

A Quest for More Series - Part 4
“More of God’s Power”
Pastor Dale Campfield – Eastgate Community Church
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Intro:

Matt 28:19 “Go and make disciples of all nations...”

ECC Process of Discipleship: Making an IMPACT...To Love...To Grow...To Serve

We have 3 priorities – To love...which is expressed in our Sunday morning celebration and connection groups. To grow...which is expressed in our Path to Discipleship. To serve...which is expressed in our daily lives in the places we live, work and play; as well as through the local church. The vision of E.C.C. is to gather together weekly for corporate worship, loving God and each other; then to come together in small Connection Groups for discipleship and fellowship, and are regularly involved in reaching out to others with the love, acceptance, and forgiveness of Jesus Christ through community outreach. To Love...To Grow...To Serve!

We are now ten days into our 40 days of fasting and prayer. How’s it going? Have you noticed a difference in your habits? Have you noticed a difference in the practicalities of feeling the presence of God in your life? Are things different?

Last week talked about having MORE of God. Not more of what He can do for us, but more of Him. We dealt with MORE of the PRESENCE of God on week one. Two weeks ago we dealt with God’s LOVE, while last week, Dr. Badu Bediako from Ghana, Africa ministered on God’s PEACE.

Today, we’ll be talking about MORE of GOD’s POWER.

Song: Oh Lord send the power just now.

Song: Come Holy Spirit I need Thee.

Song: Have you ever heard this song before: “Greater is He That is in Me” ? It’s an old song that we use to sing when we were younger. Though outdated in its style, the message is still true; for GREATER is the Lord that is within us.

First of all...we all know that God is ALL POWERFUL...

Three great attributes about God that are unique to Him only.

- * **Gods omniscience - God is all-knowing**
- * **Gods omnipresence - God is all-present/all-seeing**
- * **Gods omnipotence - God is all-power**

Since God is all powerful, and we have Him living within us, we need to walk with that power as well.

1 John 4:4

“You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.”

1 John 14:12

“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.”

So.... How do we tap into that power?

Hey listen, have you ever gone somewhere, and maybe you didn't really want to go, or maybe you just weren't expecting that much, and once you got there and you got into it, it delivered way more than you ever imagined? Did you ever do anything like that? Have you ever been anywhere like that?

Let me tell you about one of mine. A couple of years ago our team in Russia was invited to go to a Ballet. I had no desire to go to a ballet.... Boring.... I thought. We went, and I was blown away by the beauty, the artistry, the passions, the talents, it was amazing. It was an incredible experience.

Well, hopefully, that's going to happen for some of you today that came to service thinking this was going to be just the same old type of service here at Eastgate. Today, I'm believing you're going to get way more than you imagined or expected. We're going to be looking at one of the most powerful few chapters in the Bible...Acts, chapter 2 - 4. And that actually happened to a group of people. They had no idea what was going to go on, maybe some low expectations, and it totally rocked their world what they got involved in.

So, let's jump in...Acts, chapter 1. Jesus...just as kind of a review...got the disciples together. He says, "Here's is what I want you to do. I want you to wait. I want you take a timeout, and I want you to get all God has for you, and it's going to rock your world and everybody else's world."

We see that Jesus is preparing to leave, to be at the right hand of the Father and He tells His disciples...

Acts 1:5

“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.”

Acts 1:8

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

Power – “dunamis” = where we get the word dynamite from.

Then.... Jesus ascended into heaven.

Then... The Disciples returned to Jerusalem and went into the Upper Room to pray.

Act 1:12 – 14

“They returned to Jerusalem – entered into the Upper Room – all continued with one accord, united, in prayer.”

As they come away from that talk they have to choose a new apostle because Judas had kind of flaked out on them, and so they didn't know what to do. So, they basically threw dice. You know, lucky sevens! It was Matthias, and then things changed. From this point forward, they have an experience with the Holy Spirit in ways they never could have dreamed. And so, it gets started with a bang.

