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WORDS, THE TONGUE, AND TONGUES

God's revelation to man in the Bible is focused on words to an amazing degree. The expression "God said," or "Thus saith the Lord," or "God spoke," are in the Bible over 2,000 times. God created the universe by His words: "And God said, Let there be light, heavens, earth, fish, animals, man" and there was light.....

God Himself, in the person of His Son, is called the "Word of God." *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* (John 1:1) The Bible itself is called *the word of God* or *the word of truth* (Hebrews 4:12, 2 Tim. 2:15).

Salvation, the great gift of God, is received by what we believe in our hearts, and then it is confirmed by what we say, by our words: *For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* (Romans 10:10)

After this life, when we stand before God, we will be judged according to our actions, and according to the motivations of our hearts, and by the words we have spoken: *I say to you that for every idle work men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.* (Matthew 12:36-37) James says that *If anyone does not stumble in word he is a perfect man...* (James 3:2) He goes on to say that *No man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.* (James 3:8)

In Genesis 3 the Bible describes how our Great, Great, Great Grand Ma Eve was living in a beautiful garden with her husband. There was an enemy of God and man in the garden, and he came and spoke lying words to Eve. She believed him. Adam may have been standing near Eve when she was being tempted, and he did not defend her or refute the lying words that were being spoken. Generations later, when mankind was organizing a great rebellion against God, He messed up their plans at the tower of Babel by *confusing their language and scattering them abroad over the face of the earth.* (Genesis 11)

About 2,000 years ago, "*when the time had fully come*" that God had been preparing for since the beginning, He sent forth His Son, the Word of God, to rescue those who would respond to His words. After Jesus' ascension into heaven, the disciples went to an upper room in Jerusalem, in accordance with His instructions, to pray and wait. They didn't know exactly what they were waiting for, but He said to wait and they would receive power from heaven. On the day of Pentecost, fifty days after the resurrection, the Holy Spirit came in a mighty wind (God breathed on Adam and he became a living soul, God breathed on the disciples and the very breath/Spirit of God gave them power to live for Him).

Then there appeared to them cloven tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. (Acts 2:3-4) The judgment of God came at the tower of Babel and confused the tongues of those in rebellion. God's judgment was satisfied in the sacrifice of His Son on the cross, and now His Spirit came to heal men's tongues so that when a diverse multitude came together in Jerusalem, *Everyone* (from sixteen different ethnoses around the Mediterranean Sea) *heard them speak in his own language.* (Acts 2:6-11)

Note also that "cloven" tongues of fire rested on the people. The Jews would understand that the Law had stipulated that the covenant people could only eat animals that had cloven hoofs. (Deut. 14 and Leviticus 11) God was now saying, "This supernatural language passes the Kosher test, you can take it in your mouth with my blessing." God gave Simon Peter the privilege of opening the door of faith to the Gentiles (That's you and me, brother!) by first giving him a vision of a sheet coming down from heaven and then sending him to the house of Cornelius. The Bible reports that, *The Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word.* The Jewish believers were astonished, *for they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God.* (Acts 10:44-47) Acts 19 reports the occasion when the Apostle Paul laid hands on the new church at Ephesus, and The Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied

Paul has an extensive and detailed teaching about the gifts of the Holy Spirit and particularly about the gift of tongues in Chapters 12, 13 and 14 of 1 Corinthians. In that teaching he emphasizes that all of the gifts must be undergirded and motivated by love. While the Corinthians had been misusing the gifts, he was careful to specify, "*Do not forbid speaking in tongues!*" (1 Cor. 14:39) He also states in Chapter 14, *I wish you all spoke with tongues, and I thank God I speak with tongues more than you all.* (Vss. 5 and 18)

The Vineyard fellowship is certainly not dogmatic about the subject of speaking in tongues, nor am I, but I want to make a couple of points about the subject: There is still a great deal of resistance among some believers, even in full-gospel or Charismatic churches, to speaking in tongues. They say it is irrational and they don't understand it. I agree that it is irrational from our earth-bound perspective. But there are all sorts of things I don't understand. I don't understand the Trinity. How could one God include three persons? I don't understand how Jesus could be both human and divine. I don't understand the space-time continuum. I don't understand how the DNA sequence could be in every cell of our body, or how there could be enough power in an atom to light up a city or blow up a city.

