



SUNDAY SCHOOL May 24, 2026

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New Testament

Context

Acts 2:1-8, 12-16

Context: Today's scripture comes from the second chapter of Acts and tells the story of Pentecost ... a moment when frightened and uncertain followers of Jesus suddenly became bold, connected, and united across barriers of language and culture. This passage reminds us that God's Spirit is not confined to one people, one nation, or one way of speaking, but moves outward into the world through ordinary people.

THE COMING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting.

Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

Now there were devout Jews from every people under heaven living in Jerusalem. And at this sound the crowd gathered and was bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.

Amazed and astonished, they asked, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?"

All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, "What does this mean?" But others sneered and said, "They are filled with new wine."

PETER ADDRESSES THE CROWD

But Peter, standing with the eleven, raised his voice and addressed them, "Fellow Jews and all who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and listen to what I say. Indeed, these are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only nine o'clock in the morning. No, this is what was spoken through the prophet Joel."

OVERVIEW

Acts 2:1-8 & 12-16 describes the arrival of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples during the Jewish festival of Pentecost. Gathered together after Jesus' ascension, the disciples experience a violent wind, tongues "as of fire," and the sudden ability to speak in many languages. Jews from across the Roman world hear the message in their own native tongues and are astonished. Some are amazed and curious; others mock the disciples as if they were drunk.

This moment is often called the "birthday of the Church," but it is more than the start of an institution. Theologically, it represents the movement of God outward — from temple-centered religion into a Spirit-filled community that crosses boundaries of ethnicity, geography, class, and language.

The passage also introduces a recurring theme throughout Acts:

- Some people hear the movement of God with wonder.
- Others dismiss, mock, or fear it.



Peter's response begins in verse 14, where he connects the moment to the prophet Joel and interprets the event not as chaos, but as fulfillment.

See Addendum on Joel.

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Immediately Before: Acts 1

The disciples have just witnessed Jesus' ascension. Before leaving, Jesus tells them: "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses..."

At the end of Acts 1, the disciples are waiting in Jerusalem. They are uncertain, leaderless in many ways, and probably afraid. Judas has died, Matthias is chosen to replace him, and the group remains gathered together in prayer. Pentecost does not happen among powerful people in control. It happens among anxious people waiting for direction.

The Passage Itself: Acts 2:1-8 & 12-16

Several symbolic elements appear:

Wind

The "rush of a violent wind" echoes Old Testament imagery where breath, wind, and spirit are connected. In Hebrew, the word used "ruach" can mean:

- wind
- breath
- spirit

This is not merely weather imagery. It symbolizes divine life entering human community.

Fire

Fire often symbolizes divine presence:

- Moses and the burning bush
- Pillar of fire in Exodus
- Prophetic purification imagery

The fire rests on individuals, suggesting God's presence is no longer centered only in temple structures.

Languages

The miracle is not simply ecstatic speech. The text stresses that people hear in their own language.

Therefore, the Gospel becomes understandable. God does not force everyone into one culture or one vocabulary. Instead, the message meets people where they are.

Immediately After: Acts 2:17-47

Peter explains the event through the prophet Joel: "I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh..."

This becomes one of the most radically inclusive statements in scripture:

- sons and daughters
- young and old
- servants and free



The chapter continues with:

- Peter's sermon
- mass baptisms
- the formation of a communal society where believers share possessions and care for one another

Pentecost is not merely emotional excitement. It leads to community transformation.

Broader Context of the Book of Acts

The Book of Acts traces the expansion of Christianity:

- from Jerusalem
- to Judea
- to Samaria
- into the Gentile Roman world

Acts repeatedly asks: "Who belongs in God's movement?"

Again and again, the answer becomes: "More people than you expected."

Acts also shows constant tension between:

- fear and courage
- insiders and outsiders
- institutions and Spirit
- unity and division

Pentecost launches this entire movement.

HISTORICAL / NON-BIBLICAL / POLITICAL CONTEXT

Pentecost was already an existing Jewish festival before Christianity adopted the term.