Acts 1:15 – 25

Judas is replaced by Matthias

Then.... 50 days later, on the Day of Pentecost...

Let's read Acts, chapter 2 and verse 1. It says, "On the day of Pentecost." What was the day of Pentecost? It says it was seven weeks after Jesus' resurrection. Let me explain Pentecost. Think of a required party. That is basically what it was. It was a required party that all Jews were going to come to. They had a couple of feasts a year they had to come to Jerusalem. They were all required to come. Think of New Year's Eve, New York City. Anybody ever been there? Have you seen it on TV, the ball dropping and all of that? Think of a party like that, only it's a select group of people who can come.

Let's think of Reds fans of the Cincinnati Reds. It's a party for Reds fans from all over the United States, but think of the United States like Europe. Is this getting confusing? In Europe, they have states, but they all speak a different language. Do you understand that? Have you ever been there? You just go to a little place like Connecticut, and they call it a whole other country, they speak a different language. Well, let's suppose it's just a required party only for Reds fans who are scattered out throughout the United States, and they each speak a different language. You have the picture? That's Pentecost, only you put Jews in for Reds fans. Okay?

So, you have Jews who are dispersed all over the known world. They speak different languages, but they come back for this party, a required party in Jerusalem.

Acts 2:1 – 4

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them." (KJ them the utterance)

What was that? I don't know. I've never seen anything like that. I don't think the writer had ever seen anything like that. He was just kind of trying to describe a God moment.

Have you ever tried to describe a sunset? Wow...how do you describe that? Well, this was a God moment. I believe that the fire symbolized that of the Holy Spirit. A lot of times, fire in the Bible symbolized cleansing and purity. But he saw something, and there was a sound. They heard something.

Then verse 4. It says, "And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit." Now, this is a fulfillment of what Jesus talked about with His disciples in John, chapter 14. Kind of a last minute pep talk before He was crucified. He gathered them together, and He said, "You know what? I'm leaving, but the Counselor is coming. The Holy Spirit is coming, and He will lead you into truth." And then the very last thing He said before He ascended, He said, "You wait in Jerusalem. John baptized with water. In just a few days, you are going to be baptized with the Holy Spirit." So this is a fulfillment of that promise that they would receive the gift, that they would be baptized in the Holy Spirit. This is actually the birthday of the Church. This is the very beginning of the Church.

Acts 2: 5 – 13

Multitudes gather, confused, hearing their own languages, accusing them of being drunk.

Acts 2: 14 – 39

Peter sets them straight. Joel 2:28 Prophecy..... in the last days, pour out my Spirit...

Acts 2:40 – 47

3,000 people came to Christ! The CHURCH has begun!

Acts 3

The Power and Boldness kicks in! Peter and John heal lame man...5,000 more come to Christ!

Acts 4: 7-8

Arrested, they asked them, *“By what power or by what name have you done this?”* Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, *“...it’s by the name of Jesus.”*

Acts 4:31

Released, at a prayer meeting, *“And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”*

How many of you want that kind of power and boldness?

It’s the birthday of the Church. And from that moment until now, there is a new sense of power, and that is a relationship with the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

Now, what affect did it have on the people who were baptized with the Holy Spirit that day, that brand new birthday of the Church? Well, they had a new power to overcome sin. They had a new power for ministry. It’s hard to miss. These guys who were just normal, ordinary people all of a sudden are able to do things they couldn’t. Some of them are miraculous. They’re able to do miracle. Some of them, there is a boldness to proclaim the gospel, which you’re going to see with Peter as we continue this chapter. But there is just a new ability to do what God has called them to do. There is a power they didn’t have before.

Another interesting thing happened; the rest of the verse. "And began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability." Circle other languages. In some versions...maybe it’s the version of the Bible you have...it says, "They spoke with other tongues." What is that about? What’s up with that? Some churches just want to gloss over this and not address it, for it can become somewhat controversial. But for us here at Eastgate, it’s something we believe in; therefore I share this with you today.

