

Articles and Sermons :: Your Tongue Is the Test of Your Spirituality by Zac Poonen

Your Tongue Is the Test of Your Spirituality by Zac Poonen - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2017/4/30 20:09

James - Chapter 3 is a great chapter in the Bible about the use of the tongue. The book of Proverbs also speaks a lot about being wise in our speech.

On the day of Pentecost it was a tongue of fire that came upon people. Unfortunately, carefulness in our speech is not sufficiently emphasised in Christendom. If you are serious about serving God, you must take the matter of controlling your tongue very seriously. Failure in this area is one of the main reasons why many preachers don't have the word of God when they speak. If you want to be a spokesman for God, you must first of all, remove all the worthless from the precious in your ordinary day-to-day conversation (Jeremiah 15:19). If you speak idle words in your ordinary conversation, you cannot expect God to speak through you when you stand in the pulpit. A second reason is unfaithfulness with money. God does not give true riches from His Word to preachers who are unfaithful with money (Luke 16:11).

The tongue is like the bit that is put into a horse's mouth with which the horse can be controlled and turned in any direction (James 3:3). Horses that don't have a bit in their mouth will run wild and such horses accomplish nothing. Horses that win prizes in races are those that allow themselves to be controlled by the bits in their mouths. If you want to accomplish something with your life for God let Him put a bit and a bridle in your mouth. Tell the Lord that you want Him to control your speech totally.

The tongue is also compared to the rudder of a ship (James 3:4). The rudder is a small steel-plate at the rear-end of every boat and ship. When you turn the rudder one way the ship turns in the same direction. It is a small piece at the back of the ship that turns a huge ship in the direction it should go.

Your tongue is the test of your spirituality and not your activity or your Bible-knowledge. Show me the way you use your tongue and I will tell you whether you are a spiritual person or not. James uses all these examples to show us the importance of the tongue. It's only a small part of the body, but what a fire it can start (James 3:5)! Many believers' tongues are set on fire with the fire of hell (James 3:6).

Nobody can tame the tongue (James 3:7, 8). In a circus, even lions and tigers are tamed and some men even put their heads inside the lion's mouth and the lion doesn't bite them off. But no-one can tame the tongue. What is the solution for this problem? We must ask the Holy Spirit to tame it in us. That was why when the Holy Spirit fell upon people on the day of Pentecost, a tongue of fire rested on their heads. The Holy Spirit was saying thereby, I want to control your tongue with the fire of God from now on. Many Christians haven't understood this.

It's a great tragedy that many who preach the baptism in the Holy Spirit today are more eager to get people speak in other tongues than to lead them to speak graciously at all times in their mother tongue. This is what has resulted in many counterfeits among those who speak in tongues.

The Holy Spirit has given me the gift of speaking in an unknown language to my heavenly Father, and I praise Him for that. But above all, He enabled me to control my mother tongue and I praise Him even more for this. This is how we can know whether we received the Holy Spirit or some other false spirit. Apply this test to yourself: Can you control your mother tongue? If not, reject every other spirit you have received and seek God again to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Tell God that you want to have the power to speak graciously at all times. Only the Holy Spirit can tame the tongue. How can you bless God in the church-meeting and then curse men afterwards (James 3:9)?

Re: Your Tongue Is the Test of Your Spirituality by Zac Poonen, on: 2017/4/30 20:51

Zac writes.....

"This is how we can know whether we received the Holy Spirit or some other false spirit. Apply this test to yourself: Can you control your mother tongue? If not, reject every other spirit you have received and seek God again to be filled with the Holy Spirit."

That statement has no basis in Scripture. It is quite bizarre in its assertions. He is saying that Christians can be possessed by demons (what else could "other spirit," mean) Strange teaching.....bro Frank

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/4/30 22:41

Perhaps this question should be answered:

Will a person who has truly received the baptism of the HS be unable to bridle his tongue?

It seems to ZP is simply saying that if you ain't controllin' your tongue you ain't yet received the true baptism of the HS regardless whether you can speak in tongues.

Re: - posted by drifter (), on: 2017/4/30 23:46

I agree Frank. There is no basis in scripture that Christians can have demonic spirits in them.

Re: , on: 2017/4/30 23:48

Todd, we don't have to guess what ZP said, that's why I quoted him :) He clearly states that if you if you cannot bridle your mother tongue (all the time, every time, sometime???) then you have a demon and not the Holy Spirit. Just bizarre....bro Frank

Re: brother Frank - posted by JFW (), on: 2017/5/1 0:14

Could this perhaps be what brother Poonen was thinking of (regarding the "other spirit") when he suggested we test ourselves?

