



# Holy Spirit Power

Acts 2:1-13



## **REVERSING THE CURSE**

Genesis 11:1-9- God scatters the people by confusing their language



## LANGUAGE IS THE KEY

Speaking a new language is a special gift from God.



# OMF's Core Value No. 4

- We Practice INCARNATIONAL Ministry
  - Identifying with the people and living an appropriate lifestyle
  - Learning culture, language and worldview
  - Working in ways that encourage indigenous movements.



## **THE HOLY SPIRIT IS THE DRIVER**

Where is the Holy Spirit leading you as a church?



# 聖靈的能力

使徒行傳 2:1-13



## 扭轉詛咒

創世記 11:1-9 — 耶和華使他們從那裡分散在全地上；變亂他們的口音，使他們的言語彼此不通。



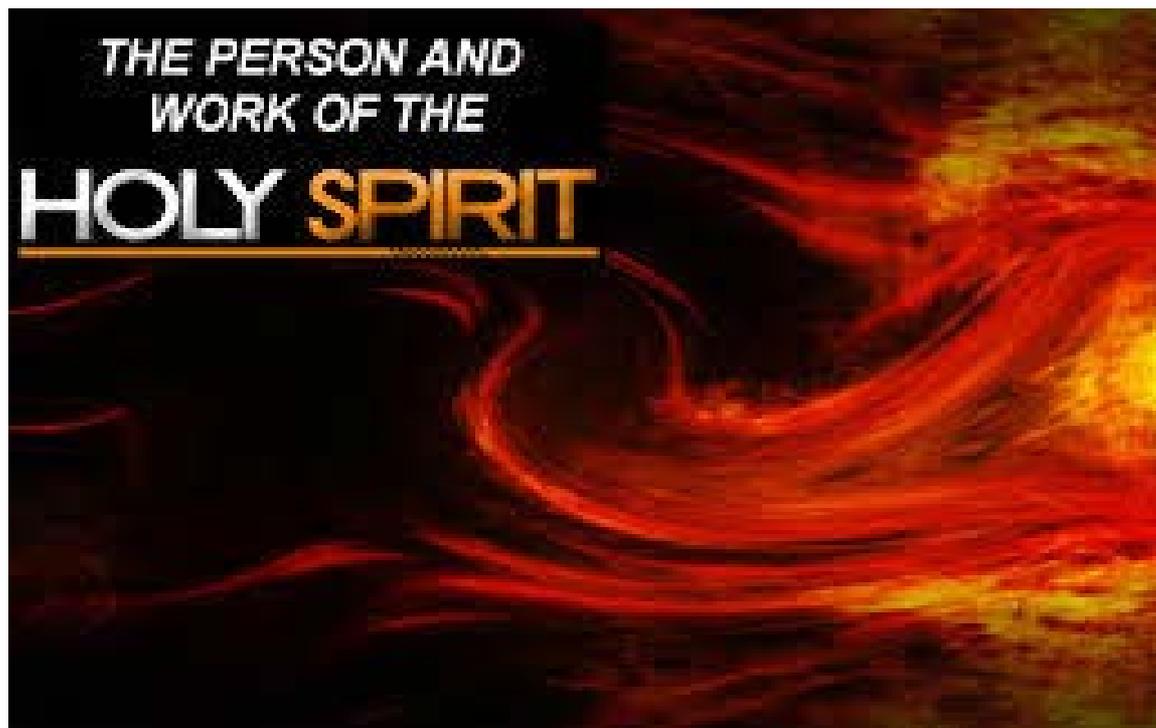
語言是主要的關鍵

說一種新的語言是神給予的一個特別恩賜



# 海外基督使團核心價值 No. 4

- 實踐道成肉身的服侍
  - 與所服侍的群體認同，選擇合宜的生活形態。
  - 學習他們的文化、語言，了解他們的世界觀。
  - 力求促進本土化運動。



**聖靈是驅動者**

聖靈在教會哪一處帶領着你？

## Acts 2:1-13 Holy Spirit Power

### Introduction

It's really great to have the opportunity to be with you today. Especially since we have just celebrated the death and resurrection of Jesus over Easter.

Pentecost Sunday May 15, 2016 50 days after Easter Sunday.

I felt that it would be appropriate to look at some of the events that took place after Jesus' resurrection. So today I would like to have a look at the coming of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. Now the Day of Pentecost was a Jewish festival to celebrate the harvest. It was also the day that God handed down the law to the Israel at Mount Sinai. So the day of Pentecost is significant in many ways. One thing is clear is that it is a day of thanksgiving and rejoicing in what God has done for his people. You could say that just as Israel became a nation on the day of Pentecost at mount Sinai, so the Kingdom of Jesus was formed on that day after his resurrection.

### Reversing the Curse

But what does it mean? The fact that the disciples started speaking different languages that could be understood by those who were listening was not something that had ever happened before. There is no parallel in the Old or the New Testaments. It is a complete surprise. Jesus didn't do anything like that during his ministry. In fact the reverse had happened in Bible History. When the people were building the Tower of Babel in Genesis 11, God confused their speech so that they could not understand one another. As a result their building project was stopped and the people were divided and moved apart.

This is the other way around. Here we can see that everyone hears the Christians speaking in their own native language. Now the text seems to indicate that the Christians were actually given the ability to speak in different languages that they did not know before. The point is that those who were listening were hearing God being praised in their own language.

What God is showing here is that the curse on the human race from the time Babel is now being reversed. God is bringing people from all over the world together in Jesus. In Jesus there is an identity and a language that is over and above people's culture, language and nationality. Instead of building a tower that challenges God's rule over the earth, we are now part of a Kingdom established by Jesus which the Holy Spirit is building for God's glory using God's people to do it. You are a part of that Kingdom. If you believe in Jesus and his resurrection from the dead then you are part of this new nation that God is building in the world today.

