

Spiritual Gifts #3 Discovering Your Spiritual Gift: Speaking Gifts

- Well howdy welcome to our series on Spiritual Gifts, helping you find your position on Team Jesus. We've looked at the fact that the spiritual gifts exist in three categories. Last week, we looked at the serving gifts. Those of you who like to do ministry with your hands. Next week, we'll look at the supernatural or sign gifts. All the controversial stuff healings, tongues, miracles and more. And this week we're looking at the speaking gifts. So I'm super excited 'cause I get to talk for an hour. The speaking gifts are those of us who do ministry, not just with our deeds, but with our words. And part of what I'm praying for in this series is that you will figure out your divine design, that as we look at your gifts, talents, abilities, experiences, your training, maybe your educational and or job history. You can figure out how God made you and what God made you to uniquely do, to contribute to his kingdom. In addition, my hope or goal is that if you're married, that you'd come to a better understanding and a deeper appreciation of your spouse. And if you're parents, same goes for your kids. Grace and I were talking about it. And most of her gifts she observed, are in the realm of serving, mine are mostly in the realm of speaking. And that helps us understand one another. And just one sort of anecdotal testimony that came in this week, there was a husband and a father, and he said that he realizes that he's not been fully appreciative of or encouraging of his wife's spiritual gift. He said that he's got gifts of leadership and such, and his wife has gifts in the realm, particularly of hospitality. She's always asking, "Can we have people over? Can we throw a dinner party? Can we do a worship night? Can we do a prayer night?" And he keeps saying, "No, why do we need to do that? That doesn't sound interesting to me at all." Come to find, he now realizes one of her gifts is hospitality. She likes to entertain, have people over, throw parties and host events. So he apologized to her. Said, "Honey that's how God made you, to do ministry. And I'm sorry that I've not fully understood or appreciated that." And so she lit up, she was like, "Great, so we can put in the budget and on the schedule, some events, have people over, dinner parties, worship nights, prayer nights." He's like "Okay, that's what we're doing." They call a family meeting. We'll come to find that one of his daughters has the gift of administration. She pulls out a pen and a pad and she's making notes and plans and charts and delegating. She's also got some leadership ability and then come to find one of his other kids has got gift of evangelism. They're like, "What about the neighbors? The neighbors are our friends. They don't know Jesus, could we be praying for them? Could we have them over to our event and party and be praying that they meet Christians from church? Maybe they join us at church. Maybe they meet Jesus." He said he had no idea that all these gifts were just sort of sitting there in his wife and their children. And as soon as he gave permission, it activated the whole family for ministry. So pray for this family as now they're getting ready to open their house and their budget and their schedule. They're having people over for dinner. They're gonna have a worship and prayer night, it's all getting organized and the non-Christian neighbors are coming. That's the point of being on Team Jesus, just trying to figure out how God made you. If you're married, your spouse, if you have kids, your kids, and how you could be activated together for the kingdom of God to do ministry. This week we're gonna look at eight different gifts in the realm of speaking, and I've got a lot to cover. So I'll talk pretty fast, but we're gonna start with this gift, the gift of apostles. You'll find it in

1 Corinthians 12:8 and Ephesians 4:11. Here's my definition, the office of Apostle. So this is the capital A versus the lower A. This is a limited office of 12, not the unlimited gifting of many. It's the 12 chosen by Jesus, who were eye witnesses to his life and resurrection. In addition to the limited office of Apostle, there is a lesser, lesser spiritual authority, spiritual gift of apostle, that manifests itself in these kinds of things, missions, church planting, training pastors, convening conferences, building ministry platforms and leading leaders. Lemme just give a shameless plug for a free resource. I wrote an entire book and it is right around 100 pages and it gets into all of this in detail. So if you're a person that has more specific questions, there are a lot of answers here and greater detail. You can pick a free copy up, if you're here at Trinity Church on the way out, or just go to realfaith.com and you can download a free digital version. But let me give you a summary of what the apostles are and are not. When we think of apostle, the first thing that comes to mind, is a limited office of 12 people chosen by Jesus. When Jesus was on the earth he prayed all night, picked 12, appointed them as his apostles, which means sent one. So they are sent by him, commissioned by the king in the kingdom, with his divine supernatural authority. Now, in addition to that, capital A limited office of 12, there is a spiritual gift, lower cap, not capital A lowercase A, not the 12 that have an office, but a gift that has some of the same function with a lower lesser level of spiritual authority that also carry forth kind of pioneering ministry in leading of leaders. We see this in Jesus' ministry. Hebrews 3:1 says to fix your thoughts on Jesus, the apostle and high priest to whom we confess. So Jesus is the one who plants the church. Jesus says I will build my church. Jesus is the chief cornerstone of the Christian church. Jesus is the chief shepherd over the church. So Jesus' relationship to the church is the apostle. He is the founder. He is the cornerstone. He is the leader. He is the senior pastor over all the other pastors. That's his role and responsibility. Do you have this gift? Do you have this gift? Do pastors and ministry leaders seek you for wise counsel, oversight and help? Sometimes the apostolic gift will be pastoring pastors, leading leaders. And so sometimes what happens is pastors will find someone who helps to instruct and oversee them. This can be denominational leaders, network leaders, seminary presidents, ministry leaders of various sorts or kinds, pastors to pastors. Do you have a deep compassion and concern for ministry leaders and their families? There are pastors who love and serve people. People with apostolic gifting, they love and pastor pastors who pastor people. So as I care for you, there are people with apostolic gifting that care for me and my family. And as I look for your best interests, they're looking out for our health and well-being. Can you effectively minister cross-country, cross-culturally? Sometimes this means going to another country or another nation, speaking another language, church planting or pioneering missions in an unreached people group. Are you an entrepreneur? You like to start something from nothing or grow something. If you have apostolic gifts, you don't wanna go somewhere that already is established. You wanna go start something new and do you love to see Christians unified for the sake of the Gospel. An apostolic gifting is more like a spiritual father or mother. Paul says, "You have many teachers. You don't have many fathers." And this is more of a parental heart that says I want all the kids to get along, all the churches and pastors and leaders and ministries to love one another and to work together for the cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Well, as a warning that for each of these gifts, there's a shadow side, for everything that God creates Satan counterfeits, for everything that God builds, Satan seeks to break. As a warning, there are repeated warnings in