What does it mean to “Speak in Tongues?”

Consider these 2 Greek words for “Tongues”

1 – glossolalia = an unknown language. It is a supernatural ability to speak in another unknown language. It comes from the Greek glossa, which means tongue and lalia, which means talk or language.

It doesn't have to be a known foreign language. This particular word does not necessarily indicate a known foreign language. It can just be another tongue. The Bible talks about tongues of men, which is a known foreign language, and tongues of angels, which we know nothing about. From this point forward, Acts, chapter 2, until now, there have been groups of believers who practiced glossolalia.

2 – xenolalia = a known language. Comes from the word xenos, which means foreign, and lalia, which means tongue.

And the difference between this and glossolalia...glossolalia is supernatural ability to speak in a language that doesn't necessarily have to be a known tongue. Xenolalia is a supernatural ability to speak in another language that is a known tongue.

It would be like if one of you who never ever studied it, suddenly could speak flawless French or Spanish or Chinese or German. Those of you in college, how many would know that would be a cool gift? Forget studying. I'm going to blow right through French 101. That is what xenolalia is all about, and that seems to be what is happening here.

Let's go on. Let's read it. Acts, chapter 2 and verse 5, it says, "Godly Jews..." Redeemed nations were living..." circle living, "...in Jerusalem." Some of them were living there, but some of them were just there temporarily because of the Pentecost party. So, the whole city is really full. It's like Super Bowl Sunday or something like that in a city because of the feast.

It said, "When they heard this sound, they came running to see what it was all about, and they were bewildered to hear their own languages being spoken by the believers. They were beside themselves with wonder. 'How can this be?' they exclaimed. 'These people are all from Galilee, and yet we hear them speaking the languages of the lands where we were born!'" It just goes through just a whole bunch of them. They said, "We're from here, and they're speaking this, and how can they do this?"

"And we hear these people..." down in verse 11, "...speaking in our own languages about the wonderful things God has done!" Now, this got their attention. Wouldn't you agree? And it made them open to hear the proclamation of the gospel. Here's what happened. There was this noise, a God noise, something happened, and then they see something they don't understand. There are people speaking in their own languages who obviously haven't studied it, and they're telling about the wonders of God. And what it does, it sets them up. There is a purpose. It sets them up to hear the gospel.

Q. So, what is speaking in tongues?

A. Speaking in tongues is, to put it simply, Holy Spirit inspired speech in a language unknown to the speaker. It can be spoken in a Christian's private prayer life, or in a public worship service with interpretation.

In simplest terms, speaking in tongues is when someone speaks in a language that he or she does not know.

Q. What is the purpose of speaking in tongues?

Paul seems to mention two purposes.

First of all, when it is interpreted it provides a message from the Lord, much as prophecy does.

1 Cor. 14:5

"I would like every one of you to speak in tongues, but I would rather have you prophesy. He who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, unless he interprets, so that the church may be edified."

Paul seems to think that both prophecy and a message in tongues which has been translated are valuable to the church. How does this interpretation of tongues happen? Well, apparently in two ways. Paul's list of spiritual gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:10 and his instructions given in Chapter 14:26-28 seem to indicate that there may be certain individuals in a church who have the spiritual gift, really miraculous ability, to understand and translate what someone speaking in tongues says. The impression I get is that this individual was able to do this whenever someone spoke in tongues. But, Paul also seems to say that the person who speaks in tongues might be able to translate it for others. 14:13 For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says. Now, I really don't claim to totally understand how this was all supposed to work, but those are the instructions Paul gives. Again, I think it is so essential that both those who speak in tongues and those who do not, pay close attention to what the Lord says to us in these verses.

The second purpose of tongues is this: Even if it is not interpreted, it still can provide spiritual encouragement to the one who speaks in such a way.

Though Paul does not say so explicitly, he implies a number of times in this chapter that some Christians speak in tongues privately and find benefit in doing that. Look at...

1 Cor. 14:18,19

"I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. But in the church I would rather speak five intelligible words to instruct others than ten thousand words in a tongue."

