SOFTWARE & TECH

# Of The Purpose Of Pentecost By Tl Osborn

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## Understanding the Purpose of Pentecost According to TL Osborn

Pentecost is often remembered as the dramatic day when tongues of fire rested upon believers and they began speaking in other languages. For many, it remains a historical event or a doctrinal point of debate. However, renowned evangelist and teacher **T.L. Osborn** dedicated much of his ministry to unveiling a deeper, more practical truth: the purpose of Pentecost is not merely a display of supernatural phenomena, but a divine empowerment for global evangelism. In his classic work, *Of The Purpose Of Pentecost*, Osborn shifts the focus from the experience itself to the mission that the experience enables. This article explores the key insights from T.L. Osborn's teaching on what Pentecost truly means for every believer today.

### Who Was T.L. Osborn and Why His Teaching Matters

T.L. Osborn (1923–2013) was a pioneering Pentecostal evangelist who, alongside his wife Daisy, conducted massive crusades across Africa, Asia, and Latin America. They witnessed millions of people come to faith, accompanied by extraordinary miracles. Osborn's theology was intensely practical and mission-driven. He believed that the primary purpose of Pentecost was not to provide a spiritual high but to supply the necessary tools for every believer to fulfill the Great Commission. His book *Of The Purpose Of Pentecost*distills decades of frontline experience into a compelling argument: the Holy Spirit was given to make ordinary people into extraordinary witnesses. This perspective challenges both those who treat Pentecost as a mere historical footnote and those who reduce it to a private spiritual experience.

### The Core Argument: Pentecost Is About Power for Witness

Osborn's central thesis is straightforward: the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Day of Pentecost to empower believers to be witnesses **"unto the uttermost part of the earth"** (Acts 1:8). He argues that the speaking in tongues, the prophecies, and the boldness displayed by Peter and the apostles were not ends in themselves. Rather, they were signs that the power of God had been released for a specific purpose—**evangelism**. In his teaching, Osborn repeatedly emphasizes that the same power that raised Jesus from the dead is available to every Christian to bring the message of salvation to a lost world. This power is not for personal exaltation; it is for the harvest. When believers understand this purpose, they stop seeking Pentecost as a feeling and start living it as a commission.

One of the most poignant warnings in *Of The Purpose Of Pentecost*is that many believers receive the Holy Spirit but fail to understand why. Osborn points out that the early church did not sit in the upper room forever; they went out and turned the world upside down. He warns that a focus on spiritual gifts without a corresponding burden for the lost leads to spiritual stagnation. The purpose of Pentecost is not to make us feel powerful, but to make us effective heralds of the gospel. When we reduce Pentecost to a denominational distinctive or a personal blessing, we rob it of its revolutionary intent. Osborn insists that every tongue-

speaking, Spirit-filled believer should be a soul-winning believer, or else the gift has missed its intended mark.

## Key Themes in T.L. Osborn's Teaching on Pentecost

Osborn's treatment of Pentecost can be broken down into several interlocking themes that together form a comprehensive understanding of its purpose.

- The Holy Spirit as a Person, Not a Feeling: Osborn emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is a divine person who works through believers. The purpose of Pentecost is to bring us into a cooperative relationship with the Spirit, who then uses our voices, hands, and feet to reach others.
- Boldness for Witness: He shows that after Pentecost, the disciples were transformed from fearful men hiding behind locked doors to fearless proclaimers in the temple courts. This boldness is one of the primary evidences of the Spirit's filling.
- Miracles as Evangelistic Tools: Osborn believed that miracles, signs, and wonders are not just for show. They are to confirm the message of the gospel. In his own ministry, he saw that the demonstration of God's power opened hearts that were otherwise closed.
- The Universality of Pentecost: Osborn taught that the purpose of Pentecost is for every believer, not just for clergy or special classes of Christians. The Great Commission is given to all, and so is the power to accomplish it.
- Urgency of the Harvest: He constantly reminds readers that billions of people have never heard the name of Jesus. Pentecost is God's answer to the desperate need for laborers in the harvest field. The Spirit empowers us not for comfort but for combat against the darkness.

## The Practical Application: Living Out Pentecost Today

According to Osborn, understanding the purpose of Pentecost is not an intellectual exercise. It must change how we live. He provides several practical ways to apply this truth.

