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Bible House Of Grace.**



God, through His Son Jesus, provides eternal grace for our failures and human limitations.

My Experience Of Speaking in Tongues.

(2013)

The Bible not only reveals God's eternal plans purposes and promises

But also shows how you can know God for yourself.

Teach it, don't demand it.

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My experience of Speaking in Tongues.

INTRODUCTION: though I do not speak in tongues today this testimony is not about condemning all who do since I did enjoyed many years of fellowship in those years with faithful brothers and sisters in Christ who were truly committed to the Lord and faithfully followed him and more important than this while I was in these churches I found the Lord Jesus Christ and the grace and love of God. Because of this I would never condemn (as some do) every believer who is in a Christian church and belongs to a Christian organisation or institution simply because I may not agree with certain teachings their church, organisation or institution may hold.

This testimony obviously does not apply to everyone who speaks in tongues, as it was about forty-five years ago. It is my story and my experience only. Many ideas, goals, teachings and even the focus of many churches have changed over the years therefore much of this testimony may not be applicable to today's modern Christianity. Before beginning this testimony it may help for me to briefly share that I now believe when the word tongues is used in the Bible it means language or dialect and refers to a language that is different from one's own native language.

Using the word tongues was a common expression during the earlier ages even the introduction of many older Bibles begin by saying, "Translated out of the original tongues and with the former translations diligently compared and revised by His Majesty's special command A.D 1611. Both the Greek and the English words tongues and language can refer either to the organ of speech in our mouths or the language that is spoken thus the reason languages is often referred to as tongues, i.e., it is the organ (the tongue) that is speaking the language.

The following two verses show that the Bible uses the word tongues and language interchangeably showing that the word tongues simply means language. Luke writes: -

- Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language (Acts 2:6 KJV)

Then in verse eight Luke states: -

- We hear every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

These two verses clearly show that those listening understood what those speaking in tongues were saying and that it was a proper language.

My Testimony.

About forty-five years ago I made a commitment to follow the Lord Jesus Christ and was fully immersed in water and baptized. There was singing, tongue talking and all sorts of things going on around me, but none of it mattered, because I knew that this was between me and God, it was not a decision I had made easily. I knew it was a total surrender of my life to God and to Christ at that moment.

Ever since that day my life changed, God filled my heart with His love, His mercy, His grace, and clothed me with the righteousness of Christ. I was repentant and had a love, passion and zeal for the Lord and certainly understood the message of the cross, the message of salvation and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus correctly.

My spiritual Christian journey in Christ began in a church that believed speaking in tongues (the kind of babble spoken in some churches today) was the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, a special angelic prayer language to God. I embraced this belief and spoke and prayed in tongues for seventeen years. In those years my honest heart attitude was to do what is right before God no matter what sacrifices that may involve. I truly believed I was using a spiritual gift that God had miraculously given me.

When I spoke in tongues I had total control over it just like I do with my normal speech, I could turn it on or turn it off at will it was not some-kind of trance like state that I had no power over. I was never overtaken mentally or emotionally by speaking in tongues and I did have a general idea in my mind of what I wanted to say even though neither I nor anyone else in the congregation understood the speech that was spoken.

Since I have come to realize that I had a wrong understanding of the Scriptures concerning tongues and prophecy and that God does not need His children to make some kind of sound they do not understand to communicate with Him I do not speak in what some churches are calling tongues today or prophecy (although I still can speak in tongues if I chose to).

Was I saved in those early years of my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? "Was I saved when I spoke in tongues?" I fully understand that everyone will have a different answer since only God knows my honest heart attitude toward Christ and my faith in those early years, but putting this question aside for a moment what has changed?

My love, devotion and passion for God and the Lord Jesus Christ have not changed. I have always known that my salvation was totally dependent on the grace that comes to us through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. My love for the Scriptures and fellowship with those in the family of Christ have not changed and I still have the same intimacy with God and with Christ that I had prior to coming to a clearer understanding of many Scriptures that I once saw in a different light during those early years of my faith.

The ability to speak in this so called angelic language that I did not understand had nothing to do with my salvation. I always knew that there was nothing I could do that would make me worthy before God. I knew all I could do was to love His Son the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in his righteousness and shed blood and do all I could to live a life that would honour God and bring a good testimony to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Christian faith.

