, I think by this time, there must be another way of getting it. Have you come to know the Lord in a personal way? Have you responded to his calling and received the gift of salvation that he's offering? Well, if not, we would urge you to do that today. God would love nothing more than to have a relationship with you.

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