

FROM NONSENSE TO SENSE / Sunday, May 24, 2015

Unifying Topic: GIFT OF LANGUAGES

Lesson Text

I. Language As A Tool (Acts 2:1-7, 12)

II. Tongues In The Corinthian Church (1 Corinthians 14: 13-17)

III. Communication Is The Goal (1 Corinthians 14:18-19)

The Main Thought: What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. (1 Corinthians 14:15, KJV).

Unifying Principle: Communication is important as groups implement programs that will affect the lives of others. What is needed to achieve the best communication possible? The need for finding a common understanding is necessary whether people are speaking in different native languages as in Acts 2 or unknown spiritual languages as in 1 Corinthians 14

Lesson Aim: To help students understand what is at stake in 1 Corinthians 14.

Life Aim: To learn how to praise and worship God in one's local church in all kinds of ways and languages.

HISTORY:

The last of part of **Luke 24** after Jesus' Resurrection and appearance to the two followers on the road of Emmaus, Jesus speaks a promise of His Father to the disciples, where they were to wait in Jerusalem until the power from on high would come upon them. This power was to make them bold and effective witnesses among all nations. He led the disciples out as far as to Bethany before His Ascension to heaven. The ascension closes the Lord's earthly ministry. Now it would be left for others to continue His ministry. They returned to Jerusalem with great joy to the temple.

Acts 1:1-26 Luke is the writer of Acts. He was the companion of Paul, and had every opportunity of obtaining information about the great events of the gospel of Christ. He addresses this Book to Theophilus (meaning "loved by God", was the man to whom Luke wrote the Gospel of Luke & Acts; many speculations but little is known of him), and it is made clear that it is a continuation of the Book of Luke. Jesus had showed Himself to many in the 40 days alive after His Resurrection. He commanded the disciples not to depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father. John baptized with water but they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost. They were still wondering if Jesus would restore the kingdom of Israel at that time. Jesus lets them know that "*it is not for them to know the times or the seasons; it's in the power of the Father.*" Their power will come when the Holy Ghost comes upon them to make them witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, and in the uttermost part of the earth. After Jesus spoke He ascended up into the clouds out of sight. While they were staring up at the last glimpse of Jesus, two men in white apparel (angels) appeared among them. They ask these men of Galilee as to "*Why stand here gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you...shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*" (**vv.1-11**).

After Jesus disappeared into heaven, the disciples returned to Jerusalem from the Mount called Olivet and gathered in the Upper Room where Peter, James, John, Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (the son of Alphaeus), Simon (The Zealot), Judas (brother of James), the women, Mary (the mother of Jesus), and the brothers of Jesus were on one accord in prayer and supplication. Peter made it known that their small group had grown and that there were 120 that assembled in the Upper Room. He also lets them know that the scriptures had to be fulfilled in which the Holy Spirit had spoken through David in the Old Testament concerning Judas who served as the guide to apprehend Jesus. Although Judas was one of the chosen, he had received money for the arrest of Jesus and he bought a field with the money. He committed suicide and the people called that place, "*The Field of Blood.*" Peter's proof was King David's prediction in the Book of Psalms: "*Let his*

habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein: and His bishopric (office) let another take" Ps.69:25. Therefore, they needed to choose a successor to take the place of Judas: one who had participated in Jesus' earthly ministry and one who was a witness with them of Jesus' Resurrection. They appointed two: Joseph called Barsabas, surnamed Justus, and Matthias. They prayed over this decision by asking the Lord, and by lot. It fell upon Matthias (gift of God). "Matthias was chosen and became an apostle with the other eleven" (vv.12-26).

LESSON:

Acts 2:1-7, 12 Language As A Tool

2:1 And when the day of Pentecost — The Day of Pentecost was one of the most phenomenal and important events in all of history. It was the third great Israelite feast mentioned in Leviticus 23. It was a harvest festival fifty days after the Passover week. However, this Pentecost had greater significance than the preceding.

- Old Testament Pentecost occurred fifty days after Israel left Egypt and the Passover lamb was slain.
- New Testament Pentecost occurred fifty days after Christ rose from the dead, the Lord being our Passover Lamb.
- Old Testament Pentecost celebrated the birth of the nation Israel (Ex.19:5) and as they received the Law given on tablets; 3,000 people died for breaking the Law by worshiping the golden calf, signifying the covenant of the law that brought death (Ex. 32:28). However, on...
- The first New Covenant Pentecost Day, the Spirit was given; 3,000 people received life and were added to the Church of Jesus Christ (Acts 2:41), signifying the covenant of the Spirit brought life.