the Bible about quote on quote, false apostles. False apostles are people who will pretend that they have authority that is equal or even greater to scripture, which that's not the case. God's word is the highest authority. They will say that they have authority equal to, or sometimes greater than the 12 that were chosen by Jesus. Those are false teachers. Part of the way you can see a false apostle is well, they're leading cults. They're leading people astray. They're leading people into sin or rebellion or folly. They are spiritual leaders, but they're leading against God, not for God. And they're contradicting the word of God, not teaching and applying the word of God. My father-in-law, Grace's dad Gib, he was pastor for 40 sumn years, of a church called Trinity Church, that we in honor to him, named our church after. And so when I became a Christian, he was telling me about a cult in the neighborhood where we grew up and where he pastored. And it was a very bizarre thing, because the senior leader basically called himself an apostle. And he said that he was like an author of the Bible. And so we went to one of his meetings and it was particularly concerning. He taught for a very long time, but he never quoted the Bible. And he never really talked about Jesus. Instead he got up and he talked about his personal visions, how God took him into heaven and showed him secrets. And then it was one of the weirdest things I've ever seen. The band started playing and people got up and they left their spouse and they started dancing with people that they were not married to. They called it spiritual or soul connecting. And so they had all of these bizarre doctrines, they resulted in widespread adultery. They denied essentials of Christian faith, and he was a very powerful spiritual leader, but did so by demonic power. And there was a deception that came upon the people in the room and Grace and I were just very troubled and bothered in our spirits. Like this is just wrong. This isn't based on the Bible. This is not glorifying to God. There's unholy spirits in the room. This is not about the Holy Spirit. This is leading people toward adultery, not marital faithfulness. This is a false apostle. And what he's doing here is false and counterfeit ministry. So you've gotta be careful. In addition however, there are some that legitimately have this gift. I'm gonna give you an example historically, from a man named Hudson Taylor. And part of the reason I'm giving you sort of brief, biographical sketches throughout Christian history in this series, is if you read about a gift and you're like, "That sounds like me." And then I tell you about someone who had it historically, maybe you could go read their biography or study it. That could be really fun for you. That could encourage you. Hudson Taylor, he was a guy who had no formal theological degree. He wasn't a big guy. He was small, weak, frail. He was originally studying in the UK to be a medical doctor, very prestigious position, obviously honored in the community, gonna make a good income. And at the age of 19, he felt God burdened him to go into ministry and to forsake his career as a doctor and to become a pastor. Well, this was very debatable and controversial. Obviously family and friends are looking at him going, "What are you doing? To go from physician to pastor, great income to poverty, widely respected to not widely respected. Why would you do that?" Well God called him. And then he felt called to China. So here he is, a frail, weak, young, formerly untrained British kid, who realizes I need to go to China. So I think he gets on a boat and he makes his way to China of all places. Now nobody knows him. He's got no money. He's, completely rejected. He's the outcast weirdo in the culture. He just doesn't fit. And what he decides is, God has called me there to pioneer new ministry, to have an apostolic function, because we've not found a way to reach the Chinese people, but Jesus loves them and he died and rose for them. And they need to know about

Jesus. Well he commits himself to a life of total poverty, total controversy. He is completely overworked. On one occasion, he preached in 58 Chinese cities in 25 days, 51 of which had never been visited by a Protestant missionary. 25 days. This kid preaches 58 Chinese cities. 51 of them, nobody had showed up to preach the Gospel ever. So he's the first guy on the scene, in many of these cities in China, teaching them about Jesus. He almost dies multiple times. He's sickly. He does not live a long life. And then he gets a lot of opposition because he decides, something that was very controversial in the day. And that is, "I'm going to learn the Chinese language. I'm going to wear the Chinese clothes. I'm going to eat the Chinese food. I'm going to adopt the Chinese holidays. I'm going to immerse myself in Chinese culture to be a missionary, to reach Chinese people for Jesus." And that was very controversial. A lot of the folks in the UK were like, "What are you doing? That is not acceptable." But today there is a large number of Christians in China. Many of them persecuted in the underground church and they would all trace their spiritual ancestry to Hudson Taylor, had he not gone and taken a risk and tried something different, they wouldn't have heard about the Lord Jesus. That's the apostolic gift. You're trying to find creative ways, to bring Christ, Christianity, church planning, missions, evangelism and leadership to people that have not heard it before. And they need Jesus desperately. In addition, the second gift is the gift of teaching, Romans 12:7, 1 Corinthians 12:28. I'll define it here. It's the ability to understand and communicate biblical truth, in a clear and relevant manner so that there is understanding and application. Learning, researching, communicating, illustrating truths or qualities, that an individual manifest when exercising the gift of teaching. This is the nerd gift and I'm your nerd friend. These people enjoy studying and learning new information and find joy in sharing it with others. Well, obviously we see this very clearly in Jesus' ministry. He is called a rabbi. Rabbi just literally means teacher. So a lot of people just called him teacher. And it says of Jesus' teaching that when crowds heard him, they were stunned and amazed because he taught differently than the other teachers. The other teachers were boring and would quote one another, but he had his own innate, God-given, spiritually-anointed authority. So it says that he taught as one who had authority. And so with the teaching gift, how many of you have the teaching gift? Here's some questions to see if you have it. Do you like studying and researching? To be a good teacher, first you need to be a good student. Before you can teach anyone, you need to first yourself be taught. How many of you love to study and research? How many of you love imparting biblical truth to others? You're like, "Man when I learn the Bible and then I get to help people learn the Bible, that's like my favorite thing. I get excited about what I learn. And then if I can help them learn it, it doubles the joy." Do people come to you for insight and scripture? If you have a teaching gift, people will just find you. They'll be like, "Okay I was studying about, explain this to me. Can we meet? Do you have any good Bible commentaries? What does this mean? I don't understand. Could you explain this? Could you help me figure this out?" They're going to come and ask you because they know that you've done your homework. In addition, when you teach, when you explain something, this can be one-on-one. This can be in a small group or a class or a large group. When you teach, does the light bulb go on for people and they get it? As a teacher, that's one of the most exciting things that happen. People are like, "Oh, I understand. Okay now that makes sense. I didn't understand that. Now I do. That makes perfect sense." That's one of the great joys of the teaching gift. And then lastly, are you someone when you study, especially studying the Bible,

