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CHURCH

SERMON NOTES & TRANSCRIPT

The Power of Praying in Tongues

What It Is, What It Does and Whether You Need It

Speaking in tongues is not required for salvation, but it is for every believer. When you pray in tongues, the Holy Spirit prays through you: He intercedes for you, carries the weight of prayer your mind cannot, and builds you up.

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SERIES
We're Openly Spirit Filled, Week 3 of 5

MAIN TEXT
Acts 2:1-4

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01

Sermon Transcript

Amen. Well, you can turn in your Bibles with me to Acts chapter 2. Acts chapter 2. We've been in a series called We Are Openly Spirit-Filled. We are openly Spirit-filled. And so today we're going to start the message with Acts chapter 2. And if you are Pentecostal enough, you know what happens when a Holy Ghost-filled preacher turns to Acts chapter 2. So here we go. Acts chapter 2, verse 1 says, "When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

"And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance." Today I want to talk to you about the supernatural benefits of speaking in other tongues.

> **ACTS 2:1-4 ESV**
>
> [1] When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. [2] And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. [3] And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. [4] And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

I told Ashleigh as I was preparing for this message, it dawned on me we should have had about 300 visitors today. Because that's what happens when you preach on stuff like this. This is when everyone shows up who you're like, I don't know that you're ready for this message.

And so if you are with us for the first time today, I promise that I think you're going to leave enriched by this message. When it comes to the subject of tongues, speaking in other tongues, the supernatural gifts in general, when it comes to this subject, the church is divided by and large. There are some in the church who don't believe that any of these things are for today. There are some in the church who believe that these things are for today. By the end of the next two minutes, you're going to know where I stand on that. Hallelujah. I feel like preaching more than y'all feel like responding this morning.

I will jump on chairs. I will have a good time today. I am ready to preach. Okay? So now there's a division there, but then there's also a division amongst people who do believe that the supernatural gifts are for today. There's a division between charismatics and Pentecostals. Charismatics do not believe that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism of the Holy Spirit, whereas Pentecostals do. And that is a doctrine that we adhere to in this church. That is a doctrine that I adhere to personally. We believe in the baptism of the Holy Ghost as evidenced by the speaking in tongues that is given by the Holy Ghost.

Amen. That's a good place to run around the room. Hallelujah. Now there are a few disclaimers I do want to make going into this message, okay? Because when we start talking about being Pentecostal, we start talking about speaking in tongues, like I said, there's a division at the church at large. There's a division between Pentecostals and charismatics.

And then there's another division between Pentecostals and Pentecostals. And there are some that would falsely teach you that you have to speak in tongues to be saved. And I just want to tell you this morning that that is not true.

It knocks on the door of potentially damnable heresy. I don't believe that. I don't teach that. This church doesn't believe it. If you've ever heard it, you heard wrong. Let's get you on the right side of things. Amen. Okay? So the first disclaimer is that tongues are not required for salvation. The second thing I want you to know is that if you've never spoken in tongues, it does not mean that you do not have the Holy Spirit. The Bible says in the end of John that Jesus breathed on his disciples and then they received the Holy Spirit.

> **JOHN 20:22** ESV
>
> 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.

But it wasn't until Jesus ascends to heaven that they speak in tongues.

So I think if Jesus is looking you in the face and says, "You got the Holy Ghost," you've got the Holy Ghost. Amen. So the moment you were saved, the Bible says in Ephesians that you were sealed by the Spirit.

> **EPHESIANS 1:13** ESV
>
> 13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,

So you've got the Holy Spirit. A guy named Robert Heidler, who was a Baptist gentleman who got the baptism of the Holy Spirit, surprised him and probably most of his church. Amen. But he wrote in a book that influenced me greatly when I was a young man. He wrote this, that there is an indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit, which is what you get when you are saved.

And then there is an empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit, which is what you get when you receive the baptism. And then here's the third disclaimer I want you to have this morning. It is for everyone. It is for everyone. Now, the sign gifts of speaking in tongues and there being an interpretation for unbelievers to see, that is not necessarily for everyone. But the ability to pray in an unknown tongue that the Spirit knows is for everyone. I have a friend that a couple years ago called me on the phone and he said, "You're not going to believe what happened."

Now, he's a preacher, I'm a preacher, and he was at a preacher meeting. We call it district council. It's our state meetings in the Assemblies of God. And so he was at a state meeting with a bunch of other preachers. And he goes, "You're not going to believe what happened." I said, "What?" He goes, "Somebody's acting up tonight." Now, have y'all been in Pentecost long enough to know what I mean when I say somebody was acting up? If you don't know what I'm talking about, you are the person everybody thinks is acting up. Okay? So he said, "Somebody was acting up tonight.