The Jewish festival of Shavuot occurred 50 days after Passover and celebrated:

- the wheat harvest
- and later, the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai

Jerusalem would have been crowded with pilgrims from across the Roman Empire.

Luke intentionally lists regions from all over the known world to emphasize diversity.

This matters politically. The Roman Empire often unified people through military force and imperial power. Pentecost presents a different kind of unity:

- not enforced sameness
- but mutual understanding amid difference

Rome created unity through domination. Pentecost creates unity through understanding.

There is also an important reversal of the Tower of Babel story (Genesis 11):

- At Babel, language divides humanity.
- At Pentecost, language becomes a bridge.



The miracle is not that everyone suddenly speaks the same language. The miracle is that people finally understand one another.

See Addendum on The Tower of Babel.

HISTORICAL TIMELINE / BIBLICAL TIMEFRAME

Approximate Timeline

- Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection: c. 30–33 AD
- Ascension of Jesus: approximately 40 days after Easter
- Pentecost event: approximately 50 days after Passover/Easter
- Writing of Acts: approximately 80–90 AD
- Traditionally attributed to Luke, companion of Paul

Broader Historical Context

During this time:

- Rome occupied Judea
- Jewish groups were divided (Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes)
- Revolutionary tensions simmered
- Christianity had not yet separated fully from Judaism

The followers of Jesus were still seen as a Jewish movement at this stage.

BIBLE TRANSLATION UNDERSTANDING

Acts was originally written in Greek.

Several words carry layered meanings that are difficult to capture fully in English.

“Spirit” – The Greek word means:

- spirit
- breath
- wind

English translations usually choose one word, but the original language intentionally carries all three meanings simultaneously.

So, when the wind rushes through the house, ancient listeners would hear:

- breath of life
- movement of God
- divine Spirit

all at once.

“Tongues” – The Greek word can mean:

- physical tongues
- languages
- modes of speech



Some traditions interpret this primarily as ecstatic spiritual speech (speaking on tongues). Others stress understandable human languages. The passage itself strongly emphasizes understanding: “How is it that we hear, each of us, in our own native language?”

See Addendum on Speaking in Tongues.

“Filled” – The disciples are “filled” with the Spirit.

This does not necessarily imply possession or loss of self-control.

In Greek thought and biblical imagery, being “filled” often means:

- empowered
- inspired
- animated with purpose

Major English Translation History

- Latin Vulgate (Jerome, 4th century)
- Wycliffe Bible (1380s)
- Tyndale Bible (1520s)
- King James Version (1611)
- Modern translations:
 - NRSV
 - NIV
 - ESV
 - Common English Bible

Each translation reflects theological assumptions.

For example:

- Some emphasize miraculous ecstatic speech.
- Others emphasize communication and understanding.

That distinction shapes interpretation.

SCHOLARLY METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATION WITH MODERN-DAY AND GRANT COUNTY CONTEXT

Scholars often interpret Pentecost metaphorically as the moment human isolation begins to break apart.

The disciples were gathered in fear, confusion, and uncertainty.

Then suddenly:

- walls become bridges
- strangers understand one another
- fear turns outward into service

Metaphorically, Pentecost is about learning how to hear and speak across division.

Not everyone suddenly agrees. Not everyone becomes identical. But they begin understanding.

That may be one of our greatest needs.



Modern-Day Context

Today we often speak the same language but still fail to understand one another:

- political tribes
- cable news silos
- social media outrage
- generational divisions
- rural vs urban suspicion

Sometimes people are not truly listening at all.

They are waiting to react.

Pentecost challenges that.

The Spirit does not erase diversity.

The Spirit helps people hear beyond it.

Grant County / Rural Indiana Context

In Grant County, this can appear in many forms:

- town vs country thinking
- church disagreements
- partisan assumptions
- younger and older generations struggling to communicate
- people feeling unheard or dismissed

Pentecost asks an uncomfortable question: “Are we trying harder to win arguments... or to understand people?”

There is also an important warning here.

Some people in the crowd respond with curiosity.

Others immediately mock: “They are filled with new wine.”

That still happens today.

When something challenges our worldview, it is often easier to ridicule than to listen.