1. Seek the Giver, Not Just the Gifts: While spiritual gifts are valuable, they are tools. The goal is to know the Holy Spirit intimately and to be led by Him daily. This relationship fuels a passion for souls.
2. Prioritize Evangelism Over Experience: Osborn encourages believers to step out of the comfort of church services and into the streets, workplaces, and nations. The best evidence of being filled with the Spirit is a life that consistently shares Christ.
3. Expect Supernatural Help: He taught that every believer can expect the Holy Spirit to give them the right words, create opportunities, and even perform miracles to confirm the gospel. This expectation turns witnessing from a duty into an adventure.
4. Maintain a Global Vision: Osborn's own ministry was international. He exhorts all Christians to pray for the unreached, give to missions, and be willing to go themselves if God calls. The purpose of Pentecost cannot be fulfilled in a closed room.
5. Confess Jesus Boldly: One of the simplest yet most profound applications is to speak about Jesus naturally and frequently. The Holy Spirit gives utterance—not just in tongues but in clear, persuasive speech in the local language.

## The Great Commission: The Ultimate Purpose

Osborn repeatedly ties Pentecost back to Jesus' final command: **"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"** (Mark 16:15). He sees Pentecost as the fulfillment of the promise Jesus made before His ascension. Without the Holy Spirit, the disciples were not equipped for the task. With the Holy Spirit, they became unstoppable. In *Of The Purpose Of Pentecost*, Osborn argues that the church today has largely lost this missional perspective. Many seek the power of Pentecost for personal breakthroughs, health, or prosperity, but neglect the primary reason the power was given—to reach the lost. He calls this a tragic misappropriation of a divine gift. The purpose of Pentecost is not to make life easier but to make witness more effective.

Osborn's own life demonstrated this truth. He and Daisy faced hardships, cultural barriers, and opposition, yet they saw astonishing results because they operated in the authority and power of the Holy Spirit. Their testimony validates the teaching: when the church embraces the true purpose of Pentecost, the world sees the reality of Christ. The same power that caused thousands to be saved in a single day in Jerusalem is available today for the same purpose.

## Common Misunderstandings Corrected by Osborn

In his writing, T.L. Osborn addresses several misconceptions about Pentecost that have crept into modern Christianity.

**Misunderstanding 1: Pentecost Is Only for the Early Church.** Osborn refutes this by pointing to Acts 2:39: "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off." The purpose of Pentecost is continuous. Each generation needs the same empowerment to fulfill its evangelistic mandate.

**Misunderstanding 2: The Purpose Is to Speak in Tongues.** While speaking in tongues is a valid initial evidence of the Holy Spirit's infilling according to some traditions, Osborn insists it is not the ultimate goal. Tongues are a tool for prayer and a sign, but the greater purpose is outward witness. He compares tongues to the engine of a car—essential for movement, but the car is meant to go somewhere.

**Misunderstanding 3: Pentecost Is About Personal Holiness Only.** Certainly the Holy Spirit transforms character, but Osborn argues that holiness is not an end in itself either. A holy life is a powerful witness. The purpose of Pentecost includes sanctification, but always with an outward focus. We are set apart to be sent.

## The Role of Faith and Action

Osborn was known for his strong emphasis on faith. In *Of The Purpose Of Pentecost*, he connects faith and action to the fulfillment of the purpose. It is not enough to simply receive the Holy Spirit and wait. Believers must act on the Word and the Spirit's prompting. He taught that faith is released through action—especially the action of speaking the gospel. When we open our mouths, the Holy Spirit fills them. This principle echoes the early church's prayer in Acts 4:29: "Grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word." Osborn encourages every believer to step out in faith, knowing that the power of Pentecost backs up their words.

## Conclusion: Embracing the Real Purpose of Pentecost

The life and teachings of T.L. Osborn present a clarion call to the modern church: the purpose of Pentecost is not a mystery to be debated, but a mission to be embraced. The Holy Spirit was given to empower ordinary people to do extraordinary things in taking the gospel to every creature. *Of The Purpose Of Pentecost* is a timeless resource that redirects our attention from self-centered spirituality to world-changing witness. Whether you are a lifelong Pentecostal believer or someone seeking a deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit's work, Osborn's central message is as relevant today as it was when he first preached it. The fire of Pentecost is meant to ignite a flame of evangelism that spreads to the ends of the earth. The question remains: will we embrace the purpose, or settle for a pale imitation? The choice, as Osborn would remind us, determines whether we will see a generation saved or a Spirit quenched.

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