Could it be possible that God gave us this gift in order to humble us? Do we really think we understand God and His ways perfectly? Jesus said we must come to Him like a little child. That does not mean that we disconnect our brains: Jesus said we are to *love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength.*

I have a question: if we believe that the Bible is the word of God, is it conceivable that God gave us a gift that is pointless, foolish, nonsensical, and without a good purpose? Is it conceivable that a good God, a wise God, would do such a thing? God has shown us that there are good and rational reasons for this strange gift: (1) Speaking in tongues edifies (builds up) the believer himself (1 Cor. 14:4). (2) Tongues are a sign to unbelievers (1 Cor. 14:22) (3) Tongues, when interpreted, equals prophecy (1 Cor. 14:22). (4) Tongues, or a prayer language, is also a way to pray with our spirit when we do not understand how to pray with our minds. (1 Cor. 14:15)

I have a dear friend, David Hjertstedt, who was a missionary in Israel for about thirty years. He is now retired and lives in Washington State. He told me one time that over the course of his life he had spoken in languages he did not know at least twelve different times. He would find himself intermingling with a group whose language he did not speak and have the impression he was to speak in tongues. (A very unusual, out-of-the-box experience!) He would then speak forth in his prayer language and find himself addressing the people in that group in their language, and he understood their language. Some wonderful things happened as a result of that miraculous moment. After his message or conversation with the people ended, once again he could not speak nor understand their language. He said that he had spoken in Hebrew, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Navajo Indian (while visiting a reservation in New Mexico), and eight or nine other languages.

Several years ago Tommy Tenney told about an experience he had in Russia. Tommy had been traveling to many countries teaching about the presence of God, and he had seen marvelous things happen. On a visit to Russia, he spoke to a group of several hundred pastors. He was to speak to them on three consecutive nights. Of course he was using an interpreter, and on the first night after he preached the group was as dead as could be. He could not understand why God did not show up at the meeting. On the second night the same thing happened. He spent the night in prayer. God revealed to him that the interpreter was not a Christian and was not interpreting his words but was making up nonsense. On the third night when Tommy went forward to speak, the interpreter started to go up with him and Tommy said to him, "I will not be needing you tonight." The interpreter said, "What do you mean? There is no one else here to interpret for you." Tommy said, "I will not be needing you tonight." Tommy went to the stage, as God had told him to do, took a deep breath and started speaking in tongues. He found himself speaking in fluent Russian and understanding what he said. In a few moments the Spirit of God fell on the congregation and they started running forward and throwing themselves on the floor, repenting, weeping, and crying out to God. When Tommy left the stage he no longer spoke nor understood Russian.

About six years ago, at the invitation of an American missionary lady, I went to Tepic Nayarit, about two hours north of Guadalajara, to minister to the staff of a large orphanage. While there I got acquainted with the lady who was the principal of the high school. This was the story she shared, confirmed by the missionary lady: She had a son about 18 years old, who was a musical prodigy on the violin and also a composer. This young man started "hearing" from God that he was to go to Israel, start some sort of musical training school, establish an orchestra, and use this venue to share his Christian faith. He immediately bought some Hebrew language manuals and started trying to learn the language. After a week or so of study, he heard God speak to him and tell him that He was going to teach him Hebrew. He went into a trance, and over a period of three or four hours God downloaded the Hebrew language into his mind. At the end of that time he could read, write, and speak Hebrew perfectly! (Oh, that God would download Spanish into my dense brain! Por favor, Padre Celestial?)

All of which is to say that God seems to be pretty good at language. I think He majored in languages at H.H.U. (Heavenly High University) If you have been resistant to the gift of tongues, I encourage you to reread Acts 1 and 2, and Chapters 12 through 14 of 1 Corinthians. Then you might pray, "Lord, I earnestly desire all of the gifts." This is what the Bible tells us we should do in 1 Cor. 12:31 and 14:1. And if you have been closed and resistant to the gift of tongues, you might pray, "Lord, please take away my fear, open up my tightly closed brain and let your light shine into the darkness."

Just one final word: you don't have to speak in tongues. You get to.

FAITH IS TRUSTING GOD

(From The Kingdom, Power, and Glory by Chuck and Nancy Missler)

Faith is a choice we can never stop making. It's a choice to follow God and do what He asks, regardless of how we feel, what we think, or what we want. Just as God loves us unconditionally, we must trust Him unconditionally. Faith is trusting God even when we've been stripped of our position, finances, reputation, comfort, family, and our last ounce of understanding. It's getting to the place where we can say, "I won't let any of these things move me." As Job exclaimed, "Though you slay me, yet will I trust You."