you tend to go deeper? Because you're just really curious. You get down rabbit trails. There's a lot of details, that other people don't find very interesting, but to you, they're fairly fascinating. This is the teaching gift. This is one of my gifts. I like to teach. I think this year outside of daily devotions, just study guides, books, sea books. I'm gonna publish almost 1,500 pages of Bible teaching. Plus sermons, plus questions, plus devotions, plus classes, hundreds of hours of teaching. I really love teaching. It's fun for me. I find a lotta joy in it. There was a Bible teacher named Charles Haddon Spurgeon, in the UK some years ago. He said, "If there wasn't a heaven," I'm paraphrasing. He said, "I'd wanna spend eternity in the pulpit teaching. 'Cause that's the closest I get." I totally understand that. If you have a teaching gift, whatever that might be, you just love to teach and you love to have people learn and you love to awaken their curiosity. Well, a couple of warnings, for those of us with teaching gifts. Those of us who teach, we tend to work in the realm of ideas, which isn't bad. But when you deal with ideas, you can become idealistic and you can become then legalistic. Dealing with ideas is a lot easier than dealing with people. For example, you can be a person who's newly married and you're looking forward to being a parent. So you decide, you know what? We're gonna read some parenting books. You read a few good Christian parenting books. And you're like, "You know what? We've read the books. We got all the information. We're set. We know exactly how to be a parent." And then you realize when the kid shows up, you have no idea what you're doing. The point is, everything works on paper. It's once you get people involved, that things become more complicated. For those of us are teachers, we can work in the realm of ideas, we can become idealistic, we can become legalistic. In addition, for those of us that have teaching gifts, we can get impatient with people that are slower to learning. Sometimes, we've been thinking about it a long time. We present it. It's the first time they've heard it. Or maybe we've been studying for years and they've been studying for minutes. We need to be patient, loving, with people who are in process. And also I would just encourage you. There's always a counterfeit from Satan for every spiritual gifts. In addition to the gift of teaching, the Bible talks a lot and warns a lot about false teachers. And the point is this, if you wanna rebel against God, if you wanna believe or behave in a way that is contrary to the express will of God and the word of God, you can always find somebody that'll agree with you. It doesn't matter what crazy thing you wanna believe or what crazy way you wanna behave. You can find somebody who's pretty smart, maybe educated, makes a cogent argument and is a false teacher. You can justify pretty much anything. And false teachers are always willing to get paid good money to deny what God has said. So you gotta guard your heart and only go for real teachers. Now historically, lemme give you an example of a real teacher. There was a guy named John Calvin. He lived in the 1500s and he became a Christian around the age of 23, around the age of about 26, which is incredibly young. He wrote something called "The Institutes." "The Institutes" is a very thick, systematic theology looking at subjects that appear in the Bible and it's become sort of the heart of something that's now called Calvinistic Theology in his honor. Around the age of 28, he settled in the city of Geneva and immediately started opening academic schools, institutions of higher learning and was promoting education. He was a teacher. Now up until that point in world history, it wasn't a common idea that the average person like you or I should be educated. In fact, it was to the advantage of those who ruled the government, controlled the court systems, own the land, oversaw voting if it existed in a culture, to have the majority of the people be

illiterate. They can't organize. They can't really create any sort of political upheaval or legal challenge or change. Yet Calvin came along and he said, "You know what? We need to have people learn how to read and write. So that they can learn the word of God in their native language. So he was, I would argue, one of the if not the first massive advocates for widespread education. And what happened then is that his concept, is now a global phenomena. It's interesting, even in schools and universities, that don't hear that the majority of the reason that we have literacy and education is because of Christians who wanted people to learn to read and write so that the Bible could be translated into their language so they could hear from God for themselves. Now by the turn to the century, it's very interesting, nations where the Gospel of Jesus Christ had not spread like China and India had a literacy rate from 0 to 20%. Roman Catholic countries had a literacy rate from 40 to 60%. Protestant countries had a literacy rate from 94 to almost 100%. The most literate nations in the world, historically are those where Protestant Christianity has gone and John Calvin's influence has spread. This may shock you, but the first 123 universities and colleges, founded in America, were founded by Bible-believing Jesus-loving Christians who are following and applying the teaching gift of John Calvin for education. And it's weird today, that a lot of the time you go to a university and they're arguing against Christ, Christianity and the Bible. And if it wasn't for Christ, Christianity and the Bible, you wouldn't even have education. You wouldn't have literacy. You wouldn't have the printing press. And all of that is from the teacher, John Calvin, who wanted to teach people to read, so that they could learn God's word. The next gift is the gift of evangelism, Ephesians 4:11. It's the ability to boldly and clearly communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ. So that non-Christians become Christians. Evangelists feel compassion for the lost and seek to earnestly understand their questions and doubts, so that they can provide a compelling answer. An evangelist often prefers to be with non-Christians in the culture rather than hanging out with Christians in the church. So here we are in church and many of you, perhaps most of you, I hope and pray, know and love Jesus, but then you think of all the people in the world, they don't know Jesus. Just think of all the people that live within a stone's throw of where we find ourselves, that don't know Jesus. They may never come in here so we need to out there. This is the evangelistic gift. This is why Jesus came from heaven to earth. He came to seek and to save the lost and he sends us with an evangelistic ministry to seek and save the lost. And Jesus comes to earth and he goes to parties and events and houses with non-Christians and the religious people get all negative and judgy on him. He's a friend of drunkards and gluttons and sinners. And he's like, "You know what? They're lost. They don't know me. And they're not gonna come to the religious institution where they're gonna get judged by all the religious judgy people." So Jesus says, "I'm just gonna go hang out with them and love them and talk to them about how to have their sins forgiven." Lemme just say this, if you're here and you're not a Christian, or you're hearing this and you're not a Christian, you need Jesus. The reason that you and I have so much pain, problem and parallel in life, is that we were made by God. We're made for God. And we've turned our back on God. We've separated ourselves from God. As a result, we have unplugged our life from the power source of God. We're living on our own energy. This is why we get sick and tired. And this is why we get frustrated. And this is why life doesn't work. And ultimately, it's why we die. We weren't made to die. We were made to live by the living God, but because of sin and separation from God, we die. Now, God knew that we would live forever separated from him

unless he did something to fix this problem that we have made. So God came into human history. His name is Jesus Christ. He said, he's God. He's the only major religious leader in the history of the world to declare himself to be God. He said he was God with his words and he showed he was God with his deeds. He performed miracles. He healed people. And his greatest miracle was rising from the dead. And he's the only person who's ever fully, thoroughly, totally conquered death in the history of the world. And then he ascended into heaven where he's alive right now. Lemme say this, whatever problem you have, pales in comparison to your sin problem and until you invite Jesus Christ to deal with that problem, you're on your own, dealing with all your other problems. Once you invite Jesus, you say, "Jesus, forgive me of my sin. Be my God. Reconnect me to the God who made me." Now God is there to help you with all of your other problems. So if you've never given your life to Jesus, if you've never given your sin to Jesus, if you've never trusted in Jesus, if you've never received Jesus, that's why we're here. So that you can belong to God through Jesus Christ. That's why he came, he lived, he died. He rose to conquer death, to forgive sin and to love you and to invite you into a loving relationship that never ends. And the message of the evangelist is simply this. Just helping people get to know Jesus. Do you have this gift? Do you enjoy being with non-Christians? Some Christians, they don't really like hanging out with non-Christians. They, maybe they use bad language. Maybe they have some bad habits. Maybe they're frustrating. Non-Christian say, "Well, no, no, no I don't know Jesus." But sometimes Christians say, "You know what? I do love non-Christians and they don't know Jesus. So it doesn't bother me." Does a person's conversion bring you a profound joy? When somebody gets saved, does that make your whole month? When we do baptisms, is that like your favorite day of the year? Do you like teaching other Christians how to share their faith? You know that there's a lot of people that know Jesus and know people who don't know Jesus and you like to help the people who do know Jesus have conversations with people who don't know Jesus about Jesus. And when you're having a conversation with someone, who's not a Christian, do you easily turn the conversation toward salvation and becoming a Christian? Like if somebody sits next to you on the airplane, you're like, "It's a divine appointment. You're getting saved today brother." If you're somebody who's at the grocery store and you're just having a conversation at the checkout line, you'd find it very, "Hey, is there anything I can pray for you about? How's your day going? Hey, God loves you. I just wanted to let you know, every time I come in here, it's really great to see you and God put you on my heart this week. And I was praying for you. How are you doing you?" You're that person who, whatever the conversation you're gonna get to Jesus and you do so pretty easily. Now, if you have this gift, just a few cautions or warnings, number one, you can love non-Christians outside the church so much, that you don't care as much as you should for Christians in the church. We need to love everybody. Those who know Jesus and those who do not yet know Jesus. In addition, what can happen is for all of us, with our spiritual gift to our ministry, passion or calling, we can get so excited about our thing, that we get judgy about their thing. So let's say you're called to missions. Anybody who doesn't wanna go to a foreign country and drink bad water and get a stomach parasite, their junior varsity, they don't really love God. If you're a person who is an evangelist and you love non-Christians, anybody who's not out on the streets, sharing their faith, holding a sign, yelling through a bullhorn, is not a real Christian. You can get very judgy. And the point is this, we don't wanna judge them for their gifts. We wanna celebrate our gifts

