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The Disciple-Making Minister

Biblical Principles for Fruitfulness and Multiplication

By David Servant

Chapter Eleven

The Baptism in the Holy Spirit

As one reads through the book of Acts, the work of the Holy Spirit in the early church is evident on every page. If you remove the work of the Holy Spirit from the book of Acts you have virtually nothing left. Truly, He empowered the first disciples to “turn the world upside down” (see Acts 17:6; KJV).

The places in the world today where the church is expanding the fastest are those places where Jesus’ followers are yielded to and empowered by the Holy Spirit. This should not surprise us. The Holy Spirit can accomplish more in ten seconds than we can accomplish in ten thousand years of our own efforts. Thus it is of vital importance that the disciple-making minister understand what Scripture teaches about the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives and ministries of believers.

In the book of Acts, we frequently find examples of believers being baptized in the Holy Spirit and empowered for ministry. We would be wise to study the subject so that we can, if possible, experience what they experienced and enjoy the miraculous help from the Holy Spirit that they enjoyed. Although some claim that such miraculous works of the Holy Spirit were confined to the age of the original apostles, I find no scriptural, historical or logical support for such an opinion. It is a theory born from unbelief. Those who believe what God’s Word promises will experience the promised blessings. Like the unbelieving Israelites who failed to enter the Promised Land, those who don’t believe God’s promises today will fail to enter into all God has prepared for them. Which category are you in? Personally, I’m among the believers.

Two Works by the Holy Spirit

Every person who has truly believed in the Lord Jesus has experienced a work of the Holy Spirit in his life. His inward person, or spirit, has been regenerated by the Holy Spirit (see Tit. 3:5), and the Holy Spirit now lives within him (see Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19). He has been “born of the Spirit” (John 3:5).

Not understanding this, many Charismatic and Pentecostal Christians have made the error of telling certain believers that they did not possess the Holy Spirit unless they had been baptized in the Holy Spirit and spoken in tongues. But this error is obvious from Scripture and from experience. Many non-Charismatic/Pentecostal believers have much more evidence of the indwelling Spirit than some Charismatic/Pentecostal believers! They manifest the fruits of the Spirit listed by Paul in Galatians 5:22-23 to a much greater degree,

something that would be impossible apart from have the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Just because a person has been *born* of the Spirit, however, does not guarantee that he has also been *baptized* in the Holy Spirit. According to the Bible, being born of the Holy Spirit and being baptized in the Holy Spirit are normally two distinct experiences.

As we begin to explore this subject, let us first consider what Jesus once said about the Holy Spirit to an unsaved woman at a well in Samaria:

If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, “Give Me a drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water....Everyone who drinks of this water [from the well] will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life (John 4:10, 13-14).

It seems reasonable to conclude that the indwelling living water of which Jesus spoke represents the Holy Spirit who indwells those who believe. Later in John’s Gospel, Jesus again used the same phrase, “living water,” and there is no doubt that He was speaking about the Holy Spirit:

Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture said, ‘From his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water.’” But *this He spoke of the Spirit*, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified (John 7:37-39, emphasis added).

In this instance Jesus did not speak of living water becoming “a well of water springing up to eternal life.” Rather, this time the living water becomes *rivers* that flow from the recipient’s innermost being.

These two similar passages from John’s Gospel beautifully illustrate the difference between being born of the Spirit and being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Being born of the Spirit is primarily for the benefit of the one who is born again, that he might enjoy eternal life. When one is born again by the Spirit, he has a reservoir of Spirit within him that gives him eternal life.

Being baptized in the Holy Spirit, however, is primarily for the benefit of others, as it equips believers to minister to other people by the power of the Spirit. “Rivers of living water” will flow from their innermost beings, bringing God’s blessings to others by the power of the Spirit.

Why the Baptism in the Holy Spirit is Needed

How desperately we need the help of the Holy Spirit to minister to others! Without His help, we can never hope to make disciples of all nations. That is, in fact, the very reason Jesus promised to baptize believers in the Holy Spirit—so the world would hear the gospel. He said to His disciples:

Behold, I am sending forth the promise of My Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are *clothed with power* from on high” (Luke 24:49, emphasis added).

