

Spiritual Gifts #4 Discovering Your Spiritual Gift: Sign Gifts

- Well, we're at the end of the series. Thanks for joining us for the Spiritual Gifts Series. In the first section of gifts, we looked at serving gifts, the second section we looked at the speaking gifts, today we look at the sign gifts, also known as the supernatural gifts. I'm gonna cover as much as I can as fast as I can, but you're gonna find a lot more details in this free book. If you're here at the church, grab a copy on the way out. if you're online, go to realfaith.com and get a free copy of the "Spiritual Gifts" book. And there's a whole section on the supernatural and sign gifts. The four supernatural sign gifts are miracles, tongues, prophecy, and healing. We're gonna look at those in detail. Sometimes they're called the sign gifts, sometimes they're called powers, wonders, signs, miracles, all of which are pointing to the Kingdom of God. So when we think of a sign, a sign is pointing us toward a destination. A sign is a supernatural action of God in this world that points to another world, and it points to ultimately the Kingdom of God. And so the storyline of the Bible is that we need to believe in that which is supernatural, not just natural, not just that which we do see, but that which we do not see. The world we live in tends to be very naturalistic because of a philosopher named David Hume and also something called the scientific method in naturalism, people tend to only believe in what we can test and retest through scientific method and experiment, only what we can see through a microscope or a telescope. Well, the supernatural is beyond the natural, and sometimes that which is supernatural overrides natural laws. This is why miracles don't fit within the scientific method. You can't make a miracle happen whenever you want, it's something that God determines when it occurs. And so what we're dealing with now is the supernatural showing up in the natural, the supernatural overriding the natural, God and His Kingdom showing up in our world and revealing Jesus Christ as King. And so what I don't want you to do, I don't want you to just dismiss the supernatural, the miraculous, the power of God showing up in extraordinary ways. I also want you to be discerning, because everything that God creates, Satan counterfeits, everything that God starts, Satan seeks to stop or oppose. And so it says this in 1 John 4:1, "Don't believe every spiritual thing that happens or every spirit that shows up, but test to see that which is from God." So the whole point of this sermon is discernment, to ask, is this natural or supernatural? And if it's supernatural, is it from God or is it from the enemy of God? So we're gonna deal with the supernatural. And I wanna start with a big theological category. And for some of you, this is gonna be a little complicated, but what happens is in various teams, tribes and traditions of Christianity, there are different belief systems and assumptions that may not even be well known, but they have a great impact and influence on how the Bible is taught, how God is seen and how supernatural events are interpreted. And so let me explain this, there are two basic positions, one is called cessationism, the other is called continuationism. This is the preface to the study of the supernatural and sign gifts. And let me just give you the definitions here. Cessationism, as the name would indicate, it would say that certain supernatural sign gifts have ceased, that's cessationism. Continuationism is that, as the name would indicate, they continue. So cessationism says that the supernatural sign gifts, that would include miracles, healing, prophecy, and tongues, as well as extra biblical revelation, angels, dreams, visions, words from God. They would say that those supernatural sign gifts existed in the first century to

confirm and approve the apostolic authority and message, but are no longer needed because we have the complete canon of scriptures. So they would say, God did extraordinary supernatural revolutionary things until the Bible was written, and then what it's called the canon or measuring rod of scripture was closed. And now that we have the Bible, we don't need God to speak in any other way, because everything we need to know is in God's word. In addition, there is a contrary position called continuationism. And that is that the supernatural sign gifts continue to operate on the earth until the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. And so the continuationist positioned would be, God has always done supernatural things, dreams, miracles, angels, visions, prophecy, healing. The Kingdom of God shows up unexpectedly, powerfully and mightily repeatedly throughout human history. And that God is working that way, and will continue to work that way until Jesus returns. The big debate between these two positions, and these are massive decisions to make, because the question is, well, is this God's way of working in the past, but not His way of working in the present or does He continue to operate as He always has? The big debate is 1 Corinthians 13, so I'll read it to you. He says this in verses eight through 12, "Love never ends." So now we need love, when Jesus comes back, we need love. All of eternity, the one thing that keeps going is love. "As for prophecies, there are things that will come to an end, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease, as for knowledge, it will pass away. We know in part, we prophesy in part, when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away." And he compares it to growing up. "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways." What he's saying is that once you come to full maturity somethings change. "For now, we see in a mirror dimly." So we see who God is and what He's doing, but not as clearly as we will. "But then face-to-face. Now I know in part, then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known." And so this section of Corinthians definitely says that certain spiritual gifts cease, they will come to an end, they will pass away. We will mature beyond them and we will no longer need them. So that point is clear. There is a finish line for certain supernatural, sign, spiritual gifts. The question is where's the finish line? What's the deadline? What's the timeline? Now those again, who are cessationists would say, it says here that when the perfect comes, the imperfect passes away and then they would say, this is the perfect Word of God. And once we got this perfect Word of God, we don't need the other imperfect or maybe less mature modes of communication, a revelation from God. And the truth is the Bible is perfect. God reminds me in Proverbs 30:5,6 that every Word of God proves true, that this is God's perfect Word. It is the only perfect thing on earth. It is the highest authority on earth, it is the Supreme Court, by which we evaluate everyone and everything. And it is our highest authority. But when it's speaking of the perfect, in 1 Corinthians 13, it's not speaking of the finishing of the writing of the Bible, though it is perfect, it's talking about the coming of the perfect Kingdom of God. It says that we will see Him, Jesus Christ, face-to-face. So the context of 1 Corinthians 13 is not talking about the perfect Word of God, it's talking about the perfect Kingdom of God. And it's talking about the second coming of Jesus Christ. And what it says is when Jesus returns, He brings with Him perfection, the curse is lifted, the dead arise. Satan, demons and evil doers are sentenced to their eternal torment of hell. God's children are fully, totally, completely healed. All of our questions are answered. All of our tears are wiped away. All of our longings are fulfilled, and that this imperfect world passes away, and it is