and celebrate their gifts, without thinking that if they're not doing what we're doing, they're not doing what God has called them to do. Lemme give you an example historically. Obviously we think of evangelists, we think of Billy Graham. I mean just a legend. He's having a great day, he's with Jesus. I got to meet him a few times, incredible evangelist, but I'll give you another evangelist historically that maybe have not heard about, his name is George Whitfield. Now George Whitfield, he lived in the 1700s. He began preaching around the age of 24, here in the United States of America. He is arguably the greatest preacher, that our nation has ever produced. During his life he preached 18,000 sermons, which, I mean I've preached a lot. I can't even imagine getting to 18,000. And this was before modern media, the social media and technology, and he preached live, like people in front of him, 10 million, 10 million people heard him preach live. Out of his preaching, God used him and anointed him for something called The Great Awakening. Under his leadership, 150 churches were planted. There were times that he would show up and he would preach, upwards to 30,000 people live at one time, with no microphone. I mean, this was before modern technology. So he's yelling the Gospel to 30,000 people. And then when he was done preaching, he would be coughing up blood. He literally would wreck his own body, to preach the Gospel. It's estimated the majority of people who lived in the United States of America, heard him preach live at least once in their lifetime. His farewell sermon, his last sermon on the Boston Commons. It was a larger crowd than the number of people who lived in Boston. Literally everyone came to hear him preach his farewell sermon. And what he says is, "God forbid that I should travel with anybody, a quarter of an hour, without speaking of Christ to them." What he's saying is, if it's been 15 minutes and I've not told you about Jesus, then I failed. That's an evangelist. That's an evangelist. Are you an evangelist? Do you have a heart for people who don't know Jesus? Do you love people who don't know Jesus? Are you the person who's praying for them, talking to them, buying them a Bible, inviting them to church, having those conversations about Christ? Some of you, it's not just people outside of the church, but also inside the church that you have a burden for, this would be shepherding or care gift. Also known as a pastoral gift, Ephesians 4:11. A pastoral gift, also commonly known as shepherding or Christian counseling or discipleship. You like to protect, guide, counsel and disciple other people, especially Christians. The evangelist, wants to help non-Christians meet Christ. This person wants to help Christians grow in their relationship with Christ. People with this gift find great joy in seeing people mature in their faith, overcome besetting sin and discouragement, so that they're healthy and living out the fruit of the Spirit. Well, obviously in Jesus' ministry, he is called the good shepherd and this is a shepherding gift. And a shepherd does two things. Number one, they love and protect and feed and provide for the sheep and they fight and oppose the wolves. That's what a good shepherd does. The wolves are gonna hurt the sheep. The shepherd wants to protect love and care for the sheep and bring them together as a flock, like our church family. Jesus is also called the chief shepherd. So anyone who has the shepherding gift is an under shepherd and Jesus is the chief shepherd who's over us all. And we see some of the most beautiful, poignant, life-changing experiences of people in the Bible, when they sit down with Jesus and it looks like a pastoral counseling session. So there is a place called Samaria. God's people lived in the north and the south and in the middle was a place called Samaria. It was a demonic cult. These people had incest and they just edited out books of the Bible. They were just corrupt. And so God's people would walk around

Samaria, from the north to the south. Jesus comes to earth and he walks through Samaria and he goes to a well in the middle of a day. Now, the women would come to the well in the morning, to pull water and to visit. And it was like Arizona. If you're gonna go for a walk do so early, and if you're new to the Valley, let me tell you this, two o'clock is not a good time to go for a walk in June, July and August, or as we like to call it the Beast of the False Prophet and the Antichrist, those three months that unleash the flames of hell on the earth. You learn in a desert arid climate, get up early, if you're gonna get out and be active. So the women would come together in the well, early in the morning they'd catch up and visit, pull water. This woman is in the well, she's at the well rather, in the middle and the heat of the day. You know why? She was the outcast. She was shunned. She even among the bad people, she was the bad person. Among all the people that were rejected, she was even rejected by the rejected people. So she's the outcast. Nobody cares for her. She's all by herself. She's been married and divorced many times, she's living with some guy, she's got a bad reputation. What does Jesus do? He stops at the well, to have a counseling appointment, a ministry meeting, a divine assignment with her. Now men don't talk to women. Jews don't talk to Samaritans, religious leaders don't talk to women with bad reputations. Jesus says, "You know what? She's not gonna make me unclean. I'm gonna make her clean." And he sits and he has a conversation with her and he talks to her about her life and her relationships and her longings and her spirituality and the guy she's living with. And she just kinda opens up and says, "Okay, here's who I am. Here's my life. Here's the mistakes I've made. Here's where I find myself." Jesus forgives her. He loves her. He puts grace on her. She becomes a Christian. And then she goes into town and she tells all the Samaritans, "I met Jesus." And then there's a massive revival in Samaria. And she becomes one of the first and greatest evangelists in the New Testament. And it all started with what looks like a counseling session, like a Christian counseling session. For those of you that have this shepherding, care, pastoral gift. You're the people who like to do biblical counseling. You're the Christian therapists and counselors. You're the grief and trauma victims. You're the people who go do last rights at the retirement home and tell people about Jesus and the eternal state before they go home. Your people who like to help broken and hurting people. You have hope for them, because you have the Holy Spirit for them. Do you have this gift? When you correct or instruct someone, do they feel loved and helped? People are like, "Thank you. That was really helpful. I felt loved by you." Do you enjoy meeting with Christians to help them grow in their faith? You're like, "Hey, let's go out to coffee, lunch. Let's, I'm gonna disciple you. I'm gonna mentor you. I'm gonna coach you. I'm gonna counsel you." Do people pursue you for wise counsel and instruction? Like, "Hey, I need to run this by you. I need your help. Can you help me figure this out? What do you think I should do?" Do you like to regularly meet with people? You'll schedule coffee, lunch, dinner, meetings. You're regularly meeting with people, to listen and then give them wise counsel. And do you really find joy seeing people heal, grow, mature, in the Holy Spirit? You're not a person that's demanding perfection rather. You're not demanding perfection, but you're celebrating progress. You're like, "If they just, your walk with God is just one step at a time. And if you take the next step, I'm cheering for you." Well, as a warning what I would say is, for those of you that have a pastoral gift, you need to learn healthy, appropriate boundaries. A pastoral relationship is different than a personal relationship. A personal, you can have my cell phone, drop by my house, go on vacation with me, do the holidays with me. We're peers and

