

The Permanence of Love, Part 2

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 13:8

Code: 1869

We are all aware of the fact that this is a chapter about love. A chapter about love, and we've learned much about it. We know, here at Grace Church, a little about the real meaning of love because we've endeavored to make such a major item out of it. We know that the Scripture teaches that love is the very essence of God because God is love. We know the Scripture teaches that the highest expression of love is the Lord Jesus Christ. It says in John 13:1 that, "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them unto perfection." The perfect example of one who loves.

We know that the kind of love that the Bible talks about is a love, according to the apostle Paul in Ephesians 3, that "passes knowledge." And only by the Holy Spirit can we comprehend the depth and height and breadth of love. We know it is a kind of love that, marvelous truth as it is, "is shed abroad in our hearts," according to Romans 5:5. And so love is very dominant thing, the nature of God expressed in Christ, beyond human understanding, and yet, poured through believers. What a tremendous truth it is.

We have defined love. We have said that love is not a feeling, love is not an emotion, but love is a spirit of self-sacrifice. It is a willingness to do what is needed by somebody else, even if it means sacrificing something that I need or possess. Love is to be such a dominating thing in the life of a Christian, so much is it to be the way of a Christian's life, that a Christian can actually be recognized by virtue of his love. Jesus essentially said that. "By this shall all men know that you are My disciples, if you have love one for another."

In I John chapter 2, along with a couple of other places in that same letter, he says, "He that says he is in the light and hates his brother is in darkness. He that loves his brother abides in the light." In other words, Christians are people who love their brothers. In chapter 3, verse 16, "By this perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." And he says, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Our lives, then, are characterized by love.

In fact, it is so much the characterization of a Christian that final judgment can actually be determined on the basis of love. Look with me for a moment at Matthew chapter 25. In Matthew chapter 25, verse 33, we have the judgment of the sheep and goats that occurs at the second coming of Christ. It says there, "And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left." Now, there is the separation between believing and unbelieving nations. Now notice. "Then shall the King say to them

on his right hand, 'Come, you blessed of my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.' ”

Now we get the scene. Christ is giving the kingdom to some, some special ones, some special individuals are granted the kingdom. On what basis are they granted that kingdom? Notice verse 35. “For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you took me in, naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me.’

Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when saw we thee hungry and fed thee? Or thirsty and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger and took thee in or naked and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick or in prison and came to thee?’ And the king shall answer and say unto them, ‘Verily, I say unto you, as much as you have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, you have done unto me.’ ”

Now, what is interesting about this is this. That Jesus determines who enters the kingdom on the basis of their deeds of love. Is that salvation by works? No. It is simply the fact of what James is saying. It is that true salvation issues in deeds, and they will be deeds of love. You can tell a man by the pattern of living, because the pattern of living is determined by the nature of the man. And a new nature creates love, and love, when a fruit of the Spirit, determines behavior. And so Jesus actually judges people on their deeds of love because they are so much a manifestation of the new nature. So you see, love is extremely vital to the believer.

And this tremendous chapter just overwhelms you with the reality of love. In fact, I was thinking this week that I wish I could just teach this chapter about love, just go right through and just celebrate love from beginning to end. You say, “Why don’t you do that?” Because I get stuck at verse 8. And the reason I get stuck is because there’s a word there, and the word is “tongues,” or language. And you know what? That’s an issue today and so I have to talk about it.

I was wishing this week that I had lived 100 years ago. Because if I had lived 100 years ago, I could come and I could just preach the 13th chapter. And when I got to verse 8, I’d say, “Languages, well, that’s something in the apostolic age and it’s not around, so we’ll just go on.” But I can’t say that because it’s something going on today we’ve got to talk about. But it would be kind of nice, I was thinking, if we could just talk about love and leave it at that. But I guess we’d better deal with that issue because it is an issue.

You know it’s kind of sad that the world doesn’t understand love. And I think that we who talk about love and who say we need to live out love not only need to live it out with the world, but we’ve got to understand that there has got to be a loving spirit even when we talk about an issue like this. It’s very important. Now, the world doesn’t understand love at all. When the world says, “I love you,” it means,

“I love me and I want you.” That really is a selfish thing.

It's like Alan Redpath tells a story about a girl who was totally despondent. She called up her pastor and she says to him, she says, “Oh, Pastor, what am I going to do?” She says, “There's a man who loves me so much that he says if I don't marry him he'll shoot himself.” And the pastor said to her, “Don't do anything. Let him shoot himself.” He said, “Such a threat is not love. It's pure selfishness.”

He's right. He's not saying, “I love you.” He's saying, “I love me and me needs you.” But the world doesn't understand. But we have to demonstrate that to the world. And I know that it's not just as simple as loving the world; it's as simple as letting the world see that we love each other even when we disagree, see. It's got to be there.

And the people who are involved in the Charismatic movement and the tongues movement and so forth, many of those people are our brothers and sisters in Christ. And after all, love is the eternal thing and gifts are going to pass anyway, aren't they? And we've got to keep our perspective, but we also have to talk about the subject and we have to do what it says in Ephesians 4. We have to “speak the truth in love.” So we're going to go ahead and do that, but I wish we didn't have to.

