

My No-Tongues Letter (with Lessons on the Father's Spiritual Gifts)

February 6, 2018

My letters are factual accounts. They were written to a specific recipient for a specific reason at a specific time. I am sharing them just in case they may encourage someone else.

The Initial Recipient and Reason

The Lord gave me the opportunity to lead a retreat with a special lady within an amazing congregation to about 80 women. I felt directed to share this information with her to be sure we were on the same page before the retreat began. These words were directed toward her in a letter and have now been tweaked to be more understandable to a wider audience:



I don't speak in tongues. Yes, there. I said it. But I have a beautiful story I'd like to share with you. Still, after reading it, you might not think I am anointed or filled or adequate to lead. That is why I would like to honor you by giving you my story.

I'll start with my conversion on April 3, 1980 when I was 23. I was filled with the Holy Spirit at a prayer meeting on the Thursday before Resurrection Sunday. The next day I woke up swimming in the Holy Spirit. I felt like I was under water. I hadn't heard the term *baptism* or *immersion* yet, but I knew I was immersed, totally covered in waves of the love of God with an inner deep knowing that I belonged to God forever. This was so dramatic and life-changing that I never doubted my salvation even through times of great trial and suffering.



Fast forward to 2003. I had been single until I was 45 years old. After I had been married to Dusty for one year, we made the decision to leave our jobs and move to Columbus, Ohio to go to a Bible institute. Although I was aware of my gifts of teaching and discernment, other understandings became clear. Our professor had just completed his own study on the gifts of the Spirit and categorized them into gifts of the eyes, hands and mouth. My name was written on every gift pertaining to *sight* and *eyes*. I was thrilled to be a highly specialized eye for the body of Christ! (I later completed my own study from the Greek and found new revelation. This Learning Tool called *Understanding Spiritual Gifts* is available at FlowerGirlGreetings.com. I give a summary of this tool in this paper.)

In my early years as a Christian, I was rejected as "less than" and "not filled" by many Christians I worked with who believed that the gift of tongues was the evidence of the filling of the Spirit. Each time, I would go home and devour the Scriptures or read completely through the book of Acts looking for truth. I heard of "tongues classes" I could take, but that went against what I read in passages that assured me that God was the One Who would give me the gifts I needed (1 Corinthians 12:11; Romans 12:6 to name a few).

At our new church in Columbus, I encountered the issue again at the women's conferences. I would go forward, always open to whatever the Lord willed for me and always grateful for the gifts He had already given to me. But I grew weary of their emphasis on the gift of tongues as a prerequisite to being a *somebody* in the church. The wife of the senior pastor suggested I have him pray for me. She said that

people often spoke in tongues when he prayed for them. Since I highly respected this pastor, I decided to take her suggestion. After all, I wouldn't want to miss out on anything God had for me! So, the next Sunday I stood in the long line where the pastor graciously received and talked with people after the service. It was my turn. He said he was so sorry but that he had run out of time and would I come back next week! So, I did. I marked it on my calendar. June 4, 2006. The pastor took my head in his hands (while Dusty put his hand on my back and listened). He spoke in tongues about three inches from my head for at least ten minutes. At intervals, he said, "I see a large eye," and "I see a gigantic eye," and "All I see is a gigantic eye." Dusty remembers that the pastor prophesied that my gifts would be used in a wider way across the body of Christ. Then, we went home.

The message was clear to me – God was saying, "I've given you specialized eye gifts and you are good with Me." I never felt the need to demand or ask one more time. I felt the Lord wanted me to rest from this pursuit along with the feelings of inadequacy. He wanted me to embrace and enjoy being an eye.



Then, we moved a half-hour away in 2008 and began attending a small community church. We were excited! We liked the people, and it was so close to our home. A couple invited us for dinner. Then, they showed us a movie on the Holy Spirit and wanted to lead us in speaking in tongues. After a whole life of this and at the risk of looking unspiritual and resistant, I handed the evening over to Dusty. The vibrant lady said that a Christian without tongues is like an elephant without a trunk. I guess that means "not fully functioning in the role for which it was created." I cried all night and all the next day, sobs and sobs... I think I cried because I longed for a place where I was accepted, a place to just belong.