Pentecost calls Christians toward humility, patience, listening, and understanding before judgment.

HOW SHOULD WE ACT AND REACT TO THIS SCRIPTURE TODAY?

1. Learn to Listen Before Reacting

Pentecost is fundamentally about hearing and understanding.

Christians should be people who:

- listen carefully
- ask questions
- avoid instant outrage
- resist manipulation by provocateurs



2. *Speak So People Can Understand*

The disciples speak in ways others can hear. Sometimes Christians use insider language, slogans, or political shorthand that pushes people away instead of inviting them in. The Gospel should connect with real people in understandable ways.

I often tell Laura to quit with the “Bible Speak” ... just say what it is. Easiest example is “The Body of Christ” ... just say church.

3. *Do Not Fear Diversity*

Pentecost does not create sameness. It creates connection amid difference.

Healthy Christian community does not require everyone to:

- vote alike
- think alike
- look alike
- or come from identical backgrounds

4. *Be Open to God Moving in Unexpected Places*

Many people dismissed the disciples because the event looked strange. Sometimes God’s movement disrupts comfort zones. Acts repeatedly shows God working through unexpected people.

5. *Build Community Instead of Tribes*

The early church formed communities centered on shared care and generosity. Pentecost was not merely emotional worship. It changed how people treated one another.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Why do you think the miracle of Pentecost focused on understanding different languages instead of making everyone speak one language?*
2. *What are some “language barriers” people experience today even when speaking English?*
3. *Why do some people respond to new ideas with curiosity while others immediately mock or dismiss them?*
4. *How can Christians become better listeners?*
5. *What might Pentecost say about political and cultural divisions today?*
6. *What does it mean that the Spirit was poured out on “all flesh”?*
7. *How can churches accidentally become places where outsiders feel they do not “speak the language”?*
8. *What fears might the disciples have been carrying before Pentecost?*
9. *How does this passage connect with the Tower of Babel story?*
10. *What would Pentecost look like in Grant County today?*



Gospel

John 20:19-22

After Mary Magdalene discovers the empty tomb and tells the disciples she has seen the risen Lord, Jesus appears to the disciples while they are hiding behind locked doors in fear.

JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors were locked where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.”

After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord.

Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit.

OVERVIEW

John 20:19-22 is one of the most powerful resurrection scenes in the Gospel of John. The disciples are not out preaching boldly. They are not celebrating Easter morning with confidence. They are afraid, locked away, uncertain what will happen next.

Into that fear, Jesus comes and says:

“Peace be with you.”

He does not scold them. He does not say, “Where were you?” He does not shame them for hiding. He brings peace, shows them his wounds, gives them joy, sends them into the world, and breathes the Holy Spirit upon them.

This is resurrection not as escape from the world, but as courage to re-enter it.

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Immediately Before: John 20:1-18

Mary Magdalene finds the stone removed from the tomb and runs to tell Peter and the beloved disciple. They inspect the empty tomb, but Mary remains outside weeping. Jesus appears to her and calls her by name.

Mary becomes the first witness to the resurrection in John’s Gospel. She tells the disciples: “I have seen the Lord.”

That makes this scene especially important. The disciples have already heard the testimony, but they are still afraid. That feels very human. Hearing good news does not always immediately erase fear.

This Passage: John 20:19-22

The disciples are gathered behind locked doors “for fear of the Jews.” In John, this phrase usually refers not to all Jewish people, since Jesus and the disciples were Jewish, but to the religious authorities hostile to Jesus and his followers.



Jesus appears among them and says, “Peace be with you.” He shows them his hands and side. The wounded, crucified Jesus is the risen Jesus. Resurrection does not erase the wounds; it transforms their meaning.

Then Jesus says: “As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

This is the disciples’ commission. They are not simply comforted; they are sent to spread the word.

Then Jesus breathes on them and says: “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

John deliberately echoes Genesis 2, where God breathes life into humanity. This is new creation language. The risen Christ breathes courage, purpose, and divine life into a frightened community.

Immediately After: John 20:23-31

Jesus speaks of forgiveness and retention of sins, which connects the Spirit-filled community to reconciliation, truth-telling, and moral responsibility.