Now, the chapter has four parts, 1 Corinthians 13 does. It has four parts. And we have already discussed the first two, we're in the third one, beginning in verse 8. We discussed verse 8 last time. We will discuss verse 8 again this time. And we thought we might get to verses 9 and 10, but that will be next time. Verse 8 is loaded with good things.

We are talking about love's permanence. We have discussed love's prominence. That's when he says, “If I have not love, I am nothing.” Love is prominent in everything. We've discussed love's perfection. That's where he describes every virtue of love in verses 4-7; and now, love's permanence. Now, what is he saying about love's permanence? Well, he makes a comparison here between the spiritual gifts and love, because the Corinthians had exalted the gifts to a place of high priority. So much so that they had made the gifts everything.

They had decided that the real issue in the Christian life was using your gift and really putting it on. And, of course, they were seeking preeminence, and they were spiritual showoffs and they had counterfeited the true gifts. They were carnally expressing the gifts. They had terrible jealousy over people with certain gifts, so they manufactured a false one to kind of compete. The Corinthian church, when it came together, was absolute chaos.

And Paul has to say, in the 14th chapter, “You'd better let things be done decently and in order instead of everyone yelling and shouting, and doing their thing at the same time.” And so they had just pushed the gifts completely out of perspective and to the absolute exclusion of the reality of the important thing, which was love. And so Paul says, “You've made such a big deal out of gifts, let me

just give you a little comparison between gifts and love.”

His comparison is this. Gifts are just for time. Love is forever. You might as well major in the eternal. And he says it three ways. Gifts are temporary, gifts are partial, and gifts are elementary. And in those three statements, he is really saying, “Gifts are just a part of the passing scene. But you need to anchor yourself to relationships that are forever, and they will be anchored on the basis of the anchor of love.”

Now, let’s go back to verse 8. Paul is saying basically one thing in the rest of the chapter. “Love never fails.” That is the clear pinnacle, the climax, of all that he has said. That is absolutely the peak. Love never fails. And then he comes down to explain what he means. “Whether there be prophecies, they shall be rendered inoperative; whether there be languages – “ or tongues “ – they shall stop by themselves; whether there be knowledge, it shall be rendered inoperative.” Then he goes on, “For all those things are partial, all those things are elementary. They belong to childhood. But love is eternal.” That’s the whole message of the rest of the chapter.

Now, let me remind you of what we discussed last time so it’s very clear in your thinking, because it is a major point. “Prophecies shall be done away,” the King James says. They shall be rendered inoperative,” the Greek verb, or shall be abolished, shall be brought to an end. “Knowledge,” at the end of the verse, “shall be rendered inoperative.” Shall be abolished. Same verb, verb *katarge* for you Greek students. The verb simply means “to be abolished or to be rendered inoperative.” It is in the passive form. Prophecy and knowledge will be rendered inoperative.

Now, notice. Both of those have the same verb. Both are in the passive, and in the passive verb the subject receives what? The action. So something stops prophecy and knowledge. Something is going to stop prophecy and something is going to stop knowledge. They will be rendered inoperative by another thing acting on them; that’s the use of the passive. If you were to say, “I was hit,” then there has got to be something that hit you, right. And that’s, essentially, the passive use.

Same here. These will be rendered inoperative, something acting on them. And we found out what it is. It’s in verses 9 and 10. “For we know in part – “ that’s knowledge “ – we prophesy in part – “ that’s prophecy, and those two appear there. “But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be abolished,” or rendered inoperative. Same verb, *katarge* again. So prophecy and knowledge will be *katargeoed*. When will they be *katargeoed*? When the perfect thing comes.

Now, I told you that we’d discuss this week what the perfect thing is. But we won’t, we’re going to have to wait until next week. Sorry about that. Because of time, we want to cover some other things before we get to that. There is so much in those white spaces between the verses. Now, you’ll notice, backing up a little bit, that in verse 8 you have prophecy and knowledge being rendered inoperative as a passive form. But when you come to tongues, it’s a totally different verb. The verb is *pau*, which

means to stop. It is in the middle voice, which in the Greek is reflexive, which accentuates the active.

Tongues will stop by themselves. Fifteen times used in the Septuagint and rendered that way. To be brought to a complete halt, to be ended, to be stopped, to be completed, to be finished by itself, which means nothing stops tongues. Not the perfect thing. The perfect thing only stops knowledge and prophecy. Look at verse 9. Knowledge and prophecy are mentioned in verse 9, tongues never appears. Why? It stops by itself before the perfect thing comes. Tongues will stop.

Now, we discussed last time whether it had, and we suggested to you the answer is that tongues has indeed ceased. It has stopped. And there were two reasons, and we gave you all kinds of sub-points. But, basically, there are two reasons we believe tongues have stopped. Number one, the purpose for tongues came to an end. You'll remember that the gift of languages had basically a three-fold purpose. Summarizing, first of all, it was a source of divine revelation; God spoke revelation through that gift. Now, when the Bible was complete, is there any need for further revelation? None. So the revelatory nature of that gift has ceased.

Secondly, it was a miracle sign to authenticate the apostles and the prophets in the apostolic age. Since there was no written Scripture to confirm what they preached, God attended them with signs and wonders and gifts, and so forth. It was a sign gift of a miraculous nature to attest to the divine, supernatural power of the apostles and prophets.

