

O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing-November's Hymn of the Month 2024

By
Bill Dagle

The tongue is a powerful instrument for either good or evil. The book of James testifies to that in James 3:5-6. Given over to God, the tongue can accomplish great things for our Lord. Taken for self, the tongue can cause great destruction. In the singing of our hymns, we have the opportunity to do good for God and encourage one another in our faith in Christ. No one understood this better than the great hymn writer, Charles Wesley, who gave the church over 6,000 hymns. Included in that long list is the hymn, *O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*.

Charles and his brother, John, are remembered as the founders of the Methodist Church back in the early 1700's. John would preach, and Charles would write and sing. The year was 1739, the first anniversary of Charles' conversion to Christ. Religious all of his life, it wasn't until he met Count Von Zinzendorf, a Moravian leader, that Charles realized his need of a personal relationship to God. In his journal dated May 21, 1738, Charles wrote of his spiritual rebirth experience, "I took myself to prayer, the Spirit of God strove with my own and chased away my unbelief." Now, a year later, Charles was inspired to write a hymn, in celebration, by a passing remark of Peter Bohler, another Moravian friend. He said, "Had I a thousand tongues, I would praise Christ Jesus with all of them." There was the seed thought; and out of it, Charles Wesley would write *O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing*.

We all have one tongue; and each day, the decision is ours, too. We can use the tongue for good or waste it away for bad. If you know Christ as your personal Savior, then give your tongue to Him. If you don't know Christ, surrender your soul and tongue today and, like Charles Wesley, you'll say:

He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed to me.