friends. A pastoral relationship, you need more boundaries. Okay, you need to call, need to schedule a meeting. I do love you, but you're not my best friend. I'm here to help you. It's more like a counseling counselee relationship and so nice people, that have a shepherding gift, they're not good with boundaries. And because they're dealing with unhealthy people, if you let unhealthy people set the boundaries, you're going to have unhealthy relationships. So you need to model health for them, with appropriate relational boundaries. Lemme give you a positive historical example. There was a guy named Richard Baxter. He was a Puritan and again on the UK, in the 1600s. And he was not formally theologically educated, but he was anointed to the Holy Spirit. He became a pastor young, at about the age of 23. And he was in a small English town. The town had about 2000 people and he says they were unruly, rebellious, like not the best people. These were some difficult, ungodly people. He called them quote, ignorant, rude and reveling. Eventually though, he grew a church of 1000 people, in a town with 2000 people. That's amazing, I mean. Half the town went to his church. The way he did it is through pastoral care. So every year he would schedule a time to go to everybody's house and he'd meet the mom, dad, the kids, and then he would ask, "How's it going? Where are you at with the Lord?" And then he would give them sort of a care plan for the year. "You need to read these books of the Bible. You need to pray with your wife. You guys need to go to church. You need to listen to your daughter and unburdened her heart dad." And he would give assignments. And he'd literally give homework for the year for each of the households and families in his town. And then the next year he would come back and follow up. He had regular counseling appointments. He trained other pastors in pastoral care and counseling. And the point is that he pastored a town of 2000 people. And 1000 of which were Christians in his church. This is a small town. You could walk to everybody's home. They had a lot of kids. So if you met with the household, you could meet with a lot of people, but that's how he did it. He literally pastored those people and he wrote 200 books or so in his life, one of which is called "The Reform Pastor." And it's just teaching pastors how to do pastoral care. Another book, it came out some years ago and I got one of the first editions. It's called "A Christian Directory." It's about this thick, it's all of his counseling notes. Addiction, gambling, alcoholism, divorce, adultery, whatever sins or struggles people may have. He wrote it before Maslow, before Freud, before Skinner, before modern psychology and social sciences. But he kept all of his notes from his decades of counseling appointments and he puts them together, thematically and topically for shepherding and care. And it's a pretty fascinating read. In addition, there is the gift of encouragement. Encouragement, Romans 12:8. It's also called in some translations of the Bible, the gift of exhortation. It involves motivating, encouraging, consoling others, so that they mature in their walk with Christ. To encourage someone is to literally pour courage into them. Some people are scared. They're worried, they're anxious, they're fearful. You're pouring courage into them, to strengthen and sustain them. Christians with this gift, having an unusual sensitivity for and are attracted to people who are discouraged and struggling, as a result, people tend to pursue them for healing words, gracious truth and compassionate counsel. When you're fearful, when you're struggling, when you look at the future and you're like, "This doesn't look good. I don't know how I'm gonna make it." The person with the gift of encouragement comes alongside and says, "If you don't have faith, you can borrow mine. And I'm gonna go with you." Jesus' ministry is one of encouragement. He told us to love our enemies and do good for even those who do evil. He's

encouraging us to do what is right. He also exhorts people. He says, "Leave your life of sin. Go and sin no more." He's encouraging them. "There's a new future for you. There's a new life for you." Philippians 2 says that there is encouragement in Christ. Do you have this gift? Do people seek you out for advice and encouragement? When people are having a hard time, they're like, "I need, hey I need to talk. Could we get together? Could you return my call? Could you, what scripture do I need? Could you pray for me?" In addition, do you enjoy walking with someone through difficulties? If you don't have the gift of encouragement, you see someone with a problem and they're really strong. "How are you doing?" "I'm not doing good. I'm struggling. I'm hurting. Life is frustrating. It's falling apart. I'm really worried." You're like, "Okay, well, good luck with that." That's not the gift of encouragement. The person with the gift of encouragement, they walk toward you, when everyone else is walking away from you. When people look at you and they're like, "That's a lotta work." And they're like, "Yup and that's why God sent me." They're walking in when everyone else is walking out. Are you attracted to those who are hurting and needy? And are you a person who's patient and has joy with people who are hurting and struggling? There are certain people that would exhaust others and they energize you. Now this would be Grace's dad, grandpa Gib. He's gone home to be with the Lord. He passed through the church for about 40 sumn years. He, one of his gifts was shepherding. He would meet with people all the time and counsel them, but also one of his gifts was encouragement or exhortation. And he had hope for people, even if they didn't have hope for themselves. And he could see a future for them, combined with a gift of faith. And he would speak that over them and he would encourage them. I'll never forget with grandpa Gib, I met one guy one time, he said, "God, used Gib to save my life." This is my father-in-law. And I was like, "Well why is that?" He's like, "Well, I was a drug addict for over a decade and Gib met with me every single week for coffee for a decade." I mean, that's 52 weeks a year. That's like 500 coffees. And he said, "Finally, every time we met, Gib loved me, he encouraged me, he prayed for me." He said, "You do belong to the Lord. You do have the Holy Spirit. You don't need to be a drug addict. I wanna encourage you. I wanna put courage in you. There's a hope and a future for you." He said, "He said that to me every week for 10 years." And then one day I believed it and I've not done drugs since. I thought that's incredible. That's a gift of encouragement and a shepherding gift. And that's Grace's dad. Now for those of you that have this gift, I want you to be careful because sometimes your instinct is to encourage everybody, but what if somebody's evil? What if there's a brokenness in them or a darkness in them? And you're encouraging them. You don't wanna encourage evil. So you need to be discerning. In addition, as a warning, sometimes if you're the encourager, you can struggle with the prophet. The prophet is the person who just tells the truth and the encourager is thinking, "Well, that wasn't very loving. You could have said that nice. That was a little harsh. You didn't warm up the relationship before you delivered the knockout blow." You need to allow the prophets to be the prophets and you need to be you without being judgmental of them. And also to, Satan will counterfeit the encouragement gift with flattery. Now the flatterer's the one who, "You're the best. I love you. You're amazing. I've never met anyone like you. I can't live without you. You're incredible. You changed my life. I'm sure you're right. I'm sure they're wrong." The flatterer's the one who's always manipulating you so that they can use and abuse you. This is the demonic counterfeit of the spiritual gift of encouragement. The encouragement gift is to build others up. And the flatterer's gift is to butter others up. There's a