Luke also records Jesus as saying:

It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but *you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you*; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth (Acts 1:7-8, emphasis added).

Jesus told His disciples not to leave Jerusalem until they were “clothed with power from on high.” He knew they would be essentially powerless otherwise, sure to fail at the task He had given them. We note that once they were baptized in the Holy Spirit, however, God began to use them supernaturally to spread the gospel.

Many millions of Christians around the world, after being baptized in the Holy Spirit, have experienced a new dimension of power, particularly when witnessing to the unsaved. They found that their words were more convicting, and they sometimes quoted scriptures they didn’t realize they knew. Some found themselves called and specifically gifted for a certain ministry, such as evangelism. Others discovered that God used them as He willed in various supernatural gifts of the Spirit. Their experience is thoroughly biblical. Those who oppose their experience have no biblical basis for their opposition. They are, in fact, fighting against God.

It should not surprise us that we who are called to imitate Christ are called to imitate His experience with the Holy Spirit. He was, of course, born of the Spirit when He was conceived in Mary’s womb (see Matt. 1:20). He who was born of the Spirit was then baptized in the Spirit prior to the inauguration of His ministry (see Matt. 3:16). If Jesus needed to be baptized in the Holy Spirit to equip Him for ministry, how much more do we?

The Initial Evidence of the Baptism in the Spirit

When a believer is baptized in the Holy Spirit, the initial evidence of his experience will be that he speaks in a new language, what Scripture refers to as “new tongues” or “other tongues.” Numerous scriptures support this fact. Let us consider them.

First, during the final moments before His ascension, Jesus said that one of the signs that would follow believers is that they would speak in new tongues:

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned. *These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues* (Mark 16:15-17, emphasis added).

Some commentators claim these verses should not be in our Bible because certain ancient manuscripts of the New Testament don’t include them. Many of the ancient manuscripts, however, do include them, and none of the many English translations I’ve read omit them. Beyond that, what Jesus said in these verses correlates perfectly with the experience of the early church as recorded in the book of Acts.

There are five examples in the book of Acts of believers being initially baptized in the Holy Spirit. Let’s consider all five, and as we do, we will continually ask two questions: (1) Was the baptism in the Holy Spirit an experience subsequent to salvation? and (2) Did the recipients speak in new tongues? This will help us to understand God’s will for believers today.

Jerusalem

The first example is found in Acts 2, when the one hundred and twenty disciples were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost:

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. *And they were all filled*

with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance (Acts 2:1-4, emphasis added).

There is no doubt that the one hundred and twenty believers were already saved and born again before this time, so they definitely experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit after salvation. It would have been impossible, however, for them to have received the baptism in the Holy Spirit prior to this time simply because the Holy Spirit was not given to the church until that day.

It is obvious the accompanying sign was that of speaking with other tongues.

Samaria

The second example of believers being baptized in the Holy Spirit is found in Acts 8, when Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached the gospel there:

But when they [the Samaritans] believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike....Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent them Peter and John, who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For He had not yet fallen upon any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus (Acts 8:12-16).

The Samaritan Christians clearly experienced the baptism in the Holy Spirit as a secondary experience after their salvation. The Bible plainly states that before Peter and John arrived, the Samaritans had already “received the word of God,” believed the gospel, and been baptized in water. Yet when Peter and John came down to pray for them, Scripture says it was so “that they might receive the Holy Spirit.” How could it be clearer?

Did the Samaritan believers speak with new tongues when they were baptized in the Holy Spirit? The Bible doesn’t say, but it does say that something amazing happened to them. When a man named Simon witnessed what occurred as Peter and John laid their hands on the Samaritan Christians, he tried to purchase from them the same ability to impart the Holy Spirit:

Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit. Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was bestowed through the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money, saying, “Give this authority to me as well, so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit” (Acts 8:17-19).