I was fully aware Christ loved me I only had to look at the bloodstained cross to know this and even though I knew I was saved by grace and that the Lord understood my heart and my struggles and would not cast me away when I did feel I had let the Lord down I was deeply hurt. Today I still feel the same way, but over the years I have come to realize that I will never attain to the perfection or the standard (especially in purity of thought and of love for those who I am not naturally endured to) that I deeply would love to attain to so I have learned to live by faith in Christ's love and God's grace.

For me, back then, speaking in this language was viewed as one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that God gave to those who belong to Christ, so what has changed in my faith and my life? Mostly my understanding of God's word since I now have a much clearer understanding of the Scriptures and for that I am eternally grateful.

Some may wonder how we should treat our brothers and sisters who believe as I did that they are speaking to God in a special angelic prayer language that they believe has been given to them by the Holy Spirit to help them in their prayers to God. During my years in these churches we all understood the message of the cross, the message of salvation and the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and looked with excited joy toward his return and many in the congregation would have laid down their life for Christ if called to do so (as I would have).

This I suspect raises the following question in the minds of many, "Were we saved?" I know many faithful brothers and sisters who would love for me to say, "No we were not," but my personal answer and belief is, "If I was not saved on the day I entered the waters and baptism and during those early years of my Christian journey then I am not saved today."

This is because the only thing that has changed for me is my intellectual knowledge which I am eternally thankful for since it has made my faith so much stronger, but my passion, my love and my commitment to follow Christ and endeavor to live a lifestyle that honours his heavenly Father has not changed since I have always loved the man missing from the bloodstained cross.

My attitude today is to rest in Jesus words, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me (John 10:27) since Jesus knows who belongs to his global family I don't need to judge another Christians salvation. This brings a great freedom especially when I cast my eyes over the global body of Christ and see that there are churches that are: -

- Heavily clothed in formalism and legalistic dogma.
- Surrounded with ritual, tradition pomp and ceremony.
- Full of gossip, strife, contentions and divisions.
- Knee deep in the riches of this world, materialism and worldliness.
- Elitist and exclusive who believe they are superior to others and that only they have the truth.
- Various mixtures of all of the above.

I have come to believe that amongst all the error and mess God is able to save those whose hearts are humble and honestly seeking Him and that as they grow in faith and the love and grace of God the Lord will hold their hand as He did with Israel (and as he did with me) as they faithfully walk in the light they have. Who am I that I should judge another believers salvation? I don't know their heart, their personal struggles, their limited knowledge, the honesty of faith or lack of it, but the Lord does so I choose to be concerned about my own walk before the Lord and encourage and believe the best for others and leave the judging to eternal life to the Lord.

Added to this I am fully aware that whoever cast the first stone and judges another believers eternal salvation because they are doing something in faith that they don't agree with maybe bringing judgment upon themselves. This is because if they don't have every doctrine of the Bible perfectly down pat and exactly interpreted as God intended and are acting and behaving in a truly godly manner themselves their judgment and condemnation of others who are faithfully following Christ may rightfully fall back onto them.

NOTE: I am not saying we should not learn from each other or attempt in love to correct those things each of us has interpreted incorrectly obviously this should be the goal of us all. What I am talking about is judging the eternal salvation of faithful believers who are following and trusting in Christ and judging them to be outside of the global family of God simply because they have some doctrinal error.

I tend to think that this kind of judgment is not only damaging to the body of Christ, but could be spiritually dangerous to us individually especially when it is considered that no religious denomination, institution or church can stand up before God and claim total perfection in their interpretation of all Scripture or total perfection in everything they think and do.

Consider: even though Paul while writing a letter to the Corinthian brothers and sisters was fully aware of everything that needed correcting within their church (and there was a lot) he still refers to them as brothers and sisters in Christ, he never cast doubt on their salvation to eternal life or their faith in Christ simply because they did not have all things down pat and were living from the flesh and acting in a human way (1 Cor. 3:3-4).

Paul recognized that they had a devotion and commitment toward Christ even though when they came together as a church they were still bound by some of their old traditions and their behavior was far from being as it should he always viewed them as belonging to the global body of Christ and his family.

For further information concerning the Corinthian church, see: -

- 1 Corinthians 3.
- In, Commentary NT (ON WEBSITE MENU).

I walked with Christ and his heavenly Father for seventeen years before I was open enough to consider that what I believed may be wrong. It is very difficult for the mind to shift from what it has been indoctrinated with for so long, especially when it is what one has been introduced to from the beginning. Then it took another three years for my mind to be mostly free from much of the confusion that comes with a clouded understanding of many verses.