"And it was crazy." He said, "This guy starts to speak in tongues. He's giving a message in tongues." And he said, "Normally I'm not bothered by anything like that." He said, "But this guy was screaming in tongues." He said, "Jason, it was blood-curdling. It was screaming a message in tongues." And he said, "And as soon as the guy starts, I'm thinking, here we go." Then he says, "A guy in my section sitting near me, as soon as he's done, starts screaming the interpretation." This is one of my best friends in the world, by the way, telling me this. This wasn't 20 years ago.

This was like a year or two ago. And he says, “This guy’s standing in the pew here. He’s screaming the interpretation.” He said, “So as soon as this happens, I’m just rolling my eyes. Like, here, we’re off to the races now.” Because he’s thinking, this whole service is about to go off the rails because these two people want to act up. So I’m laughing on the phone. Because if y’all did it here and got out of hand, I wouldn’t think it was funny. But if it’s happening to other people, I’m quite amused by it. Amen. And so I’m laughing. And he says, “Well, I’m not done with the story.”

I thought, what in the world else could have happened? The lady come flying in there with shofars growing out of her back. Amen. And so he goes, “Well, this guy’s screaming in tongues. And I’m standing here rolling my eyes.” He says, “About 20 seconds later, I realize I’m the one screaming the interpretation.” He had no idea. He’s looking around and just screaming. I said, “What’d you do?” He said, “I got in my car and went back to the hotel. I was mortified.” Amen. So why do I tell you that story? I tell you that story to say that the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit are for today.

Can I get a good amen in the house? Hallelujah. And so this morning, what I want to do is I want to talk to you specifically about tongues and the power of tongues. Now, I want to prepare you. If you haven’t been around a long time, we’ve been kind of slow rolling. I’m going to be very transparent with you. We’ve been slow rolling Pentecost here. I’ve wanted to make sure we’ve had a firm foundation that is set on Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who paid a price at the cross so that we could experience this type of ministry. But now we’re ripping the Band-Aid off.

Amen. And if you’re around for any length of time, I want to prepare you that you will at some point hear somebody speak in tongues and there not be an interpretation. And I want to just say this, that our more evangelical friends would be quick to point to 1 Corinthians 14 to tell us how unbiblical that is. But there is an expression of tongues that happens in a way that is intended to be interpreted. And then there is another expression of tongues, which we are going to talk about today, which happens privately between someone and the Lord. And sometimes between the prayer closet and here, it’s going to get on your row.

And this is what I just want to prepare you for. You’re going to hear somebody standing next to you praying in tongues. You’re going to hear somebody behind you praying in tongues. The best I can tell you this morning in the kindest way, everybody say, “The pastor loves me.” Get over it. Because if that’s who we are, that’s who we’re going to be, that’s who we’re going to stay. It ain’t about to change. In fact, at some point, I’m going to get excited while I’m preaching and I’m going to pray in tongues a little bit and go back to preaching. And I’m not even going to say anything about it.

I’m going to ignore it. It’s just going to happen. That is an expression that will happen in our church. We believe it’s for you. And so if you don’t have it and you’re bothered by it, I hope whoever’s doing it on your row spews it all over you and you take it home with you. Amen. You’ll be screaming an interpretation by the end of the service. Amen. However, I also want to say this to everyone who is openly practicing the gifts in their life. We are an openly Spirit-filled church. Everybody say, “We are openly Spirit-filled.” That’s right. We’re openly Spirit-filled.

We are not obscurely Spirit-filled. There are some churches like ours that have become very obscurely Spirit-filled. The Holy Ghost gets shoved into a Thursday night seven o’clock small group that they let some crazy lady in the church lead because the pastor don’t want to touch it with a 10-foot pole. That ain’t me. I want to touch it with a no-foot pole. Amen. Hallelujah. So we are openly Spirit-filled. We are not obscurely Spirit-filled. However, we are not obnoxiously Spirit-filled. Everything that happens around the gifts of the Spirit must happen for the edification of the body at large.

So we ain’t doing no prophetic cartwheels down the aisles while we yell in tongues. It just ain’t happening. Y’all get upset like you woke up this morning praying. “I think that’s my ministry though, Pastor.” Lord, act like you ain’t ever seen nothing crazy in a Pentecostal church, please. I think sometimes I throw y’all off because I’m so honest you can’t refute

it. You're just like, you know what? That guy's telling the truth and it makes me uncomfortable. Amen. So we are not obscurely Pentecostal. We're not obnoxiously Pentecostal. But we are openly Spirit-filled.

