



# The Gift of Tongues

## Romans 8:26-27 RSV

**26** Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with sighs too deep for words. **27** And he who searches the hearts of men knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

### Definition of the Gift of Tongues:

The gift of tongues is a gift from the Holy Spirit which empowers a believer to pray from the heart in accordance to the will of God in a heavenly language.

This utterance is understood by God and can be interpreted to the one praying or of

Of all the gifts of the Holy Spirit, probably the most misunderstood and the one that causes people caution, is the gift of tongues. I believe that much of this is just because we have not had good, solid teaching on this gift of God.

From the first day of the Church, Pentecost, the gift of tongues has manifested in the life of the Church. Let's be honest, many Catholics who would have been there on the day of Pentecost, as the Holy Spirit was falling and moving believers with the gift of tongues, would have resisted, saying, "I am Catholic. We don't do that!" Yet, this is exactly how the Church started—with a bunch of people speaking in tongues. As we read further in the Acts of the Apostles we see that it is usual when believers are filled with the Holy Spirit that they begin to speak in tongues (see Ac 10:44-46, 19:6). Why would we think that God would do anything any different today?

As our above definition reads, the gift of tongues is first a gift of the Holy Spirit. It is not from the intellect of a man. It is the Holy Spirit that empowers a believer to pray in tongues. Why would any believer not want to receive a gift from the Lord, this gift from the Lord?

Next, we see that the gift of tongues empowers a believer to pray from the heart. Praying in tongues is not a matter of the intellect where the focus question

is "what is being said?" Love is a matter of the heart. How does one define and understand love? Love is not so much a matter of understanding as it is a matter of experience where the soul pours out to the other. This is exactly the same action that is employed in the gift of tongues. The heart overflows in love for God with—

**P**raise—when one prays in tongues the heart is overflowing with gratitude to God. The first, primary reason we have a tongue is to worship God, but there just aren't the words to express what is in the heart, yet we have a tongue that was created to praise. The Holy Spirit comes to us in our weakness to ignite our tongue with words that are beyond the words of man, the words of the intellect (1 Cor 14:2).



**I**ntercession— we do not know how to pray as we ought! We must become convinced of this. One of the first steps in prayer is to surrender to the prayer of the Holy Spirit in us. Most of the time our prayer is conformed to our will. The believer is called to pray in accordance to the will of God, yet many times we do not know what God's will is in a situation. The gift of prayer tongues solves this problem. When we pray in the Spirit, we pray in the will of God.

What is strange to many is that the prayer is expressed "with sighs too deep for words". St Paul writes in 1 Cor 13:1 "Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels..." We know the tongues of men: Spanish, English, Coptic, etc. What are the tongues of an-

gles to which St Paul is referring? The gift of tongues are the tongues of angels. They are unintelligible to the mind, but understood by the heart.

Many site 1 Cor 14:27-28 as the need for tongues to be interpreted. Note that St Paul is here referring to speaking in tongues, not praying in tongues. Speaking in tongues is addressed to the Church and therefore needs to be interpreted for the Church. Prayer tongues are addressed to God who needs no interpreter. In 1 Cor 14:14-17 St Paul encourages us to pray for the interpretation of our prayer tongue so that we can pray with understanding. My experiences is that most people begin to pray in their native language after they pray in tongues. I believe this is an interpretation of what they prayed in tongues.



## How to Receive the Gift of Tongues:

Most believers make this prayer with others who have either received the gift of tongues or are seeking it. You might have other believers pray over you as you pray the following prayer.

*Holy Spirit, I surrender my heart totally and completely to you.  
I confess that I do not know how to pray as I ought and I know that you will come to me in my weakness.  
Therefore, it is my desire to receive a heavenly prayer language, the gift of tongues.  
I give you my tongue  
and I ask you to anoint it with your prayer.*

Begin to praise God in your own language and allow the Holy Spirit to move you from your language to the gift of tongues.

## How to Use the Gift of Tongues

- Use your prayer language on a daily basis. The more you use it, the more you will grow in it. Remember, praying in the Spirit will increase your faith.
- Pray in Tongues whenever you enter into worship. Sing in Tongues between songs.
- Use it before you read Scripture. The Holy Spirit is the author of the Bible. As you pray in the Spirit, before you read, the Holy Spirit will soften your heart and give you revelation as to how the Word is applied to your life.
- Pray in Tongues when you are praying over someone. The Holy Spirit will then inspire your prayer to be in accordance with the will of God.
- Pray in Tongues and then listen to your heart as the Lord will use this gift to open your heart to better hear Him speak.

# Personal Reflection

On a scale of 1-10, how do you feel about the gift of tongues 10 = open to it. 1 = repul  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Re-read Ro 8:26-27. What is the Holy Spirit teaching you through this passage about the gift of tongu

Read Mk16:17-18. What does this teach you about the gift of tongue

Read Jude 1:20. What does this teach you about praying in the Spirit, praying in tongues?

How do you think your life would be changed if you had the gift of tongu



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