

**I. OVERCOMING PREJUDICES AND MISCONCEPTIONS**

- A. While the Word of God is quite clear about speaking in tongues, there is much lack of knowledge, misunderstanding, and quarreling present in today's Church over the whole topic. Apart from those people who have a clear and balanced biblical apprehension of it, there are many groups who overemphasize, demonize or completely neglect it.
- B. We don't want to miss out on or refuse anything that Jesus longs to give us, first of all because He is the Giver of good things and because He is the lover of our soul, longing to shower us with gifts of His love. Furthermore, whatever He desires to bestow on His Church will not be optional but crucial, for He is perfect in knowledge and wisdom and knows what He is doing.
- C. On the other side, we don't want to treat the things He gives to us in a wrong and unbiblical way. This will only be to our loss, and perhaps even to the loss of others if our false use will make them shut the doors of their hearts, eventually rejecting what God offers to them.
- D. One misconception I want to tackle right in the beginning is that the gifts of the Holy Spirit have vanished with the apostles. That is completely wrong and there is no verse in the Bible that supports that view (unless you alienate them from their contexts and misinterpret them to fit this purpose). Rather, the Bible clearly teaches the increase of the Spirit's activity in the last days (Joel 2:28; Mark 16:17-18).
- E. Jesus clearly said that new tongues are a normal and to-be-expected consequence of believing in Him. It shouldn't be anything strange or extraordinary to Christians, rather a simple expression of the redeemed body of Christ.

***<sup>17</sup> These signs will accompany those who have believed: ..., they will speak with new tongues. (Mark 16:17)***

- F. Paul eagerly encouraged the churches to pursue the things God has for them. It was important to Him that the Spirit would not be quenched. In that He also commanded not to forbid speaking in tongues.

***<sup>39</sup> ... do not forbid to speak in tongues. (1 Cor 14:39)***

**II. THREE DIFFERENT TYPES OF TONGUE RELATED ACTIVITY**

- A. The Bible actually distinguishes between three different types of tongue activity. Most of the contemporary confusion about speaking in tongues occurs, when those three types are mixed up because suddenly the Word of God doesn't make sense and seems to contradict itself.
- B. Here are some examples to illustrate the incompatibility of the biblical account when one assumes that all verses refer to one and the same thing:
  - 1. At one point it is said that it's to the edification of the church (1 Cor 12:7,10; 1 Cor 14:5), at another point it's for private use and self-edification only (1 Cor 14:4,17).
  - 2. At one point it has to be interpreted or no one will understand (1 Cor 14:5,13), at another point it is not even addressed to people but to God (1 Cor 14:2).
  - 3. Though it needs interpretation in order to be understood, there was no interpretation on the day of Pentecost because it was clearly understood even by unbelievers.
- C. One fact that makes it worse is that, while attributing completely different characteristics to those three types, the Bible has no consistent names for them but in some cases calls all three types

“speaking in tongues” which can make it difficult to discern which kind is referred to.

- D. To make distinguishing and talking about it easier, I suggest to use different terms for different types. Those three types differ in many areas (purpose, principles of use, etc.). That's why it's important to look closer at each single kind (which I will do after a basic outline).
  1. **Speaking in Tongues** – Purpose: prophetic message. Where: congregation. When: at move of the Spirit (gift). Recipient: church, needs to be interpreted
  2. **Praying in Tongues** – Purpose: intercession, prayer, worship. Where: in private. When: at will (ability). Recipient: God, needs no interpretation
  3. **Preaching in Tongues** – Purpose: evangelistic preaching. Where: in public. When: specific instances (miracle). Recipient: mostly unbelievers, the Holy Spirit makes them understand