Then **Thomas** appears in the next scene. He was absent and struggles to believe. Jesus later meets Thomas with the same kind of grace he gave the others. John’s Gospel then states its purpose: these things are written so that readers may believe Jesus is the Messiah and have life in his name.

Broader Context of John

John’s Gospel emphasizes:

- Jesus as the Word made flesh.
- Jesus as the light shining in darkness.
- Jesus as the one sent by the Father.
- Jesus as the giver of life.
- Jesus as the one who promises the Advocate, the Holy Spirit.

This passage brings many of those themes together. The Word made flesh, crucified and risen, now sends his followers into the world with the Spirit.

HISTORICAL / NON-BIBLICAL / POLITICAL CONTEXT

The disciples’ fear makes sense historically. Jesus had just been executed by Roman crucifixion, a public and political form of death used to shame and intimidate.

The religious authorities had opposed Jesus. Rome had carried out the execution. Anyone publicly associated with Jesus could reasonably fear being next.

The locked doors are not just a small detail. They represent a community under pressure.

In the first-century world, public loyalty mattered. If your teacher was executed as a threat to order, your association with him could endanger you. So, the disciples are not cowards in some simplistic sense. They are traumatized people trying to survive.

That makes Jesus’ first word even more beautiful: **Peace**.

Not revenge.

Not strategy.

Not blame.

Peace.



HISTORICAL TIMELINE / BIBLICAL TIMEFRAME

Approximate timeline:

- 30 AD: Jesus is crucified under Pontius Pilate.
- The evening of the resurrection day: John 20:19-22 takes place.
- Late first century, around 90-100 AD: The Gospel of John is likely written in its final form.

By the time John's Gospel is written, Christian communities are wrestling with fear, exclusion, synagogue conflict, Roman power, and the meaning of Jesus' ongoing presence through the Spirit.

So, this passage likely speaks both to the original disciples and to later believers who also felt afraid, isolated, or uncertain.

BIBLE TRANSLATION UNDERSTANDING

Original Language and Dating

John was written in Greek and likely reached its final written form near the end of the first century.

Major English Translation Stages

Important stages include:

- The Latin Vulgate, which shaped Western Christian reading for centuries.
- Wycliffe's Bible, translated from Latin into English.
- Tyndale's translation, which used Greek and Hebrew sources and strongly influenced later English Bibles.
- The King James Version, published in 1611.

Modern translations such as NRSV, NIV, ESV, CEB, and others, which use earlier manuscript discoveries and contemporary language.

Important Translation Notes

“Peace be with you”

This reflects the Hebrew greeting *shalom*, which means more than “calm down.” It means wholeness, restoration, well-being, and right relationship. Jesus is not merely saying, “Don't be nervous.” He is announcing the restoration of life after death, hope after trauma, and relationship after abandonment.

“For fear of the Jews”

This phrase needs careful handling. It should not be read as anti-Jewish. Jesus, Mary, and the disciples were Jewish. In John's context, the phrase usually points to specific Jewish authorities or leaders opposing Jesus' movement. A responsible modern reading avoids turning this into blame against Jewish people as a whole.

“As the Father has sent me, so I send you”

The word “sent” is central in John. Jesus is repeatedly described as the one sent by the Father. Now that mission continues through the disciples. The church does not exist merely to hide, preserve itself, or win arguments. It is sent to embody Christ.



“He breathed on them”

This echoes Genesis 2:7, where God breathes life into the human being. John is presenting resurrection as new creation. This is a beautiful image: frightened disciples become a Spirit-breathed people.

“Receive the Holy Spirit”

In John, the Spirit is connected to Jesus’ continuing presence, guidance, truth, comfort, and courage. This is not just an emotional moment. It is empowerment for mission.

SCHOLARLY METAPHORICAL INTERPRETATION WITH MODERN-DAY AND GRANT COUNTY CONTEXT

Metaphorically, the locked room represents any place where fear has trapped us.

It can be a church afraid of change.

A community afraid of outsiders.

A family afraid to have honest conversations.

A person afraid to forgive.

