

LOVE IS

1 & 2 Corinthians

Week 15: The Context of Gifts

The Promised Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

- Ezekiel 39:29 and Joel 2:28-29 look forward to a pouring out of the Holy Spirit on God's people
- This moment comes at Pentecost - recorded in Acts 2. The Spirit comes, many speak in tongues, which is followed by Peter's preaching
- The next story in Acts 3 is the healing of a lame man by Peter, which is followed by preaching
- In Acts 4 the disciples gather after being questioned by the Council. They pray for boldness the room is shaken & all are filled with the Spirit.
- In Acts 5 signs and wonders were regularly done by the apostles

Point #1 - Miraculous signs were given to the apostles to establish their authority in the church and to accelerate the Gospel message
- John 14:12 and the promise of the Holy Spirit

The Occurrences of Tongues in the New Testament

- Acts 10 - Peter preaches to Cornelius and his gathering and the Spirit falls on the Gentile believers and they speak in tongues
- Acts 19 - Paul finds Gospel believing disciples in Ephesus who have received John's baptism of repentance but not the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Paul lays hands on them and they are filled with the Spirit. They prophesy and speak in tongues.

Point #2 - Tongues are an unlearned human language and speaking in tongues is confirmation that God's redeeming work in Jesus Christ is not for Israel alone, but for all nations
- 1 Corinthians 14:22

Laying Hands, Prayer, the Spirit, and Gifts

- Acts 8 - Philip the evangelist shares the Gospel in Samaria, but it is required that Peter and John come and lay hands in prayer for them to receive the Spirit
- It is only the apostles, and those they laid their hands on, that we see working miraculous signs (Stephen in Acts 6 and Philip in Acts 8 - both could preach!)
- 20 New Testament books are written after 1-2 Corinthians and we do not see an expanding role of miraculous gifts or tongues. The church multiplies, but miracles do not.
- 3 eras of concentrated miracles - the Exodus, Elijah/Elisha, Jesus/apostles
- 1 Corinthians 13:8 - prophecies and knowledge will 'pass away' but tongues will 'cease'
- None of the church fathers (first 400 years) claim the gift of tongues or acknowledge the present use of tongues - but they do affirm gifts

Point #3 - Miracles can and do happen as God wills, but the roles and gifts associated with the apostles and their laying of hands declined as the church body grew.

The Gifts and Corinth

- Corinth's location made it an international scene of commerce. The gift of tongues in Corinth matches what we see in Acts - tongues benefits the unbeliever and affirms God's work among all nations
- Across the gulf of Corinth is Delphi. The Oracle at Delphi babbled in a trance like state to seekers. The description of tongues in scripture is counter to this pagan ritual.
- The church fathers and New Testament scriptures do not demonstrate tongues as a personal prayer language or as a proof of salvation
- The church fathers and New Testament scriptures do not anticipate a 'next wave' or work of the Spirit - "the perfect" in 1 Corinthians 13 is going to end some of the gifts, not increase them
- There are gifts that remain active in the church - wisdom, knowledge, teaching, faith, discernment, helping, administration