What did Simon see that impressed him so much? He had already seen a number of other miracles, such as people being delivered from demons and the paralyzed and lame being miraculously healed (see Acts 8:6-7). He himself had been previously involved in occult magic, astonishing all the people of Samaria (see Acts 8:9-10). This being so, what he witnessed when Peter and John prayed must have been quite spectacular. Although we can’t say with absolute certainty, it seems quite reasonable to think that he witnessed the same phenomena that occurred every other time Christians received the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts—he saw and heard them speaking in other tongues.

Saul in Damascus

The third mention in the book of Acts of someone receiving the Holy Spirit is the case of Saul of Tarsus, later known as the apostle Paul. He had been saved on the road to Damascus, where he had also been temporarily blinded. Three days after his conversion, a man named Ananias was divinely sent to him:

So Ananias departed and entered the house, and after laying his hands on him said, "Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road by which you were coming, has sent me so that you may regain your sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit." And immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he regained his sight, and he arose and was baptized (Acts 9:17-18).

There is no doubt that Saul was born again before Ananias arrived to pray for him. He believed in the Lord Jesus when he was on the road to Damascus, and he immediately obeyed His new Lord's instructions. Additionally, when Ananias first met Saul, he called him "*brother* Saul." Note that Ananias told Saul that he had come so that he would regain his sight *and* be filled with the Holy Spirit. Thus for Saul, being filled with, or baptized in, the Holy Spirit occurred three days after his salvation.

The Scriptures don't record the actual incident of Saul's being baptized in the Holy Spirit, but it must have happened shortly after Ananias arrived where Saul was staying. There is no doubt that Saul spoke with other tongues at some point, because he later stated in 1 Corinthians 14:18, "I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all."

Caesarea

The fourth mention of believers being baptized in the Holy Spirit is found in Acts 10. The apostle Peter had been divinely commissioned to preach the gospel in Caesarea to the household of Cornelius. As soon as Peter revealed that salvation is received through faith in Jesus, his entire Gentile audience immediately responded in faith, and the Holy Spirit fell upon them:

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they were hearing them speaking with tongues and exalting God. Then Peter answered, "Surely no one can refuse the water for these to be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did, can he?" And he ordered them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 10:44-48a).

In this case, it seems as if the members of Cornelius' household, who became the first Gentile believers in Jesus, were born again and baptized in the Holy Spirit simultaneously.

If we examine the surrounding scriptures and study the historical context, it is apparent why God didn't wait for Peter and his fellow believers to lay hands on the Gentile believers to receive the Holy Spirit. Peter and the other Jewish believers had great difficulty believing that Gentiles could even be saved, much less receive the Holy Spirit! They probably would never have prayed for Cornelius' household to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit, so God sovereignly acted. God was teaching Peter and his companions something about His marvelous grace toward Gentiles.

What convinced Peter and the other Jewish believers that Cornelius' household had genuinely received the Holy Spirit? Luke wrote, "For they were hearing them speaking with tongues" (Acts 10:46). Peter declared that the Gentiles had received the Holy Spirit just as the one hundred and twenty had on the day of Pentecost (see 10:47).

Ephesus

The fifth mention of believers being baptized in the Holy Spirit is found in Acts 19. While traveling through Ephesus, the apostle Paul met some disciples and asked them the following question: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" (Acts 19:2).

Paul, the man who wrote the majority of the New Testament epistles, clearly believed that it is possible to believe in Jesus but not have received the Holy Spirit in some sense. Otherwise he would not have asked such a question.

The men replied that they had never heard of the Holy Spirit. In fact, they had only heard of the coming Messiah through John the Baptist, the one who had baptized them. Paul immediately baptized them again in water, and this time they experienced true Christian baptism. Finally, Paul laid his hands on them that they might receive the Holy Spirit:

When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying. There were in all about twelve men (Acts 19:5-7).

Again, it is obvious that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was subsequent to salvation, regardless of whether or not these twelve men were born again before they met Paul. Also, once again, the accompanying sign of their Holy Spirit baptism was speaking in tongues (and in this case also prophecy).