replaced with a perfect Kingdom of God with the second coming of our King, Jesus Christ. And it says that we will see Him face-to-face. That is the eternal Kingdom of God. And the point is simply this, we need all of the spiritual gifts until we get to the Kingdom of God. Once Jesus Christ returns, there are certain spiritual gifts that we don't need anymore, their use will have come to completion and fulfillment. I'll give you some examples, right now, we need the spiritual gift of evangelism. Go out and tell non-Christians about Jesus. When Jesus returns and heaven and hell are occupied, and the eternal state is entered, we don't need the gift of evangelism. Nobody gets saved in heaven. There's a point where all the decisions are made. The gift of evangelism comes to an end in the second coming of our King and His Kingdom, Jesus Christ. In addition, in the Kingdom of God, you won't need the spiritual gift of healing. Now, today, people are sick, and you're gonna learn about healing today. And we pray over people that God would heal them. But in the Kingdom of God, nobody needs to be healed, the gift of healing is retired. I love all of you, doctors and nurses, but I'll just tell you, you're gonna need to find something else to do. For those of you who drive in an ambulance or do physical therapy for those who are injured, perform surgery for those who are battling cancer, God bless you. All of you, pharmacists and caretakers, we love and appreciate all of you, but when Jesus comes back, you're gonna get forever off, your job is done, there's no more sick people. In the same way, there are people now that have demonic oppression and they need prayer and deliverance. In the Kingdom of God, there will be no demons, there will be no demonic oppression. We won't also need the gift of discernment. Well, what was that true or a lie? Was that of God, of Satan? Well in the Kingdom, it's all gonna be true and it's all gonna be good and it's all gonna be God, so we don't need discernment. The point is that there are some gifts that we no longer will need in the Kingdom of God, but we do need until the Kingdom of God arrives. That's the big idea. So just to let you know, I am a continuationist, not a cessationist. I've been teaching through books of the Bible for 25 years. I have no idea how you could come to a cessationist position. It makes no sense to me. It doesn't organize itself with the teaching of the Bible. There are whole books of the Bible like Daniel or Exodus or Acts or the Gospels or Revelation that to me makes zero sense from a cessationist position. You have to do origami to whole sections of the Bible and make it into something that it's not. I believe in the supernatural. I believe in the God of miracles. I believe in tongues and healings and prophecy, I believe in all of it. And I'm excited to teach you about it. And we're going to start with miracles. In 1 Corinthians 12:9, it mentions miracles, "And is the ability to call on God to do supernatural acts that reveal His power by special moments of divine anointing from God the Holy Spirit. People with the gift of miracles see God show up in extraordinary ways, from daily little events to major public displays. In these moments, there is an overriding of the natural laws which govern the universe. God shows up to reveal a sovereign rule as Creator over creation." Now we see this often in Jesus' ministry. I've got this in the free book, but in the four Gospels alone, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, Jesus performs 40 miracles, 40. This is a big part of His ministry, so it should be a big part of ours. In the Gospel of Mark, which is the shortest in the New Testament, one third of all the verses are just about Jesus' miracles. It's all present tense, active verbs, He did this, He healed this person, He multiplied this food, He raised this dead person. He walked on this lake, here's all His miracles. Jesus' miracles include commanding nature. There's a big storm, and He looks at the storm and says cease, and it obeys Him, 'cause He is the Creator

exercising His miraculous authority over creation. Jesus walks on water, that's a miracle. He heals people, that's a miracle. He delivers people from demonic oppression, those are miracles. The dead arise, the blind see, the deaf hear, the mute sing, the lame leap for joy, because when the King shows up and brings the Kingdom, there is supernatural divine, Holy Spirit, anointing and miraculous power that is unleashed from the Kingdom of God on the earth. And this is not a minor side point of Jesus' ministry. In John 20:30, it says, "Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book." What it's saying is that the Bible records for us some, but not all of Jesus' miraculous works. What it's saying is He did a lot more than you even know about. This is sort of the greatest hits in the summary, but there is much more miraculous and supernatural ministry. It says this as well in John 21:25, "There are many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." What it's saying is Jesus did a lot of miracles, we only know some of them. Now, there are some who would say, "Well, I don't believe in miracles or I'm suspicious of miracles." Let me tell you this, it may be because you are worldly. Those who tend to oppose the miraculous in the supernatural, they tend to be worldly. Again, there was atheistic philosopher named David Hume who wrote a book against miracles. And what he basically argued was, we've sort of evolved beyond this sort of primitive myth of people having a soul in a supernatural world, in God and angels and the unseen realm and divine beings. We've sort of evolved beyond that sort of primitive superstitious thinking. Now we just believe the science and we follow the facts. And we only believe that which are three pound fallen brain can prove through the scientific method of testing and retesting. And all of this is what C.S. Lewis would call chronological snobbery, that they were primitive and were advanced and they were stupid and we are smart, and they didn't believe science, and we do. And the truth is God did create this world with natural laws in order that allow us to test and retest and have science. But because He is the Creator and sovereign ruler overall, He can override natural law, and He can do that which is extraordinary and supernatural. But what happened as this naturalistic ideology, this worldly philosophy started to permeate and promulgate in academia, some Christians were like, "Well, we feel like we're sort of believing primitive things. So all of a sudden there's a downplaying of the supernatural. There's a dismissing or explaining a way or, well, yeah, maybe Jesus did a few things, but sort of read that fast and let's not look too foolish in the eyes of those who you think that they are in fact very wise." And what I would say is, you know what, our God is a supernatural God. And the Bible is a supernatural book. And from beginning to end, you have to believe that there is a God who rules over this world and can show up and do in this world, whatever He is pleased and decides and determines to do. Now, sometimes you will hear even Christian theologians and Bible teachers whom I love but disagree with on this point, they will say, "Well, the miracle ceased in the first century, and there is no evidence of the supernatural beyond the early church," none of which is true. That's a minority position. The majority of Christians around the world believe in the supernatural and have had healings and miracles and supernatural things happen. And to me, it's quite offensive to just dismiss it all and say, they're all lying or they're all in error, and we just sort of dismiss them wholeheartedly. And then there are scholars like Craig Keener, he's the first to write New Testament scholar. And he wrote this two volume book on miracles, on the credibility of the New Testament accounts. And he starts with the miracles in the Gospels, and he works through the