2Cor 11:3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.

4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

Here the apostle Paul, clearly speaking to believers, seems (to me) to be making a similar assertion... albeit focused on the more general context of deception and at least could be taken the same way as ZP's use of the term, no?

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/5/1 8:07

I agree Fletcher-

I don't think ZP was talking about demonic spirits when he used the word spirit; but it's not 100% clear to me.

Re: , on: 2017/5/1 10:44

Hi Fletcher,

I would say the context of the Scripture you quoted was clearly the context of teachings. Paul was speaking about false teachers and he was afraid that the Corinthians would embrace false teachers. Zac's context was spiritual gifts, specifically the gift of tongues. He is saying that the proof of being genuinely baptized in the Holy Spirit as opposed to a false spirit (can only be demonic in this context) is that you " Can control your mother tongue." This is not biblical and creates a myriad of confusions (which always happens when you depart from the simplicity of the Gospel).....bro Frank

Re: - posted by mattf12486, on: 2017/5/1 10:48

I think Zac has seen the gift of tongues being used as "the mark" of the baptism of the Spirit and is trying to show how foolish that idea is by pointing to the book of James. He seems to be saying that taming our mother tongue is a greater mark of the Spirit in control of our life than speaking in tongues. He makes a great point and I could be wrong but I think we are reading too much into what he was trying to say.

Re: , on: 2017/5/1 11:10

Matt writes.....

"I could be wrong but I think we are reading too much into what he was trying to say."

I think rather than guess what a man is trying to say, we should just read what he actually said and if it is not Biblical, ask for an explanation. Maybe he just mis-spoke?bro Frank

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2017/5/1 14:55

Quote:
-----It seems to ZP is simply saying that if you ain't controllin' your tongue you ain't yet received the true baptism of the HS regardless whether you can speak in tongues.

I agree that this is exactly what the brother is sharing.

Quote:
-----That statement has no basis in Scripture. It is quite bizarre in its assertions. He is saying that Christians can be possessed by demons (what else could "other spirit," mean) Strange teaching.....bro Frank

Dear brother,

From my experiences of reading and hearing eye-witness testimonies, believers or false believers have had the gift of tongues but it was a counterfeit and was exposed in either a demonic manifesting or expulsion of a demon. I believe there are some in the north american church under this sort of delusion, probably most of them are unsaved and would appear very "pentecostal" but their hearts are not surrendered to the Lord and they have opened themselves up to a demonic counterfeit.

The Holy Spirit is that, "holy."

Re: , on: 2017/5/1 15:30

Bro Greg writes.....

"From my experiences of reading and hearing eye-witness testimonies, believers or false believers have had the gift of tongues but it was a counterfeit and was exposed in either a demonic manifesting or expulsion of a demon. I believe there are some in the north american church under this sort of delusion, probably most of them are unsaved and would appear very "pentecostal" but their hearts are not surrendered to the Lord and they have opened themselves up to a demonic counterfeit."

Now bro Greg, as one who lives in North America, you will not get an argument from me about counterfeit Christianity, whether it is on the Pentecostal side or whether it is on the legalistic side where people have a head knowledge and appear to live very Godly lives and speak like the finest pharisee or scribe but know nothing of the living God and have never encountered Him in any way other than through their brains. To me that is simply both sides of a broad spectrum of religion. My comments were directed to what Zac wrote, not what other people's opinions of what he might have meant. He wrote.....

"This is how we can know whether we received the Holy Spirit or some other false spirit. Apply this test to yourself: 'Can you control your mother tongue?' If not, reject every other spirit you have received and seek God again to be filled

d with the Holy Spirit."

This is unbiblical and untrue and it invites an explanation from Zac as to exactly what he meant by that.....bro Frank

Re: Your Tongue Is the Test of Your Spirituality by Zac Poonen - posted by Sree (), on: 2017/5/1 17:43

Quote:

That was why when the Holy Spirit fell upon people on the day of Pentecost, a tongue of fire rested on their heads. The Holy Spirit was saying thereby, "I want to control your tongue with the fire of God from now on." Many Christians haven't understood this.