Now, there are no apostles and prophets authenticating the gospel. It's authenticated by virtue of whether a man agrees with what has been written and delivered to the saints. We're not trying to defend apostles anymore by miracle signs anymore, so it has ceased as a sign gift.

The third use of it was as a judicial sign to unbelieving Israel, fulfilling Isaiah 28:11. It was a judicial sign to unbelieving Israel of coming judgment. That judgment came in 70 A.D. The nation was destroyed, and that was fulfilled. There is, therefore, no reason today for tongues as a sign to unbelieving Israel. So it has no function as a source of revelation; it has no function as a miracle sign of proving the apostles and prophets, and it has no function as a sign to Israel regarding their judgment. Therefore, its reason to be is no longer around. So we say it ceases for lack of purpose.

Secondly, the second reason we believe in the cessation of tongues is the fact is that history says it did cease, and so does I Corinthians 13:8. It says tongues shall stop by themselves. We look at history and they stopped. In fact, for up until 500, from the birth of the church until 500, after the apostolic era was over, there is no record of the church ever speaking in tongues, or anyone in the church, except two people, Montanus and his disciple and follower Tertullian, and we mentioned them.

And Montanus was...in the second century, Montanus believed that he was the Holy Spirit. He was a heretic. He had some women who accompanied him and spoke in ecstasy and prophesied. He believed the kingdom of God was coming to Phrygia and that it would be set up in his village. He was a heretic, and his follower, Tertullian, was also branded a heretic. They were really disregarded by the church. The mainline of the church, no such occurrence, and I read you many quotes from the church fathers stating that they had no knowledge of that as anything existing for the church.

And then we saw that throughout the rest of the history of the church until the twentieth century, there is no account of tongues except isolated incidents among heretical groups. Never was it a part of the main church; never was it a part of even Reformation doctrine; never belonged in the church. And it wasn't begun in a mainstream way in Christianity until 1901. So what is interesting about that is that you have 18 hundred years when tongues had stopped.

You say, "But wait a minute. It did exist among those groups." Yes, but those were all heretical groups. The question is simply this. Those groups were most likely not even Christian. But in mainstream Christianity, within the confines of the church of Jesus Christ, it hasn't existed until 1901 when it popped up in Kansas and spread to California. And now, you know where we are.

Now, what is interesting is that our Charismatic brothers and sisters have to treat this in one of two ways. Number one, they say that, "Well, we – " and they do...they...they do say this – "We claim Montanus, and we claim Mother Ann Lee," and we claim some of these strange people who spoke in tongues at intervals of three hundred or four hundred years through the church. But by doing that, you see, they're putting themselves in a heretical tradition. They're saying, "Our movement has been a part of the heresy of the church for years." And I'm not sure that's what they want to say.

There's only one other alternative for a Charismatics. And this is where most of them stand, I think, the ones who really seriously think about it. They are saying, "It did cease, but it is starting again." And they will say this, "Because we have...we are now in the last days and God is giving us the last-day outpouring of His Spirit." That's the most reasonable view that they will present.

I'll tell you something interesting about that view. That's the view that Montanus held. Because they asked him, "Where has it been if it just popped up with you? Where has it been for the last one hundred and fifty years. And he said, "Oh, it's been restored now because this is the last days and the kingdom of God is coming right away. And it'll be in Phrygia and the headquarters will be in my village." See, he said the same thing.

And so, nowadays, we're asking them where has it been for the last 18 hundred years, and their saying, "Well, it's been restored." And, "Well, what scripture do you use?" And, invariable...and I want you to turn there with me...they go to Joel chapter 2. And Joel chapter 2 is the scripture they use to defend the fact that tongues has been restored in the last days.

And I want you to look carefully with me at Joel 2, and I'll see if I can't help you to understand what it's saying. And the verse that they use is also recorded in Acts 2:17, and we'll look at that in a few minutes. Now, notice Joel 2:28. Here's the passage, and it's recorded by Peter at Pentecost, and that's why they make the connection. "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and, also, upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit."

Now, notice, in the last days they say, "God is going to pour out His Spirit on all flesh. Sons and daughters will prophesy, and dreams and visions, and so forth. And he'll pour out His Spirit. Now they say, "We are now experiencing the last-day outpouring of the Holy Spirit." Now there are several problems with that, and I want to show you what they are, and will back up to verse 20.

Now, if you look at this prophetically, and I think when you're dealing with the passage, you have to deal with it as prophecy because of the fact...prophecy of the future because of the fact that verse 31 where it says this is before "the great and the terrible day of the Lord," and we know the great and terrible day of the Lord is the second coming, and he's talking there about signs in the heavens, so we're dealing with the end time prophecy, I'm convinced.

Now, look at verse 20. "I will remove far off from you the northern army, and drive him into a land barren and desolate." Now, when is it that Israel confronted by a northern army? What period of time? Tribulation. During the great tribulation, Israel is under the siege of a great northern army, a great northern power. You can read this in the book of Daniel. And they will be sieged by this great northern army, but the northern army will be defeated.

When is that great army defeated? At what great victory? When Christ comes in the great victory of Armageddon, right. What happens immediately after Armageddon? As far as we know, the setting up of the kingdom. Christ returns at Armageddon, wins the victory, judges the nations and sets up His kingdom. Now, that flow is right here. The northern army is defeated in verse 20. Immediately you come to verse 21, and you take one step into the kingdom.