early church in Acts. And then he works through church history. And what he does, he says, "Here's all the cumulative case evidence, that the God who did miracles is still doing miracles. That the God who shows up in power still shows up in power. That the God who acted is the God who continues to act." And the burden of proof would be on those who would push back and say, "Well, I don't believe in that. The question is, are you able to then disprove all of these claims of all of God's children for thousands of years on planet earth, and all of the reports from the mission field where the Kingdom of God shows up and ordinary power to reveal Jesus Christ is King? And the point is this, that we believe in a divine God, we believe in a supernatural God. We believe in a powerful God. We believe in a free God. We believe in a living God, and God can do whatever He wants to do. And even if we don't agree with Him, it doesn't matter to Him because He's the Lord, and He gets to do what He wants. Well, do you have this gift? Do you believe that God can truly do the impossible? And have you seen Him do just that? How many of you, your story is like, "I believe God can do anything, and I got stories to prove it." He's shown up in extraordinary supernatural miraculous way that defy all other explanation, our dreams, visions, angelic visits, demonic encounters, and deliverance, as well as other supernatural wonders, just part of your testimony. Some of you you're like, "Look, I can't explain it. I don't control it. God's just shown up in some extraordinary ways in my life and done some incredible things." How about this, have you seen God do extraordinary things in times of prayer and worship? When you're in the Spirit, you're praying and worshiping, you're connecting with the unseen realm by the power of the Holy Spirit, who really connects the unseen realm with the seen realm. Have you seen supernatural things happen in prayer and worship, is God tend to show up and show off. And are you keenly aware of God's presence and power? And for every gift, there's always a shadow side. There's always the demonic counterfeit of a created gift or the misapplication of a God-given gift. So the warning on this, of miracles, would be 2 Thessalonians 2:9-10, "The coming of the lawless one is by the activity of Satan with all power and false signs and wonders and all wicked deception." What he's saying is, there are counterfeits signs, wonders and miracles, that God will show up and Satan will show up. That this is why sometimes in other religions or spiritualities, there are supernatural things that happen. In cults and false religions, there can be the revelation of an angel, but it's a demon posing as an angel. There could be a healing, but it's by demonic power to lead people away from God. It's not by God's power to point people to Jesus. And so what he's saying is, you need to be discerning, you need to be discerning. You can't just dismiss everything that is supernatural, but you need to discern all that is supernatural, because what we don't want is just to be spiritual, we wanna be spirit-filled. We don't wanna just be open to the spirit realm, we wanna be open to only the ministry of the Holy Spirit. Now in my experience, and I'm going to share a bit of my experience. I tend to come from tribes that are more sensationalistic. They're either dismissive of the supernatural, or at least a lot more doubtful, a lot more cautious, a lot more wary and unlikely, yet my relationship with God has always been supernatural, and I don't control this and I don't explain this, I just experience this. Some of you know my story, 19 years of age in college, went to my first men's retreat, and I'm out going for a walk and God speaks to me audibly, "May Grace preach the Bible, train men plant churches, told me four things to do. That's what I've been doing since I was a freshman in college, is getting ready to do that. God spoke to me, that's supernatural. I didn't even know God still did that at the time. I went to my

pastor and I said, "I think God told me to do this." And he's like, "That's God's Word to you." In my life, I've had a lot of dreams and visions. Dreams tend to happen when you're asleep, visions tend to happen when you're awake. For me a dream, and this doesn't happen often, but it does happen, I'm sleeping, and it's like I watch a movie of the future. And then usually in that dream, God speaks a scripture out loud, or a scripture is spoken out loud, and then I'm awakened and I write it down, and then it comes to pass. There have been specific events in my life where God has revealed to me in incredible detail, exactly what was gonna happen. And I'll tell Grace or one of my pastors or somebody that I trust. And then it happens exactly like God revealed. And sometimes this is a vision for me. And a vision is like a dream, but as opposed to being asleep, you're awake. And so I've had visions, it's like watching a movie, no one else can see it except for me. And I didn't understand this as a new Christian, 'cause I didn't come from a background where this was common or I had any language for it. So early on in ministry, I'll never forget, I was at the office and this girl came, I was a new pastor in my mid-20s. And I was at the office and this girl came in to volunteer and help do something. And she was just walking by, she's like in her early 20s. And I saw her husband grab her, throw her up against the wall, assault her and threatened her life. As she walked by, I just saw it like a vision. And so I called her over and I said, "Look, can I ask you a question?" I said, "Is your husband abusing you?" And she just starts crying. She said, "Well, who told you?" I said, "God did, God did, 'cause He loves you, and you're in danger." So I called her husband in and I said, "Hey, have you been abusing your wife? Have you been doing this to her and then threatening if she told anybody you were gonna harm her?" He got very angry. He looked at her and he yelled at her, he was like, "I can't believe you told him." I said, "She didn't tell me, her Father did. Her Father told me that you were abusing His daughter." I said, "God revealed this. This is not between you and her, this is between you and Him." She was trapped in an abusive relationship. She had to file a restraining order. She had to get protection. I mean, she was in real danger. It was something that I didn't know and that she couldn't tell anyone, but God wanted it known to protect His daughter, that's a vision. At a similar occasion, many years ago, I was speaking at a pastor's conference in another country and I felt like God gave me a word for thousands of pastors and they received it as a word. And then I was getting off the stage and I was gonna go get lunch or something, and I saw a girl, a young woman off to the side, and I felt like God compelled me to go speak to her. So I walked up to her and I said, "Hey," I said, "I know this is a little weird. I'm not saying thus sayeth the Lord, I'm not bringing you a book of the Bible, but God burdened me with something and I wanna share it with you. And you could tell me whether or not it's true." And she was like, "Okay." I said, "You shouldn't have moved out of your parents' house. Your mom and dad loved the Lord and they love you. And when you started dating that boy, your mom and dad were right, he's not a good guy, he's very dangerous. And now that you're living and sleeping with him, you feel trapped. And he started to get violent with you. And he's mean to you, and he's cruel to you. And this abuse is only going to escalate, and you know you should leave, but you're too ashamed and embarrassed, and you don't wanna go home to your parents' house, 'cause you're afraid of what they're gonna do or say. You need to know that they love you, that they're praying for you every day, that they're shedding tears in the presence of God. And that if you come home, they'll just treat you like the prodigal in the Bible. They're gonna love and kiss and embrace and bless you. So you need to leave this abusive relationship. You need to go