The former pointed typologically to the latter. Old Covenant Israel was a type, to point us to Christ.

The importance of the New Testament Pentecost brought:

- The coming of the Holy Spirit.
- The birth of the church.
- The corporate filling of the Holy Spirit, of the body of believers with the promised presence of Christ.
- The personal filling of the individual believer by the Holy Spirit.
- The Presence and Power of God coming upon believers, gifting and equipping them to proclaim the glorious message of salvation to men.

2:1b ...was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." The Day of Pentecost had fully come:

¹Jesus was crucified on Passover; He was buried on the Feast of Unleavened Bread; He was Resurrected on the Feast of First Fruits. Then fifty days after the Resurrection of Jesus, the promised New Covenant arrived on the Feast of Pentecost. 120 people were praying, and had been praying with (on) one accord for ten days to bring what God desired for them. Jesus' disciples were assembled "*with one accord*" (*Gr homothymadom*), meaning likemindedness for that very purpose. They were instructed to tarry until they were endued from on high with His power. There was an importance for all this to occur. This was fulfillment. You see this was man obeying in the city of Jerusalem precisely where Christ told them to go and wait. This shows the unity and purpose among these early disciples in one place (the Upper Room).

2:2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting." Suddenly, without warning, something unexplainable that you would never forget, came.

1. There was a **mighty sound** that filled the room.
 - a. The sound was from heaven, that is, from God.
 - b. The sound was like the rushing of a mighty wind.
 - c. The sound filled the house and was localized in the house where they were sitting.

The wind is symbolic of the Holy Spirit's presence.

2:3 "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them."

¹ http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/acts/2_1-4.htm
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

2. There was the appearance of "**cloven tongues**" (*diamerizomenai*). The Greek means a tongue that was cloven, that is, *parting asunder*.
 - a. The tongues were not fire, but like fire, that is, looked like fire.
 - b. The tongue of fire that first appeared symbolized the presence of the Holy Spirit which was to dwell in the midst of God's people as a whole. When He began to divide into many tongues of fire and to rest upon each believer, He was symbolizing that He was to dwell within each believer as well as within the whole body of believers. The word "**it**" means "**He**" (the person of the Spirit of God) "**sat**" (*ekathisen*). The Holy Spirit Himself was descending and resting upon each of the disciples. They were not receiving tongues of fire but as foretold by John the Baptist that there was One coming who would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire - the Spirit of God.

Fire in the Old Testament often indicates the presence of God, especially in His burning holiness and purity, consuming everything that is impure. These tongues may therefore portray both the purity and the power of the speech of these disciples as they proclaimed the mighty works of God, as well as the holy presence of God.

²The baptism in the Holy Spirit is key, because in that experience we first yield our wills to God; we then yield the one unruly member that we are powerless to control: "*the tongue*." When we are baptized in the Holy Spirit, we actually fulfill the instruction to yield our members to God as instruments (weapons) of righteousness. Certainly, when the tongue has been yielded to God and taken over by the Holy Spirit, it becomes a weapon: in prayer, in testimony, and in preaching.

2:4 "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." ³We are commanded to be continually filled with the Spirit. I just want to say that the filling differs from the baptism. Baptism—The moment you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, when God did that sovereign work of grace in your life and opened your heart, God, the Holy Spirit, united you, identified you with the body of Christ. The primary meaning of the word "*baptize*" is: "*to immerse or dip*." It means: "*identification with or united to*." The baptism with the Holy Spirit is identification with the body of Christ. "*Filling*" is continually and allows you to be endued with power for God's purpose and work.