Now watch. "Fear not, O land." I mean I know you've been under a terrible siege and war and bloodshed. In fact, we know in the tribulation, the blood will be as deep as a horse's bridle for a length of 200 miles, right. It says it in Revelation. So the land has been just denuded again. "Fear not, O land in the kingdom. Be glad and rejoice; for the Lord will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field; for the pastures of the wilderness do spring."

You may not have anything to eat for a little while, but something's going to happen dramatically. "The pastures in the wilderness are going to spring, the tree bearing her fruit, and the fig tree and the

vine are yielding their strength.” What’s going to happen in the kingdom is there's going to be a proliferation of crops and growth, and things are going to explode. Read Isaiah where it says the desert is going to blossom like a rose and things are going to spring up, and streams in the desert and all these marvelous things in the kingdom, and He puts the land back together.

Verse 23: “Be glad then, ye children of Zion, rejoice in the Lord, your God; for He has given you the former rain moderately, and He will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain and the latter rain in the first month.” Now, listen. This is super. You know people make a big deal out of the former rain and the latter rain. Do you know you know what the former rain means? That's when it rains in autumn. And the latter rain is when it rains in the spring.

In Israel, you have the former rain in autumn and you have the latter rain in the spring, and those are the things that secured the crops. But he says, “When you get in the kingdom, you are going to get the former rain and the latter rain in the first month. You’re going to get so much rain when the kingdom begins, it’s everything is going to grow like crazy. What you have to normally wait for for seasonal rain, God is going to dump rain and make everything grow.

“And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, and the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmer worm, My great army which I sent among you.” No more of those pestilence things. And all the crops that were lost then will be proliferating here in restoration. “And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord, your God, who has dealt wondrously with you; and My people shall never be ashamed.”

No shame ever. Why? That has to be the kingdom. They’re going to praise God, praise the Lord. You know who Israel is currently praising? They’re praising the god of might, see. That’s who they’re currently bowing down to. The revival hasn’t happened. And in verse 27, “And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel.” When will the Lord be in the midst of Israel? When Christ sits on His throne in the city of David, right, and reigns. “And that I am the Lord your God and none else, and my people shall never be ashamed.”

You see, this is the great when the people are in their land, when the crops begin to grow, when streams in the desert come, when it blossoms like a rose, when it rains in the first month as it would rain in a whole year of rain and everything grows. And all is overflowing, and no pestilence and no plagues, and everybody worships God and everybody praises God. That has never happened in the history of Israel, that’s kingdom stuff.

Now watch. Verses 28 comes so clearly. “And it shall come to pass - “ what's the next word? “ – afterward.” Afterward what? After the kingdom has already begun. “Then I will pour out My Spirit.” Now, listen, people. That prophecy cannot be fulfilled until after the kingdom is established; that’s a

kingdom prophecy. "Then will I pour out My Spirit on all flesh; your sons, your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, young men shall see visions; and upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out My Spirit."

Just so you know what day it is, he goes on to discover how that day will come. He says, "There will be wonders in the heavens and blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. And the sun altered and the tail...a great and the terrible day of the Lord will come." In other words, all of this, he says, will follow this great judgment, and then the kingdom will be set up. See, what he's saying, and you just have to look at it. A simple Bible student reading an English Bible could see it.

I saw it, and I'm no scholar, and I don't know much about Hebrew. But I just read it and check a few Hebrew words. All I wanted to know was does after mean after?. And after means after. It's after the kingdom has begun, after the day of the Lord with all the signs and wonders. Oh, that hasn't happened. After the army of the north has already come down and been defeated, after the kingdom has been set up, after the day of the Lord. "Then I'll pour out My Spirit."

Listen. Same thing in Ezekiel 36. "In the kingdom," He says, "I will gather Israel from all over the world, and I'll bring you into your own land. And then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and then you shall be clean. And then I'll take away your stony heart and give you a heart of flesh, and then will I pour My Spirit in you." After you're in the land, after you are regathered in the kingdom. Read it; it's Ezekiel 36.

Oh, you see people, you can't take that verse and just yank it out and make it say whatever accommodates what you want. Now, to me, it's just a closed case. There just is no basis for believing that Joel has anything to do with the present scene. And then some of them even say the former rain was Pentecost and the latter rain is now, and when gave the former rain, He's now giving the latter rain. People, first of all, that's just plain H₂O; that's not tongues. That's just...he's just talking about water, plain old water basically.

Now, some people say, "Well, there is a metaphor there." Well, if there is a metaphor there at all, it is that the former rain was the Davidic kingdom and the latter rain is the Messiah's kingdom. That would be the only picture he would be making, where he says, "You had the former rain moderately." In other words, "David's kingdom was nice, but it had its problems. But in the latter rain, you're going to get all the good things." So maybe if you want any metaphor there, then it would be between David's kingdom and the Messiah's, but certainly it has nothing to do with Pentecost and 1901. So, you see, it's fairly clear that this has to be in the future.

Now then, you cannot say that the current Charismatic movement fulfills Joel 2:28. And when you can't say that, you have no other scripture to substantiate the current...current movement, none. There is no scripture to substantiate that God would do now what He did in the apostolic age in

reference to the gift of languages; there isn't any. And these people who want to claim that this is the age of the outpouring of the Spirit are wrong. This is not the age of the outpouring of the Spirit. All that the whole Bible says about that age is in reference to Israel. Don't they see that? And God's Spirit hasn't been outpoured on Israel yet. There's only a remnant now, isn't there, just a remnant.