home to the safety of your mother and father and you'll be okay, and God has a better future for you." She just starts crying. She said, "How did you know? I said, "I have no idea." She was a pastor's daughter. She said, "I can't this event 'cause my dad's a pastor in this network." And she said, "I was coming forward for prayer to ask the Lord what I should do. And you just told me what the will of the Lord is." I was like, "I have no idea how I knew that. You're a total stranger from another country that I've never met before, and I saw in a sea of thousands of people, but God loves you so much, that He want you to be safe." So she called her parents. She sent me, was an email or a letter later. I can't remember how she communicated with me. And she gave me the rest of the story, she said, "I went home, my parents love me, they forgave me, they prayed over me. They brought me home, they kept me safe. I'm doing great, I'm back with the Lord. I'm back with my mom and dad and I'm safe." I was like, "Well, praise be to God." This is just part of life in the spirit for some sometimes, that's the gift of miracles. I can tell you a lot of stories. That's just a few that come to mind. Another spiritual gift is the gift of healing. In 1 Corinthians 12:9, "This is the ability to call on God to heal the sick through supernatural means for the purpose of revealing God and His Kingdom, where all sickness will be forever healed." Now, this is important, there are people in the Bible who do love God and don't get healed. "Epaphroditus, Timothy, Trophimus and Paul, each had sickness that was not healed despite the fact that they deeply love God and walk with Jesus faithfully." Now here's the good news, "Every Christian will be fully, totally, completely and eternally healed forever upon the second coming of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the dead." We're talking about here is healing. In Jesus' ministry, He healed people. I've got this again in the free book, the 27 times in the Gospels, we hear that Jesus healed an individual, 10 times, He healed groups of people, Jesus healed, and it's a sign of the Kingdom of God. And it's pointing to the Kingdom of God where all of God's children will be healed together forever. The book of the New Testament that records the Holy Spirit's work in and through the first Christians, it's called the book of Acts. The book of Acts is written by a medical doctor named Luke. Luke writes the majority of the New Testament. By sheer content, he's the primary contributor. He writes Luke and Acts about the supernatural spirit-filled ministry of Christ and Christians. And it shows that the ministry of Christ through the Holy Spirit continues after He dies, rises and returns through Christians. Jesus goes up, the Spirit goes down, supernatural sign ministry continues. Luke, as a medical doctor is confirming miracles, healings and supernatural deliverance. The book of Acts is 28 chapters long, 12 of the 28 chapters record healings, healings. What this shows is that medicine is not against prayer and faith. That this man Luke, he does both. He is a trained medical doctor who is using any and all medical ability to bring health and healing. He's also a spirit-filled Christian, who is praying over people for their healing. Sometimes people will say, "Well, we don't need medicine, we just need faith." Well, the New Testament is written by a guy who was trained in medicine and walk in faith. And it shows that they are to work together. That sometimes God works through a physician and sometimes God shows up as the Great Physician, and either way, it's bringing healing. Now what happens as well in the Bible, sometimes people have demonic oppression that leads to physical suffering. You are one person, two parts. You are a body and a soul. And they, in fact can affect one another. Part of the problem that we have in the Western world is we're trying to get people to be healthy, but we're missing half of their being. The diagnostic manual for mental disorders, for example, is kind of the Bible for behavioral science

and mental health. Zero, hear me in this, zero times it mentions the soul, zero. It deals with you naturally, not supernaturally. It deals with you physically, not spiritually. And so what we wanna say is we wanna study the natural in the body. We wanna trust medicine and science. We also want to minister to the soul, and we want to see if the Holy Spirit can deliver someone from some sort of spiritual oppression that is leading to physical suffering. And so what happens oftentimes in the Bible, someone has a demonic oppression, that once that is delivered, they experience physical healing. Again, this would include some that have mental health issues and then all of a sudden they're in their right mind. People who are mute, people who are blind, bleeding and epilepsy. There are people in the Bible, that there is no natural cure, there's only a supernatural, that their pains and their problems and their perils are physical, but the primary causation is spiritual. I've been criticized on this publicly for a long time. But in our first ministry, I started the college students and then worked in a very rough urban area with a lot of people that came from hardcore drug use, many from the occult, people who were involved in witchcraft, people that had profound trauma in their life, and they would come with spiritual oppression and then sometimes God would deliver them. And they would experience healing. Sometimes this was mental healing, sometimes this was physical healing, but it's divine deliverance. Now all of this, of the healing gift, is a sign pointing to the Kingdom of God and Jesus is King. It says in Isaiah 53:5, "He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace." And the word there is shalom, it means healing and wholeness. It's the way God intends us to be and our world to be. And then it says, "By His wounds we are healed." And so this promise in Isaiah is oftentimes quoted by God's people, "By His wounds we are healed." And the is that Jesus died not only for our sin, but also for our suffering, that He forgives our sin and He alleviates our suffering. And so in Jesus, there's not only forgiveness of sin, there is physical healing of the totality of your being. The question is when? And what happens here is it promises that there will be healing, but it doesn't promise when. And the guarantee and the promise is not in this life, but in the eternal life. That some people will get healed in this life, but ultimately, all of God's children will be healed upon the resurrection of the dead and the second coming of Jesus and the Kingdom of God. It says in the Kingdom of God, that Jesus will wipe every tear from your eye. There'll be no more pain, it says, there'll be no more mourning. No one will get sick. No one's going to need a vaccine. No one's gonna need to wear a mask. No one's going to need to go on a ventilator. Nobody's gonna need to go to the hospital. Nobody's gonna need to plan a funeral. There will just be life in the presence of Jesus for the resurrected children of God, together forever with no exception. And there are times that the Kingdom shows up as a sign pointing to the resurrection, but all of God's children need to wait until that last day to receive that total healing. Do you have this gift? Well, do you enjoy laying hands on the sick and praying for them in faith? Some of you, you just like to pray for those who are sick and you've seen God show up and heal them. And again, it's not that you heal them, it's that God heals them, but somehow God works through you to heal them. Do you have a deep compassion for those who are sick? Do you have interest in both prayer and medicine to seek the total health of others? If you feel like God may have given you a healing gift, you may also wanna go to be trained in medicine so that you can have the fullness of every possible opportunity to bring health to people. One of the people that I know that I believe has a genuine gift of healing, they're also a medical doctor, and they went and got