If one agrees with this explanation of tongues of fire during the day of Pentecost then the following quote from brother Zac will fall into place. If one does not agree with this explanation then they may not agree with subsequent quotes from Zac. The above quote from Zac is a revelation, which a carnal mind that has never received revelation from God cannot understand. One needs spiritual maturity to even understand God's revelation!

Quote:

This is how we can know whether we received the Holy Spirit or some other false spirit. Apply this test to yourself: "Can you control your mother tongue?" If not, reject every other spirit you have received and seek God again to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Tell God that you want to have the power to speak graciously at all times. Only the Holy Spirit can tame the tongue. How can you bless God in the church-meeting and then curse men afterwards (James 3:9)?

So the connection of the 2 quotes from this article is very important to understand the 2nd quote. If the meaning of the tongues of fire is to symbolize Holy Spirit controlling our tongue through baptism of Holy Spirit then anyone who has no control of his tongue has not received the baptism of Holy Spirit at all, period. It is as simple as 1+1=2!

If scriptural proof is demanded then here it is!

James 1:26- If anyone considers himself religious and yet does not bridle his tongue, he deceives his heart and his religion is worthless

If his religion (or his born again experience) itself is worthless, then how is the baptism of Holy Spirit be of any worth? A man who has no control over his tongue, his religion, salvation and baptism of Holy Spirit, they are all worthless or garbage! The scripture itself is so clear.

Re: , on: 2017/5/1 18:42

And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.(Act 2:2-3)

That was what God says. If you understand that then you have wisdom. If you add to that your own wisdom, then you have added to what God said.

Sree writes.....

"A man who has no control over his tongue, his religion, salvation and baptism of Holy Spirit, they are all worthless or garbage! The scripture itself is so clear."

I want that to sink into the readers. Stop for a moment and think what Sree is saying. This is the mixing of two different Scriptures on two different topics and coming up with gross error. The context of James chapter 1 is that James is pointing out the difference between a religious man and an actual man of God. Consider what Matthew Henry says (for most

of us here respect his thoughts on the Scripture).....

1. What is a vain religion: If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridled not his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is vain. Here are three things to be observed: - (1.) In a vain religion there is much of show, and affecting to seem religious in the eyes of others. This, I think, is mentioned in a manner that should fix our thoughts on the word seemeth. When men are more concerned to seem religious than really to be so, it is a sign that their religion is but vain. In a vain religion there is much censuring, reviling, and detracting of others. The not bridling the tongue here is chiefly meant of not abstaining from these evils of the tongue. When we hear people ready to speak of the faults of others, or to censure them as holding scandalous errors, or to lessen the wisdom and piety of those about them, that they themselves may seem the wiser and better, this is a sign that they have but a vain religion. The man who has a detracting tongue cannot have a truly humble gracious heart. He who delights to injure his neighbour in vain pretends to love God; therefore a reviling tongue will prove a man a hypocrite. Censuring is a pleasing sin, extremely compliant with nature, and therefore evinces a man's being in a natural state. (Matthew Henry)

I agree with Matthew Henry's observation. In a vain religion there is much of a show to appear to others pious. The exact opposite of what Sree and Zac are saying. The pious religious man who loves to censure is the man who cannot bridle his tongue and his religion is vain. It has nothing to do with a process of sanctification where the Lord is taking a genuine saint from glory to glory and from precept to precept. I suggest Sree reads Acts 15 and then tells us whether it was Barnabas or Paul who had the false spirit because, by their logic, one of them did as there was a sharp dissension between the two, one of them or both of them had not learned to tame the tongue by their logic therefore one of them or both of them was not saved at all and had some demonic spirit. Scary logic, flee from it.....bro Frank

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2017/5/1 19:20

Quote:

That was what God says. If you understand that then you have wisdom. If you add to that your own wisdom, then you have added to what God said.

Like I predicted correctly, you did not agree with Brother Zac's revelation on the meaning of tongues of fire! Tongues of fire is a symbol, it is not a meaningless thing that God sent. Every symbol used by God has a meaning. One needs revelation from Holy Spirit to understand the meaning of that symbol. If all the symbols are to be explained plainly in scripture, then there is no need for Holy Spirit to interpret scriptures for us! There is an entire book called Revelation in Bible that is full of unexplained symbols. It cannot be understood without Holy Spirit. Like I said, one needs spiritual maturity to understand and appreciate revelation. It is not a surprise to me to see someone fails to understand and appreciate divine revelation!