We've got to wait until the Tribulation is over, until the Second Coming is over, until Jesus sets up His kingdom and reigns in Jerusalem. And then His Spirit will be poured out on all flesh. And you know what interests me is that even then, it doesn't say anybody will speak in tongues, does it. And it's very clear about what it does say. Prophecy, dreams, visions. Tongues? No. Why? Because when tongues ceased, tongues ceased. It doesn't say they're going to stop until a little later...footnote...when they'll be back again. No, it does not say, and you don't see them picked up anywhere.

Let's go to Acts 2 because everyone will ask, "Well, if that's true, John, about the Joel text, then why does Peter quote it on the Day of Pentecost?" And here's where our beloved friends get confused, I think, and maybe they just need to be taught. And I'll, you know, give them the benefit of the doubt, that they just have not been taught properly in this. But in Acts 2, Peter stands up after the occasion of Pentecost and the speaking in tongues, and he says, "This is that which was spoken through the prophet, Joel. 'It shall come to pass in the last days, I will pour out of My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.' "

Well you see, they say, "Well, look right there. You've got Peter saying what happened on Pentecost is the outpouring of the Spirit." Now you want to back up a little bit and understand something. On the Day of Pentecost, verse 19, was there wonders in the heavens, signs in the earth? Was there blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke? Did the sun turn to darkness, and the moon to blood, and did the great and terrible day of the Lord come? Of course not. It's future, future. Now, listen. He's talking about the coming of the kingdom, the setting up of the kingdom. He's quoting Joel.

You say, "Well, what in the world does it have to do with Day of Pentecost?" Just this. Now, listen. What happened on Pentecost, Peter tells them, was a preliminary glimpse of the kind of power that the Spirit will release over all flesh in the kingdom. It was a little, tiny, localized thing in a little, tiny town called Jerusalem, in a little country called Israel, to a little tiny handful of 120 people.

And it was to be to them and to surrounding people a sign of what God's Spirit would do someday worldwide, see. It was a glimpse of the kingdom, and it is exactly what is meant in Hebrews 6:5, when the writer of Hebrews says to the people who were there, "You have tasted of the powers of the age to come. You've got a little taste of the kind of power that is going to be released in the kingdom when Christ comes at the great and terrible day of the Lord." Do you understand? It was just a glimpse, just a taste.

One of the great biblical scholars of the 19th century was George N.H. Peters, and he put it this way, quote, "The baptism of Pentecost is a pledge of fulfillment in the future, evidencing what the Holy Spirit will yet perform in the coming age." End quote. He was right. A current theologian, Helmut Thielicke, of Germany, a very brilliant German theologian, holds that same view, and he has a very beautiful statement. He says, "The miracles of the first century, things like tongues," I love this, "are the lightning on the horizon of the kingdom of God." He's right. "They are the lightning on the horizon of the kingdom of God." He says, "Those miracles are the lightning flashes that draw our attention, that beyond that horizon, there is a coming kingdom."

And that's exactly what happened at Pentecost. But beloved, that was not the fulfillment of the Joel prophecy that is yet to be fulfilled in the kingdom. Now, you say, "Why are you spending so much time on this?" Because this is the one passage that they hold on to to defend the fact that the pouring out of the Spirit is going to occur, and they want to define it as now. It can't be defined as now. There is no scriptural evidence, then, to support the continuance of tongues.

For number one, there is no reason for it. We showed you what its reasons were and they don't exist. History shows that it ceased. Thirdly, there is nothing in the Bible that supports the fact that it will return in the church age. The verse says it will stop 15 times in the Septuagint, and that form, when it's used, it means it will stop. There is no reason to believe it will start.

You can't use Joel 2:28 to say that it's coming up again because this is the outpouring for two reasons. Reason number one, Joel never said tongues would come back when the outpouring came. And reason number two, this isn't that outpouring. And the point of the whole argument is that tongues is going to stop. That's what Paul is saying, and you can wiggle your way all the way around the Bible and you just won't find them starting again.

People say, "Well, what about Luke 11 where it says He'll give the Holy Spirit to them that ask, and if you ask for bread, will He give you a stone? And we're asking for the Spirit and we're asking for tongues and we get it." Yes, but if you're asking for something that God isn't giving in a certain time, then you may get something that isn't from Him. That's very clear. People say, "Well, I asked the Lord for it." Yeah, but maybe the Lord isn't giving it. And if He's not giving it, and if Satan knows you want it bad enough, and you're having an unqualified request, he may give you a satanically developed substitute.

And you know what you have to be careful of, people, and this is such a dangerous thing. Don't let experience change anything. Don't let somebody come along and say, "I don't care about Joel 2:28, Acts 2. I don't care about I Corinthians 13. All I know is that it happened to me." You know that's what they say, bless their hearts, "It happened to me; you can't deny my experience." Well, yeah, but experience...I mean why do we need this? Bring your experience to this. People are having

experiences all over the place.

Man, people in TA, transactional analysis; TM, transcendental meditation; all the other strange things going on in our world, in every religion around the globe, people are having experiences. Drunks have experiences, but they sleep them off. They never were real, you know. They were fighting the DTs or whatever else, you know. There's a difference be...you know, judging reality, the worst judge of reality is human experience.

