

Cherished-Chosen-Challenged – May 23, 2010

The Language of Love

“Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually. And God has appointed these in the church: first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, administrations, varieties of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Are all workers of miracles? Do all have gifts of healings? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way.” I Corinthians 12:27-31

The word in Greek that is translated as “tongues” in the New Testament is “glossolalia”. It is a word that refers not to the vain and unintelligible babbling and gibberish which some attribute to tongues speaking, but instead it incorporates and describes discernable and understandable languages. On Pentecost we hear about how the varied peoples gathered in Jerusalem heard the disciples speaking in their own language the wonderful deeds of God. It surely makes us think about the miraculous things that have been recorded in the Bible and even wonder about claims that the same things are happening today.

God always has the ability to do miraculous things through His people, such as healings and tongues speaking, but He chooses the time and the place for these things and He never uses them in conflict with His Word. In fact God tells us plainly, not to look for signs and wonders, but instead to focus upon His Word. There we find the simple saving grace for all people. God promises in His Word that all who believe will be saved.

Some have claimed the opposite. They marry the demand to produce “spiritual gifts” to saving faith. Their conclusion: “No gifts—no faith—no salvation. This is nothing less than a return to the law.

A close study of the Scriptures shows that the gifts of God to do miracles, healings, resurrections, and speaking in tongues come and go--- but the Word of God endures forever. We need to think with the same

mindset that God has. He has invested everything in the work of His Son. Another way of describing it that helps us understand is to contrast the Biblical miracles with the miracle of the Gospel. Because of death, these powerful signs of God are temporal....what God works through Word and Sacrament is eternal!

When St. Paul espouses the Word of God about all of these gifts he enjoins us to desire the greater ones. These are not tongues speaking, healings, or other signs and wonders. Our desire needs to be for the proliferation of the saving Gospel and the expansion of God's people using the Sacraments rightly. In this the saving work of Christ is glorified and sinners are saved eternally by God's grace.

Our challenge remains to share the Gospel with others. That may well mean learning a new language, supporting Bible translation, and sending missionaries. The important thing is that we share with others at home and abroad the wonderful things God has done, so that they may rejoice with us in the eternal glory of everlasting life with Christ our Savior.

- “Remember: Be regular in worship. God is working the miracle of life eternal in you as you hear His Word and receive the Lord's Supper.
- Remember: The work of sharing the Gospel begins at home. Is there someone you can tell about the love of Jesus? Let the Spirit of Pentecost be your guide!

How blessed we are to be the people of God. He has chosen us to be in this place. He has prepared us for this time. He has equipped us for service to Him. **Don't wait for someone else to do it. If you wait on someone else to do it...it will never get done!** God bless you in the growth of your faith and in service to Him and His people, for your labor in the Lord is never in vain.

Pastor Jacobs

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