If you do not agree with Brother Zac's explanation of the meaning of tongues of fire, why do you even bother to post rest of the article where he concludes based on his earlier explanation? I find your post totally ridiculous and beyond reasoning!

Regarding Matthew Henry's explanation, I find nothing in it contradicting what I said. James begins the word saying "any of you", which includes the people intended to be recipient of the letter. James wrote the letter to believers and not unbelievers. So if there is a believer who cannot control his tongue then his religion is vain. It is a simple scripture, I am not sure why you twist it so much to prove something else!

Regarding the incident in Acts 15. It is a sharp disagreement between Barnabas and Paul as stated in most of the translation. Disagreement has nothing to do with control of tongue. One does not need to agree with everything to control his tongue. You do not agree with Zac Poonen here, hence does that mean you do not control your tongue?

Re: , on: 2017/5/1 19:27

Sree, you stated what you liked as did I. Let us agree to disagree.....bro Frank

Re: - posted by AbideinHim (), on: 2017/5/2 8:10

Most of the deception today is not coming from those that have received a counterfeit tongue, but from the large segment of Christianity that believes that the gift of tongues is not for believers today, or worse than that, that it is of the devil. Christians that are seeking a true Baptism of the Holy Spirit will not be given a counterfeit, and scripture bears this out.

The Holy Spirit is indeed holy, and Christians should be living holy, sanctified lives. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit has been given to the Church to empower believers to be a witness for Christ. There are Spirit filled Christians today that have received a true Baptism of the Holy Spirit with a true gift of tongues that have not embraced the work of the cross in their lives and are living after the flesh. In the epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, the believers at Corinth were affirmed in their giftings that they came behind in no gift. They also received correction from the Apostle Paul, not that they had received a counterfeit gift, but that they were out of order in the Church with the gift of tongues. The Apostle Paul also rebuked the believers for their carnality, that there was immorality allowed in the Church, and that there was also strife and division. Now these were Spirit filled believers that were manifesting the gifts of the Spirit but were lacking in the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit includes self control, which means that they were to control their conversation. God will not do what He has told us to do. He will not control our tongues in our communication with others any more than He will control our tongues when we are praying in the Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives the utterance and we do the speaking.

It is possible for a believer that is filled with the Holy Spirit to not be walking in the Spirit. There has to be a daily taking up of the cross, crucifying the flesh, and walking in the Holy Spirit in order to live a holy life.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2017/5/2 10:52

Quote:

Most of the deception today is not coming from those that have received a counterfeit tongue, but from the large segment of Christianity that believes that the gift of tongues is not for believers today, or worse than that, that it is of the devil.

This observation might be true in some part of the world but the Churches that I have observed especially in India, among the Pentecostals the opposite is true. There is so much importance given to tongues that people ignore the fruits and go by gifts.

Quote:

It is possible for a believer that is filled with the Holy Spirit to not be walking in the Spirit. There has to be a daily taking up of the cross, crucifying the flesh, and walking in the Holy Spirit in order to live a holy life.

I agree completely with this. I received the baptism of Holy Spirit but did not speak in tongues for few years. But the proof of Baptism in my life was self control. Whenever I walked in the spirit, there is no way I could lose my control on tongues. But there are times when my personal devotion was lost and I backslid losing the control of my tongue.

Re: - posted by TMK (), on: 2017/5/2 12:47

ZP, as I read the OP is not talking about temporary lapses in the use of one's tongue (perhaps an unkind word in traffic toward the stranger that cut you off) but rather he is talking about a person who professes to be filled with the HS but habitually runs down other people, speaks unkindly to his wife and children on a daily basis, gossips at the work place regularly, but then puts on a face at church and leads Bible studies etc.

If a person is truly filled with the HS his tongue will not be an issue the very great majority of the time. I think it is a genuine test, very much more so than "speaking in tongues."

I am not even talking about coarse language. I have known persons saved from rough backgrounds and filled with the HS but who may have been a little rough in some words they used. But the MANNER of their speech changed dramatically.

Re: , on: 2017/5/2 13:11

Great post bro Mike, you write.....

"It is possible for a believer that is filled with the Holy Spirit to not be walking in the Spirit. There has to be a daily taking up of the cross, crucifying the flesh, and walking in the Holy Spirit in order to live a holy life."

This of course is true and Biblical and can be backed by Scripture. True sanctification cannot even begin unless we are Baptized into the Holy Spirit and He empowers us to overcome. The sanctification is a process and the Lord encourages His children as opposed to, perhaps, this.....