### III. SPEAKING IN TONGUES (THE GIFT)

- A. **Definition:** Delivering prophetic messages to the congregation in an unknown language that needs to be interpreted through the spiritual gift of interpretation in order to be understood.
- B. It's listed among the **supernatural gifts of the Spirit** (1 Cor 12:10,30; 14:26) which implies 1) that not everyone has it (1 Cor 12:30), 2) that its purpose is the edification of the church so it's exercised in a corporate setting (1 Cor 14:5,12) and 3) that it's bestowed and activated through the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12:7-11). It also means that we will only flow in it to the extent that we give room to the Holy Spirit to use us in this certain way. If we don't use it, we won't grow in it.
- C. **Every believer should pursue the gift of speaking in tongues.** In 1 Cor 14:1 Paul exhorts every Christian to pursue spiritual gifts and emphasizes the prophetic gifts in a special way. Later in verse 5 he then speaks of the interpreted tongues speech as equal in value to the prophetic.
- D. It **needs to be interpreted**, otherwise it will not be understood (1 Cor 14:5-6,17,27-28). Interpretation is listed as another gift of the Spirit (1 Cor 12:10,30; 14:26), not by natural means like learning. Interpretation is not translation, as if every word or syllable would have a specific translation. Rather it is more like interpreting dreams and vision: it gives meaning, not a translation. Notice also that even the one who gives the speech is to pray in order to receive the interpretation of what he said in tongues (1 Cor 14:13). Thus it's clear that **it's not a natural language** that the speaker understands and could translate himself. Speaking and interpreting tongues is a supernatural process, not a natural one.
- E. **How does it work?** – Usually, the one who is going to speak in tongues will get an impression that God will speak through Him in tongues. Then he or she will (appropriate to the setting and after consulting leadership) start speaking in tongues in front of the group or church, expressing what God puts in the heart of the one who speaks. Meanwhile, others in the room will ask God for an interpretation (those with the gift especially, but it's also a good circumstance to find out if you have the gift by asking, too). The one giving the speech will pray for an interpretation too (1 Cor 14:13). After that, someone will interpret (explain) the meaning of the speech to the group or church.
- F. **Activation:** You won't find out whether or not you have it unless you try it. In a group everyone asks God for a speech in tongues. If you feel like the Holy Spirit encourages you to speak, then do so. After it you and the others ask God for an interpretation and share what He gives to you. This will be much easier if you already pray in tongues often.
- G. **Question: Why doesn't God speak direct and clearly?** – Paul likens the gift of speaking in tongues to

prophecy and it indeed is a form of it. However, the simple fact that it's prophecy with an additional step (the tongue speech) rises the question why God wouldn't speak clearly in the first place. Why would He make it even more complicated? First of all, speaking of tongues in a way is close to God-given dreams: They are so symbolic and confusing that if God doesn't give you the interpretation you wouldn't understand them. So the same is true there too: Why wouldn't He speak clearly in the first place (apart from the numerous times that He actually did)? I can see different reasons why God would want to make it this way in His infinite wisdom:

1. ***It's about hunger*** – It shows us that even though God loves to bestow things freely, He also delights in a hungry heart. He deeply enjoys hearts desperate enough for Him that they, instead of being indifferent, would readily pay every price in order to draw closer and get more of Him.
2. ***It awakens hunger*** – Those occurrences are not only to teach us that God wants that our hearts are hungry, but at the same time awaken that hunger in us when we respond rightly. They are the bait of a passionate God that cries “Seek My face” (Ps 27:8). With them, He makes us knock, ask and sit before Him. We could say it's His way to draw us closer if we don't come voluntarily.
3. ***It teaches us utter dependence on God*** – Even in our spiritual gifts (and especially in all forms of the prophetic) we need to walk in complete dependence, in the “I only do what I see the Father do”-paradigm like Jesus did (John 5:19). That is God's desire. He does not give spiritual gifts because He couldn't do the job alone. He's giving them because He desires intimate partners that would walk and work and love in complete partnership with Him. It's God's way to develop a dependent spirit in us.

#### IV. PRAYING IN TONGUES (THE ABILITY)

- A. **Definition:** Praying in tongues, also commonly referred to as praying in the spirit or one's personal prayer language, is a spiritual language used for private prayer (1 Cor 14:2,28), personal edification (1 Cor 14:4), intercession (Rom 8:26-27) and worship (1 Cor 14:15-17). Like speaking in tongues it's contrary to using our minds to form words and sentences, rather our spirit prays (1 Cor 14:14-15).
  1. Paul specifically refers to this type when he is speaking about “praying in tongues” (1 Cor 14:14), “praying with the spirit”, “singing with the spirit” or “blessing in the spirit” (1 Cor 14:15-16).
- B. Other than the gift of speaking in tongues, this is **for private use** (often in a private setting) and **does not need interpretation** since it's addressed to God and not men.
 