The Verdict

Let's review the five examples. In at least four of them, the baptism in the Holy Spirit was an experience that occurred after salvation.

In three of them, Scripture plainly states that the recipients spoke with other tongues. Moreover, in Paul's meeting with Ananias, his experience of being baptized in the Holy Spirit was not actually described, but we know that eventually he did speak in tongues. That represents the fourth case.

In the remaining case, something supernatural occurred when the believers in Samaria received the Holy Spirit because Simon tried to buy the power to impart the Holy Spirit.

Thus the evidence is quite clear. In the early church, born-again believers received a second experience with the Holy Spirit, and when they did, they spoke in other tongues. This should not surprise us, because Jesus said that those who believe in Him would speak in new tongues.

So we have conclusive evidence that every one who is born again should also experience another work of the Holy Spirit—that of being baptized in the Holy Spirit. Moreover, every believer should expect to speak with other tongues when he does receive the Holy Spirit baptism.

How to Receive the Baptism in the Holy Spirit

Like all of God's gifts, the Holy Spirit is received by faith (see Gal. 3:5). In order to have faith to receive, a believer must first be convinced that it is God's will for him to be baptized with the Holy Spirit. If he is wondering or doubting, he will not receive (see James 1:6-7).

No believer has any good reason not to believe that it is God's will for him to receive the Holy Spirit, because Jesus plainly stated God's will in the matter:

If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him (Luke 11:13).

That promise from the lips of Jesus should convince every child of God that it is God's will that he or she receive the Holy Spirit.

This same verse also supports the truth that being baptized in the Holy Spirit occurs

after salvation, because here Jesus promised God's children (the only people who have God as their "heavenly Father") that God will give them the Holy Spirit if they ask. Obviously, if the only experience one could have with the Holy Spirit was being born again at the moment of salvation, then Jesus' promise would make no sense. Unlike a certain breed of modern theologians, Jesus believes that it is very appropriate for people who are already born again to ask God for the Holy Spirit.

According to Jesus, there are only two conditions that must be met for one to receive the Holy Spirit. First, God must be one's Father, which He is if you are born again. Second, you must ask Him for the Holy Spirit.

Although receiving the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands is scriptural (see Acts 8:17; 19:6), it is not an absolute necessity. Any Christian can receive the Holy Spirit by himself in his own place of prayer. He simply needs to ask, receive by faith, and begin to speak in tongues as the Spirit gives him utterance.

Common Fears

Some people worry that if they pray for the Holy Spirit, they might open themselves up to a demon spirit instead. There is, however, no basis for such a concern. Jesus promised,

Now suppose one of you fathers is asked by his son for a fish; he will not give him a snake instead of a fish, will he? Or if he is asked for an egg, he will not give him a scorpion, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? (Luke 11:11-13).

If we ask for the Holy Spirit, God will give us the Holy Spirit, and we should have no fear of receiving anything else.

Some are concerned that, when they speak in other tongues, it will just be themselves making up a nonsensical language rather than a supernatural language given by the Holy Spirit. If, however, you attempt to invent a credible language before being baptized in the Holy Spirit, you will see that it is impossible. On the other hand, you must understand that if you are going to speak in other tongues, you will consciously have to use your lips, tongue and vocal cords. The Holy Spirit does not do the speaking for you—He only gives you the utterance. He is our *helper*, not our *doer*. *You* must do the actual speaking, just as the Bible teaches:

And *they* were all filled with the Holy Spirit and [they] began to speak with other tongues, *as the Spirit was giving them utterance* (Acts 2:4, emphasis added).

And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and *they* began speaking with tongues (Acts 19:6, emphasis added).

After a believer has asked for the gift of the Holy Spirit, he should believe and expect to speak in other tongues. Because the Holy Spirit is received by faith, the recipient should not expect to experience any particular feelings or physical sensations. He should simply open his mouth and begin to speak the new sounds and syllables that will make up the language that the Holy Spirit gives him. Unless the believer begins to *speak by faith*, no utterance will come forth from his mouth. *He* must do the speaking, and the Holy Spirit will provide the utterance.