So this morning, concerning tongues, I want to talk to you about three things. I want to answer three questions for you. I want to answer the question of what is it, what does it do, and do you need it? What is it, what does it do, and do you need it? So if you're ready for this, give the Lord a good shout of praise real quick. Just, "Yeah, yeah." All right. So in Acts chapter 2 verse 1 that we read a moment ago, there is a moment in a room in Jerusalem that is — the upper room is more like a balcony that's looking out on a street, okay? And so they're in this upper room and something happens while they're praying and suddenly there's a commotion and they begin to speak in tongues.

That's what happens. Now this introduces a debate amongst Pentecostals, evangelicals, people who don't even believe in the gifts. They're debating it, don't know why, doesn't matter to them at all. But the debate is this: did they speak in a real language, or did they speak in what we have experienced in a modern — let's see — a modern classical Pentecostal, that's a fun phrase right there, a modern classical Pentecostal sense? And I want to be respectful, but what we would know is kind of a gibberish, okay? Everybody know what I'm saying right now?

Okay, yeah. All right, good. If you aren't, just, you know, cluck like a chicken. Somebody will think you got something at some point. Amen. Hallelujah. And so the question that is posed, and there's a debate, is which one is it? Is it the real language? Is it this tongues that we're used to? And I think the answer for us is actually in the rest of the passage. So if we go to Acts chapter 2 verse 6, it says this: "And at this sound the multitude came together and they were bewildered because each one was hearing them speak in his own language."

I want you to hear that. Each one was hearing them speak in his own language. "And they were amazed and astonished, saying, 'Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each one in his own native language, Parthians and Medes and Elamites, residents of Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians. We hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God.' And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'

"But others mocked and said, 'They are filled with new wine.'" So here's a couple of things I want us to think about in this passage.

> **ACTS 2:6-13** ESV
>
> 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing
> them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are
> speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Parthians and Medes
> and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and
> Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and
> proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." 12 And all
> were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others mocking said, "They
> are filled with new wine."

First thing I just told you is that the upper room is more like a balcony overlooking the street. And so there's this prayer meeting happening up there. These people are praying. I just want you to hear me. They're praying on a balcony at a

time that is called Pentecost. This is a very big day in — or a very big season in — Jerusalem. This would be much like New Year's Eve in Times Square, New York. Okay? This is that kind of moment.

It's very busy. And I want you to just ask yourself, if you were in a place — let's just say coming up here in a couple of weeks, you go down to Mardi Gras, we'll have an altar call at the end of service, amen. But let's say you're going down to Mardi Gras and it's real busy, and you get, because you're good and saved, amen, you get you a prayer meeting going, looking out over this. You go into a cafe and you're looking out over Mardi Gras. You get you a little prayer group together. Do you think you bring Mardi Gras to a stop with a prayer meeting?

I don't. I don't think people know what you're doing up there. I think things just carry on. But something was happening up in that room that was loud. It was a great commotion. It was a big deal, to the point that people who were in the city stopped and took notice of this balcony that is covered up by a lattice. So what was happening in that room? Well, the next thing that we know is that they heard them speaking in their own languages. But now, if it's loud enough to get their attention — because some people would tell you, well, they must have all spoke in tongues one by one.

I don't know many people who are going to sit around and listen to five languages before they finally get to Chinese. I don't have that kind of patience. If I hear you speaking in German, I'm kind of going, I don't think that's for me, and I'm already out of here, Jack. So they heard a loud commotion, and they're hearing people speak in their own language. I want everybody to do something for me real quick. I'm not going to judge you, okay? I'm not going to judge you, but I want everybody on the count of three to yell out your favorite TV show, okay? On the count of three, I want everybody in the room to yell out your favorite TV show or the first TV show you can think of, because I'm looking at y'all's faces like y'all don't own one.

Y'all are like, I don't know what my favorite TV show is. So whatever I yell out — whatever you've watched in the last week, okay — I want you to yell it out. One, two, three. Okay, so I caught a handful of things, but for the most part, that was a big jumbled mess, right? Okay, I'm going to count to three. I want everybody to yell out, "I Love Lucy." One, two, three. Okay, did everybody understand the second one? But you didn't understand the first one. So if they were up in the upper room, and there's a big commotion going on that can get everybody's attention, bring Jerusalem to a halt, and they're all speaking in real languages, doesn't matter.