their medical degree and they love the Lord and they will treat their patient and pray for them. And they're like, "However God wants to help them, I just wanna use whatever I can to bring help and hope and healing to people who are hurting." And then lastly, have you been healed or seen someone else healed supernaturally? Some of you have, you've been healed. And this is as well something that I want to warn you about, because not only does God heal, sometimes Satan will heal as well. Sometimes the demon will torment you to get you to pray to a false god, and then heal you so that you're devoted to that god, because the demon will trade your physical healing for your spiritual suffering. They will trade your body for your soul. And some people, particularly when you're hurting and suffering, I mean, if you're dealing with chronic pain or you're heading toward end of life, or there's someone that you know and love, and they're just out of options, you can reach such a desperate place, that you're open to demonic deception. And so what I would say is this, for those of us who are Christians, we need to do all we can medically for health. We need to pray fervently in faith for health, but we need to know as well that because of sin, we're all going to die. That there will be a point where a body goes into the grave and our soul goes before the Lord. And Christian faith is proven at that moment, to live is Christ, to die is gain. To depart and to be with the Lord, the Bible says is far better. And so for us as Christians, the Bible says that we grieve, but we don't grieve as people that don't have any hope. And what you need to know is that ultimately, the same Jesus who conquered death awaits you on the other side of death. And He has total healing and victory over death for you. And there is a day when He will return and your body and your soul, they will reunite and they will resurrect and you will be totally, fully, completely healed with all of God's children. And it'll be a great homecoming for loved ones and family and friends. This is the hope of the believer. Now my experience, my mom was healed. I believe I was a little boy when my mom got healed, she had a recurring health problem that medically they couldn't solve or resolve. She went to a charismatic continuationist physician, would also be known as charismatic or sometimes Pentecostal. My mom went to a spirit-filled prayer meeting, and they prayed over her and God healed my mother. Now I didn't grow up knowing the Lord, but I knew that my mom knew the Lord. Some people come to faith through persuasion, some come through power. Those of us, and this is more my story through persuasion, we've got a lot of questions and objections, and we need a lot of footnotes and a lot of answers. Some people, they don't come to faith through persuasion, but through power, God just shows up, God heals and God answers prayer, God does a miracle, something happens, they're like, "He's real, I can't deny it," that was my mom. God physically healed my mom. And that was the beginning of the falling of dominoes of faith in our family. And my mom started praying for the rest of us children to know the Lord, and God has answered that prayer. And I just wanna honor my mom. And my mom's relationship with the Lord is very supernatural, she sees visions, she's seen angels, she's gotten words. My mom is someone who walks in the spirit, and she walks in the supernatural, and I love my mom with all my heart. And when she has had things revealed to her by God or healed in her by God, it's all true, and she loves Jesus, and that's the story of some of you. In addition to healing, there are profits and/or prophecy. In 1 Corinthians 12:28 and Ephesians 4:11. What's a prophet? What's a prophecy? "Well, like a mail delivery person who does not write or edit the mail, but collects and delivers it, the prophetic calling combined two ministries. First, prophets receive specific revelation directly from God. Second, they spoke that revealed Word to people with the

expectation of an obedient response to God. The prophets communicate either by speaking or in writing." That's how we get books of the Bible. "People with a prophetic gifting more easily spot compromise, sin and error, desire immediate change. They preach repentance. It's about immediate obedience and action for Christ. They tend to be bold, sensitive to sin," is why they get killed. "A place a very high value on biblical behavior and telling the truth no matter what the cost." Now, when the Bible was written, about 25% of your Bible is prophetic in nature, meaning it was anticipating prophesizing declaring the future events that would come to pass. In addition, there are a whole genres of literature in your Bible called the major prophets and the minor prophets. The major prophets are Isaiah, Jeremiah, who also wrote Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel. Minor prophets are Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, and Malachi. So the Bible has whole categories of literature by genre that is the prophetic writings. In addition, when a prophet spoke in the Old Testament, they would often say, thus sayeth the Lord or the Word of the Lord came to me, hundreds of times. And what they're saying is I didn't write the mail, and I'm not gonna edit the mail, I'm just delivering the mail, and it's His mail, this is a Word from God. In Jesus' ministry, he's called a prophet. Back in the Old Testament, book of Deuteronomy, there was a promise that a prophet was coming like Moses, but only greater. And then Jesus is called the fulfillment of that prophetic promise, that Jesus is the prophet, that He comes to proclaim the Word of God and repentance of sin to the earth. Now in prophetic ministry, I believe there are three functions, one is ceased. It is in the Old Testament, certain people would be raised up by God to either speak or write the literal perfect, what we would call inerrant Word of God. This is how we get the Old Testament prophetic books of the Bible. These were unique individuals filled with the Holy Spirit, given that authority to give us the Word of God, that function is completed. The Bible is written. There are no new books of the Bible being written. The canon, meaning measuring rod is closed. So that function of the prophets and prophecy, it is completed, and there will not be a prophet like that bringing forth with that level of authority, something that would be equal to a book of the Bible, so that to be clear. Anybody comes along and says, I've got a new book of the Bible, no, you don't. We've got all that we need, the canon is closed. Number two, sometimes a prophetic ministry and prophecy is taking God's timeless word and applying it in an incredibly timely way. It is just a perfect fit. And this has been my experience in 25 years of Bible teaching, that I will tend to organize my preaching calendar upwards of a year in advance, and I'll just lay out books of the Bible and here's where I'm gonna be. And I don't know what the future holds, but it's amazing. And I've seen this over and over and over. And for those of you that have been part of our church family for any length of time, you've seen it. Things happen in politics or culture or the world or in our church family or in our city and there's an issue that arises that week, and then boom, we're in the Bible, we're going through a book of the Bible. It is like a sniper shot from heaven. Boom, absolutely hits the target. And you're like, that was the perfect scripture to hit that issue that we're dealing with this week, that's prophetic. It's taking the timeless Word of God and then preaching it in a timely way. Because God's word is timeless, it's always timely. And sometimes prophetic ministry is not new revelation, it is applying it to new circumstances, a new needs, a new crises, a new times so that it awakens with freshness. And we've seen this, like we were in the book of Daniel, and looking at Christians being driven underground and church being closed and government not allowing God to be worshiped and

then COVID hits, and we're halfway through Daniel and now we're living Daniel. And it's like, oh my gosh, this is the perfect book for what we're dealing with. How do we still be God's faithful people under a government that is making it harder to gather and worship our God? God's timeless word is timely. And what I'm saying is sometimes prophetic ministry is not new revelation, but it is eternal revelation that is uniquely appointed to speak to a time and a season. The third function of prophetic ministry would be special information or revelation regarding the future. God knows and rules of the future. This is not at the same level of authority as the Bible. The Bible is our Supreme Court of highest authority. We check everything by the Bible, but the Bible does say that God uses secondary additional modes of revelation. There's general revelation, there's common grace, there's visions, there's dreams, there's angels, there's prophecies. There's God's showing up to speak through other servants. There's God speaking directly from His unseen realm. I've got all of this again in the free book, you can get on "Spiritual Gifts." But the Bible does tell us that there are other ways that God speaks and reveals. All of those are under the authority of God's Word and to be tested by the final and highest authority of God's Word. But occasionally, the God who knows and rules the future will reveal it to prepare His people for it. And those are times of prophetic insight where God is saying here's what's coming, and I need my people to be prepared. We see this a lot in Jesus' ministry. How about you, do you have this gift? Are you deeply burdened by lies, apostasy, false teaching and injustice? You're like, when people say that they're speaking for God and they're not, I just kind of lose my mind a little bit. You have the prophetic gifting. Are you the kind of person who says what needs to be said no matter what? Are you one of those people you're like, It's true, I don't care. I don't care what they think, I don't care what they say. I don't care what they do, it's just true. And that somebody needs to tell the truth." You may have a little bit of a prophetic gifting. Do you struggle with being loving and not just truthful, being merciful and not just just? Sometimes those of us that have a prophetic gift, we tell the truth, but we forget to have the heart of God and the love of God communicated within. Jesus came full of grace and truth. The truth, absolutely, but delivered with a heart of love and grace. And sometimes the prophets struggle with that. And do you get upset when people do not immediately obey God's Word? People that have more of a prophetic mindset, they're like, "If God says it, you do it. If you're sinning, knock it off. If He says to go, go do it." And sometimes people with a prophetic gifting, they don't understand why people don't just immediately spring to obedience. Well, if God told you to do it, why aren't you doing it? Well, that's what the Bible says. What's taken so long? There continue to be an impatience. There's a sense of urgency and passion with those who are a bit more prophetic. Now, the warning is this, Jesus, Paul, John, others in the Bible, they warned against false prophets. There are false prophets. Now let me say this, sometimes what happens is a gift will not just be used, but abused. And then others will say, "Well, see that gift was abused, therefore we should not use that gift." The abuse of a gift does not negate the use of a gift. In the same way, I would say that the gift that is abused the most might be teaching. There's a lot of terrible Bible teaching, but it doesn't mean we get rid of teaching, it means we have good teaching so that people can overcome bad teaching. The way we overcome false prophets is by listening to the true prophets. And when it comes to false prophets and false prophecy, three things I would give you to look for, number one, the messenger, do they love the Lord? Do they have the fruit of the Spirit? Do they have the