My guess is that Paul may have never spoken in tongues when he gathered with other Christian believers. He wanted to talk in a way that made sense to the people who were listening to him. So, where did he speak in tongues more than everyone else? In private, when he was alone.

Listen to 14:13-16 For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will sing with my spirit, but I will also sing with my mind. If you are praising God with your spirit, how can one who finds himself among those who do not understand say "Amen" to your thanksgiving, since he does not know what you are saying? Now, Paul's point is that prophecy is a more valuable gift to the church than tongues. But the implication is that when someone privately speaks in tongues, that person is praising God with his or her spirit, and that is certainly a good thing to do.

It's just not as good as if one spoke words that everyone could understand and from which they could benefit. But should not spiritual gifts be used only to benefit others? Not necessarily. That is their primary purpose, but Paul apparently is telling us that a secondary reason why God gives some people this gift is so they can use it as a private prayer language. Now, some have suggested that speaking in tongues which are to be interpreted and speaking in tongues as a private prayer language are really two distinct gifts from God's Spirit. They say that not everyone has the gift of speaking in tongues publicly, but every Christian can, and maybe should, have the gift of speaking in tongues privately. Well, there is really no biblical support for that view, and it seems to contradict what the Lord tells us here in Chapter 14.

I should also mention that in Verse 22 Paul says tongues can function as a sign for unbelievers, but then in Verses 23-25 he talks about how an unbeliever who walks into a church where people are speaking in tongues is going to be turned off and think everyone there is crazy. The only way I can make sense of what Paul says is that in Verse 22 he is talking about a situation where an unbeliever hears someone speaking his native language, like what happened at Pentecost. That type of tongues would be a sign for a non-Christian, but otherwise that is not the purpose.

Pointers Concerning Speaking in Tongues

Just a few things I'd like to point out to you pertaining to speaking in tongues as the Spirit gives us the utterance.

Speaking in Tongues...

1. Is completely Biblical

I believe you can see this from the message above and all of the text that we have brought forth into this subject. It's a God thing.

2. Is a free gift from God for believers only

Mark 16:17

“And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name they will drive out demons; they will speak in new tongues.”

The fact is, all of us have the Holy Spirit the moment we accept Christ into our lives. He's part of the trinity-Godhead. The “gift” of the Holy Spirit is a free gift given to us by God that is available to everyone; it's a choice to receive it or not.

In Acts 2 it says ALL of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to SPEAK IN TONGUES as the Spirit enabled them. This tells us it is for every believer. It wasn't just the Peter, John, and James but even the women and children in the upper room were praying in tongues. Later in the Book of Act{ion}s, Paul laid hands on some believers and they spoke in tongues. These believers were no one special. In fact, these believers were saints from Ephesus, which John later told them that God is calling them to return to their first love or they will lose their blessing. [Rev 2:4-5] God is baptizing "nameless and faceless" people for ministry just like he baptized big names preachers like William Seymour, Smith Wigglesworth, Tommy Barnett, and others. The only requirement for receiving the Baptism of tongues is being saved and asking God for it. He longs to baptize you with power from on high. God desires to give you fire. There is nothing you can do to earn this baptism. You cannot earn anything from God. You can only experience his grace by faith. Every gift God gives you is because of his grace. You can receive this gift of the Holy Spirit as the Apostle Peter called it through his grace. Do you want everything God has for you? Then, ask him for this baptism of Fire, Grace, and Glory. It is there for your taking!

It's a gift from God to His children. If you don't know Him, today is a good day to make the decision to come and follow Him. Keep in mind, there are always counterfeits to anything God does; and so too does the enemy counterfeit the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

3. Is imparted through the laying on of hands

Acts 19:6

“When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied.”

Acts 8:17

“Then they began laying their hands on them, and they were receiving the Holy Spirit.”

I've experienced others who have received the gift of tongues as well without a soul touching them..... for God is sovereign. But the scripture does back up and confirm that many received as a result of the laying on of hands by the disciples.