Here's our personal story:

Back in the late eighties, the development company where Chuck was CEO went bankrupt. We lost *our position* in the community as we went from being well respected and millionaires to not having enough money to buy our next meal. We lost *our finances* as we were forced to declare personal as well as corporate bankruptcy. We lost *our reputation* when some people felt that we had hidden money away in an offshore account, and they falsely accused us in public. We lost *our comfort* as we lost our cars, insurance and dream home - the one we just spent two years remodeling and planned to retire in. On top of this, we lost *our understanding* when, after receiving many wonderful promises from the Lord

of complete restoration of all things, all our belongings were subsequently destroyed by a 6.8 earthquake that hit our rented house. Several years later we lost *one of the most beloved members of our family* when our son, Chip, died unexpectedly at the age of thirty-nine of a massive heart attack while out jogging one afternoon.

So when we say we understand how hard it is to have faith when things only seem to get worse, we really do understand!

Faith means laying aside all of our circumstances and getting to the place where we can say and mean, "I won't let any of these things move me." (Acts 20:24) It comes when we can trust God in the depths of the trial, even before the victory is realized and before the promises are revealed. Faith has to pass the test of disappointment and the urge to quit. The enemy will set up every roadblock he can to entice us to give up. We must do just the opposite!

Here's what the Lord did for us. He reestablished our positions, not in the corporate world, but in a much better world (the spiritual world). He restored our finances to the point where it seemed as if the more we gave away in His Name, the more He returned. He renewed our reputation. He restored our comfort through a series of miracles. We now have a beautiful home, cars, and insurance. He rebuilt our understanding as to why He allowed these devastating things to come into our lives, much of which is explained in our book, Faith in the Night Seasons. He revived our family, even though our son Chip can never be replaced, our daughter Lisa with her husband and four kids live on the same property as we do, our other daughter Meshell lives close by, and our son Mark and his family have experienced miraculous healings. All of our children know and love the Lord. If He can do these things for us, He will be faithful to do the same in your life also.

(Note from Glenn: I am absolutely convinced that Job is the pattern for every serious believer. If you are serious about going on with God you have already gone through many fiery trials, you are going through them right now, or they are in your future. We need to gird up our loins, whatever that means, and decide we are going all the way with the Lord no matter what!)

THE BIGGEST SIN IN AMERICA

Based on my observation, there aren't any "sins" in the United States of America. There are only "mistakes." A couple of weeks ago a guy in our community was driving his SUV with a suspended license. He was high on alcohol and drugs. He ran up on a sidewalk and killed a lady who was walking her dog. Obviously he made a mistake. It was certainly not a sin. ("Sin" implies moral culpability to a higher power.)

Oops! I forgot. There is one sin in our culture - - **intolerance!** Our public schools all teach that judging another person is intolerant, evil, even sinful! Intolerance is considered by American culture to be the biggest sin, perhaps the only sin. "Live and let live" is our credo, and that means we don't have the right to judge anyone for any kind of conduct.

But according to the Bible, there is such a thing as sin, and God is totally and irrevocably intolerant of sin.

An old farmer and his wife went to their little country church every Sunday. One Sunday the wife was sick so the farmer went to church by himself. When he got home, his wife asked, "What did the preacher preach about today?" He said, "Sin." (He was a man of few words.) She said, "What did he say about it?" He replied, "He's against it."

That's the way God feels about it, also. The penalty for sin is hell. That's pretty intolerant. "Wait," you say, "I thought God was loving and merciful." Absolutely. He loves us so much that He gave His Son to be our Savior. All we have to do is turn to him in faith and repent of our sins. At that point God forgives us for our sins and will never, ever remember them against us. **GOD IS FORGIVING, NOT TOLERANT!**

I think that the church has been so influenced by the culture that we have it all mixed up. We think it is unloving and Pharisaical to point out to some fellow Christian that he is committing a sin and should repent. Jesus taught, "*Judge not, that you be not judged.*" But Jesus was talking about a spirit of condemnation. He was certainly not talking about judging someone's behavior. Jesus also said, "*Don't cast your pearls before swine.*" If you are going to heed this warning, you have to figure out (judge) who is a swine. And Jesus taught, "If someone sins against you, take steps to stop the abuse or treat the abuser like a tax-collector." (See Matthew 18:15-19) Of course there is a time to turn the other cheek, but there is also a time to lovingly confront a brother or sister and appeal to them to repent. Granted, we must be very, very careful about how we do such a thing, with much prayer and humility, but we have the idea that we should never even consider doing it. Am I right?