Well, you say, "Then, all right, John, if we're going to stick with the Word, then we've got to say that the gift has ceased. Yeah, okay. Well, then, if what's going on today isn't scriptural, then what is it? What in the world is going on, because all these people are doing this." Well, let me give you some suggested answers.

Number one, it is very possible that some of it is Satanic and demonic, satanic and demonic. Now, let me illustrate what I mean by that. Every false religion in the world was spawned from the same individual. Who? Satan. The Old Testament says, "All the gods of the nations are demons." Remember that? There's a demon behind every false system.

Satan is working in false religion, so you can believe that wherever tongues occurs in a false religion, its basic source is Satan or demons. For example, Mormons claim to be able to speak in tongues. The Encyclopedia Britannica...you can check it out...cites many instances of tongue speaking among pagans in their worship rites.

Dillow says in his book, which is a helpful book...Joseph Dillow, he's written on this. He says, "D.C. Graham tells of a girl in the Szechwan province of China who was possessed by demons and 'began to utter words incoherently.' Edward Langston says that in East Africa, many persons possessed by demons speak fluently in Swahili or English, although under normal circumstances they don't understand either language.

"Junod reports that among the Thonga people of Africa, when a demon is exorcised, the person sings a curative song which he himself composes. Usually the songs are in the Zulu tongue. Even if the person doesn't know this language, it is claimed that he will be able to use it, quote, 'by a kind of miracle of tongues.' As far back as Vergil, who lived from 70 to 19 BC, there are references to the tongues speaking of the Sibylline priestess on the Isle of Delos. This is described in Virgil's "Aeneid.

"Today, ecstatic speech is found among the Mohammedans and the Eskimos of Greenland. Non-Christian alchemists of the middle ages were reported to have spoken in tongues. This caused them to be popularly feared as men skilled in sorcery. The Bwiti cult among the Fang people of the Gabon Republic," and I still don't know where it is, "has been observed speaking in tongues.

“The parapsychology laboratory of the University of Virginia Medical School reports incidents of occult speaking in tongues. A Turkish actress claims she learns the language of Jacosta from a black man she sees in her dreams. Joseph Smith, the founder of the non-Christian sect of Mormonism, taught his followers to speak in tongues in the following manner.” This is a quote from Joseph Smith. Quote, “ ‘Arise upon your feet, speak or make some sound, continue to make sounds of some kind, and the Lord will make a tongue or language of it.’ ” End quote.

That sounds like it was quoted right out of the manual for the Charismatic people. It is the very same approach. Now, here you have all kinds of possibilities of Satan and demons introducing this. So just to say it exists and that validates it is foolish. That is as foolish as it is to say if there is some religion, it must be of God. There are plenty of religion that isn't. And the Corinthians had done the same thing; they had counterfeited it. They were using pagan ecstasy and calling it the gift of languages.

A second explanation of the phenomenon of the tongues movement is that it is just learned behavior. It is learned behavior. In a sense, it's kind of fake. It isn't really a supernatural experience; it isn't a miracle; you just learn how to do it. And I personally believe that this is far and away the most common explanation. That people who speak in tongues, basically for the most part, just learn how to do it. And the reason I say that...many reasons, but one is that in traveling around the country and hearing many different tongues speakers, I have noticed amazing similarity in the terms they use; they all speak sort of the same thing in the same way. And I've heard it enough that I could say those words to you. I'm not going to do that, but I could.

John Kildahl, in his book entitled *The Psychology of Speaking in Tongues*, published by Harper and Row, says “Tongues is definitely a learned behavior.” And, incidentally, he was commissioned by the American Lutheran Church and the Institute of Mental Health to do a long, long-range study with Paul Qualben. And their conclusion was that far and away the vast majority of this movement was simply learned behavior. People had just learned how to speak in tongues because it was told that it was the right thing to do. They wanted to do it; they wanted badly enough to do it; they learned to do it.

And I had a fellow from our church come to me last Sunday and say, “That's the situation with me. I learned to do it. I'll show you.” And he took off and did it. He said, “See, I can do it anytime I want.” And the things he said, strangely enough...I don't remember if I told him at the time...were the very same terms that I'd heard before from others who claimed this is some heavenly language, some private, personal language.

Tongues, also, are deliberately induced. I remember being one night in The Children of God meeting. I went down there to see what was going on. We were trying...I think we were trying to get a fellow out of there, as I remember, who had been caught by The Children of God. And we were sitting in the lobby, and there was a guy who supposedly came to Christ and this fellow was trying to get him to

speak in tongues.

And it was...it was...he was just inducing it in a most laborious way. This poor guy, well, just really didn't know what to do. And he couldn't figure out what the next step was, and he was giving him all these procedures to get into this thing. Well, you know what happens? Where it is a learned behavior, and where it is so strongly induced by pressure from somebody else, it is a potential for a great disillusionment. Because once the experience comes and the people get into the movement, they realize it is simply learned behavior.

It isn't anything supernatural, it isn't really effective. They have the same problems in their life, the same hang-ups, the same deal whether they're doing it or not doing it, so they become very disillusioned. "And, frequently," say Kildahl and Qualben, "the more sincere the person is when going in, the more disillusioned they are coming out." So you have to be very careful about this.

