

GRACE GAZETTE

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Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Hebrews 12:12-13

SPEAKING AND HEARING

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. Mark 12:29-30

Two miracles occurred on the Day of Pentecost. One was the fulfillment of a prophecy wherein the tongues of men were loosed to speak in languages which they did not know. The other was a demonstration of the power of GOD to open the ears of those who were dull of hearing. Down through the ages men have marveled at this first occurrence (i.e.; speaking in tongues) and sought to have it duplicated in their midst. We see this "miracle" occur on a few other occasions as the LORD poured out HIS SPIRIT upon those that "heard" the word of GOD according to HIS purpose.

Paul writes in some detail to the Corinthian church as to the operation of this phenomenon which he rightly calls a "gift". Certain sects and cults of those calling themselves Christians have made the exercise of "speaking in tongues" to be the centerpiece of their practice and operation. When one is brought into their midst, they make this miraculous "gift" (which is a "sign") to be so commonplace that it can be "learned" or "taught" by and to others completely negating the very basis of this being a "gift" which is bestowed upon men according to the good pleasure of GOD.

Paul certainly did not forbid the exercise of this "gift", *"Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order."* (1Cor 14:39-40). Yet he did warn about the proper use of it in the public gatherings of the saints and set strict parameters as to the practice of it. *"But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church."* (1Cor 14:28) Needless to say, such admonitions and warnings are roundly ignored by those who place greater emphasis on "speaking", than "hearing". Paul was not personally ignorant of this "gift", yet he clearly understood the greater good that is ministered to the church by "speaking" in an intelligible language rather than in gibberish which no man understands. *"Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue. Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men."* (1Cor 14:19-20)

"Hearing" the word of GOD is a greater gift than "speaking" it even though the latter be exercised with the tongues of angels. Eloquence and miraculous utterances by men will pass away, but the WORD of GOD will stand forever. *"But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."* (1Pet 1:25) *"Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous judgments endureth for ever."* (Psa 119:160)

So, as we look at the occurrences on Pentecost, we see that the miracle that had the greatest and lasting effect upon those present was that of "hearing" the WORD of GOD. *"Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language."* (Acts 2:6) They soon forgot the miracle of "speaking" but they could not forget the miracle of "hearing". *"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in*

their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)

Not everyone who has the physical ability to hear sounds with their ears, is given the gift of "hearing" the glorious good news of JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified. But oh, what a wonderful demonstration of GOD's mercy is visited upon those who are enabled to do so. *"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."* (Acts 13:48) Many heard with their ears, but only those who were appointed to "hear" with their heart rejoiced and magnified the WORD of GOD.

A man may repeat syllables, whether unintelligible (as in the case of modern "tongue speaking") or, quite lucidly set forth (among the more sedate), in the copying of styles or mannerisms of others in declaring the word in preaching, (so-called) but one cannot duplicate the gift of "hearing" for it is sovereignly dispensed quite separately from audible sounds. There are any number of "schools" that men can attend which can "teach" them to "preach" (supposedly, as they would define it) but there is no "school" nor scheme of men that can cause men to "hear".

Going through the motions of "preaching" (however eloquent and scholarly), apart from the sending of the messenger by GOD, is no more useful to the sons of GOD than is the contrived "speaking in tongues" by those who clamor for recognition and miracles. GOD does not hear the prayers of men because of their "much speaking", nor are men enabled to hear by the copious preaching of men, who go where they have not been sent and declare any message which is not *"JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified."*

Paul clearly stated the importance of the public declaration of HIS WORD and the end to which HE is often pleased to send it. *"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."* (1Cor 1:21) He defined such "preaching" as having one message, *"the preaching of the cross."* (1Cor.1:18) He declares a similar theme to the Romans, *"How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"* (Rom 10:14-15)

Many are those who become enamored with the concept of preaching (and preachers) and inadvertently think that it is synonymous with "hearing", yet such is not the case. HE does indeed use the preaching of the Gospel to bring *"life and immortality to light"*, but only to those whom HE grants the gift of "hearing" that same gospel, spoken not by the tongues of men, but by the quickening power of the SPIRIT of GOD. Faith is bestowed by the LORD through *"hearing"* and not by preaching. *"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* (Rom 10:17)

"But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." (Rom 10:18) So, it is not the "sound" of speaking which we desire but rather the opening of the ears of those who hear that "sound" which is sent by GOD to accomplish the exact purpose for which it is sent. *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."* (Isa 55:11)

The Gospel message, while elucidated and more clearly defined in these "last days" (i.e.; since the advent of CHRIST), has not changed from the beginning, even as the LORD described the first and greatest commandment, *"The LORD our GOD is ONE LORD"*. For when CHRIST came into the world the LORD said, *"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."* (Mat 17:5) The manifestation of CHRIST as the True and Living GOD, clothed in flesh and blood, is the very CENTERPIECE of that which the LORD would declare. Even as Peter testified and the LORD revealed to HIM the ORIGIN of his "hearing". *"Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."* (Mat 16:17) Have you heard HIM? *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me."* (John 10:27)

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