4. Will not get you to heaven any quicker

5. Doesn't mean you're any better than anyone else

There are some who feel that because they speak in tongues they're just a little bit holier than others. Like they have some type of inside thing going with God that makes them better; “yes... I'm part of the tongue talking club, I should be given some perks at church and stuff like that.” Not!

Galatians 2:6

“God has no favorites”

6. Is not the answer to all of your problems – but it'll help!

But the Holy Spirit will help you in dealing with your problems. It is also a great way to deal with spiritual warfare; that we deal with daily, whether we realize it or not. It gives you that extra umph in your life. The way I see it, I have a relationship with Christ. I fast and pray, which opens supernatural doors for me. I speak in tongues, which gives me the strength and power to walk through the doors, then the love that I have for God and others, keeps me there.

Romans 8:26

“In the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.”

So the Spirit intercedes through us in tongues and gives a new intimacy in prayer. Sometimes whilst on your knees or walking or however you pray – you find yourself at that point when you don't know how to pray or move things on in your prayer. You are at the 'Groan' point. And when you hit that point God sometimes gives to you the words to express those groanings and longings – and that gift of words may come in a tongue.

This is not to say that praying in tongues is the only form of Spiritually directed praying, or Spirit prompted prayer – but it is a form that God sometimes in His goodness gives. Tongues are a powerful weapon in Spiritual Warfare. In that general daily battle we have with the powers of darkness as we come to God with our prayers or those specific situations where deliverance and ministry is involved. It is a tremendous release to find yourself in a situation where you don't know what to pray so you pray in the tongue that God gives to you.

Many of you may be familiar with the stories of Jackie Pullinger and her work in Hong Kong and the breakthrough that came in the Spiritual Warfare when she began to use this gift. [Walled city. Triad Gangs. Drugs & prostitution] She writes in her book 'Chasing the dragon', “by the clock I prayed for 15 minutes a day in the language of the Spirit and after about 6 weeks of this I began to lead people to Jesus. Gangsters fell to their knees sobbing in the streets, women were healed, heroine addicts were set free and I knew it had nothing at all to do with me.” Jackie experienced a breakthrough in that Spiritual battlefield.

7. Enables a Christian to praise God at a new depth

This is what was happening at Pentecost. They heard the Apostles praising God in their own language. Cornelius – when the Spirit of God comes upon him and his relatives and friends in Acts 10 we read:

Acts 10:46

“For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.”

It enables a Christian to speak to God in prayer in a new way.

1 Cor. 14:2

“For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.”

Tongues opens up for many a new dimension of prayer.

There are times when you run out of words. When you’ve said, “Lord you’re great. Lord you’re wonderful. Lord you’re fantastic. Lord you’re brilliant.” And you feel if only I knew more words that I could use to praise God. God gives you those words.

Often this happens in worship. We are singing together, worshipping and lifting the name of Jesus higher and God leads us naturally on into a tongue of praise & worship.

I’m told that the average person has a vocabulary of 5000 words. Winston Churchill’s vocabulary was nearer 15,000. But how many words can we find to praise God – yet we never have enough. Tongues enable us to praise God in a new way.

And what’s cool is that this is a prayer language between you and God, and the beautiful thing to me about it is, the devil can’t understand it! I love that. I can pray “in the spirit”, and he can’t tell what I’m praying about. It must drive the enemy mad.

8. Is not easily understood

If you don’t understand all of this... don’t worry! Neither do I! I don’t understand it all, but I believe it all and I know that it takes faith. If you have to understand it fully before you speak it, none of us would be able to speak in tongues. It’s a matter of faith in receiving this gift from God.

9. Doesn't mean you have to be weird

I speak in tongues, and I'm not weird... However, if you look at the experience of the disciples in the upper room, the neighbors thought they had been drinking! They thought they were strange! It can be weird, but you don't have to be weird.

Tongues are not a hypnotic, zombie like state in which the person has no control of his faculties.

