

- In setting the stage for this message, I want to start with a personal experience ... **Story** ... I've shared all of this for the purpose of showing a way in which the Spirit of God wills to work in a person's life ... And to provide you some practical examples of what the Gift of Tongues is and how this gift is beneficial

What is the Gift of Tongues?

- Outside of **1Cor12-14**, the gift of tongues is found in **Acts2,10,19**, and could be implied in **Rom8, Eph6**, and **Jud20**, in reference to Christians praying in the Spirit ... **1Cor14**, however, is the place where we receive the most teaching on the Gift of Tongues ... This gift can be very divisive for Christians ... Those who believe gift no longer functions today; some go as far as saying those who speak in tongues are demon possessed ... Those who believe gift does still continue today; some believe unless one speaks in tongues, they don't possess Holy Spirit, or isn't as effective ... Gift still functions today as we read in the NT; those who speak in tongues are not demon possessed; those who speak in tongues aren't more spiritual than those who don't; those who don't, have the same Spirit as those who do
- Whether referring to tongues of men or tongues of angels, as Paul does in **1Cor13:1**, the GK word is same: **glossa** ... The context surrounding the word **tongues** determines how word should be taken ... Experience of tongues in **Acts2** is different than in **1Cor14** ... **Acts2** refers to supernatural ability to speak a human language one has never spoken or learned before ... **2:4** – spoke in languages **as the Spirit enabled them**, implying disciples did not know the language beforehand ... **2:6-13** – the people understood what was said without need for help – each heard in their **own native language** (9-11) ... **2:11** – message spoken not necessarily evangelistic, but of worship: **declaring the magnificent acts of God** in understandable, human language (possible human language also in **ch10,19**)
- **1Cor14** refers to supernatural ability to speak a heavenly language, either publicly spoken with interpretation, or privately spoken between you and God (a prayer language) ... A person can have the ability to do both, or one, or empowered spontaneously by the Spirit to speak a tongue to be interpreted ... This ability of speaking in tongues is most common; though, there's plenty testimony of missionaries speaking languages they've never known or studied

How is the Gift of Tongues Beneficial?

- To rightly understand **1Cor14**, you must understand why Paul is writing what he is ... The main issue in **12-14** is an immature belief and use of spiritual gifts in the church – particularly concerning the gift of tongues
 - In **14:1-6**, Paul dismisses the belief that the Gift of Tongues is a superior gift ... In saying this, Paul is not teaching that tongues is now an inferior gift ... In **14:7-25**, Paul argues for the need of interpretation when tongues are publicly spoken, which was not being done and causing chaos ... In **14:26-40**, Paul instructs on having order in gatherings ... The conclusion concerning tongues is that they are beneficial when done in a way that builds up the church family ... When tongue-speech is uninterpreted, neither the hearer nor the speaker is edified by the message ... If a person senses they have a message to speak, and no one is present to interpret, Paul says, **"Keep quiet and wait"** ... Implying, those who speak in tongues are able to control their gift – when to speak and when not to speak (**27-28**) ... Self-control is of the Holy Spirit
- Now, a question should be asked: if tongues in **1Cor14** refer to supernatural ability to speak a heavenly language, what exactly is being spoken? ... And, is the person actually speaking words or just gibberish? ... **Garland**, "Paul understands tongues to be a language inspired by the Spirit and not a noncognitive, nonlanguage utterance. It is not simply incoherent babbling in the Spirit ... Tongues consist of words ... which, though indecipherable, are not meaningless syllables strung together" ... *Explain* ... In **14:2**, tongues are primarily directed to God, who knows our secret thoughts and deepest burdens and all complexities within us ... God created every language ever spoken on earth and in heaven ... He can decipher what we speak in a mysterious tongue – it's mysterious to us, not Him
 - This, then, leads to what is being spoken ... The language of heaven is the language of worship and prayer and intercession and thanksgiving ... Tongues is given to a person for the purpose of prayer and worship

- What then is interpreted – a declaring in English what has been prayed or sung or expressed to God, for the benefit of the congregation ... The interpretation does not have to be word-for-word; the Spirit provides the interpretation and leads a person in giving the interpretation
- The weirdness of tongues did not cause Paul to shy away from them, nor cause him to stop others from enjoying what God obviously and graciously gave them – 5, 18, 26, 39 ... The Gift of Tongues is not something to fear ... There's been much abuse attached to this gift over the years unfortunately, putting off many from experiencing the benefits God has always intended ... My hope today, is that God begins to wash away the gunk and ugliness and strangeness that has been thrown upon this beautiful Gift He gives to people
- A great benefit of Tongues is the way it's used in private prayer and worship ... Some wrongly state that all tongues must be spoken in public, and that speaking privately fails to edify the church, which is the point of all spiritual gifts (for them tongues are not a gift for today) ... But, that's not what Paul teaches ... He actually encourages people to pray and worship in tongues privately (4-5, 14-15, 18, 39) ... Thus, Paul is encouraging us to regularly build ourselves up, so that we are able to build others up along the way (see also Jud20-23) ... Edification has a ripple effect
 - *How is praying and worshipping in tongues beneficial to you, because you have no idea what you're saying or singing?* – Fair question ... And I used to wrestle with this ... Storms, "My confidence rests in the reality of the Spirit's work in making known to the Father precisely what my heart feels and longs for." ... I know what I want to pray for people, and how I feel about their need ... I then trust what I'm saying is being rightly communicated to the One who is putting the words and burden within me to pray ... More I pray in tongues more I get a sense for what I'm praying ... So, sometimes I go from praying in tongues to praying in English and then back again to tongues, seemingly without missing a beat ... *Prayer in groups ... Tomlin song ...*
- Gift of Tongues is not the greatest gift, nor is it the least of gifts ... Not everyone will receive this, but we are able to ask for it, especially if the desire has been placed there by the Spirit ... It's a gift to embrace ... Language of heaven is the language of worship and prayer and intercession and thanksgiving ... How Great is Our God