"If his religion (or his born again experience) itself is worthless, then how is the baptism of Holy Spirit be of any worth? A man who has no control over his tongue, his religion, salvation and baptism of Holy Spirit, they are all worthless or garbage! The scripture itself is so clear."

Consider the word of the one who is judging lives here, "worthless," and "garbage." These are not the words of God.....
.....bro Frank

Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart. And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God; Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. But if the ministration of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the vail is upon their heart. Nevertheless when it shall turn to the Lord, the vail shall be taken away. Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. (2Co 3:1-18)

Re: - posted by twayneb (), on: 2017/5/5 9:49

Quote:

----- Quote:

It seems to ZP is simply saying that if you ain't controllin' your tongue you ain't yet received the true baptism of the HS regardless whether you can speak in tongues.

I agree that this is exactly what the brother is sharing.

Quote:

That statement has no basis in Scripture. It is quite bizarre in its assertions. He is saying that Christians can be possessed by demons (what else could "other spirit," mean) Strange teaching.....bro Frank

Dear brother,

From my experiences of reading and hearing eye-witness testimonies, believers or false believers have had the gift of tongues but it was a counterfeit and was exposed in either a demonic manifesting or expulsion of a demon. I believe there are some in the north american church under this sort of delusion, probably most of them are unsaved and would appear very "pentecostal" but their hearts are not surrendered to the Lord and they have opened themselves up to a demonic counterfeit.

The Holy Spirit is that, "holy."

I absolutely agree that there are false manifestations that are not of the Holy Spirit, but rather another spirit. But I think we run into trouble when we begin to identify one aspect of a believers life and make a statement that if that believer falls short in that area, then his experience is not of God. I have only heard Mr. Poonen speak once or twice, and I really don't know a lot about him, but I think the scriptural path he took to his conclusion is a little off in my opinion. The fruit of a Spirit-filled life is not summed up in our speech.

I have, since receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit at age 18, spoken at times in an attitude, manner, or with words that I know did not please God, and the Holy Spirit has been faithful in each of those cases to convict me and work in my life to bring about greater Godliness in that area. But my shortcoming did not mean that my experience in the Lord was not genuine. It only revealed that God had more work that He needed to do in my life, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, He continued to do that work.

I think you said it well. The fruit is in a surrendered heart that longs for deeper relationship with God, and the whole life of that believer will be a story of transformation from glory to glory by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Re: , on: 2017/5/5 10:32

Hi bro Travis, that was a great post and I could not agree more with your conclusions. You write.....

" But I think we run into trouble when we begin to identify one aspect of a believers life and make a statement that if that believer falls short in that area, then his experience is not of God."

Yes indeed brother. You write.....

"I have, since receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit at age 18, spoken at times in an attitude, manner, or with words that I know did not please God, and the Holy Spirit has been faithful in each of those cases to convict me and work in my life to bring about greater Godliness in that area. But my shortcoming did not mean that my experience in the Lord was not genuine. It only revealed that God had more work that He needed to do in my life, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, He continued to do that work."

Amen, this statement that you write is not only true but I imagine would be deeply encouraging for those who are (that would be all genuine saints) on a path of sanctification, empowered and convicted by a wonderful and beautifully Holy, Holy Spirit. Your word carries that conviction and that encouragement, unfortunately there are many who simply have a ministry of condemnation.....bro Frank

Re: Your Tongue Is the Test of Your Spirituality by Zac Poonen - posted by proudpapa, on: 2017/5/5 11:04

RE : /// ...This is how we can know whether we received the Holy Spirit or some other false spirit. Apply this test to yourself: "Can you control your mother tongue?" If not, reject every other spirit you have received and seek God again to be filled with the Holy Spirit....///

The problem with this is what does "Can you control your mother tongue?" imply ? 100 % perfect control all the time ? , If this is true of anyone than are they not a perfect person ?

I was at a rodeo last weekend, all the horses had a Bridle on them but not all of them where completely trained to the bridle yet, (some better than others) some horses would not turn around the barrels like they ought, others knocked over barrels, some went right when they should have went left, some kept running when they should have stopped etc. etc.

Just because some of the horses where less trained to the Bridle did not negate the fact that they had a true Bridle on them.

Re: - posted by Theophila (), on: 2017/5/5 18:10

The Western mind is an odd thing. Interestingbut odd.