In fact, I remember hearing one person give a testimony. I think it was on one of those television programs where they do this all the time, saying that somebody...well, they were having spiritual problems. Well, this person said, "Have you used your tongue every day? Have you spoken in your tongue language every day?" "Well, no I haven't." "Well, that's the problem. You've got to do it. You've got to get in that every day and every day. And it doesn't matter how it starts. You can just get it started. But once you get it started, the Holy Spirit will keep it going."

That's incredible. If the Holy Spirit wanted it going so much, why didn't He start it going Himself? I'm sure He can handle it. But see, it doesn't make sense. But do you see how intimidating it is to say to somebody, "Your spiritual problems are because you stopped doing that." Now, I don't know if everyone says that, but it's at least one occasion when someone said it. But the peer pressure is very great; the desire to belong, to be a part.

The other testings that have...that have been done, and there are many of them, too many to even quote, have discovered another interesting thing. And that is always an attachment to a leader or a group, a strong sense of identification with a group or a leader. And when people lose confidence in either the group or the leader, they cease speaking in tongues. That's Kildahl and Qualben's book where they talk about that. Now, so it could be Satanic, or demonic, or just could be learned behavior.

Thirdly, it could be psychological. And I think some of the more strange cases might be actually psychological, where people just flip out. You know I...have you ever watched junior high girls at a rock concert. You see them on the news, "Whoo, Ooh," you know, screaming over some freaky person who's just...and what happens is this heat and the emotion and the furor and the loud noise. And they, literally, give up voluntary control of their vocal chords, voluntary control of their muscles until they start falling on the ground. They start flopping around.

It doesn't take a doctor or even a layman who's read in the medical science to understand it. Your brain can do anything to your body, whether it's control over speech or anything else. And so, psychologically, tongues can be explained as motor automatism, which could be clinically described as "radical inward detachment from one's conscious surroundings." It's a disassociation of nearly all voluntary muscles from conscious control. You just kind of flake out.

Some call it ecstasy. And ecstasy is described as "a pleasurable state of intense emotion linked with an altered state of consciousness." The emotion, the fever, the intensity, they swirl around you. And pretty soon...you know you and I have all experienced moments when we feel a little detached and a little woozy, and maybe a little faint. Well, that kind of driving, pounding emotion. And it's interesting, too, that much of the rhythmical music that is often associated with tongues, goes right along with that same kind of thing, tending to drive you away from a sense of control.

And then, also, the area of hypnosis; whether group hypnosis or individual hypnosis, or auto hypnosis, self-hypnosis, John Kildahl and Qualben say that...and this is a quote. "Hypnotizability constitutes the sine qua non of the *glossolalia* experience." The conclusion they make is that all of the people they studied who fell into tongues were people who were hypnotizable. And not everybody is.

Maybe that's why I've never done it, because I'm not hypnotizable. I don't know why; I just am not. But people have tried to hypnotize me, and it doesn't work for some reason. I don't know why, but it just doesn't. And maybe I'm too fact oriented, and maybe I...maybe I'm too strong in my own mind, I don't give myself to anyone. I don't know what it is. But there is a sense in which Kildahl says, "People who are submissive, suggestible, and dependent on a leader are the people who fall into tongues."

And I can see that. Because they really want to belong, they hear the power of suggestion, they submit to whatever's being said. They fall under this thing, the emotion gets hot enough, the pressure gets great enough. And, pretty soon, it's happened. And there are many other psychological explanations. Now, I can't go around and say, "Well, this...don't come to me and say, "Well, you know Mrs. so and so, she did that. So have you heard what...what is that? Is that psychology? Is that auto modism? Is that..."

I don't know. I'm just telling you there are other explanations, right. There are others. There are plenty of psychological explanations, other than the fact that it's the Holy Spirit. The gift has ceased. We know that because we studied it in the Bible. Now, what we've got today could be explained many ways.

Listen to this. Dr. E. Mansell Pattison, who is a member of the Christian Association for Psychological Studies, himself a believer, is currently an instructor at the University of Washington School of

Medicine, said this recently. "The product of our analysis is the demonstration of the very natural mechanisms that produce *glossolalia*. As a psychological phenomenon, *glossolalia* is easy to produce and readily understandable.

"I can add my own observations from clinical experiences with neurological and psychiatric patients." Now, listen. This is most interesting. "In certain types of brain disorders resulting from strokes, brain tumors, etc., the patient is left with disruptions in his automatic physical speech circuit patterns. If we study these patients, we can observe the same decomposition of speech that occurs in *glossolalia*.

"Similar decomposition of speech occurs in schizophrenic thought and speech patterns, which are structurally the same as glossolalia. This data can be understood to demonstrate that the same stereotypes of speech will result, whether conscious, willful control of speech is interfered with, whether by injury to the brain, by psychosis, or by passive renunciation of willful control."

That last line is essentially what they tell people when they want them to speak in tongues, "Release yourself." Give up the control of your voice. Just say words; just let them flow. Don't think about what you're saying. You can speak that way either by having brain damage, psychosis, schizophrenia, or giving up willful control. That's amazing. "This corroborates our previous assessment that *glossolalia* is a stereotyped pattern of unconsciously controlled vocal behavior which appears under specific emotional conditions."