The Source of the Utterance

According to Paul, when a believer prays in tongues, it is not his mind praying but

rather his spirit:

For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. What is the outcome then? I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also; I will sing with the spirit and I will sing with the mind also (1 Cor. 14:14-15).

Paul said that when he prayed in a tongue, his mind was unfruitful. That means his mind had no part in it, and he did not understand what he was praying in tongues. So, rather than praying all the time in tongues without understanding what he was saying, Paul also spent time praying with his mind in his own language. He spent time singing in tongues as well as singing in his own language. There is a place for both kinds of praying and singing, and we would be wise to follow Paul's balanced example.

Notice also that for Paul, speaking in tongues was just as much subject to his own will as was speaking in his known language. He said, "*I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also.*" Critics often claim that if modern tongues speaking was truly a gift from the Spirit, one would not be able to have control over it, lest he be guilty of controlling God. But such a idea is unfounded. Modern and ancient tongues speaking is under the control of the individual as God planned it would be. Critics might as well say that people who have hands that are *truly* made by God have no control over their hands, and that people who make conscious decisions to use their hands are attempting to control God.

Once you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, you can easily prove to yourself that your utterance in tongues is coming from your spirit rather than your mind. First, try to carry on a conversation with someone at the same time as you read this book. You'll find that you can't do both at the same time. You will discover, however, that you can continually speak in tongues as you continually read this book. The reason is because you aren't using your mind to speak in tongues—that utterance comes from your spirit. So as you use your spirit to pray, you can use your mind to read and understand.

Now That You Are Baptized in the Holy Spirit

Keep in mind the primary reason God gave you the Holy Spirit baptism—to empower you primarily for the purpose of being His witness, by means of the manifestation of fruit and gifts of the Spirit (see 1 Cor. 12:4-11; Gal. 5:22-23). By living a Christ-like life and demonstrating His love, joy, and peace to the world, as well as manifesting supernatural gifts of the Spirit, God will use you to draw others to Himself. The ability to speak in tongues is only one of the "rivers of living water" that should be flowing from your innermost being.

Also remember that God gave us the Holy Spirit to enable us to reach *all* the people of the earth with the gospel (see Acts 1:8). When we speak in other tongues, we should realize that the language we are speaking could well be the native tongue of some remote tribe or foreign nation. Every time we pray in tongues, we should be mindful that God wants people of every language to hear about Jesus. We should ask the Lord how He wants us to be involved in fulfilling Jesus' Great Commission.

Speaking in tongues is something we should do as much as possible. Paul, a spiritual powerhouse, wrote, "I thank God, I speak in tongues more than you all" (1 Cor. 14:18). He wrote those words to a church that did a lot of speaking in tongues (although usually at the wrong times). Therefore, Paul must have done a lot of speaking in tongues to do more than they did. Praying in tongues helps us to stay conscious of the Holy Spirit, who lives within us, and will help us to "pray without ceasing" as Paul taught in 1 Thessalonians 5:17.

Paul also taught that speaking in other tongues edifies the believer (see 1 Cor. 14:4). That means it builds us up spiritually. By praying in tongues, we can, in a way we may not fully understand, strengthen our inner man. Speaking in other tongues should provide daily enrichment in every believer's spiritual life and not be just a one-time experience at the

initial filling of the Holy Spirit.

Once you have been baptized in the Holy Spirit, I encourage you to spend time every day praying to God in your new language. It will greatly enhance your spiritual life and growth.

Answers to a Few Common Questions

Can we say with certainty that all those who have never spoken in tongues have never been baptized in the Holy Spirit? Personally, I don't think so.

I've always encouraged people to expect to speak in tongues when I've prayed for them to be baptized in the Holy Spirit, and probably 95% of them have within seconds of my praying for them. It would amount to thousands of people over the years.