One of the greatest joys in Christian life is the joy of working, worshipping and serving God together with other Christians who are from different languages, nationalities and cultures. When we work together with Christians from other languages we learn to look at the world differently and we learn things that we just would not learn from sticking in our own culture. Working in OMF we have people coming together from all over the world. In our office here in Sydney we have people from Sweden, Singapore, Hong Kong, Columbia, Jamaica and even South Australia. We have worked in Thailand in a multicultural team and we feel that our lives have been so enriched through our experiences. We have worked with Germans, Malaysians, South Africans, Koreans, Chinese, North Americans and South Americans. From

all of them we have learnt to appreciate something new about their culture and their perspective.

So that is the first lesson that we can learn from this amazing event- That God is reversing the curse that comes from people speaking their own language, and taking pride in their own culture thinking that somehow it is superior to other cultures. God does this by bringing together people from all cultures, languages, tribes and nations to work together in humility and love to reach out to others in the name of Jesus.

And God will do this in surprising and wonderful ways. Just think of the way that the church is growing in the Middle East and Iran in spite of severe persecution. In Africa and in Asia. It is amazing to see how the Holy Spirit is at work in the world, often in very surprising ways which will not make front page news.

### **Language is the key**

When I thought about this display of power I thought that it was quite strange. If I was going to show God's power I think that I would do it in the same way that Jesus did- by healing people and doing lots of impressive miracles. But this is very different. The coming of the Holy Spirit was not about great numbers of people getting healed of their diseases, or people being raised from the dead, or some other great display of power. In fact the ability to speak a different language could be seen as not very spectacular. Some of the people who were watching just dismissed it and said that they were all drunk. So it was not something that impressed everyone. And that is the way that God chose to do it. Now why do you think that was?

Talking to someone in their native language is the way to reach the heart. That is why we call it the heart language. It is only when someone hears about God in their heart language that they are able to really understand what Jesus has done for them. That is why missionaries go to such great lengths to learn the language of the people that they are trying to reach and spend so much effort translating the bible into that language.

ILL- When we went to Thailand we would have really appreciated being filled with the Holy Spirit in this way and had the ability to speak Thai immediately. But it wasn't to be. We had to adjust in all kinds of ways and often made some really embarrassing mistakes before we were able to relate to Thai people and share Jesus in their language. One time I called an older Christian lady crazy instead of Aunty. Another time I went into a coffee shop and asked for a flood of coffee instead of a cup of coffee. Another time I translated a testimony in front of a whole year of TAFE Students and said translated the word bitter wrongly. I said that he had been raped. We were not allowed to preach until we could preach in the local language. it is through a person's mother tongue that they are able to really understand about God's love for them.

If you want to reach people for Christ you need to be able to speak their language. That is how you are going to be a witness to them. Jesus said that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on them 1:8. Part of that power was the power of being able to speak the language of the people we are trying to reach. What languages do you speak or which ones are you prepared to learn?

### **The Holy Spirit is the driver**

Many people have funny ideas about the Holy Spirit. Some people seem to have the idea that the Holy Spirit is like some kind of electricity that we can plug into before we have power from God. The Holy Spirit is a person. He is one of the three persons of the Trinity and we tend to forget about that. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit we are filled with the presence of God, and an appreciation of the love that God had for us in Jesus. So often we look for some external sign that the person had the Holy Spirit. You're not always going to find one because it is something that is living inside us and may not always be seen from the outside as it was here.

What does the Holy Spirit do?

- He enables believers to live the Christian life.
- He intercedes for us (Rom. 8:26-27).
- He illumines and guides believers into all truth (John 16:13-14).
- The Holy Spirit enables Christians to fight sin (Rom. 8:5-6).
- The Spirit sanctifies us (1 Peter 1:2).
- He gives us Christian assurance to know that we are children of God (Rom 8:15-16).

Reflect on everything that God the Holy Spirit has done and is doing in your life. If you have a relationship with Jesus and are part of a Christian community or church, then you are filled with the Holy Spirit. The bible is clear on that. you can make the Holy Spirit unhappy by sinning or you can walk in step with the spirit by listening to the word of God and obeying it. Sometimes the Holy Spirit will do some special things in your life to encourage you and show you his love in a special way.

I would love to see us all being able to speak all kinds of languages right now, but I don't believe it's going to happen. This was a one-time event to show that a new era had begun and that speaking other languages is part of the power that the Holy Spirit uses to bring others to know him. It is no accident that God chose Paul to become the person that God would use the most to reach out to the Gentiles. He spoke Greek very well. He was educated in both Greek and Hebrew culture and could use these skills to communicate the gospel across cultures. We see this all through Acts how Paul is able to command an audience with all kinds of people because of his knowledge of language and culture- Kings and Queens, Merchants, Jews, Roman soldiers etc etc.

Can you speak a different language? How can God use that for his purposes? Has the Holy Spirit given you a special burden for a particular people group? Are you prepared to learn the language of that people group so that you can communicate the love of God to them?

**What does this mean for us today?**

- First of all the Holy Spirit will do surprising things in your church. If you are seeking God together he will give you the gifts and the vision together to reach out to the people around you. Where is the mission vision for your church in the local community? In sending missionaries to unreached people groups?
- Language is important in God's work. That is why so much effort is spent on Bible Translation, producing Christian Radio and Television broadcasts, and for cross cultural workers to learn the language of the local people. We need to recognize that. So you need to think about how God has gifted you with languages and how you are using that gift for God's glory.