character of Christ? Are they godly people? Look at the messenger, if they're in open center rebellion, if they're pro-state, if they're teaching things that are contrary to the Word of God, then that's a false prophet. Look at the messenger, number two, listen to the message, does it agree with the Bible? And I guess that's what the Bible says. And/or if they say something is gonna happen, does it come to pass? Like every once in a while there's somebody comes out and it's like, "I figured out when Jesus is coming back, He's coming back on this month, on this day, on this year." And they tell the whole world, this is the day of the second coming of, and if He doesn't come, guess what? That's a false prophet. We had a lot of false prophets in the most recent election. There were a lot of Christians prophesying the outcome of the, and it didn't happen. Well, that's false prophecy. You look at the messenger, do they love the Lord? Are they filled with the Spirit? Do they have the character of Christ? Are they one of God's children? And then listen to the message, does it agree with the Bible? And if they say something is gonna happen, does it happen? And if it doesn't happen, then it was false. Thirdly, in addition to the messenger and the message, I would encourage you to look at the motive. There's the messenger, there's the message, and then there's the motive. Why? There's always a way to profit and popularity and being a false prophet. Being a false prophet is popular and profitable. There are always people who wanna do something that God forbids. And if you stand up and say, "Actually, let me tell you why God's okay with it now, He's changed his mind, He's evolved. He sort of moved on from that primitive teaching in the New Testament. And now we have new revelation. Let me tell you how God's changed His mind. And now you can kind of do what you wanna do. If you will preach on behalf of God against God, that's very popular and it's very profitable. There are certain people who are like, "I just want you to tell me that I get to do what I wanna do, and I don't have to do what God tells me to do. And if you'll tell me that I get to do what God tells me not to do, I will pay a lot of money for that. I'll pay for that conference, I'll pay for that seminar, I'll buy that book, I'll buy that. I'll pay for that degree. If you will just let me rebel against Him and pretend to be godly, you will get my affection and also my financial contribution." This is the motive of the false prophet. They have popularity and profit. Now I'll give you an example. Sometimes people struggle with these sign gifts and the supernatural gifts because they've seen them abused. This is what drives some people toward cessationist theology. Let me say this, there are closed-handed issues and open-handed issues. On the sign gifts, the supernatural gifts, they're in the open hand, you can disagree with us, we love you, and you can be part of our church family, but we wanna discuss and dialogue it, maybe even debate it without dividing over it. Nonetheless, sometimes people are very fearful of the supernatural because they've seen the abuse of a gift. And I saw this firsthand some years ago, I was teaching in another country, I won't say the country or the group or the denomination. I was on a preaching drive. I think I preached like 36 sermons in 10 days in three cities with multiple flights. I literally just about killed myself. But I was speaking with one group of leaders and pastors, and I met their leader, so the person that had their apostolic gift, he would be the pastor. The pastor is the leader of the leaders, the movement leader, the network leader, the chief theologian, the convener of the conferences, the writer of the books, he was that guy. And he was a good Bible teacher, obviously loved Jesus. I really liked him. He's a good man. We're having lunch, and he started talking to me about the sign gifts and especially prophecy. He was very strong, which I'm fine with, that's my spiritual gift too. We're kind of doing it. And I finally

looked at him and I said, "Your passion seems to indicate your pain. It seems behind your passion is some pain." I said, "You're very concerned when I say God told me or God spoke to me, or God showed me. When I say that you get very sort of bristly and resilient and resistant." I said, "What happened to you?" And he said, "I won't talk about it." I said, "No, no, no, I do." I said, "Just be honest with me." He said, "Well, I grew up in a Pentecostal tradition where they had nights of healing and prayer and miracle and prophecy, or at least that's what they said." And he said, "We had a prophet come, a "prophet" come to town." I put that word in quotes. And he said, "The prophet came up to me and said, 'God's got a calling on your life for ministry,' and he was a little boy. And he said, "But you're not going to experience it because you're gonna die at a young age." This is a little boy. And I think that this "prophet" told this little boy you're gonna die like at age 13 or 14. He actually gave him a death sentence. He's putting a curse over a little boy. He's now a grandpa, he's an elderly man, he's still alive today, he's a very elderly man. And he said, "I lived in sheer terror as a little boy growing up, thinking that I was going to have a death sentence at a certain age," I guess around 13 or 14. He said, "And I was paranoid and I was paralyzed." He said, "Then that birthday came and I was fine," he said, now I'm an old man. He said, "And that was a false prophet, and that was a false prophecy. And he cursed me and he emotionally traumatized me." And I said, "You're right, that's wrong side, that's false. He was a counterfeit. I don't know if he knew the Lord, but in that moment, he wasn't speaking for the Lord." The point is that there're false prophets, they are going to say things that are not true, and sometimes they cause great pain and harm. And some of the people that I've seen that are the most devoted to what I would call cessationism, their passion is motivated by their pain. You need to heal from your pain and you need to let God's word be true and every man a liar, and the abuse of a gift does not negate the use of a gift. In fact, the best way to overcome the abuse of a gift is the right use of a gift. Now I've seen in my life, real prophecy. This will be controversial, but I'll share two examples from Trinity Church in our experience. My wife, Grace and I, were considering moving to Arizona to start a church after God spoke to us audibly and released us, even though we were welcomed to continue at a job that we had been enjoying serving in for many years. And God spoke to us audibly in the house, in two separate rooms and released us. And so that was the Word of the Lord to us. And then we were praying about what was next. And some of you know the story, I was in Florida, and I was at a pastor's conference. And I went to get some time with the Lord, and I got turned around, couldn't find a coffee shop, so I ended up at a Mexican restaurant, and I walk in, and there's a pastor there meeting with some of his leaders. And I didn't know this man, I'd never met him. And I'm out of state, I'm in Florida. And he said, "Oh, Pastor Mark, come visit with us." I said, "I'm busy," I'm super nice guy. And he said, "Do you mind if I pray for you?" I was like, "I'm always up for that." So he prayed for me. And then he opened his eyes after he closed in prayer and he said, "Pastor Mark, as I was praying for you, I felt like God gave me a vision that I was supposed to share with you." Now what he didn't say is thus sayeth the Lord, what he said is, "I feel like God has something for me to share with you. And I'm gonna tell you, and you can decide whether it's from the Lord." That's a lot better than thus sayeth the Lord, it's like I could be hearing wrong or I could be speaking wrong, but I'm gonna tell you what I think I'm hearing and what I'm supposed to be speaking. He said, "I had a vision that you and your family were packing up, moving to the desert, a hot, dry arid climate, that God was going to give you a fresh new season