So Dr. Pattison's conclusion is that *glossolalia* or tongues can occur wherever conscious, willful control of the brain is interfered with, and that could be psychological or physiological. You say, "But why are they doing this, John. Why is it happening?" Well, I think there are many explanations for why it's happening. Someone started it, and it was kind of exciting. And somebody else got it, and off it went. But, basically, I think it comes from spiritual hunger.

People are told that this is how to get a great spiritual experience. And, man, if you haven't had it, you haven't arrived, and so they're doing it. And they haven't been properly taught. Or people are seeking for a spiritual expression, some way to express. You know they've been coming to church and just plunking themselves for years. And there's no involvement and they want an expression. Or there is a desire to be thought holy, and people who do this are thought holy, and so they want to be thought holy.

And there's a reaction to a secularized, mechanized, academic, cold, indifferent society. And this is something supernatural. This is something that's not academic; it's not explicable in terms of reason. And there's a need to belong and a need for acceptance and a need for security. And all of these things drive people into these groups where they're the "in" group, and they're the ones who have it and the rest don't. That's very satisfying. That's self-actualization. "I am a Charismatic." You are something. You belong to something that's got something that others don't have.

But the scriptures say tongues shall cease, and they ceased. But love is eternal. You know what I don't want you to do. I just...I don't want you to forget that this whole chapter is about love, right? And everything I've said to you is just to try to teach you the Word of God. I don't have an axe to grind. Some of my friends are in Charismatics movement, and I don't want to talk about that with them all the time.

You want to know something? I thank God for Pentecostal and Charismatic people who believe in the authority of the Word of God. I may think they ought to study it a little more, but I thank God they believe it and hold it up as authoritative. And I thank God for them because they believe in the deity of Jesus Christ, and they believe in His sacrificial death and His physical resurrection for us. And I thank God for that.

And they believe in the salvation by faith and no works. They believe in the gospel and they believe in the Holy Spirit. And they believe in living the life and they believe in obedience. And they believe in proclaiming their faith. And I thank God for all of those things. I'm sorry we can't agree on this one thing, but they're my brothers and sisters in Christ and I'm going to love them, because love is eternal. I know that. And the gifts are just for...just for a little while. And theirs just happens to be around when it shouldn't be. But it's all going to go anyway.

And you know something, that I have a fear that everybody's going to run and say, "Boy, I've got eight Charismatic friends, so they need this," and we're going go running out shoven tapes down Charismatic throats. "Listen to this. This'll straighten you out." You know that would be the last thing I want you to do. You know, if you have somebody who believes in tongues or has this experience, you know what the best thing to do, just love them to death, just love them something fierce. And then they're going to disassociate love from tongues. See.

People say, "Oh, I've never loved since I had this experience. I've never felt so good. I've never had such joy." You just joy and love and positive and happiness. And they're going to say, "Hey, maybe this isn't connected to tongues." And, then, when the day comes, because of the life that you've lived and the love that you've shown, they come to you and say, "Could you help me with this?" you could say "Yes, ha ha, see," and then you can hand them a tape. But love them and earn the right to hear...to be heard.

There's no reason to...listen, I'm sad that there's a rift in the church. It grieves my heart because of the rift. And I don't think there's any point in jamming a bunch of my tapes in the gap just to make it harder. What I think we need to do is to love those people with all our hearts and to be available for the time that comes when they ask us what the truth is, or when the right moment comes and we can share in love. Because it's so very important that we love. That's the whole message of the chapter.

Now, I was accused last week of not being loving. But, you see that's how you define love. Is it loving to speak the truth? Is it loving to teach the Word of God? I'll tell you one thing right now. I love God and His Word more than I love anything else, and I love his Word next to Him. And if I love Him and His Word, then I'm going to proclaim His Word with boldness. And after that, I'm going to love people. But the Bible speak the truth in love, and this is the truth.

Now, I'm not always right. You're not shocked, are you? I'm not always right. But you know something. I don't stand alone in teaching you what I taught you this morning. I feel firm that this is what the Word of God is teaching. There are some things that I'm not sure about. I'm sure about this. And there are many, many men, scholars far better than I, who are standing on the same ground. This is the truth. And I believe it is the most loving thing to do to tell the truth, because then you put people in the place of blessing, don't you? When they live the truth.

People say...one fellow said, "Well, you shouldn't get into that. When there's an issue there, you should just go past it, just don't deal with it." That's the worst answer. How...what are you going to do, ignore God's Word? Do you think you didn't do a favor to somebody by telling them the truth? If I'm in error, listen, I pray God someone comes to me and says, "MacArthur, you're flat wrong. Let me show you why."

And I'm the first guy to say, "Thank you, thank you." This is God's Word, I want to deal with it as such. So that's the truth. It's in love, I hope, and I want you to carry it from this place wherever you take it in love. Be available to help, but don't create anxiety and bitterness where you can build a bridge of love. Let's pray.

Father, thank You for our fellowship this morning. Thank You for the clear ministry of the Spirit of God as He takes the Word and makes it make sense, opens it to us. Fill us with love, Your love shed abroad in our hearts, that we might melt the heart of our staunchest enemy because we love so deeply. May our love be in action and not in word, that we might truly be Your children in the world and in the church. We pray in the name of the One who loved and gave Himself. Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.gty.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You

You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (<http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright>).