difference between building someone up and buttering someone up. And so you need to be careful of those who are flatterers because it can be a manipulation of the encouragement gift. Well, lemme give you a positive example. So one of the greatest Christian leaders in the history of the world is a man named Martin Luther. He lived in Germany, Catholic monk, devoted to poverty and celibacy and study and teaching. And he struggled mightily his whole life with depression. Before he really got radically saved, he was depressed 'cause he was trying to pay God back for all of his sin. He lived in a painful circumstance. He slept on an uncomfortable bed. He ate uncomfortable food. He literally wrecked his body, hurt his digestive system. I mean, he was physically depressed. He was emotionally depressed. He was spiritually depressed. He was just depressed. And then he got saved and he started preaching and teaching about the grace of God. And then he got a lot of negative, he's hated, death sentences, outcast by the church, rejected by the media. People are trying to end his life and he's depressed. He then marries a woman named Catherine. She was a nun that he jailbroke out of a convent on Easter. And I think without Catherine, he wouldn't have made it. She was an encouragement to him. She was a faithful friend. She went to his monastery, where he was living with a bunch of other Bible students. Imagine a bunch of single grad school guys, who are theologians, living alone. Their house is a total dump. She cleaned it up. She plants a garden. She changes his diet. She opens the window. She gets a clean, fresh bed. She sets up a home where he can have encouragement, in a life that is filled with discouragement. She tries to set up home as an encouraging place for him. They started having children, but they had some crisis as well. He loved his kids and he would play music for them and they would give him joy and they would encourage him. But then he had a daughter who died in his arms, at 13 months, had a second daughter who died in his arms at 13 years. As a daddy of two little girls, the thought of seeing your own little girls, die in your arms. I can't even imagine the level of depression and grief. And he would go into very deep seasons, of very profound depression and grief, and she would encourage him. She would pray for him. She would sit with him, when he was writing letters in theology, she would comfort him. She would encourage him. She also had a real sense of humor, and sometimes she knew how to snap him out of his depression with humor. So there was one occasion when he opened the door and she was there wearing all black, dressed like a widow, preparing for a funeral. And he's like, "Whoa who died?" And she said, "Well, if the great Martin Luther is this depressed, I just assume that God died. So I dressed for his funeral." And he started laughing. So, she's got a good sense of humor. She knows how to sort of snap him out of his funk, with her gift of encouragement. And she also was a certified renowned beer brewer. So nun brewer. And he would write letters to her and say, "I miss you. I miss your friendship. I miss your comfort and I really miss your beer." And so he said at the end of his life, "The greatest gift of grace a man can have, is a pious, God-fearing, home-loving woman, who he could trust with all his goods, body and life itself, as well as having her as the mother of his children." The point is, I don't think Martin Luther would have spearheaded the Protestant reformation, unless he had Catherine as his helper, his friend, literally his encourager. The one who came alongside to put courage into him so that he could continue in what God had for him. In addition, the next gift is leadership, Romans 12:8. I know we're going fast. You can go through the book and read more detail. These are people who have a clear, significant vision from God and are able to communicate it publicly or privately, in such a way, that they influence

others to pursue that vision. There was an old pastor named E.V. Hill, and he said, "The man who says he's a leader and doesn't have people following him is just a fool who's out for a walk." A leader is someone that has a vision and others are following them. These people tend to gravitate to the point position in the ministry. Others tend to have trust and confidence in their abilities. They best serve others by leading them. And they tend to operate with a strong sense of destiny. Well we see leadership, obviously in the life and ministry of Jesus, about 2000 years ago, he walked on the earth and he just said, "Hey, follow me." And for 2000 years, billions of people have done exactly that. And today Jesus is the most significant and impactful leader in the history of the world. Billions of people following him. And so Jesus is the greatest leader the world has ever seen. Do you have this gift? Do others have confidence in your ability to lead? Do you like being the final voice and the one to take responsibility? If you're gonna call the shots, you've gotta take the shots. Some people don't wanna lead 'cause they're like, "I don't wanna be out front and get shot." Other people are like, "You know what? Somebody's gotta do it. I'm willing to do it. 'Cause I love God and I love people. And what God has called us to do is so important that it's worth getting shot for." When a difficult situation arises, does everybody look at you? Like, "Well what should we do? What do you think we should do?" Oftentimes the leader emerges during crisis or difficulty, and everybody just looks at them and says, "What are we doing?" Do you have a clear vision for a better future that inspires other people to pursue it with you? Can you build a team, to accomplish that vision? For those of you who do have the gift of leadership, just a couple of warnings. Number one, you can't just be in authority. You need to be under authority. So I've got authority over me that I submit to. Pastors with leadership gifting and apostolic gifting, that are over me. And so as leaders, we can't just be in authority, we need to be under authority. And we can't be totally independent. We need to seek wise counsel, plurality of leadership. Let other people speak into the process, so that we're not completely isolated. For those who are leaders as well you need to know this, that leadership is lonely. Because you're out front, oftentimes you're alone. You're gonna need to find other people that are leaders, to walk with you, to come alongside of you, to be friends to you. And lastly I would say, particularly in Christianity and the church, leadership starts at home. If you can't lead yourself, you're not ready to lead others. If you're not leading your family, you're not ready to lead in the family of God. And what oftentimes happens is, people don't lead themselves, so they don't lead their family well, and they show up to church and they blow up and they're like, "Okay, I'm here to tell people what to do." No. You need to lead yourself and lead your family. Ministry starts at home. Leadership starts in home. First priority is yourself and your family. The lessons you learn from that, then can be leadership lessons to love and to help others. I'll give you a historical example that's positive. Maybe somebody you've never heard of, but a guy named Athanasius. He lived in the 300s-ish. He's one of the most important theologians and theological leaders in the history of the church. Early on in Christianity, there was a big debate with a guy named Arius and a heresy called Arianism that finds itself in a cult called Jehovah's Witnessism or the Kingdom Hall today. But Arius was a very strong leader. I would say he was a false teacher and false apostle. He's denying that Jesus is eternal, that Jesus is God. And he's denying the Trinity, one God in three persons. So he's a false teacher and he is a counterfeit false apostle. There's a lot of people following him, but he's a false apostle and false teacher. And one of the great theologians who was arguing against him, was a man named Alexander.