<sup>2</sup> ***For one who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God; ... (1 Cor 14:2)***

  1. In 1 Cor 14:18-19 when Paul claims to speak more in tongues than all of the Corinthians, it is clear that he is referring to the private prayer language because subsequently he is contrasting this with when he preaching is in a church setting.
  2. The bible gives two possible settings for praying in tongues: 1) in private setting (when you are alone) and 2) in a public setting (congregation, etc.) but for private use, like personal prayer or worship in church (1 Cor 14:28).
- C. It's purpose is **personal edification** (1 Cor 14:4) that finds expression in various benefits:
  1. ***Tenderizing and activating our spirit*** – When we pray in tongues we activate our spirit, give it room to connect with God, and so tenderize ourselves for God's presence by putting our attention and focus on God. We press into His presence, where we are built up and our perspective changed. We can sing and pray with our minds without using the spirit, being somewhere else but focused on God. But we cannot pray in the spirit without using the spirit.

2. **Connecting us with God's love** – One way that we encounter more of God's love and the reality that we are His children is in praying in tongues as He increases His presence and we are more open to hearing His loving voice.

<sup>16</sup> ***The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God. (Rom 8:16)***

3. **Impartation of divine revelation** – Praying in tongues is like extending our spiritual antennas. We connect with God's sphere as we grow more sensitive to His voice and presence. It often happens then that we receive new revelation from God, that we suddenly get new ideas or understand things. Praying in tongues is speaking "mysteries" (1 Cor 14:2), a word that Paul used in 1 Cor 13:2 to refer to prophetic knowledge.

4. **Praying when you can't find words** – Sometimes when we pray for a long time, we easily run out of words, or there are times when it feels very hard to pray or we pray for a friend but don't really know what we should pray. In praying in tongues we never run out of words. You can pray for hours and do not even have to care about what to say because your spirit prays. Instead of struggling for words, you just let the spirit fill your mouth (1 Cor 14:14). He can fill your mouth with prayers and praise when you can't yourself.

<sup>26</sup> ***In the same way the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. (Rom 8:26)***

5. **Praying without ceasing** – Praying in tongues is a step closer to "praying continually" (1 Thess 5:17). It enables us to pray whenever and wherever we are (you don't have to pray louder than quiet whispers) and we can also do it while being busy with other things. It's a wonderful way to maintain a connection with God and a life of prayer even in the business of our everyday life.

6. **Praise that pleases God** – The Bible testifies that praying and singing in tongues is a way to "give thanks well" (1 Cor 14:17). Your renewed spirit prays, sings and praises in a language that is completely pleasing to God's heart, free from the distortions of our worries, the defilements of the flesh or the limits of our minds and understanding. It's the spirit that God has given us praying back to God and lavishing love on Him. He completely enjoys hearing those words being uttered through and by our voices.

7. **To quiet evil thoughts** – Paul explains how the mind is unfruitful when we pray in tongues. Through praying in tongues and focusing on Jesus we are enabled to overcome evil thoughts that assault our minds simply by forcing it to quiet down and come into alignment with God.

<sup>14</sup> ***For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. (1 Cor 14:14)***

8. **Science proves benefits** – There have been quite a few scientific studies on praying in tongues of which it is very interesting that they broadly support the biblical account and testimonies of those who do it.

D. **Every Spirit-filled believer can pray in tongues** and this fact I will underline clearly:

1. That was **Paul's desire** and did not only express a wish but also a possible reality. Paul mentioned it together with the prophetic of which the Bible makes it clear that all can prophesy (Joel 2:28; 1 Cor 14:31).

<sup>5</sup> ***Now I wish that you all spoke in tongues, but even more that you would prophesy ... (1 Cor 14:5)***

2. **Praying in tongues is not a spiritual gift** in the traditional sense (as opposed to speaking in tongues) because