of ministry and a brand new church. And God was going to pour out His blessings on you in a brand new place. And you were gonna live in the sunshine and you were gonna be healthy. And you're gonna do ministry together as a family." And he laid all this out, total stranger in a Mexican restaurant, that I happened to walk into. He looked at me, he's like, "Does this make sense?" I was like, "Incredible, because I've got to go catch a flight from Florida to Arizona. My family is flying in, we're gonna meet in Arizona. We're scouting it out. We're meeting with the leaders in the city, and we're asking the Lord if this is where He would have us to move as a family." And he's like, "I had no idea. I was like, "I know, but the Lord did. And I believe the Lord just confirmed through you what He is doing in our life." When it came time to start this church, I met with pastor Jimmy Evans, one of our Apostolic overseers. And he said, "Mark, God's gonna give you a building, it's gonna be off the one-on-one, it's gonna seat 800. It'll be a historical church. You'll be able to buy it." He laid out all of these details. I was like, "How do you know that?" He's like, "I don't know, I just feel like that's what I'm supposed to tell you." This building wasn't even on the market, it came available, we bought it. It's historically designated. We could seat 800, everything that he said came true specifically. And some of you heard the story, but we had an Easter service where we set up every chair, and I was like, "Okay, how many chairs is it?" "793." I was like, "Close." And then look in the sound booth, I kid you not, some of you know the story, there were seven seats in the sound booth. God promised us a building off the one-on-one, historically designated that we could buy, that would seat exactly 800. And everything that was said came to pass. The point is, sometimes God just tells you stuff that you need to know. And praise be to God for that. Now the last gift is tongues. And I'm running out of time, so my tongue needs to move fast. You can find this in 1 Corinthians 12, 13, 14. "Tongues is best translated languages from the original Greek text of the New Testament. So speaking in tongues is the supernatural ability to pray in the Spirit in the language of heaven or speak to others in their earthly language, which is unknown to the speaker." Let me give you a little bit more. "This gift may also include the ability to skillfully translate from one language to another as scholars do to get God's word out in thousands of languages so that people can read God's Word in their own tongue or language. Additionally, it may include the ability of some Bible scholars to work masterfully from the original languages of the Bible, Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic, to accurately help us learn the exact meaning of the scriptures from the original languages and the earliest manuscripts." The big idea is this, today on Planet Earth, it's hard to communicate because there's around 7,000 languages. And so if you love Jesus and they don't know Jesus, and you're like, "I wanna tell them about Jesus," language is this tremendous barrier. The Bible tells us around Genesis 11, that there was a day when everyone spoke the same language and they came together to do evil, to create a city that was a counterfeit of the Kingdom of God. And its center was the tower of Babel, where they were going to sort of live in heaven and replace God. God looked down and said, "Unified unbelievers with one common language can't be stopped." So what God did, He scattered the people and He separated their languages. This is where we get nations and cultures and languages and groups of people. And so what happens is in Acts 2, after Jesus dies, rises, returns to heaven and the Holy Spirit comes down, the Holy Spirit comes down, and then God supernaturally allows tongues or languages. Now people that don't share the same language, they're unified in the spirit, they were divided because of their rebellion, they're unified because of His salvation. And now

people who don't speak the same language are telling one another about Jesus by a supernatural language miracle of the Holy Spirit. Now, the question is, did Jesus speak in tongues? What we've done in these series, I've showed you how every gift is manifest in the ministry of Christ. This is the only potential exception. The Bible does say that Jesus was filled with the spirit. I wrote a whole book called "Spirit-Filled Jesus." But it never says that Jesus spoke in tongues. We don't know, it doesn't say He did other than say He didn't. The point is, you can be filled with the spirit, whether or not you speak in tongues and you can be spirit-filled like Jesus, because we don't know if He spoke in tongues. Now, when it comes to tongues, let me give you three different kinds of uses. And again, our English Bible gets a little complicated 'cause the word tongue means language, and sometimes it can mean to a language and sometimes there's another word that's used in the original Greek text that means the dialect. Not only is it the language, but like you can speak English, but if you're from India or you're from Great Britain, or you're from Kentucky, your accent sounds different. And so the Bible uses languages and dialects, and it translates to all these tongues. There is a private prayer language in the angelic language of heaven. Paul says this in 1 Corinthians 13:1, "If I speak in the tongues of men and angels, but have not love, I'm noisy gong or a clanging cymbal." The way I take this to mean, again, this is open-handed, not close-handed. Just like there's languages on earth, there's a language in the Kingdom of Heaven, and that's the language of the angels. If the angels are communicating, they have their own language, just like our nations have languages, God's Kingdom has a language. There is a private, not a public prayer gift, where people will be able to speak in this heavenly language, communicating at the soul level with God, growing in their private relationship with God, unburdening themselves in the presence of God. I'll give you the next scripture on this. 1 Corinthians 14, Paul says, "For one who speaks in a tongue speaks not to men, but to God; for no one understands Him." It's not a known earthly language, it's heavenly language. "But He utters mysteries in the Spirit." The Holy Spirit in Him is connecting with God, though he doesn't understand the language. "The one who speaks in a tongue builds himself up, but the one who prophesies builds up the church." What he's talking about here is your private, not your public ministry. If you have this prayer gift of tongues, you can speak in the angelic language of heaven. You don't fully understand the language, but you're communicating with God at the soul level in the Holy Spirit. And it's something to build you up in your private devotional time, your prayer closet home with God. This is like you singing to the Lord or studying the Bible for yourself, it's praying in the spirit, it's your private relationship with God that builds you up in love for Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. Some of you have this private prayer language of tongues. Many of our leaders do, many of our staff do. Not everyone has the gift, but many of them you do. And this is for you privately. And what he says is that's different than publicly. If this is building you up privately, it doesn't necessarily translate publicly. So then the second use of the gift is a public missionary proclamation in the earthly language of the hearer not known by the speaker. So let's say you're on the mission field, and you know Jesus, and they don't know Jesus, and you don't know their language, but you wanna talk to them about Jesus. The Holy Spirit sometimes gives you the supernatural ability to overcome the language barrier and to tell them about Jesus. This is why supernatural ministry and sign gift ministry oftentimes happens in missionary context. When you have different languages and cultures and barriers, God needs to show up in extraordinary and