A congregation afraid to speak peace in a divided world.

In Grant County, we know what locked rooms can look like. Sometimes they are not physical rooms. Sometimes they are social circles, political assumptions, economic fears, racial divisions, church traditions, or old grievances.

Jesus comes into the locked room and does not begin with blame. He begins with peace.

A lot of people today are living behind locked doors emotionally and spiritually. They are afraid of losing their country, their church, their family, their identity, their security, their way of life. Fear sells. Fear organizes. Fear manipulates. Fear keeps people locked inside.

But Jesus does not weaponize fear. Jesus enters fear and breathes peace.

And then comes the significant part: Jesus sends them back out.

Christian peace is not hiding from the world. Christian peace is being calm enough, grounded enough, and Spirit-filled enough to step into the world differently.

The wounds matter too. Jesus shows them his hands and side. The risen Christ still carries evidence of suffering. That means Christian faith should never pretend pain did not happen. Resurrection does not erase the wound; it shows that wounds do not get the final word.

For a rural and small-town congregation, this passage can ask:

- Are we locked in fear?
- Are we confusing safety with faithfulness?
- Are we waiting for Jesus to protect us from the world, when Jesus may be sending us into it?
- Are we willing to breathe peace into places where others are breathing anger?

HOW SHOULD WE ACT AND REACT TO THIS SCRIPTURE TODAY?

We should notice that Jesus comes to fearful people first with peace, not condemnation.

We should be careful not to shame people for being afraid. Fear is human. But we should also not let fear become our master.

We should ask whether our churches are locked rooms or Spirit-breathed communities.



We should remember that being Christian means being sent. We are not merely saved from something; we are sent for something.

We should practice peace as a public witness. In a culture of outrage, calmness can become a Christian discipline.

We should recognize Jesus by his wounds. The wounded people around us may reveal Christ more clearly than the powerful people who claim to speak for him.

We should breathe before we speak. That sounds simple, but it is deeply spiritual. Jesus breathes the Spirit into fearful people. Maybe our first act of discipleship in tense moments is to pause, breathe, and ask: “Is what I am about to say carrying peace or fear?”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Why do you think Jesus’ first words to the disciples were “Peace be with you”?*
2. *What kinds of “locked rooms” do people live in today?*
3. *Why is it important that Jesus shows the disciples his wounds?*
4. *What does it mean that Jesus sends the disciples just as the Father sent him?*
5. *How can a church tell whether it is being led by fear or by the Holy Spirit?*
6. *What would it look like for Christians in Grant County to “breathe peace” into the community?*
7. *How do we avoid using this passage in an anti-Jewish way?*
8. *What is the difference between peace and avoidance?*



Addendum

The Prophet Joel

The prophet Book of Joel likely wrote during a time of national crisis in Judah, describing a devastating locust plague, drought, and social fear that shook the people physically, economically, and spiritually. Joel interpreted these disasters not simply as random events, but as opportunities for reflection, repentance, and renewal.

Yet Joel's book is not only about judgment; it is ultimately about hope. Near the end of the book, Joel delivers a remarkable promise from God: "I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh."

In a world where spiritual authority was often associated with kings, priests, prophets, or religious elites, Joel's vision was radically inclusive. Sons and daughters, young and old, servants and free people would all share in God's Spirit.

When Peter quotes Joel during Pentecost in Acts 2, he is telling the crowd that this ancient promise is happening right before their eyes. The strange events (wind, fire, languages, boldness) are not chaos or drunkenness, but evidence that God's Spirit is now moving outward into ordinary people.

Peter reframes the entire Pentecost event through Joel's prophecy, showing that God's presence is no longer limited to certain individuals or confined to the Temple alone.

This helps explain why Pentecost becomes such a turning point in Christianity: The Spirit is poured out broadly, crossing boundaries of class, gender, geography, and language. Joel's prophecy transforms Pentecost from a strange miracle into a declaration that God's work now belongs to everyone willing to listen and respond.

The Tower of Babel and Pentecost

The story of the Tower of Babel appears in Genesis 11, where humanity gathers to build a great city and tower "with its top in the heavens."