You can't hear those languages. It sounds like garbled mess. So the people on the ground must have heard them talking, and in some type of way, they heard everybody speaking in unison. Because not only did they hear the languages, but they knew what they were saying. He's giving praises to God. So at Acts chapter 2, they weren't speaking Mandarin and Spanish and Swahili up in the room. No, no, no, no, no. The people on the ground were interpreting whatever they were hearing. This isn't the first instance of tongues, my friends. This is the first instance of tongues and interpretation.

It's the only way it makes sense. Furthermore, there were two groups on the ground. There was a group that heard the commotion and went, "I hear these people giving praises to God in Portuguese." I don't know if they had a lot of Portuguese speakers there in Acts chapter 2, but you know, I read the Bible the way I read it. Amen. Hallelujah. And so you got one group that's saying that. You got another group that's saying, "No, these people are drunk." Well folks, I'm not trying to be crude here, but if you hear someone speaking French, and your first reaction is, "That guy's drunk," you might be a racist.

That is not the natural inclination. You don't hear somebody speak in Spanish and go, "Well, that guy's just — he's crazy." No, you go, "That kind of sounds like Spanish. I don't speak Spanish, but I kind of recognize it." I don't speak French, but

when they go, “Ha ha,” it kind of gives it away. Amen. Y’all know what I’m saying? Like, I would recognize it as something. But instead there’s a group that’s going, “They’re drunk.” The only way it makes sense for people to hear what’s going on in that room is if it sounds like a bunch of gobbledygook that they’re spitting out, which is kind of what the modern classical Pentecostal speaking in tongues experience is like.

This is further given to us if you look at First Corinthians chapter 13. First Corinthians chapter 13 says, “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong and a clanging cymbal.”

> **1 CORINTHIANS 13:1** ESV
>
> 1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.

Right in the middle of chapter 12 and chapter 14, which is all about the spiritual gifts, when he talks about speaking in tongues, he says “the tongues of men and of angels.” It must be some type of language that taps into the supernatural realm. If you go on further and you look at First Corinthians chapter 14, verse 2, it says, “For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men but to God.”

> **1 CORINTHIANS 14:2** ESV
>
> 2 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.

Well, hang on, wait, let’s pause right there. If they were speaking in a real language, that’s not true. If they’re speaking in a real language, they are speaking to men, but they’re men who speak a language that they do not know. But it goes on and it says that they don’t speak to men, but rather they utter mysteries in the Spirit. They’re speaking to God, uttering mysteries in the Spirit. My point is, I don’t really care if you speak in tongues, if you speak in Swahili, or if you speak in whatever it is that we be doing around our churches. What I care about is what the effect is when you do it.

This is what I know. Jesus said in Acts chapter 1, verse 8, that “ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.”

> **ACTS 1:8** ESV
>
> 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

Y’all feel I’m getting there now, amen? When the King James comes out, hallelujah, I’ll get my Macbeth on. Jesus said you’ll receive power, but what’d they get? They got tongues. Jesus said you’ll get power, but they got tongues. He said you’re going to get power. They got tongues. That tells me that there is some supernatural connection between praying in the Holy Ghost, praying in tongues, and power that enables you for life and service.

Hallelujah. I hope y’all, some of y’all that pray in tongues, leave understanding this a little bit better today. I would simplify it to say this: if Jesus said you’ll receive the Holy Spirit and get power, and they got tongues, I would say it like this — tongues is the power. Hallelujah. I ought to be getting ugly emails from Presbyterians by the end of the week.

Here we go. So here's — that's what it is. Now let's talk about what does it do. What does it do? Well, the first thing that it does is it connects you directly to Holy Spirit intercession.

When you pray in tongues — let me just help you — you do not pray in tongues. When you pray in tongues, the Holy Ghost prays through you. Romans chapter 8 verse 26 says this. Go ahead and give it to me, y'all. It says, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know what to pray for as we ought." Let me tell you something, if you can get that revelation, that there's stuff going on you don't know how to pray for. "But the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."

> **ROMANS 8:26** ESV
>
> 26 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 I'm going to tell you from a scholarly perspective, I feel that I have to have the integrity and say this: it would be hard from a linguistic perspective to say that that is speaking in tongues.

It's also hard to spend seven and a half minutes in a Holy Ghost filled church and not go, that sounds a lot like speaking in tongues. So right there, "the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words." And here's good news, the Holy Spirit is praying for you better than you are able to pray for yourself. The second thing that it does is it bypasses the mind. It bypasses the mind. Look at your neighbor and say, "You're not as smart as you think you are." That's ugly. I can't believe I have a church full of people that would have said that to somebody.

That was rude and y'all are just bad folks. We're going to pray for you at the end of service. But it bypasses the mind. First Corinthians chapter 14 verse 14 — that's easy to remember — says this: "For if I pray in a tongue my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful."