- a. Spiritual gifts are for the edification of the church (1 Cor 12:7; 14:5,12; 1 Peter 4:10-11) while praying in tongues is for the individual believer only (1 Cor 14:4,17)
  - b. In the list of spiritual gifts (1 Cor 12:10,30; 14:26), tongues are always put together with the gift of interpretation which highlights the fact that it refers to speaking but not praying in tongues. The gift is the form that has to be interpreted because it's for the edification of the church and equal to the prophetic gifts. The text does not give any reason to also include the private prayer language in this description of the gifts (especially because of its characteristic difference to spiritual gifts mentioned above).
  - c. Praying in tongues differs broadly from the characteristics of spiritual gifts mentioned in 1 Cor 12. Therefore we cannot project other aspects of spiritual gifts on praying of tongues. Consequently applying 1 Cor 12:11 (that is the fact about the gifts of the Holy Spirit that He bestows them on each differently) to praying in tongues also is simply not a valid thing to do.
3. **Not for ministry but relationship.** Because praying in tongues is not for the edification of the church but for personal edification, it has primarily nothing to do with ministry-calling (unlike spiritual gifts, see 1 Cor 12:4-5) but with my personal relationship with Jesus. Withholding it from some would mean that He would willingly limit their ability to fellowship with Him which is so contrary to His heartbeat. Though God gives us different callings and giftings to fulfill our specific ministry-tasks, He invites us all to the same level of intimacy with Him.
  4. **We definitely need it.** If Paul needed it and even said that he was doing it more than all the Corinthians together (1 Cor 14:18), who were known for their excessive use of tongues, then how much more do we need it. It's presumptuous to say that one doesn't need it if they don't display at least the spiritual maturity of Paul.
  5. **No reason to withhold something so beneficial.** Having a look at the benefits, there is no reason why God would withhold it from some. It seems strange that God would give it only to some and leave out others. All of us need constant edification in our walk with God. And looking at the benefits of it only confirms our desperate need for it.
  6. **Experience proves that God gives it to all who really want.** Even though once in a while there are people who say they don't have it, or even mean that God told them He doesn't want to give it to them (yet), I haven't seen anyone who really wanted it and didn't start doing it after some short instruction about how it works, what it is and what it is not. Often there are just wrong expectations and ideas, doubts or fears that keep people from simply stepping into it.

#### E. Requirements & Misunderstandings

1. **Baptism of the Holy Spirit** – Tongue related activity is mentioned as a result of the baptism with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6), which refers to the step from being a Christian in which the Holy Spirit works to being a Christian in which the very Godhead takes residence in you, filling you with a new experience and level of fellowship with the Holy (not of salvation!).
2. **Never done what you already can** – I believe that many Christians (especially those who really want it) are simply unaware of the fact that they already can speak in tongues. They wait for a special occasion, feeling or sign that they have it or receive it, not knowing that God has already done everything in them and that they can do it right now.
3. **It's a step of faith** – Many are baptized in the Spirit and have been wanting to pray in tongues but have never really ventured out and are now stuck in asking mode (for something they

already received). If you are filled with the Holy Spirit, then praying in tongues is an ability that you have, no matter if you've ever exercised it or not, no matter if you're aware of it or not. Stop asking for God to prepare a pathway, when He is calling you out of the boat and into the water.

4. **You take initiative** – The Holy Spirit will not “come upon you”, forcing you to do something in a way that you cannot resist but so you suddenly have to speak in tongues. That's so unlike God and it simply doesn't work like that. People who wait for that wait in vain. Even though at some point we might feel an urge of the Spirit, it's not necessary nor usual. The step into praying in tongues is obedience in stepping into it. Even in the often ecstatic gift of prophecy, Paul eventually makes clear that “the spirits of the prophets are subject to the control of prophets” (1 Cor 14:32). When you want to pray in tongues, you decide when to do it, how to do it, how loud and how fast. The spirit is not taking you over but simply filling your mouth with words. But when you want to pray in tongues, it is your part to take the initiative and open your mouth.
5. **Less ecstatic than expected** – I would say, it's not half as ecstatic as many think it is and not half as ecstatic as some groups make it seem. It's more like praying with the mind: sometimes you feel God's presence, sometimes you simply don't, sometimes you feel an anointing and sometimes not. And it's not like the Spirit overcomes you and you lose control over yourself and suddenly pray in tongues. People who report such things are most likely exaggerating a deep urge to express what they feel within. It's like when God touches you deeply and you burst out in worship. But you decide if, when and how. God hasn't created you as a robot and He won't use you as one.
6. **It's not necessary to get to heaven** – Some groups overemphasize the ability of praying in tongues so much that they wrongly (and most destructively) make it a matter of salvation. That is a most terrible distortion of Jesus sacrifice on the cross and just another manifestation of righteousness by works. You don't have to pray in tongues in order to be saved. You don't even have to want it in order to be loved enjoyed by God. He wants to give it to you because He is a good Father and loves giving you good gifts, but He certainly won't reject you if you reject one of His gifts. (We all miss and reject so many of them daily, don't we?) You also don't have to speak in tongues in order to be baptized by the Spirit. Rather the Baptism with the Holy Spirit precedes praying in tongues. There are many Christians out there who are baptized with the Holy Spirit but have (sadly) never prayed in tongues.
7. **It's no substitute for prayer with out mind** – There are some groups that overemphasize praying in tongues over common prayer with mindful words. That is wrong and completely contradicts the purpose of this present. The ability of praying in tongues is given to enhance our prayer life, not to limit it. It's an addition, no substitute. Paul clearly underlines that both are important parts of our prayer life (see 1 Cor 14:15). I personally pray more with the mind than with the spirit and would not want to change that, because I love to converse with God.
8. **It's a present of God** – Another aspect to underline the previous fact: It's a present of God and will remain that. He will never impose it on us and force us to do it. It's for our good and we decide how much we receive it and how much we walk in it. You don't have to take it, but you will miss out on something He desired to give to you to help you build an intimate relationship with Him. However, it being a gift also assures us that those who do not really want it will go without it.
9. **What about those who claim God told them He doesn't want to give it to them?** – Some say that God doesn't want to give it to them (yet). I highly doubt that and never found it to be true. Actually the case is most often that they already can, but simply have wrong expectations about how is must feel or about how to receive it. They have simply never taken the step of faith to