I would never say, however, that a Christian who has prayed to be baptized in the Spirit and who hasn't spoken in tongues is not baptized in the Holy Spirit, because the Spirit baptism is received by faith and speaking in tongues is voluntary. If I have an opportunity, however, to share with a believer who has prayed to be baptized in the Spirit but who has never spoken in tongues, I first show that person all the scriptures in the book of Acts on the subject. Then I also show that believer how Paul wrote that he was in control of when he spoke or did not speak in tongues. Like Paul, I can speak in tongues any time I desire, and thus I could decide, if I desired, never to speak in tongues again. That being so, I could conceivably have been baptized in the Holy Spirit and never spoken in tongues in the first place by not cooperating with the Spirit's utterance.

So again, when I have the opportunity to share with a Christian who has prayed in faith for the baptism in the Holy Spirit, but who has never spoken in tongues, I don't tell him (nor do I believe) that he isn't baptized in the Holy Spirit. I simply explain to him how speaking in tongues is not something that the Holy Spirit does apart from us. I explain that the Holy Spirit gives the utterance, but that we must do the speaking, just as when one speaks in his known language. Then I encourage that person to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and begin to speak in tongues. Almost without exception, all of them soon do.

Didn't Paul Write that Not All Speak with Tongues?

Paul's rhetorical question, "All do not speak with tongues, do they?" (1 Cor. 12:30) to which the obvious answer is "No," must be harmonized with the rest of the New Testament. His question is found within the context of his instruction about the spiritual gifts, which are all manifested only as the Spirit wills (see 1 Cor. 12:11). Paul was specifically writing about the spiritual gift of "various kinds of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:10) which, according to Paul, must always be accompanied by the spiritual gift of the interpretation of tongues. This particular gift could not have been what the Corinthians were always manifesting in their church, as they were speaking in tongues publicly without there being any interpretation. We should ask, *Why would the Holy Spirit impart the gift of tongues to someone in a public assembly without giving someone the gift of interpretation?* The answer is that He wouldn't. Otherwise, the Holy Spirit would be promoting something that is not God's will.

The Corinthians must have been *praying* in tongues out loud during their church services, without there being any interpretation. Thus, we learn that speaking in tongues has two different uses. One is praying in tongues, which Paul said should be done privately. That usage of speaking in tongues is not accompanied by interpretation, as Paul wrote, "My spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful" (1 Cor. 14:14). Obviously, Paul didn't always know what he was saying when he spoke in tongues. There was no understanding on his part; neither was there interpretation.

There is also, however, a use of speaking in tongues that is for the public assembly of the church, which is always accompanied by the gift of the interpretation of tongues. That

occurs when the Holy Spirit moves upon someone as He wills, giving him that gift. That person speaks out publicly, and then there is an interpretation given. God, however, doesn't use everyone like that. That is why Paul wrote that not all speak in tongues. Not all are used by God in the sudden, spontaneously-given gift of tongues, just as God doesn't use everyone in the gift of the interpretation of tongues. That is the only way to reconcile Paul's rhetorical question, "All do not speak with tongues, do they?" with the rest of what Scripture teaches.

I can speak in tongues any time I desire, just as Paul could. So obviously neither Paul nor myself would say that whenever we speak in tongues it is "only as the Spirit wills." It is as *we* will. So what we are doing whenever *we* desire *cannot* be the gift of speaking in tongues that only occurs "as the Spirit wills." Furthermore, Paul, like me, spoke in tongues privately without understanding what he was saying, so that *cannot* be the gift of tongues of which he wrote in 1 Corinthians, which he said would always be accompanied by the gift of the interpretation of tongues.

It has been only on rare occasions when I've spoken in tongues in a public assembly. That is only when I've sensed the Holy Spirit move upon me to do so, although I could (just like the Corinthians were doing) pray in tongues out loud anytime I wanted to in church without there being any interpretation. When I've sensed the Holy Spirit move upon me with that gift, there has always been an interpretation that has edified the body.

In conclusion, we must interpret the Bible harmoniously. Those who conclude, because of Paul's rhetorical question found in 1 Corinthians 12:30, that not all believers should speak with other tongues, are ignoring many other scriptures that do not harmonize with their interpretation. Because of their error, they are missing a great blessing from God.