> **1 CORINTHIANS 14:14** ESV
>
> 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.

Ray, I know I'm going to hit your language here real quick. How many of you have ever had to prepare a proposal for somebody, like for work, or had to do a report for work, or you had to put information together? Has anybody ever had to do that? It's a mental load, right? I see some nods.

It's a process. You have to think through it. Imagine coming to the Lord every day with your purchase request form that isn't filled out perfectly. And you're having to think about how to, and what all the things are that are going on that might require and you need to put your attention on, so you can pray everything through. Well, the good news is that when you pray in tongues it takes the heavy mental load off of you. And it puts it on the Holy Spirit. So the Holy Spirit takes on the weight of the way that you need to pray. Hallelujah. The third thing that it does is it builds you up.

It builds you up. First Corinthians chapter 14 verse 4 says this: "But one who speaks in a tongue builds himself up. But the one who prophesies builds up the church."

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

I'm going to tell you there's stuff we need to happen in the church, but there's some stuff you need to happen in your prayer closet. And I'm here to tell you this morning that when you pray in the Holy Ghost, when you pray in tongues and the Spirit intercedes for you, it builds you up. How does it build you up? I don't know, but I can't think having less of the Holy Ghost working in my life is going to build me up.

I know that the present active ministry of the Holy Spirit builds up my person. Hallelujah. I'm preaching better than y'all are letting on this morning. So here's the third thing I want to answer: do you need it? Do you need it? The answer is yes. Yes, you need it. You need this. Do you have to have it? No. Can you go to heaven without it? Yes. Is earth going to feel a little more like heaven without it? No. Will your life be better with it? Yes. Is life harder without it? Yes. Will you have more peace with it? Yes. Will you have more strength? Yes. Will things faze you less?

Yes. Will you have more wisdom? Yes. Will you make better decisions? Yes. Will things seem to happen more effortlessly? Yes. Will you have more money? Yes. Oh, I just thought I'd go ahead and upset the religious devil in the house. Amen. So do you need it? Yeah. And here's the reason why. If you have any area of your life that you want to see improve, you need the ability to pray in other tongues. You need the ability to pray in the Spirit. Now on one hand, I want to be clear that I do not believe that the Lord is unmerciful as to count everything against you when you pray it wrong.

I don't think you pray to the Lord in English — and even Paul would say you need to pray in tongues, but you also need to pray in English.

> **1 CORINTHIANS 14:15** ESV
>
> 15 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.

You need to pray with your spirit, but you need to pray with your mind. But I don't think the Lord gets your prayers and just looks at you doing something wrong and gets upset about it. I don't think the Lord has a department in heaven that is checking your prayer TPS reports. But if he did, he would probably look like this right here. Now I know who to pray for, everybody who laughed at that. Amen. That's what he'd look like.

So on one hand, I don't think that the Lord's holding it against you when you don't know how to pray as you ought. The mercy of God, the grace of God is at play. On the other hand, Mark 11:23 says this: "Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him." Verse 24 says, "Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours." On the other hand, I have to acknowledge that the way you pray and the things you take before the Lord do matter.

> **MARK 11:23-24 ESV**
>
> 23 Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt
> in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you,
> whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

They matter. They do play into the results you get. So on one hand, you're not going to pray so egregiously that the Lord's just going to go, "Somebody get this out of my office." On the other hand, the way you pray matters. Well, the Holy Spirit has the ability to pray directly towards everything that you need to be prayed towards perfectly, and hit areas that you are unaware with. You can pray for your kids to know the Lord, but the Holy Spirit can pinpoint what that influence is in their life that's getting in the way. You'll pray for them to know the Lord, but when you pray in the Holy Ghost, he'll remove that little friend who's causing all the problems.

Amen. That's what praying in the Holy Spirit does. Hallelujah. Y'all received this this morning? Is this good for you? So now, where does this leave us? Because normally, when I preach something like this, I give an altar call and I ask everybody to come forward and I lay hands on them when I travel as an evangelist. But I'm not traveling as an evangelist, I know, because I have to work here all the stinking time. When I do that, when I go out and I preach places I invite people for, we start laying hands on people. It's usually a lot less thorough than what I taught you this morning, and we have a big shindig.

