



Pastor's Francis Update

Sunday, May 1, 2022

Speak with New Tongues (Mrk 16:17)

One of the most powerful instruments which human beings have at their disposal was created by God. That instrument is the tongue. It is the tongue that changes the course of world history. The tongue is used to motivate and malign; to bless and to curse. The wise man says that “death and life are in the power of the tongue” (Prov. 18:21). Being such a powerful tool, the use of the tongue is of signal importance in relation to Christian witness. Mark 16:17 says that one of the signs which follow those who believe in Jesus is that they will speak with new tongues. This promise begs two questions. First, why would they have to speak with new tongues? Secondly, what does it mean to speak with new tongues? These two questions will occupy this weeks update.

The first question why do those who believe in Jesus “speak with new tongues,” implies that something is wrong with this instrument of speech. The first thing we must say is that there is nothing inherently immoral about the tongue. The tongue is simply a muscular organ in the mouth covered with moist, pink tissue called mucosa.

But the tongue is also the organ of speech, symbolic of human language. With the tongue we verbalize our thoughts and feelings. Our words actually reveal the condition of our heart (Psa. 19:14; Prov. 16:23; Matt. 12:34). It is also true that we do not always speak what is in our hearts. Jesus accused the pharisees and the scribes of this hypocritical attitude (Mk. 7:6). But that is not our focus at the moment. What we are speaking of is the basic truth that, if we can say it like this: words are the gateway to the heart. Along this line Jesus says that out of the heart proceed the evil thoughts, etc. etc. (Mk. 7:21). The divine prognosis of human speech is very serious: “Their throat is an open grave, with their tongues they keep deceiving, the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouths is full of cursing and bitterness...” (Rom. 3:13-14). The problem with the tongue is that human beings use it to curse God and their neighbors. And this is so because sin has marred the hearts of humans. Fix the heart and the tongue is fixed! The heart is fixed when the Holy Spirit takes up residence in the heart of all those who believe in Jesus Christ. They are given new tongues.

We now turn to the second question. What does it mean to speak with new tongues? Some would answer this question by saying that to speak with new tongues is “to speak with other tongues” like those who were filled with the Spirit on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:4). This is certainly not the gibberish that some call “the gift of tongues.” Unfortunately, this single issue has caused deep divisions among Christians over the centuries. Whether we agree or not that the “new tongues” in Mark 16 is equated with the phenomenon at Pentecost, it is noticeably clear that when someone believes in Jesus and is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, something unique happens to the tongue. What is this unique thing? It is this. When a person is indwelt by the Holy Spirit, instead of cursing, they now use their tongue to glorify God! Like the Pentecost believers, they speak “of the mighty deeds of God” (Acts 2:11; Acts 10:46; Acts 19:6; cf. Lk. 9:42-43). This is one of the signs of a true believer in Jesus – Praise flow through their tongue to God. They sing and make melody with their hearts to the Lord! This is what it means to speak with new tongues.

By God's Grace and for His glory,

Pr. Francis

**HYMN: “O FOR A THOUSAND TONGUES TO SING”
(Charles Wesley, 1739)**

Oh, for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise,
The glories of my God and king,
The triumphs of His grace!

My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad,
The honors of Thy name.

Jesus! the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease—
’Tis music in the sinner’s ears,
’Tis life, and health, and peace.

He breaks the pow’r of canceled sin,
He sets the pris’ner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean,
His blood availed for me.

He speaks, and, list’ning to His voice,
New life the dead receive,
The mournful, broken hearts rejoice,
The humble poor believe.

Glory to God, and praise and love
Be ever, ever giv’n
By saints below and saints above,
The church in earth and heav’n.