And then Alexander met this young guy, Athanasius, in his twenties and said, "You're going to be my assistant. You gonna help me do research and we're gonna fight against Arius." And so Athanasius, wasn't the number one leader. He was the number two leader, under this well-known leader, named Alexander, who was also a Bible teacher. Well what happens, all of this debate between the real teachers and the false teachers and the real people with apostolic gifting and the counterfeit people with the false apostolic gifting, it leads to a big public debate. Something called the Council of Nicaea that convened in 325AD and the Bible teachers and the bishops and the leaders who showed up, they showed literally the battle scars. Some guys were missing arms, ears, eyes, their bodies. I mean, this has literally been a civil war within Christianity. And what happens is there's a big debate and they pick Athanasius and they invite him into the conversation and he becomes the defender that Jesus is eternal. He becomes the defender that Jesus is God and creator not created. He becomes the great defender of the Trinity. He wrote a book called "On the Incarnation" in his twenties, that is one of the most legendary books in the history of the church. He was harassed through his life, falsely accused. He was ran out of town five times. He spent 17 of his 45 years as a Bishop, in hiding for his life, because he was so hated and oppose, but history has vindicated him. And today, we now believe that Jesus is God, 'cause that's what the Bible says. We believe that Jesus is eternal and not created, 'cause that's what the Bible says. And we call our church Trinity Church, because Athanasius was used of God as a leader, to defend the Trinity and had that not happened, we would have lost the right concept of God. Now, just for those of you who are leaders, lemme just give you two words. If you wanna lead at a greater level, two words, two words that are incredibly important, but you don't wanna hear, pain, tolerance. Those are your two words. If you want to lead at a greater level, you need to endure a greater pain. The degree of pain that you're willing to endure, that will determine the level of impact that you're going to have. And what happens is, if you're gonna call the shots, you're gonna take the shots and there's gonna be a lot of pain and pressure that comes upon you as a leader. But if you're in God's will and you endure that pain, you'll go to the next level of leadership. You'll have the greatest level of influence. Athanasius serves as a great example, incredible pain tolerance, but legendary, literally more than a millennia of impact and we're still honoring that man today.

Second to the last one, is the gift of wisdom. It is in 1 Corinthians 12:8, the insight into people in situations that is not obvious to the average person, combined with an understanding of what to do and how to do it. This is a practical gift. It is the ability to not only see, but apply God's word and practical manners of life, by the spirit of wisdom. Sometimes it's not what's right and wrong. It's what's wise and foolish. What's okay, but what's best. These people function well as coaches, counselors or consultants, they tend to be very practical about what to do, whereas people with the gift of teaching, love books of the Bible, like Romans. People with the gift of wisdom, they like books of the Bible like Proverbs. Sometimes the books of the Bible that you really gravitate toward, they can reveal your spiritual gift and or stories in the Bible, can reveal your spiritual gift. Well, Jesus we're told in Luke 2, he was filled with wisdom as a boy, as a young man it says he grew in wisdom. Says that the scholars were amazed at his teaching because of his wisdom. And he said that he was wiser than Solomon. Solomon was considered the wisest until Jesus came. And Jesus said he was wiser than Solomon. Do you have the gift of wisdom? If so, you're the person that people seek for wise counsel, do you make, do you

have a pattern of making wise decisions for yourself and your family? Your finances, your health, your theology, your life. When people look at your life, they're like, "They're not perfect, but they are wise. They figured some things out and they've got their life put together. Their family put together." Do other people seek wise counsel from you, do people seek you out. You don't, it's not like you put a sign out in your yard that says, "Please knock on my door for wise, counsel." People just find you, 'cause they know that the spirit of God is in you. When you study the Bible, do you tend to have deep insights and practical applications that other people tend not to get? When people make foolish decisions, does it frustrate you? You're like, "You didn't need to do that. You could have done this. You didn't need to do that decision. You could have went this direction." And lemme say this as a warning, you need to be careful if you have the gift of wisdom, that you function as a coach and not a critic. The difference between a coach and a critic is not what they see, but what they say. And so those people with the gift of wisdom, they're like, "Well, I see all the problems and I see what people are doing wrong, but rather than helping, I'm going to criticize." So you can become the critics. "Well, that was wrong. You did that wrong. That was a dumb idea. That was a mistake. That was an error." Okay. But are you gonna help? Nope, just gonna criticize. The difference between a critic and a coach is not what they see, but what they say. So if you have the gift of wisdom, you also need to be loving and godly and helpful. Not just pointing out what others have done wrong, but helping others to do right. And sometimes people, the counterfeit of this gift of wisdom, is spoken of in Romans 1:22. It says, "Claiming to be wise, they became fools." That there are people who, "I'm very wise. I've got a new insight. I got a new revelation. I figured this out." And they say that they're wise, but they're fools because a wise person agrees with God. And if you don't agree with God, you're foolish. And sometimes people will manipulate what God says, back to the false teaching gift. And as a result, they will claim to be wise with some new enlightened insight but the truth is, that they are foolish. Now lemme say this, I'll give you a positive example. There was a man named A.W.Tozer. He was born poor in the hills of Pennsylvania. He got saved around the age of 15. He entered into ministry. He didn't go to college. If memory serves me correct, don't know if he graduated from high school. He was not formally educated. Suggesting knowledge and wisdom, between education and wisdom, between IQ and wisdom. He had wisdom from the Holy Spirit, even though he didn't have a formal education from an institution. Now he was well-known. Many of you have probably seen his books. He was well-known on radio for Bible teaching. They'd broadcast his sermons and he was very, very famous and well-loved. He was a pastor and a writer. He wrote dozens of books and here's how he did it. He would get on his knees. Anytime he would study the Bible or prepare a sermon or write a book. And he would literally just beg God for wisdom. He would just invite the Holy Spirit. He didn't go to college, but he went to the Holy Spirit. He didn't go to high school, but he went to the Holy Spirit. He didn't go to a seminary, but he went to the Holy Spirit. He just would get on his knees, open his Bible, spend hours crying out to God, "Give me the Holy Spirit of wisdom please, so I can teach God's word faithfully." And God answered his prayer. And so his whole life was based on wisdom and it comes from the ministry of the Holy Spirit. The spirit of wisdom. Is that your gift? You like to help people fix problems, untangle knots, answer questions, have a better life, put their life together in a way that is obedient to God. And lastly, knowledge. And knowledge is in 1 Corinthians 12:8. The ability to research, remember, make effective use of a variety of information on a number of