actually begin doing it.

- a. Some actually don't want it out of fear, unbiblical ideas, misunderstandings, controversies or awkwardness and actually feel relieved by the thought that God doesn't want to give it to them. They haven't really understood the powerful benefits of praying in tongues and the potential it has to enhance their relationship with Jesus. If they did, they wouldn't feel relieved when God said something like that but would deeply sadden them and only increase their yearning for it. If they would really understand what it could do to their level of intimacy with Jesus they would exclaim with Jacob: "I will not let You go unless You bless me." (Gen 32:26)

## F. Activation

1. **Get baptized with the Holy Spirit** – If you are not baptized in the Holy Spirit, cry out to Him that you would. You definitely don't want to miss out on that!
2. **Pray for it** – If you want, let someone pray for you that the ability to pray in tongues would be activated in you and that you would find the courage to receive and use what He gives you.
3. **Free yourself from false expectations** – Do you have wrong ideas of it that actually keep you from doing it? One of the false expectations is that you have to feel something special either when receiving it, or while practicing it, or in order to start it. This can happen and it certainly can impact not only our spirit but also our emotions, but it's not necessary and doesn't always happen like this. One of the best ways to describe it is to liken it to normal prayer and it actually comes very close to it. Sometimes you feel God's presence and sometimes you just don't. But in all cases you simply start, trusting that there is one who listens and understands.
4. **Start doing it** – Simply start doing it. You can theorize a lot about it, but in the end it comes down to this simple step of faith. There's no other way or hotfix than trusting His leadership and goodness and activating what you have.
5. **Do it with someone who knows it** – It can be very helpful to have a good friend beside you who can encourage you, and one you can simply listen to in order to know what it will sound like (especially if you've never heard it before). After all I think the biggest barrier is exactly that: The venture out into new ground that simply feels a little new and insecure and therefore can make us feel a little uncomfortable at first. It's good to have one next to you for who it's not something new, who feels comfortable in doing it.
6. **Don't withdraw** – Don't be confused by its sound, the way it feels in the beginning, and maybe even that it might not seem to make sense or feel any special. In the end it's something supernatural, and it will not seem very logical. Spiritual things have to be discerned spiritually! It's like when Paul said that the gospel seems foolish for those who have no capacity to grasp it. It's a spiritual thing and our mind will not be able to grasp it all and that's ok. It will become something very natural and comfortable to you in time if you don't give up on it, this I assure you!
7. **Don't be fooled** – As in everything else, the enemy will come and try to steal, kill and destroy (John 10:10). He will be telling you that you're fooling yourself, that it's not the real stuff, and all kind of stuff. Many voices can rise up that will come against you and demonize it. (I so know what I'm talking about...) I tried to outline everything clearly and comprehensively here in order to prepare you to speak the Word of God back to the accuser and to find rest in Jesus' truth.
8. **Use it often** – Just use it more regularly. In your private prayer times give it space. When you're

taking a walk or running some errands, simply take the opportunity to connect with God through praying in tongues. It will become something very normal and natural, and before you know it you will love it a lot just because you regularly experience how it helps you love and fellowship with God more. When praying in tongues, you give the spirit room to move. It often happens to me now after having given much room to the spirit, that I find myself praying in the spirit very often. It's just become almost as natural as breathing.

