

# Fiery Followers or Christian Cannibals?

by Erlo Stegen

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*Erlo Stegen challenges believers to examine the source of their speech, urging them to be fiery followers of Christ rather than destructive 'Christian cannibals'.*

**Scripture:** Acts 2:1

**Topics:** "The Holy Spirit", "The Power of the Tongue"

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## Description

Erlo Stegen emphasizes the transformative power of the Holy Spirit, urging preachers to ignite their tongues with the fire of God rather than the destructive fire of hell. He draws parallels between the day of Pentecost and the need for believers to speak words that lead to repentance and life, rather than gossip and destruction. Stegen warns against being 'Christian cannibals' who harm one another with their words, highlighting the importance of examining the source of our speech. He illustrates the impact of our words through personal stories, calling for a revival of God's fire in our lives to proclaim His mighty works. Ultimately, he challenges listeners to ensure they are filled with the Holy Spirit and to avoid quenching His presence in their lives.

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## Transcript

Summary of sermon by Erlo Stegen, 1 Sep 2013

Acts 2

1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

It has been some days that this Word is with me. Preachers of the Gospel, are your tongues as flames of fire? If our words and lips were filled with the of fire of God the people won't fall asleep under our preaching.

On the day of Pentecost all the apostles were present and as they prayed the Holy Spirit came down.

Tongues of fire appeared on each of them. Jesus said He came to bring fire on earth and this was the day that that fire was ignited.

Does this fire burn in you that when you speak people repent as at Pentecost?

Even the disciples didn't know how the Holy Spirit will come. They didn't know what to expect. But when the Holy Spirit came they all knew what was taking place.

As all this happened and the mighty wind was heard, the people drew near to see what was happening. Just as Moses drew near to the burning bush that was not consumed and then God spoke to Him, "take off your shoes off your feet for the ground you stand on is holy ground" (Ex 3:5).

When the apostles went out they spoke in different languages, the languages of those that were gathered, and the people marvelled when they heard of the mighty works of God. What mighty works? The greatest thing God had ever done, to come in human flesh and die for His creation, rise again, so that we guilty sinners can find forgiveness from our sins and be raised to new life by His power.

John said of Jesus, "I am not worthy to undo His shoelaces for He shall baptise you with fire".

Many have been baptised with water but who has been baptised by the fire of the Holy Spirit?

There is nothing greater than that He died for us. All other things pale into insignificance compared to that event.

As the people heard the apostles many believed but others scoffed that they were drunk. But Peter answered them that people aren't drunk at 9 in the morning.

Those of you who are God's children, is God's fire in your life?

There are two types of fire we will look at.

There is another fire which James speak about, a fire from hell.

Is God's fire in your tongue or is it the fire ignited in hell?

James 3

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

From where is your tongue ignited, from heaven or hell? That fire from hell includes gossip, speaking about others behind their back. Their tongue of fire destroys, maims and kills. Examine yourself whether your tongue is ignited from heaven or hell. The tongue is a small member but there is no member which does so much damage. Sexual immorality is a huge problem in the world, even here in our province.

But the Bible says that the tongue is even worse. What is your speech like? Is it filled with God's fire or hellish fire?.

If the devil's fire does so much damage, how much greater shouldn't the power of good result from those ignited with God's fire?

Illustration 1: Thomas was a young boy but had a problem with his tongue. He used to backchat his mom and say nasty things to his brother and sister. One day he had a dream. He heard people groaning in agony and great pain. He went to the room next door and saw there a terrible sight. Three people were lying on the ground in a pool of blood, writhing in pain. He was shocked and angry at the person who had hurt them so much. He thought about what an evil person that might be and how that person deserves severe punishment. Then he saw a person standing across the room and he immediately asked him if he was the one who had stabbed them. No, the person answered, you did it! As he looked closely he realised that the people lying there included his mother, brother and sister! The person across the room continued, "remember how you spoke to your mother and so stabbed her in her heart with your cheekiness. When your sister and brother came to you while you were busy, remember the harsh words you used and chased them away". He was overcome with shame and awoke and repented.

Illustration 2: I remember an incident at the beginning of Kwasizabantu. I had gone to fix the "ram gravitation pump" which was down in the valley. A black man was with me. The pipe had to be held in a certain way lest the water sprays in every direction while we were trying to fix it. The black man was not used to this and held the pipe incorrectly. I rebuked him sharply and was angry in my heart. That night I could not sleep. God convicted me of my sin of anger and the damage I had done through my tongue. I rose from my bed and looked for the man who had helped me. I apologised profusely for waking him up and confessed to him that I had sinned against him with my angry words. I begged his forgiveness. Only then did I find peace.

Illustration 3: Cannibalism is a terrible thing for it destroys human lives. In Papua New Guinea cannibals eat their victims and proclaim how wonderful the meat tastes. As wicked as this is it is even worse when Christians use their tongues to bite and devour each other. In a sense they are Christian cannibals.

Ps 64

2 Hide me from the secret counsel of the wicked; from the insurrection of the workers of iniquity:

3 Who whet their tongue like a sword, and bend their bows to shoot their arrows, even bitter words:

4 That they may shoot in secret at the perfect: suddenly do they shoot at him, and fear not.

Does your tongue proclaim the marvelous works of God in your life?

Maybe you claim you haven't hurt anyone but have you quenched the Holy Spirit. That is the most serious sin you can commit.

What does it help you that Jesus rose from the dead, but you're still in the grave of sin? You need to meet the risen Christ and be raised from your spiritual death before you end up in hell. Then His fire can fill you and change you.

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