diverse subjects. You love to study, learn. You don't like surface-level knowledge. You're gonna go to the deep end of the pool. They're compelled to conduct thorough research, compile their findings, so that people can benefit from their long hours of focused study. People with the spiritual gift of knowledge, they love God quote with all their mind. You're the knowledge. So the wisdom people are about what to do and the knowledge people are about what to know. The wisdom people are applying it and the knowledge people are assembling it. This is the differentiation. Well, Jesus quoted the Old Testament repeatedly from memory. He rebuked the scholars of his day saying, "You don't even know what you're talking about. The Bible's about me. You've misinterpreted the whole thing. You've misinterpreted all the data of the Bible." And then if you have this gift, do you have a good mind that likes to retain information? Like you just, you got a pretty good processor up here and you tend to just remember things. I have a very good memory. I can literally be writing a book and I can almost, it's almost like I can see. I go 30 years ago, I was sitting here and I was reading this book and it was over on the left-hand-side. I saw this quote and I think this was the quote. And I could literally just pull almost anything I've read over decades, just into memory. That's the gift of knowledge. Have other people come along and said, "Wow, you have understanding. You remember things that I forget." Are you mentally curious person? You like to learn. You're like, "I just, I like to study and learn. I find it interesting." Like for me, if they ever come out with Bible Jeopardy, I'm gonna sign up. 'Cause I got a lot of things up here that are just a lot of Bible facts, that quite frankly, most people don't care about. But I find rather intriguing. When you hear a bad teaching or somebody hasn't done their homework, does that frustrate? You're like, "Come on, you can do better than that." And when you hear lies or misinformation or someone who is abusing or using or weaponizing God's word, does that immediately frustrate you. You're like, "That's not what it says. That's not what it means. You're not being true to the truth." Now here's a warning to those of us that have this gift. Paul says that knowledge puffs up. You could become arrogant, judgmental, self-righteous and proud, which is all demonic. And then he says in that same section love builds up. So if you have the gift of knowledge, you also need to have the fruit of the spirit, which is love, so that you're using your knowledge, not to make other people feel stupid, but to help them. Not to sort of impress other people, but to minister to other people. Not to sort of shut them down, but to build them up. And so knowledge without love is a very bad thing. But knowledge with love, can be a very beautiful thing. I'll give you one positive historical example, Blaise Pascal, he lived in the 1600s. He was a French scholar and philosopher. He died at 39. The amount of work he got done in a short life is amazing. He was masterful of mathematics, probability science, physics and philosophy. In literary circles, he was a child prodigy. He wrote the first groundbreaking scientific essay, on conic sections based upon synthetic projective geometry, at the age of 17. He created the first working barometer. He created the first working calculator to help his father compute taxes. In addition, he laid the academic foundation for differential and integrative calculus. He conducted the basic research on vacuums and hydraulics. He invented the syringe and created the hydraulic. I mean, and he died at 39. A wide range of disciplines, but here's the big idea. He loved Jesus Christ and he was a Christian. He had these little thoughts that he was working on and he had little scraps of paper, he'd keep 'em in his coat or put 'em in his nightstand. He had these little, when a thought would come to him, he was collecting his thoughts, to write this big book to defend Christianity and introduce people to Jesus Christ. And

he died before he finished it. All we have are this sort of collection of these little snippets that he'd written and it's called "The Pensees" which means thoughts. And you can now go by his book, "The Pensees," it's been translated into English as well as other languages. And it's brilliant. It's a book I've read, I love and it's not even his book. It's his random thoughts that were going to be a book. And they're so brilliant, that they're good enough to make their own book. He is a founder of, really amazing religious philosophical thought. And John Jock Rousseau and existentialist philosophers, sort of trace their history and roots back to Blaise Pascal. Knowledge, the point is this, you can love God with all of your mind. Some of you God has made to be scientists and doctors and lawyers. And God's given you brilliant ability to synthesize information. And some of you are theologians and you're following in that gift of knowledge. Now that being said, the sermon's have been long. That's what happens when one of your gifts is speaking. You can find out more in the study guide and the book that I wrote and lemme just close with this before we transition. What we're talking about here are the speaking gifts. And that is that we don't just do ministry with our hands, but with our words, and you think about it. Communication, text, email, social media posts, liking, tagging, following, reposting, blog comments, technology, voicemail, all of the ways that we have to communicate, to me what's very convicting is Jesus says that the words that we speak reveal the heart that we have. So my question to you would be, how are you doing with your words? Are they investing in the kingdom of God? Are they blessing the people of God? Are they echoing the truth of God? Are they communicating the heart of God? Are they agreeing with the word of God? And it's a good opportunity for us and particularly convicting for me, to just ask, "Okay Lord, how do I use my words for ministry? To bless others with these speaking gifts." As you consider that, you're gonna hear a great testimony. And then for those of us that are part of the church family, we're gonna all use our speaking gifts to sing to God together. And we're going to use our words, to sing the praises of God and to thank God for what he's done for us in Jesus Christ.

- Hi, name's Barty Quarders and I've been going to the Trinity Church for a little bit over two years now. It has been an amazing experience and a great place for me and my family to grow. I'm married. I have three kids ages 6, 10, and 14, and my kids love the church, my wife loves the church. Our whole family has kind of brought a lot of people to the church. And now it's like we have a community at the church and it's just amazing. I'm a general contractor. I run a company called QB Development. We're doing a lot of development stuff around Phoenix and Scottsdale. I didn't know the Lord, didn't have any relationship with Christ. We went to church when I was a kid till about second grade, and then we stopped going to church and never went to church again. Put my focus more on doing whatever I wanted to do, without having any responsibility and created a lot of problems for me. I got mixed up in drugs and alcohol and things like that. Went to prison for the first time at age 21. Went to prison three more times after that. Ended up in a prison in Tijuana, Mexico. It was shortly after that time that I spent in that Mexican prison, a friend of mine took me to breakfast and asked me if I wanted to have a close, personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Why I said yes, I don't know, but the Holy Spirit must've been working in me. And that was my answer. And he started discipling me. Trinity Church is the first church that I've ever had for a home church. I never had my own church or a church that I belonged to. And Pastor Carl I think was the first person at the church that greeted me.

Immediately, he asked me if I wanted to serve on the church and got me to go to a Welcome to the Team. And I jumped in right away and got on the Greeting Team. And then shortly thereafter, my wife said, "Well, maybe we should do a home group." And then we started doing a home group. And then I was asked to be a leader of one of the Real Men Tables and that worked out great. All these things that I'm doing at the Trinity Church, I can't even put my finger on what it is except the Holy Spirit working in me. But it's truly just the things that bless my life on a daily basis. I'm the same guy that made all those bad decisions so many years ago. And now with the power of Holy Spirit and Christ working in me, things are just really start to unfold in a great way in my life. One time Pastor Brandon asked me to come up and kinda share what my ministry is outside of the church, which is just helping guys that struggle. And I got to bring a good friend named Rick to the church. And Rick came out of detox on a Wednesday night and on a Sunday afternoon he was saved and to just watch those kinds of things take place. And that's what I experienced at the Trinity Church. That's just one of many stories where I've seen people, jump up and say, "I wanna get baptized, or I can't wait to do this. I'm gonna jump on this team. I wanna have Life Group at my house." All those things. I've got to see that and experience that. So if you have any idea or inkling that you should probably be serving at the church, or even if you don't wanna serve at the church, but you're wondering why all these other people are talking about it all the time, or why are they doing that? What I have gotten out of this is so much more than anything I could have imagined. And I know if you just take that first step, you talk to one of the leaders at the church, asked them how you can get involved and become part of the church. Your life will change in ways that you never imagined. I don't want you to hesitate. I don't want you to think about it. I just want you to ask someone around you, who's part of the church, how you can help serve and watch your life unfold. My name's Barty Quarders and I found my position on Team Jesus.