## V. PREACHING IN TONGUES (THE MIRACLE)

- A. **Definition:** Boldly proclaiming the gospel in tongues while being understood by other people in their own language. That is the kind that we read of in Acts 2 (the day of Pentecost).
- B. Many people falsely associate the Acts 2 form of tongues with the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues mentioned in 1 Cor 12 and 14. This again will cause various problems when trying to bring the biblical account together. They are close, but there are also distinct differences between those two:
  1. **No interpretation needed** – When Paul talks about the gift of speaking in tongues in 1 Cor 14, he repeatedly underlines the necessity of interpretation (1 Cor 14:5-9,13,27-28). However, we don't read anything of interpretation in Acts 2, nor does the necessity for it appear at all, for the people understood (Acts 2:7-8).
  2. **The staggering fact was the understanding rather than speaking** – When carefully studying Acts 2 it is obvious that the actual surprise (more than about the fact that they were speaking in other tongues, Acts 2:4) was the fact that everyone understood them in their own language (Acts 2:7-8). The language miracle that happened in Acts 2 was more a miracle of hearing than of speaking. While they spoke in other tongues, everyone understood them in their own native language. It was more than speaking in tongues that was understood without interpretation, it was it being translated by the Holy Spirit differently in each of the listeners ears.
  3. **Conviction rather than edification** – First of all the speech was addressed to unbelievers rather than the church. Then its purpose was not the edification of the congregation but the conviction of those unbelievers of whom many would get baptized later that day.
- C. **So, is this (or any of the tongue related activities) a real, existing human language?**
  1. Because of the Acts 2 account, many assume that tongue activity always and only refers to someone speaking in a real human language that he or she hasn't learned. I believe that this is a wrong conclusion and, even more, that there is no substantial evidence in the biblical texts that would require it. Here are some reasons:
  2. **Speaking in tongues** – Once again, Paul puts the spiritual gift of speaking in tongues together with the gift of interpretation. The need to interpret is what he specifically highlights in 1 Cor 14, or it won't be understood. The spiritual gift of speaking in tongues requires a real spiritual gift of interpretation (not the naturally acquired ability of translation). It's a spiritual language that can only be understood by a spiritual gift.
  3. **Praying in tongues** – The personal prayer language is not a human language, but a language only known to God because it was only meant for Him (isn't that a lovely fact!). 1 Cor 14:2 makes it clear that what you say when praying in tongues is reserved for God alone, and that “no one” (!) understands.
  4. **Preaching in tongues (Acts 2)** – Again, the biblical account is clear in that the real miracle here happened in every ear hearing a different language rather than them speaking in to them foreign



languages (Acts 2:7-8). Therefore it's not necessary that any of them was speaking a foreign language at all since everyone of the listeners would hear something different anyway (which would, after all, make it more or less useless anyway). Thus, it seems quite natural that they, as the Bible says spoke in tongues (Acts 2:4) while the Holy Spirit Himself interpreted it, in this case translated it, to the every one of the listeners for means of conviction.

5. Thus, none of the three types seems to be initially or mandatorily connected to a real, existing human language.
6. This being said, of course there is no reason to limit the work of the Holy Spirit. God is not to be put in a box! I believe that God can and does grant to some that they can suddenly speak a foreign language fluently and also that tongue related activity (any of those) can come close or really be an existing human language. I have heard of and seen it myself. However, I'm not sure if they really spoke the different language, or (like in Acts 2) the Holy Spirit translated it in my ears. My intention here is simply to point out that the biblical account does not speak of tongues as being human languages and that insisting on that is not based on the biblical text.

#### D. Activation

1. **Sovereign move of God** – I categorized what happened in Acts 2 as a miracle and think that it's an appropriate description, because they are unique and sovereign moves of God that require the cooperation of human beings with God and though there is no biblical promise for their successful repetition can surely (and in many cases) are rightly sought.
2. **Pray for it** – As it is a miracle, we can and should pray for it and expect God's intervention especially in times of need. This also positions us to boldly walk it out in case that God really wants to give it to us at some point.
3. **Try doing it** – Sometimes when I am in a different country where I cannot speak the native language and I see a homeless person or beggar asking for money at the side of the road, I seize the opportunity, ask God to use me as a witness for His glory, go over to the person, give them some money and then speak to them in tongues. You showed that you care, they are happy, and if they can't understand you, they will know you're a foreigner and won't care. Really, you have nothing to lose that way. Furthermore, you've blessed them anyway, and you've touched God's heart as well since He is deeply acquainted with the poor, broken and hurting ones. Seeing their need also encourages me and really makes me expect God to move in those situations. If He does use your speaking in tongues (and I have heard of instances where it happened), then you are proclaiming the Word of God in power and will mightily impact the life of this person. Both of you will be amazingly surprised when God actually grants a divine encounter in this area.