Whenever there is a move of God, there are going to be people who are going to call it weird. And sometimes what people declare as moves of God are weird and odd, and they're not really God. We ought to be discerning about those things. We shouldn't be just totally gullible. But even within the Church, anytime there is a move of God of any kind, there will be some people who will go, "Boy, I hope this is true," and they'll judge it. They'll kind of look at it, search it out, and then affirm it. And there are others who just write it off right away. "That's weird. That's different." We've seen that here at Eastgate before in certain circumstances. "That's just different. That's weird. That's just not right. That's not real." Well, a move of God is oftentimes unusual, and it attracts attention.

10. Is a different experience for everyone

When I first received the gift of tongues, at a summer church camp, I was crying and it was an emotional thing. I loved it. My jaw was shaking, my emotions were raw, it was wonderful. The next night, I went forward to speak in tongues again, and nothing. No tears, no feelings, no nothing. I thought I had lost it. I went to my counselor who encouraged me to know that it's not based upon feelings, but upon the facts of God's Word and my relationship with Him. I was relieved, then began speaking it again.

11. Is not about emotionalism

For some people, there are a lot of emotions that follow their experience with speaking in tongues; for others, not. For me, I was emotional at first, but then realized that it's not about the emotion, it's about the fact and the relationship I have with Christ Jesus.

12. Can be extremely frustrating

There are some people who just start speaking it immediately with no hesitation. Some, it takes a long time. Some get frustrated in the process. I remember one guy who got prayed for with the laying on of hands to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit who didn't get any type of tongue at all; until he went to bed that night and just started speaking it as he laid his head on his pillow.

13. Comes from God through your voice box

Acts 2:4

“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” (KJ them the utterance)

It comes from the Holy Spirit, but we have to speak it out. It takes our act of faith to speak it out and just not wait for God to somehow speak through us without our voices and tongues. It truly is a faith thing to do this, but you have to speak it out. It may be strange, which it is, but it will eventually become normal.

14. Is not always fluid at first

Speaking in an unknown tongue is a language; and it needs to be practiced. Like any language you learn, you don't usually start out speaking it fluidly, but it takes time to learn and grow in that language. The more you speak in tongues, the more fluid you will become in talking with God. So don't get frustrated in the process.

15. Is worthless if you don't love others

1 Cor. 13:1

“If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but do not have love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.”

Conclusion:

Now What? When you come forward today, and we lay hands upon you to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, what should you be doing?

Four Things to Do in Receiving the Gift of Tongues

1. Relax

You don't need to be worried and stressed out. You don't have to worry about what others think about you. You don't have to worry about whether or not you'll be talking in tongues or not; feeling as if you passed the test if you do, and failed it if you don't. There's no failing in this! This is a God thing for you; not a man thing. Relax. No worries.

Sometimes we have a hard time relaxing as well because of the unknown factors. Having never done this before, there are lots of unknowns, which is understandable. But you can relax, for no one here is going to be weird about this.

2. Rejoice

I like it when we begin to rejoice and praise the Lord, then at a certain time, we step out in faith and just start speaking it out; allowing God to take over our tongues during that time as He gives us the utterance.

I've seen some people pray for others to receive the gift of tongues where they almost tackled them! I've seen some grab someones chin and move it up and down, saying things to encourage them to start speaking it like, "honda, suzuki, yamaha", etc... Not here. There's no coaxing.... Just prayer and encouraging you.

3. Receive

Let it come forth from the Lord. Just receive this free gift from God.

4. Repeat

You've got to speak in tongues often! Use your language. For some of you here today, you haven't spoken in tongues for years... maybe today is your day to get it going again.

So..... how about you? Do you know Jesus Christ as your personal savior? Do you have a relationship with Him? If not, today can be your day. A day of new beginnings. And then, one you know Him.... Would you like to receive this wonderful free Gift of the Holy Spirit?

I encourage you to. And as you do...

You watch... you wait... you'll see!