Let me share some scriptures for you to consider: 2 Timothy 2:19 (NLT) - *God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: "The Lord knows those who are his. And those who claim they belong to the Lord must turn away from all wickedness."* 1 Timothy 3:1-5 - *You should also know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. They will be unloving and unforgiving, they will slander others and have no self-control; they will be cruel and have no interest in what is good. They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. They will act as if they are religious (they will apparently be church members), but they will reject the power that could make them godly. **You must stay away from people like that.***

Please note the last sentence that I highlighted. Wouldn't it be intolerant for us to judge people in the church and to shun them if they were living "sinfully?" There must be some misunderstanding. Right? Have you ever read the book of 1 Corinthians? Did you read Chapter 5? Paul is writing about a man in the church who was living with his mother-in-law. Paul is astonished and indignant that the Corinthians are putting up with this. He tells them to "remove this man from your fellowship!" That equates, he says, to "*casting him out of the church and into Satan's hands, so that his sinful nature will be destroyed*" but that "*He himself will be saved when the Lord comes.*" This bears careful study. Then Paul goes on to

say: ***When I wrote to you before, I told you not to associate with people who indulge in sexual sin. But I wasn't talking about unbelievers who indulge in sexual sin, or who are greedy or are swindlers or idol worshipers. You would have to leave this world to avoid people like that. What I meant was that you are not to associate with anyone who claims to be a Christian yet indulges in sexual sin, or is greedy, or worships idols, or is abusive, or a drunkard, or a swindler. Don't even eat with such people. It isn't my responsibility to judge outsiders, but it certainly is your job to judge those inside the church who are sinning in these ways. God will judge those on the outside, but as the Scriptures say, "You must remove the evil person from among you."*** (1 Cor. 5:9-13)

Whoa! This is not the way the church operates in our day. It isn't even the way we think. Apparently it is a very serious thing to become a Christian but to continue to live like the world. Apparently God is not tolerant of such behavior and God's coming judgment on such casual and blatant sin is terrible to contemplate. It is so terrible that extreme steps should be taken by the church to call such a person to repentance.

James refers to the problem of backsliding in the church at the end of his epistle: *My dear brothers and sisters, if anyone among you wanders away from the truth and is brought back again, you can be sure that the one who brings that person back will save that sinner from death and bring about the forgiveness of many sins.* (James 5:19-20)

My friend Lynne Cumming just told me about a recent experience she had in Phoenix. She met a lady who was held in high esteem in a fellowship there and who was speaking prophetic words to the group. Lynne was invited to spend the night in the lady's home in order to get acquainted and to spend time in prayer with her. During the course of the visit the lady, who was in her early 60's, mentioned that she had a boyfriend with whom she was sleeping. But, she said, "There is nothing wrong with that." She said that she had prayed about it and that it was OK with God. Lynne was so surprised that she couldn't think of what to say. The next morning she met with the lady and told her, in as loving a way as possible, that the god who told her it was OK to live in immorality was not the God of the Bible but a god she had made up in her mind. Lynne pleaded with her to repent and ask God for forgiveness. The lady was offended and chose to terminate her relationship with Lynne immediately. Lynne then called the leader of the lady's fellowship to apprise her of the situation so they could take appropriate steps if they chose to. Glory to God! May God give us all a heart to hate sin, to fear God, and not to fear the opinion of men.

MINISTRY

- Just spent a weekend at a large prison (1700 inmates) in Canyon City. Over 90% of the men in this prison are there for sexual offenses - pedophilia, rape, etc. Our team was Roberta, Mary, and Chere from Loveland and Ft. Collins, and Jim and I from Grand Junction. Good attendance - 67 men. We had a great time and saw some men set free and healed. I got a wonderful report. One of the men, in his 30's, told Jim that when we taught in that same prison two years ago it made a deep impact on him and he came under conviction about being alienated from his father for many years. His father had been an alcoholic and very angry and violent. He wrote his father a letter and asked him to come visit him. In a few weeks his father showed up at the prison and they sat down together. He told his father that he had become a Christian and that he had forgiven him and that he wanted to have a relationship with him. The father didn't say much, and he left. A couple of months passed and the father came back to visit. He was carrying a Bible. He told his son that he had become a Christian and that he loved him! Glory to God!
- Plan to have another seminar, "Breaking Free," in my church here starting November 2nd.
- Lynne and Fred and I plan to minister in Guadalajara for three weeks starting about December 1st.
- Please pray for us. (There are 40,000 murders annually in Mexico, and about the same number of kidnappings. We don't want to be in that number!) If you would like to help with the cost of these trips, it would be greatly appreciated.

God Bless,

Glenn

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I would like to thank each of you for your support of this ministry.

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