Which leads me to conclude that rather than divide perhaps a better path would be to accept each other as being a brother and sister in the global body of Christ and treat each other with love and respect with the understanding that we all have faults both in thoughts, behavior and in Scriptural knowledge in varying degrees since not one of us can stand before God free from sin or claim perfect understanding of God or of His word and even if we could not one of us are able to attain to it and therefore there will be no perfect church (in behavior or knowledge) until our beloved Lord returns.

NOTE: treating each other with love and respect does not mean that we have to agree with each other's differences, it just means that we respond in love rather than treat those in Christ who are different to us as enemies and rest in the confidence that Christ knows those who are his.

Some reading this maybe thinking, "But James doesn't Jude tell us to contend for the faith (Jude 1:3). Yes he does, but contending for the faith is primarily about doing all we can do to stop Christians going back under the law to earn salvation and to be counted worthy and accepted by God. The faith and the Gospel that we are to contend for is that salvation to eternal life is a free gift and comes by grace and not works good deeds or religious practices.

Paul's constant struggle was to stop those who had come to Christ, from falling back under the influence of the Jewish leaders since they were constantly enticing new converts back under the law, convincing them that they could not possibly be saved without being circumcised and keeping the Old Testament ceremonial law that had been part of their Jewish faith for nearly four-thousand years.

There are in some churches brothers and sisters who conform to the group experience rather than appear faithless or be rejected, but in most cases those who faithfully trust in Christ believe what they believe, and do what they do out of a pure heart because they believe what they are believing and what they are doing is the right thing.

Since the focus here is not upon sinful things, but upon religious belief, traditions and customs and faithful believers in Christ doing things in love and faith toward God, perhaps if we all accepted that each of us is on an individual spiritual journey with the aim of becoming more like Christ in our behavior, in our knowledge and in our understanding and instead of dividing it would be spiritually healthier to attempt to learn from each other in humbleness and in the love and the grace of God that comes to all of us through our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is interesting to notice that within the family of Christ there is grace available for those who are struggling with behavioral problems, but that same grace is often not extended to those who are still growing in knowledge and intellectual understanding of the Bible. Maybe if we extended God's abundant grace to cover intellectual error to those who love Christ and whose outward life evidences their inward faith, there would be fewer divisions in the body of Christ and the church would be a better testimony to those outside it.

Since the Bible was written in an entirely different culture to ours and the body of Christ is a global family filled with people from different nations, countries, cultures, backgrounds, knowledge, levels of education (especially religious), hurts and troubled pasts there is always going to be certain amount of Scripture we will all understand differently.

Some might be thinking, "But Paul told the brothers and sisters at Rome to avoid those who cause divisions contrary to the doctrine that he taught them" (Rom 16:17), certainly this is true, but in the context of his letter to the Romans the doctrines he has in mind are the following three: -

1. Doctrines that are contrary to the teaching that salvation is by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ contrasted to self-effort and strictly adhering to ceremonial rites, holy days and keeping religious traditions and customs etc.
2. Doctrines that are contrary to the truth that Jews and Gentiles are now one in Christ, contrasted to them being two separate nations.
3. Doctrines that are contrary to godly behaviour and lead people away from the Lord Jesus Christ and God's grace.

These are the three major topics Paul has focused on in his letter to the brothers and sisters in Rome and the doctrines he has in his mind when he says be careful of those who cause divisions and create obstacles. Naturally within the global family of Christ there are many varied understandings of many Scripture, but not all teachings are important to know to be saved to eternal life nor does one have to have perfect understanding of every teaching of the Bible to walk with the Lord.

No-one has to be a walking Bible encyclopaedia to be in the family of Christ and saved to eternal life, but should any teacher proclaim a message of works and self-effort to be saved or teach that Jews and Gentiles are two separate groups in Christ, or teach doctrines that lead people away from godly behaviour and from Christ Paul says they should be avoided (Rom 16:17-19).

IN CONCLUSION.

I have come to believe that we all begin as spiritual infants and that our spiritual journey will take us through dry deserts and beautiful oases, through dark and weedy forests full of thorns and through forests full of the most glorious flowers and brilliant light until the Lord we all love who is missing from the bloodstained cross returns in glory to gather us to himself may the Lord forever hold your hand and guide you through the struggles and confusion and the highs and lows of life.

For further information concerning tongues see the title: -

- My Experience of Speaking in Tongues.

In, Testimony (ON WEBSITE MENU).

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