Here's the deal. I am not going to give that altar call today. And I'm also not going to tell you why I'm not going to give the altar call today, other than to say, you need to be here next week for an announcement I'm going to make. Okay? But you will have an opportunity to receive during this series. This is a message I want you to sit and ponder on, especially if you've struggled to receive or if you've ever felt like you were disqualified. It is for you. You need it. You can have it. Amen. And I do want to prepare you. If you listen to this message this morning and you've never had the experience — as a pastor in pastoral ministry, I have taught on this many times over the years and not given an altar call for it, whether it be in a class setting or just, I thought it would be weird because I'm a number two and not the number one, and I didn't think the preacher wanted me to give an altar call for people to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost in the middle of the week all of a sudden.

However, I've had people who've sat under the teaching and they've gone home and they've gotten it around the house. And all of a sudden, they'd be doing something, they'd be thinking about the message, and they'd receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. And for some reason that I cannot explain to you, I have had a lot of people receive it while they were doing dishes at the sink. I cannot explain that to you. I don't know if I got a dish-doing anointing on me, but if you want to receive before what I'm going to announce next week, go home, get your kitchen nice and spotless.

And before the end of the day, you might be shouting and dancing right into the living room. Amen. Hallelujah. So we're going to announce something next week. So that brings me to this. I'm going to share a couple of things with you, and then we are going to pray and dismiss this morning. The first thing I want to say to you is you need to be here next week. Next week is Vision Sunday. I want you to know I'm going to show you a ton of stuff. I believe in leading with transparency. I believe in leading with faith. And you're going to see whatever comes out when the two of them things get mixed up with each other next week.

Amen. So you need to be here next week for Vision Sunday. Now, I was planning on taking a one-week pause in this series for Vision Sunday and then going right back to We're Openly Spirit-Filled, which is a value of our church, by the

way. However, because we are openly Spirit-filled, for the first time since I have been here, I have been instructed by the Spirit to hit pause and to teach something for one week. On February 8th, I am going to teach some things that are intended to help you with your marriage. On February 8th, I'm going to take one week, and I believe I'm going to give you some stuff that's going to help you improve some areas of your relationship with your spouse.

Your marriage could be rescued in that service. Your marriage could be tuned up in that service. At best, we save your marriage. At worst, we get you through Valentine's Day unscathed. Amen. So that's why I'm going to do it next week. So February 8th, you need to be here. If you're not married, you need to be here. If you want to be married, you need to be here. If you used to be married, you need to be here. And if you are married, you need to be here. Amen. I can only help you so much in this moment. All I can tell you is, men, don't buy your wife a vacuum cleaner for Valentine's Day.

That's all I've got for you at the moment. Amen. How many of you received the word this morning? Give the Lord a praise.

02

Preaching Notes

Before You Preach

This is the third message in a five-week series on being openly Spirit filled. The first weeks laid the foundation; this week is direct teaching on speaking in tongues. Say it plainly: the church has been "slow rolling Pentecost" to make sure the foundation is Jesus Christ and His finished work at the cross. Now the Band-Aid comes off.

Expect a mixed room. A message on tongues draws people who are curious, people who are skeptical and people who were hurt by excess. Lead with the three disclaimers so no one leaves thinking they are unsaved or second class, then answer three simple questions: **What is it? What does it do? Do you need it?**

This message deliberately withholds the usual altar call for the baptism in the Holy Spirit. If you preach it as part of a series, decide ahead of time where the opportunity to receive will come, and tell people.

Introduction

> ACTS 2:1-4 ESV
>
> 1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Today we are talking about the supernatural benefits of speaking in other tongues.

On this subject the church is divided. Some believe the supernatural gifts are not for today; others believe they are. Even among those who believe the gifts are for today there is a division. Charismatics do not believe that speaking in tongues is the initial physical evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Pentecostals do. This church holds that doctrine, and so do I: **we believe in the baptism in the Holy Spirit, evidenced by speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives utterance.**

THREE DISCLAIMERS

1. Tongues are not required for salvation. Some falsely teach that you must speak in tongues to be saved. That is not true. It knocks on the door of damnable heresy. We do not believe it and we do not teach it.

2. If you have never spoken in tongues, it does not mean you do not have the Holy Spirit. At the end of John's Gospel, Jesus "breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20:22). Yet the disciples did not speak in tongues until after Jesus ascended. If Jesus looks you in the face and says you have the Holy

Spirit, you have the Holy Spirit. The moment you believed, you "were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit" (Ephesians 1:13).

Robert Heidler, a Baptist who received the baptism in the Holy Spirit, put it this way in a book that shaped me as a young man: there is an **indwelling ministry** of the Holy Spirit, which you receive when you are saved, and an **empowering ministry** of the Holy Spirit, which you receive in the baptism.

3. It is for everyone. The sign gift of tongues with an interpretation, given for others to hear, is not necessarily for everyone. But the ability to pray in an unknown tongue that the Spirit knows is for everyone.