3. There was the **filling and speaking with other tongues** because of the sudden appearance of God's power. The "*filling of the Spirit*" refers to you permitting the Spirit to control you, lead you, and empower you, on a daily basis. At this point they were under the complete guidance and direction and control of the Holy Spirit. You've got to remember: "*The Holy Spirit's Baptism*" is that we are being placed into Christ; and "*being filled with the Holy Spirit*" is that Christ is being placed in us to be used for powerful service.
 - a. The disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit.
 - i. First, both the body (church) and each individual believer were filled. They were all filled with the presence and power of the Spirit; corporately and individually.
 - ii. The disciples were given the gifts of the Spirit to carry on the work of the ministry upon earth. This fact is not mentioned here, although it is certainly to be demonstrated in the preaching and witnessing about to take place.
 - b. The disciples began to speak with other tongues.
 - i. Other tongues mean foreign languages; other languages. The disciples were supernaturally witnessing and preaching in the languages of the different nationalities gathering together there. The languages also show that from then on God's people would come from all nations, marking the transition from Israel to be the church. Christ in them, changes everything.
 - His Spirit had actually entered into their hearts and lives. They were filled with a deep sense of His presence and power; His concern and His love for the world; His courage and drive to share the great news of the glorious gospel. They spoke in different dialects as the

² Declaring God's Word—A 365 Day Devotional by Derek Prince

³ http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/acts/2_3-4.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

Spirit gave them utterance. This may indicate a clear difference from the Gift of Tongues as listed in 1Cor.12-14.

All gifts once bestowed by the Spirit and thereafter are to be exercised by the believer. God made His presence known to this group of believers in a spectacular way—roaring wind, fire, and His Holy Spirit. Elijah also needed a message from God in the Old Testament. There was a mighty wind, then an earthquake, and finally a fire. But God's message came in a gently whisper. God may use dramatic methods to work in your life; or He may speak in gentle whispers. Wait patiently and always listen.

2:5 "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven." There were Jews from many other countries present in Jerusalem. "*Devout men*" (*men who handle spiritual matters carefully, worshipfully, & reverently*); Jewish pilgrims who had come from all over the world, had returned to Jerusalem to celebrate the "*Feast of the First Fruits*" heard the Word. "*Out of every nation under heaven*" (*intended to indicate the widespread nationalities of the Jews present in Jerusalem*); every nation where there were Jews.

2:6 "Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language." When the rumor of this remarkable transaction was spread, the multitude came together and was confounded. It was apparently the sound of the thunderous blast caused by God that brought the people rushing to the scene. And it was the news of the disciples' behavior that brought the crowd together— every man heard them speak in his own language.

2:7 "And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?" The crowd heard an amazing thing—the disciples supernaturally speaking in their own tongue (dialect; language) and it was understood. What didn't make sense, made sense! ⁴Luke says, they "*marveled*." It is really a word which means they were "*hit hard, stunned; in awe, wondered, amazed, were astonished*." They were staggered by this amazing thing. People from Galilee were known for speaking in an unusual way. ⁵People from other places could not always understand them. But now, the strange thing to these people was that Galileans were speaking in languages not native to their own tongue, but to the tongue of the people who were listening. This amazed them because they expected to hear the Galileans speak in their own tongue.

NOT PART OF THE LESSON VERSES 8-11

2:8 "And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?" They are still asking the question! Well the answer only comes from God sending His Spirit through vessels of clay. We can presume that all the people present would speak Hebrew, Greek or Aramaic, and many would probably speak all three. So these "other tongues" in their native languages were intended as a sign rather than as a means of conveying knowledge. Wherever they were born, they were able to hear their dialect spoken by men that were not from their place of birth. 1Cor.14:22 says "*Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not...*"

2:9 "Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia," 2:10 "Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes," 2:11 "Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." ⁶Luke then lists 16 nations. He starts off on the east and lists the Parthians and the Medes and Mesopotamia. It would be where we would think of as Iran and Pakistan and Afghanistan today. He comes around and he moves through what is today Turkey and Syria and Iraq. Then he moves down into Egypt and North African nations. Then he goes up into Asia and Europe. Then he mentions

⁴ http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/acts/2_4-13.htm

⁵ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/acts-lbw.htm>

⁶ http://www.bereanbiblechurch.org/transcripts/acts/2_4-13.htm

Rome. People had come as visitors from Rome for this festival, both Jews from Rome and also "proselytes"—people who so wanted the God of Israel that they were willing to go through a process of becoming Jews in order to enter into the promises of God, for the Jews. Why are all these places mentioned? This is a list of many lands from which Jews came to the festivals in Jerusalem. And because of captivities and persecutions they had been widely dispersed throughout the world. They would go back to their homelands with God's Good News of salvation. Thus God prepared the way for the spread of the gospel.⁷ This message of the wonderful works of God is not just for one nation, but for all. These, who spoke in languages foreign to their own, were not really speaking to these people, but were rather letting God speak to these people through them.

