

**THE BIG IDEA:** In public, be careful. In private, be carefree.

### The Take-Off

As we've worked our way through this series called The Helper, we've intentionally taken our time

We've been careful to build slowly and carefully, line on line, precept on precept

If you're like me, that can be frustrating, because we're quick to go to the index or the table of contents and look for our specific answer so we can move on, but God's kingdom doesn't grow like that

He isn't about quick fixes, or even quick answers

As a master builder, God lays the foundation, then adds the framework followed by the finishing touches and then adds the furniture.

But here's why it's been so important that we've taken the time to build carefully: most of us are scared out of our minds that the Holy Spirit is going to do to us what's in this scene from one of the best movies ever made...

[He Shook me Like a Doll - from Monsters. Inc.]

The Holy Spirit is a friend, not a force. He leads, he doesn't push.

And it's ok to have questions, because we're on a journey, and when we don't quite know when we'll arrive, we tend to ask a lot of questions along the way:

"Are we there yet?"

"Did you bring any snacks?"

"Can we stop and get a milkshake?"

"Who let it rip??"

Questions are a part of this, and while we may never have all the answers, that shouldn't stop any of us from asking questions. The best place to do that is always in community groups. Just know that your CG leaders are journeying, too, and so they may very well be asking the same questions!

So, this morning, let's continue our journey with the Helper by seeing what the big deal is with tongues:

### 1. First things first

- a. We haven't gotten to it yet, but there is a public use of tongues, and they can be used as a sign to unbelievers and they can also be used along with interpretation to encourage the church
- b. But this morning, we're looking at a third use - a personal and much more intimate prayer language
- c. But before we get there, we need to answer some obvious questions
- d. One, have tongues ceased?
  - a. Some have said yes based on 1 Corinthians 13:10 - because we now have the complete Bible, tongues aren't necessary
  - b. But verse 12 points to another perfect - a face-to-face encounter that will leave us with full understanding
  - c. This is Jesus, and when we see Jesus face-to-face, and know him as he knows us, tongues will no longer be necessary
  - d. Tongues have not ceased
- e. Two, why are tongues confusing?
  - a. first, because they're a mystery (1 Cor. 14:2), so they'll never be fully understood!
  - b. second (and more importantly), people have used them in the wrong places at the wrong times
  - c. they use the private grace publicly, and that leads to confusion
  - d. This was such a big deal that Paul took most of 1 Corinthians 14 to clear up private vs public
- f. Last week we talked about 2 problems that have to be corrected if we're going to be used by the Helper: pride and the tongue
- g. The church in Corinth was struggling with both, and as we saw last week, it was the public gifts without the private fruit of the Spirit that was confusing people, and so chapter 14 is Paul doing a lot of distinguishing between what goes on publicly and what goes on privately
- h. Think of this as a parent talking to their children in the car before they go to dinner at another family's house
- i. "In our house, we lick the maple syrup when it drips, but we won't do that here."
- j. All of us understand that when private things go public, it causes problems (or it creates a movement like "People of Walmart!")

- k. We'll be in this chapter a lot when we journey through the public gift of tongues, but for now, let me sum it up with the Big Idea: In public, be careful. In private, be carefree.
- l. Publicly, we shouldn't confuse people with tongues - God's not about confusing people (v. 19 shows that!)
- m. But privately, we should be able to use this gift with no worries, and Paul encouraged it (v. 18 - he did, and v. 5 - he wanted all of them to, as well!)

## 2. More reliable than the best Wi-Fi!

- a. Not only is private grace of tongues scriptural, there are amazing benefits, as well
- b. One, it builds us up (1 Cor. 14:4) (Robert Morris - "I need all the building up I can get")
- c. Two, it strengthens our faith (Jude 20)
  - a. one reason for this is because we have to trust God
  - b. this builds faith and tears down pride
- d. Three, it helps us pray when we don't know what to pray (Rom. 8:26)
- e. Four, we can know that we're praying God's perfect will (Rom. 8:27)
  - a. those last 2 are fantastic
  - b. they can revolutionize our prayer lives because it's like the most reliable Wi-Fi hotspot ever!
- f. Five, praying in the Spirit protects us by completing our armor (Eph. 6:18)
- g. Six, it allows me to offer the most vile part of my body to God for righteousness (James 3:16 and Romans 6:13)

## 3. More desire, less demand

- a. Inevitably, people start to feel pressure and ask questions like, "Do I have to pray in a prayer language?"
- b. The answer, of course, is no, but the question is wrong
- c. The question should be, "Why would I not want to pray in a prayer language?"
- d. My prayer is that you would find this spiritual Wi-Fi to be a growing desire, and not a confusing demand
- e. People won't be leaning in close to hear if you've "got it"
- f. I won't be dissecting you to see if we can find "evidence"
- g. I'm just praying that you find the amazing power in prayer that I have
- h. Are you a better Christian if you do or a worse Christian if you don't?
- i. Let me answer that with another question: if you play football without pads, are you still a football player?
- j. Of course, and depending on the skill level, you may be a better one than people with all the equipment!
- k. But why run the risk of injury by not using every piece at your disposal?
- l. Like the pastor told Robert Morris, "I need all the building up I can get!"

## The Landing

How do we end a message like this? Well, we obviously don't tell everyone to go public with something private! But we do want to allow you some time to reflect on what we've learned, and so we've asked Elizabeth Donaghue to close our service by singing the song "I Am Not Alone" as we pray.

It's a powerful song that I pray reminds us of the most important benefit of the Helper: not a prayer language, but a constant awareness that we are children of God

Romans 8:15 - the Helper doesn't lead us to fear, but to a Father who is always with us, no matter what