Illustration: the interpretation at district council. A close friend, a pastor, called me a year or two ago from our state ministers' meeting. During a service, a man began screaming a message in tongues. My friend rolled his eyes and thought, "Here we go." Then someone near him began screaming the interpretation, and he rolled his eyes again, sure the service was about to go off the rails. About twenty seconds later he realized he was the one screaming the interpretation. He went back to his hotel mortified. The point: the supernatural gifts of the Holy Spirit are for today.

OPENLY SPIRIT FILLED

Prepare people for what they will experience here. There is an expression of tongues that is meant to be interpreted (1 Corinthians 14). There is another expression, the one this message is about, that happens privately between a believer and the Lord. Sometimes it makes its way from the prayer closet onto your row. You will hear someone near you praying in tongues. At some point your pastor will get excited, pray in tongues a little and go back to preaching. That is who we are, and it is not about to change.

We are an openly Spirit-filled church. Have the congregation say it together.

- **We are not obscurely Spirit filled.** Some churches like ours have pushed the Holy Spirit into a Thursday night small group because the pastor does not want to touch it.
- **We are not obnoxiously Spirit filled.** Everything that happens around the gifts of the Spirit must happen for the edification of the body at large. No prophetic cartwheels down the aisles.

Three questions about tongues: **What is it? What does it do? Do you need it?**

1. What Is It?

In Acts 2 the disciples are praying in an upper room in Jerusalem, a room that may have looked out over the street, and something happens: a sound from heaven, tongues as of fire, and they begin to speak in other tongues.

This raises an old debate. Did they speak real human languages, or something like what we know today in classical Pentecostal experience, a language the speaker does not understand? The answer is in the rest of the passage.

> **ACTS 2:6-13** ESV
>
> 6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was
> hearing them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all
> these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language?
> 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and
> Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome,
> 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty
> works of God." 12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?"
> 13 But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

A LOUD COMMOTION

Pentecost was one of the busiest feasts on the Jewish calendar. Think New Year's Eve in Times Square, or Mardi Gras. If a small prayer group in a cafe above Mardi Gras started praying, the parade would not stop. But something in that room was loud enough that the crowd stopped and gathered.

Some say the disciples must have spoken one by one, each in a different language. But who would stand in the street listening to five languages waiting for their own?

Demonstration: "I Love Lucy." Ask everyone, on the count of three, to shout out their favorite TV show. It is a jumbled mess. Then ask everyone, on the count of three, to shout "I Love Lucy." Everyone understands the second one.

If a room full of people were all speaking different real languages at once, the crowd below would hear only noise. Yet each person heard his own language, and knew what was being said: "the mighty works of God" (Acts 2:11). **The people on the ground were interpreting what they heard.** Pentecost is not only the first instance of tongues. It is the first instance of tongues and interpretation.

There were also two groups in the crowd. One heard praise to God in their own language. The other said, "They are filled with new wine" (Acts 2:13). If you hear someone speaking a foreign language, your first thought is not that they are drunk. You recognize it as a language. What the mockers heard sounded like nothing they knew, which is much like what modern Pentecostal tongues sound like.

THE TONGUES OF MEN AND OF ANGELS

Paul supports this. Right between chapters 12 and 14, his teaching on spiritual gifts, he writes, "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal" (1 Corinthians 13:1). There is a language that reaches into the supernatural realm.

> **1 CORINTHIANS 14:2** ESV
>
> 2 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.

If they were speaking a real human language, they would be speaking to men, men whose language they did not know. Paul says the one who speaks in a tongue speaks to God and utters mysteries in the Spirit.

Whether it is a heavenly language or a human one, what matters most is what happens when you do it.

TONGUES IS THE POWER

Jesus promised, "you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8). Jesus said they would receive power. What did they get? They got tongues. That tells us there is a supernatural connection between praying in the Holy Spirit and the power that equips you for life and service.

Simply said: tongues is the power.

2. What Does It Do?

IT CONNECTS YOU TO THE HOLY SPIRIT'S INTERCESSION

When you pray in tongues, you are not the one praying. The Holy Spirit prays through you.

> ROMANS 8:26 ESV
>
> 26 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.

To be honest about the text, it is hard to prove linguistically that "groanings too deep for words" means speaking in tongues. But it is also hard to spend much time in a Spirit-filled church and not hear the resemblance.

There are things going on in your life you do not know how to pray for. **The Holy Spirit is praying for you better than you are able to pray for yourself.**

IT BYPASSES THE MIND

> 1 CORINTHIANS 14:14 ESV
>
> 14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.