On the surface, the story may sound like God opposing human achievement or large cities, but most scholars interpret Babel as a warning about pride, control, and human systems built around self-glory and domination. The people seek to "make a name for ourselves," creating a culture centered on power and uniformity.

In the story, language becomes confused, communication breaks down, and humanity scatters. Babel becomes a symbol of division, misunderstanding, and the human tendency to elevate power over relationship.

Many biblical scholars see Pentecost in Acts 2 as a symbolic reversal of Babel. At Babel, humanity was divided by language and confusion; at Pentecost, people from many nations hear and understand one another across their differences.

Importantly, Pentecost does not erase diversity or force everyone into one culture or one language. The miracle is not sameness ... it is understanding. Different languages remain, but connection becomes possible again.

This makes Pentecost deeply meaningful for the modern world. In times of political division, social media outrage, cultural suspicion, and tribal thinking, Pentecost reminds us that the Spirit of God moves people toward listening, humility, and mutual understanding rather than fear, mockery, or domination.



Speaking in Tongues

“Ecstatic spiritual language” is a scholarly and theological phrase often used to describe what many Christians call “speaking in tongues” — vocal expressions believed to be inspired by the Holy Spirit that may not correspond to a known human language.

The word “ecstatic” here does not necessarily mean emotional frenzy the way we casually use it today. Historically, it means:

- being moved beyond ordinary speech,
- entering an inspired spiritual state,
- or expressing something believed to come from divine influence rather than normal thought processes.

In Christianity, this idea is most associated with certain Pentecostal and Charismatic traditions, where believers may speak:

- in unknown syllables or sounds,
- in prayer languages,
- or in speech interpreted by others as spiritually inspired.

The main biblical passages connected to this are:

- Acts 2
- 1 Corinthians 12–14

What makes Acts 2 especially interesting is that scholars debate whether Pentecost is describing:

1. actual known foreign languages being miraculously spoken,
2. ecstatic spiritual speech being miraculously understood,
3. or a symbolic theological story emphasizing universal understanding.

The text itself strongly emphasizes understanding: “Each one heard them speaking in the native language of each.”

That is why many scholars lean toward the idea that Acts 2 is less about private ecstatic prayer and more about communication across human barriers.

Paul’s discussion in 1 Corinthians is a little different. There, “tongues” sometimes seem more mystical or ecstatic and may require interpretation within worship settings.

This becomes important because different Christian traditions emphasize different aspects:

- Pentecostal/Charismatic churches often emphasize ecstatic spiritual experience.
- Mainline Protestant traditions often emphasize communication, inclusion, and symbolism.
- Some scholars interpret the entire event metaphorically as the breaking down of social and cultural barriers.

Some Christians believe Pentecost involved miraculous spiritual speech, while others focus more on the miracle of understanding. Either way, the deeper message is that God’s Spirit was reaching across barriers that normally divide people.

That usually keeps the discussion open without turning it into a denominational argument.



DENOMINATIONAL THOUGHTS ON SPEAKING IN TONGUES

Several denominations and movements practice or affirm speaking in tongues besides classic Pentecostals. Some of the larger groups include:

- Assemblies of God
- Church of God in Christ
- Foursquare Church
- Church of God

But it also appears in:

- Charismatic movements inside Baptist churches
- some non-denominational megachurches
- some Catholic Charismatic groups
- portions of Lutheran, Episcopal, and Methodist churches through Charismatic renewal movements of the 1960s–80s

So, it is not confined only to “Pentecostals.”

Speaking in Tongues is actually deeply connected to Paul’s own concerns in 1 Corinthians 14.

Paul essentially says:

- if nobody understands it,
- and nobody interprets it,
- then how does it help the community?

That’s not modern skepticism.

That’s literally Paul wrestling with the same issue in the first century.

He does not fully condemn tongues, but he clearly prioritizes:

- understandable teaching,
- prophecy,
- encouragement,
- and orderly worship.

At one point Paul basically says: “I would rather speak five understandable words than ten thousand in a tongue.”

That’s pretty direct.