In December 2017, one of my best friends fell in love months after her husband's death. She asked me to be her maid of honor in her wedding. After an evening dinner with them, this man said that I was not filled with the Holy Spirit if I had not spoken in tongues. Progress – I didn't cry this time.

Now, in 2018, there are people in my life who believe all kinds of things. I know Jesus prayed earnestly that we would all be one. I forgive those who said hurtful things, because I know it's easy for people to want other people to have what they have. But this wrong interpretation of Scripture creates huge, unnecessary division in the church.

Here are a few other recent examples: During a Bible Study that Dusty and I attended from 2016 to 2019, there were six people who told one of the ladies that she didn't have enough faith because she was still in her wheelchair. My dear friend, full of more faith than I've witnessed in most people, did recover from the hurt that caused. Also, one of my dear friends wants to have a tongues party, where each person speaks in tongues and we try to interpret. Oh well, guess I won't be at that party! Often when I pray, the Lord gives me pictures that bring insight and direction. I know I could contribute to their prayers if they would be open to my visual gift.

I don't know why God distributes the gifts in the body as He does, but I know that He distributes them *as He wills* (1 Corinthians 12:11; Romans 12). It is sad to me that there may be others out there, endowed with beautiful gifts who are also being told *it isn't enough*.

So, dear sister and friend, I want to give you the space to be open with me about how you view my adequacy to co-lead your retreat. Also, many of my friends have inquired and expressed interest in the retreat. I want to advertise for it, but I'd feel uncomfortable if tongues were emphasized over other gifts in the body.

I do understand that there are tongues that are a prayer language apart from the tongues of Acts 2. I love to hear people speak in tongues. I love everything that God does! I welcome all the gifts. So, I love you, dear sister in Jesus, and my life is laid bare and open and receptive. Love in our Father, Beth Ann

The Recipient's Response to my Letter

Dearest Beth Ann, you are truly one in the Lord's Spirit with us! I feel the same as you on this topic of tongues and have had a similar experience! I have confidence in the LORD IN YOU for our retreat! I am glad you feel comfortable with others speaking in tongues, as others may speak in tongues at times. I feel as you and am comfortable, even though my "tongues" are not as loud and audibly distinct as most others. God is so infinitely beautiful and creative, and this is displayed in the uniqueness of each individual that He creates. And I love how He has a unique call and relationship with each person! We are each one-of-a-kinds! Much LOVE!!

Conclusions

Embracing Unity in Diversity

- **Beauty in diversity** (1 Corinthians 12) – These passages teach the value of our diversity. They encourage us to embrace each other's gifts realizing our need for one another.
- **Each believer is given unique gifts** that are expressed through their distinct, one-of-a-kind personality.
- **The Lord chooses our gifts.** The one Spirit works and distributes as *He wills*. (1 Corinthians 12:11)
- **The gifts are dependent upon the grace gift He supplies.** (Romans 12:6)
- **Jesus (Yeshua the Messiah) is the Head**, and we are His body held together by each part supplying the other parts. With the proper working of each part, the body grows in love, until we all attain to the unity of faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, and maturity in the fullness of Him. (Ephesians 4:16)
- **We cannot box His gifts in neatly defined packages.** Just as the Spirit is like the wind (John 3:8), we often cannot see where His gifts overlap. We must be led by the Spirit. (Romans 8:14)
- **We receive our gifts when we are born again** (John 1:12-13), immersed into the Holy Spirit. *Baptize means immerse, saturate, whelm (to make fully wet).* May He overwhelm us in the Holy Spirit!

God's desire for unity among His people is expressed through:

- **David's heart**
Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! (Psalm 133:1)
- **Jesus' heart**
I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word that they may all be one, even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one just as We are one, I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me and loved them, even as You have loved Me. (John 17:20-23)
- **Paul's Heart**
Be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3)
Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. (Philippians 2:2)

Jesus gave His life to bring into being one new creation of God in the Spirit, the body of Jesus (Yeshua) the Messiah, the family of God, His living temple, so that His joy, love and truth would be full in us and made known to others!

Blessings and peace,

Beth Ann