Illustration: the purchase request form. Think about preparing a proposal or a report at work. It is a mental load: you have to think through everything. Imagine coming to the Lord every day with a purchase request form that has to be filled out perfectly, trying to think of every situation that needs your attention so you can pray it through. When you pray in tongues, the heavy mental load comes off of you and goes onto the Holy Spirit. He carries the weight of how you need to pray.

IT BUILDS YOU UP

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

Some things need to happen in the church. Some things need to happen in your prayer closet. When you pray in the Holy Spirit and He intercedes for you, it builds you up. How exactly? We may not be able to explain it, but having more of the Holy Spirit working in your life is not going to leave you weaker. The present, active ministry of the Holy Spirit builds up your person.

3. Do You Need It?

Yes. Do you have to have it? No. Can you go to heaven without it? Yes. But will your life be better with it? Yes. Is life harder without it? Yes. Will you have more peace, more strength and more wisdom? Will you make better decisions? Will things faze you less? Yes.

If there is any area of your life you want to see improve, you need the ability to pray in other tongues.

ON ONE HAND: GOD IS MERCIFUL

Paul says to pray with both: "I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also" (1 Corinthians 14:15). So keep praying in English. God is not unmerciful, counting it against you when you pray imperfectly. There is no department in heaven checking your prayer reports. The grace of God is at work when we do not know how to pray as we ought.

ON THE OTHER HAND: HOW YOU PRAY MATTERS

> **MARK 11:23-24** ESV
>
> 23 Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

The way you pray and what you bring before the Lord do matter. They play into the results you get. The Holy Spirit can pray perfectly toward everything you need, and into areas you are not even aware of. You can pray for your children to know the Lord. When you pray in the Holy Spirit, He can pinpoint the influence in their life that is getting in the way.

Conclusion

Normally a message like this ends with an altar call for the baptism in the Holy Spirit and the laying on of hands. Today it does not. There will be an opportunity to receive during this series.

Until then, sit with this message, especially if you have struggled to receive or have felt disqualified. **It is for you. You need it. You can have it.**

Many people who have heard this teaching have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit later, at home, simply thinking about the message. A surprising number have received it while doing the dishes at the kitchen sink.

Next steps (as preached on January 25, 2026): Next week is Vision Sunday; come and see where the church is going, led with transparency and with faith. On February 8, the series pauses for one week for a message on marriage, because the Holy Spirit prompted it. If you are married, want to be married, used to be married or are not married, be there.

Close in prayer.

03

Scripture List

Every passage read, cited or alluded to in the message, in the order it comes up.

Read

Read aloud in the message.

ACTS 2:1-4	1 When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. 4 And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.
ACTS 2:6-13	6 And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one was hearing them speak in his own language. 7 And they were amazed and astonished, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? 8 And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? 9 Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, 10 Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, 11 both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians—we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God." 12 And all were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" 13 But others mocking said, "They are filled with new wine."

Cited

Named or quoted along the way.

EPHESIANS 1:13	13 In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,
1 CORINTHIANS 13:1	1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.
1 CORINTHIANS 14:2	2 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.

ACTS 1:8	8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
ROMANS 8:26	26 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.
1 CORINTHIANS 14:14	14 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays but my mind is unfruitful.
1 CORINTHIANS 14:4	4 The one who speaks in a tongue builds up himself, but the one who prophesies builds up the church.
MARK 11:23-24	23 Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. 24 Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours.

Alluded to

Drawn on without naming the reference.

JOHN 20:22	22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.
1 CORINTHIANS 14:15	15 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.

Pastor Jason Mayfield

SENIOR PASTOR, CITYLIGHT CHURCH

Pastor Jason Mayfield is the Senior Pastor of Citylight Church in Saraland, Alabama, where he and his wife, Ashleigh, lead a church devoted to Building Lives on Jesus. His preaching is rooted in the Bible, full of hope, and grounded in one conviction: an incredible life is built on the finished work of Jesus Christ.

For more than 20 years, Pastor Jason has given his life to the local church. He has been credentialed with the Assemblies of God for 21 years and ordained for 14, and he has led revitalization in churches that went on to rank among the Top 100 Fastest-Growing Churches in America. He carries a deep conviction that the church can be both excellent and supernatural, and a passion for revival.

He is an author and the creator of Tear Up Your Bible and POWER 27, a daily rhythm of Bible reading, prayer and worship. His resources have helped more than 100,000 people go deeper in the Scriptures. Above every title, his greatest joy is seeing people meet Jesus, be filled with the Spirit, and grow into everything God has called them to be.

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