There are a few ways scholars and psychologists approach the ideas that Speaking in Tongues is fake. Some believers sincerely experience it as:

- deep emotional prayer,
- subconscious vocalization,
- spiritual release,
- or mystical communion with God.

Others acknowledge that in some churches there can also be:

- social pressure,



- imitation,
- performative spirituality,
- or emotional group dynamics.

In other words: some experiences may be deeply authentic to the individual, while others may become culturally expected behaviors.

That tension has existed for centuries.

THE UNITED METHODIST POSITION ON SPEAKING IN TONGUES

The United Methodist Church generally takes a moderate and open stance.

The UMC does not reject speaking in tongues outright, but it also does not emphasize it as necessary evidence of salvation or spiritual maturity.

Classic Pentecostal theology sometimes teaches that speaking in tongues is evidence of being “baptized in the Spirit.”

United Methodism does not teach that.

The Methodist tradition, shaped heavily by John Wesley, tends to emphasize:

- personal holiness,
- service,
- love,
- grace,
- reason,
- scripture,
- and transformation of life.

Methodists generally ask: “Does this practice produce love, compassion, humility, and deeper discipleship?”

rather than: “Did a supernatural manifestation occur?”

The UMC officially recognizes spiritual gifts, including tongues, as possible gifts of the Spirit, but stresses:

- discernment,
- interpretation,
- and orderly worship.

In practice, most United Methodist churches:

- do not regularly practice tongues publicly,
- may feel uncomfortable with highly emotional charismatic worship,
- but usually avoid condemning those who do.

So, the typical UMC posture is:

- “Possible? Yes.
- Required? No.
- Central to faith? Also no.”



Our Class which focuses on understanding, communication, metaphor, humility, and community — aligns very naturally with mainstream Methodist theology.

One of the hallmarks of the United Methodist Church tradition is that it has usually tried to avoid extremes:

- not dismissing spiritual experience entirely,
- but also not making emotional displays the center of Christianity.

Very “both/and.”

That’s why Methodism often feels comfortable with:

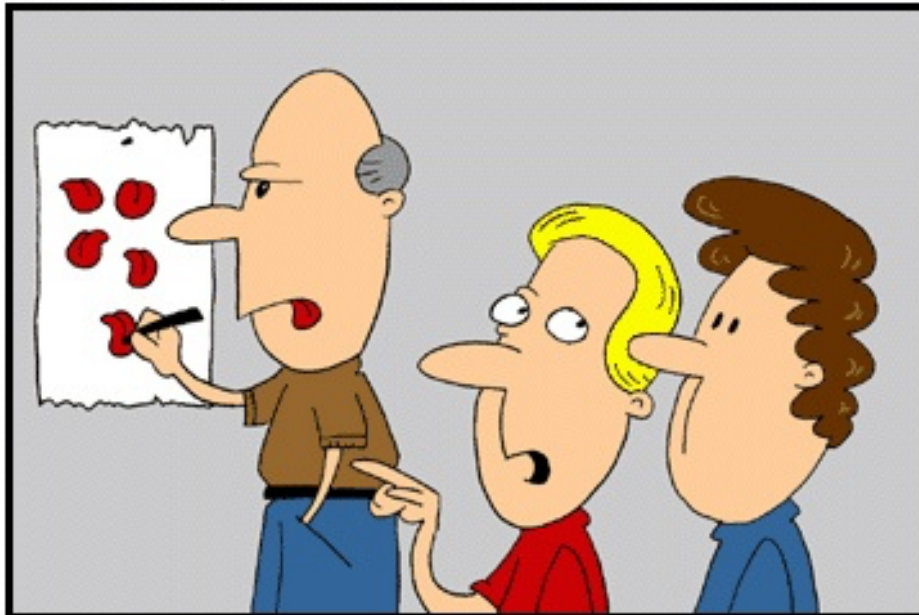
- thoughtful discussion,
- historical context,
- personal experience,
- and practical application

all living together in the same room.

How do I (me, Tom Marine) feel about this?

I’m not saying God can’t work that way... I’m just more interested in whether people are loving, growing, serving, and understanding one another.

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LOOKIT, MATT IS WRITING IN TONGUES