BACK TO LESSON

2:12 "And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?" There were three mixed reactions to what had happened: 1) Amazed 2) Doubt. 3) Many were just at a lost to what was happening. 3) Mocking. Others simply mocked, accusing the disciples of being drunk (2:13). But they were attracted to seek meaning in it all; thoughts were literally running through their minds as to the meaning.

1 Corinthians 14: 13-17 Tongues In The Corinthian Church

14:13 Wherefore let him that speaketh in an unknown tongue pray that he may interpret. "Tongues" is a spiritual language unknown to man but known to God. There were many different languages, but this was unknown to man. If one is to speak in tongues out loud to the church (to edify them), others need to understand what is being said. The tongues needs to be interpreted, meaning, what is being said, is to edify, strengthen, and comfort the church. Therefore, Paul is saying when one speaks in an unknown tongue to the church, he is to pray that he or someone else can interpret what God is saying through him. Ask the Spirit for the other gift: *The Interpretation of Tongues*. Only God can give revelation. But, when one prays, or praise in an unknown tongue (*within himself*), it communicates to God, not to other people.

14:14 For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. When praying in an unknown tongue, your spirit is praying, connecting with God's Spirit. This is not the mind praying with understanding. This is the spirit praying in an unknown tongue that is only known by the Spirit of God. Therefore the mind would be unfruitful. The Holy Spirit knows what you're saying because He is the One leading and guiding the speech, and your inward man is being strengthened. Paul is not saying not to pray with the mind, but in the case of tongues, the mind is unfruitful and as the spirit prays, He, the Holy Spirit, pinpoints on just what you need to say to God.

14:15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Paul gives himself as an example, saying, "*no matter if I pray with the spirit, I will also pray with understanding; if I will sing with the spirit, I will also sing with understanding.*" Again, it is important to use the mind as well as the spirit. God allows you to pray with the mind as well as the spirit. We can say some astounding words with our mind, but if our heart is not right, it will not be heard nor answered. But praying with our spirit is astounding in itself because you don't have anything to do with it. Now, if you really want to know what you're saying, God is able to give interpretation to you. I have been in meetings where they were praying or singing in tongues and I didn't understand them, but that didn't keep me from praying and blessing God in the only way I knew how at the time—praying with my mind (*regular language*) with my heart centered on Him; with the understanding I have of God; being sincere with God. To

⁷ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/acts/03.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

convey this to the Corinthians, Paul is insisting that both can be used. He's not excluding any, only its proper use of using the gift.

14:16 Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?— Paul is saying, "For if you praise and thank God with the spirit alone, speaking in another language, how can those who don't understand you, be praising God alone with you?"(TLB). Because they did not understand the praise and thanks, then they could not say Amen at the appointed time. "Amen" means "so be it" and "you agree with the prayer." Paul wanted others to understand and confirm what was prayed or sung.

14:17 For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified. It could have been a great blessing and giving of thanks in the room, from the person delivering in tongues, but others weren't edified. Why? Because they didn't understand what was being said. Paul wants all to be edified when the gift is given; that is, all to properly work well.

1 Corinthians 14:18-19 Communication Is The Goal

14:18 I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all:— Paul is not denying or forbidding the exercise of the gift of tongues. He also spoke with tongues even more than all of them.

14:19 Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. But, in the church, to proclaim the Gospel with understanding, he said I rather speak five words with his understanding, that his voice might be able to teach others, than ten thousand words in an unknown language. This is about all receiving what they need from God when they come to church. He probably spoke in tongues in his private worship but in and among others in the church, he spoke words with understanding that reached to edify them. Communication is the goal!

SUMMARY:

Pentecost had fully come. It was forty days after Jesus' resurrection and ten days after Jesus' ascension into heaven, after much prayer, on the Jewish Feast Day of Pentecost, that the Holy Spirit is poured out; baptized; immersed upon the 120 believers in the Upper Room as promised, with the sound of a rushing mighty wind, appearing like cloven tongues like as of fire sat; resting upon each of them (appearing above their heads), filling them with the power of the Holy Spirit where they began to speak; give utterance in other tongues (**Acts 2:1-4**). Devout Jews visiting from other countries are attracted and amazed as they hear wonderful works of God proclaimed in their own languages (**Acts 2:5-13**).

Those who spoke with the Gift of Tongues were to pray that they would be able to interpret them (**1 Cor.14:13**); also be able to pray and sing both with the spirit and with the understanding. Why? - That all might be edified (**1Cor.14:14-19**).