supernatural ways to overcome those barriers so that people can meet Jesus. It says this in Acts 2, "And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit." This is on the day of Pentecost. "And they began to speak in other tongues," known earthly languages here. "As the Spirit gave them utterance," it's a miracle. "And the people who heard this were bewildered, they were each hearing him speak in their own language." So what happens at this feast of Pentecost, this holiday, people come together and they don't speak the same language. And these people know Jesus and these people don't. And these people start talking to these people about Jesus. And these people are like, "How do they know my language? Not only my language, my dialect," because the Holy Spirit gave them utterance. It's a supernatural ministry gift. It's a missionary gift, it's Jesus loves you, and you don't know Him. I wanna tell you about Him, but I don't know your language, but the Holy Spirit knows your language. He's going to allow me to speak your language and you to hear it so that you can meet Jesus. It's a missionary ability. I have friends that have experienced this in the mission field. They'll show up in a place where there's a bunch of people that never heard about Jesus and they're like, "We don't know the language," and they start talking to them and the people get saved, the Holy Spirit is present. And all of a sudden language barrier is overcome by the power of the Holy Spirit. The third use of the gift of tongues is a language unknown to most hearers needing interpretation. So God has a word, someone will speak it, the people don't know the language, it may be the angelic language of heaven, or it may be an earthly language, but it needs to be translated or interpreted so that the people present know what's being said. Sometimes I go speak at conferences and I don't know the language, so they have an interpreter. Like I've got an event coming up for a bunch of Hispanic men in Florida. I don't speak Spanish, so they're gonna bring up a translator. I'm gonna speak, he's gonna translate for me. This is like the gift of interpretation. It's the gift of translation, God saying something to or through this person, these people don't know the language, so this person interprets this person for these people. Here are some examples, 1 Corinthians 12:7,10, "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good, another various kinds of tongues, to another, the interpretation of tongues." And so if you wanna have a private prayer language with God, you don't necessarily need to have an interpreter present, though you can. But if you're going to take that gift from it's private to its public expression, there needs to be an interpreter or a translator so that it's not you just being personally blessed, but it's all of God's people present in the gathered church to also understand what is said to test it, to make sure it's of the Lord and to confirm it's a word from the Lord. He says it as well in 1 Corinthians 14:27-28, "If any speak in a tongue, let there be two or three at the most." Again, your private versus your public use of your spiritual gift. Privately, that's not a problem, that's between the you and the Lord. Publicly, it's not about you, it's about all of us, "Two or three at the most, each in turn. So it needs to be order, not total chaos, and let someone interpret." If they're speaking and you don't know what they're saying, someone has to interpret that so that you can be blessed by that as well. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in the church and speak to himself and God. The problem that happens with the gift of tongues is when we take the private use and we make it public. And what he's saying here, private is for you, public is for us. And if the private is going to become public, God, the Holy Spirit has two or three at the most, and an interpreter, with leaders testing and approving to make sure that is in fact, a valid word from God. Well, do you have this gift? Do you have a private prayer language of tongues? Many of

you do. Are there times in your prayer life privately? Do you communicate at such a deep soul level that words can't even express? That your soul is speaking to God. You're unburdening, you're healing, you're communicating, you're connecting. Have you ever had a word that was given through you in a language that was foreign to you? Have you ever interpreted word given through another person in a language that was foreign to you? And to things like Bible translation and getting Bible teaching out in multiple languages to reach people, does that matter a great deal to you? Some of you love to work in the languages and you want to overcome them so that people can learn about Jesus. That may be an expression of the gift. A couple of things I'll say about tongues in closing, number one, some people have the gift, they do. Paul says, 1 Corinthians 14:18. "I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you." Paul says, "I have this gift. some of you have it." Some people don't have this gift. Some people will say, "Well, everybody can have this gift." It may be the least of the gifts 'cause it's always listed last in the gifts list. But Paul asks this in 1 Corinthians 12:29-30, "Are all apostles?" No. Rhetorical question, "Are all prophets?" Well, no. "Are all teachers?" Obviously no. "Do all work miracles?" Well, no. "Do all possess gift of healing? Well, no. "Do all speak in tongues?" Well, no. "Do all interpret?" No. What Paul is saying is there's lots of gifts, and everybody's got different gifts and everybody doesn't get the same gift. So here's the big idea, tongues is a real gift, some of you have it, but not all of you have it. Some of you have it, but not all of you have it. Now for those who don't have it... Some of you say, "But I don't understand it." You don't have to understand it, you need to accept it. Paul says this in 1 Corinthians 14:39, he says, "So my brothers, do not forbid speaking in tongues. Sometimes what happens, people have a gift, and people don't have a gift, and the people who don't have a gift go, "I don't understand that gift, therefore I reject it or I forbid it, or I don't believe in it." Some of you don't have the gift of administration, but it exists. You're disorganized. You don't believe in the gift of administration, but other people have it and they can help you. Some of you don't have the gift of speaking in tongues, so you don't understand it, but it doesn't mean it's not real. And it doesn't mean that you have the right to forbid it. And so what can happen is there needs to be a humility in us that says, I understand my gifts 'cause I experienced them, your gifts, I've not experienced, I don't understand them, but I don't need to understand them, I need to accept them. I need to trust that the Holy Spirit will help you to understand them. That's why, in addition to the gifts of the Spirit, there needs to be the humility of the Spirit. Well, I'm out of time. Thank you for letting me use my gift of teaching. And I would just close with this. And we're gonna hear a testimony and we're gonna spend time in worship. And as we head into a time of worship, this is where we invite the Kingdom of God. This is where we, by faith trust, that right now in the unseen realm, there is a King, His name is Jesus, and there is a kingdom. And then right now in the unseen realm, the parted saints and divine beings are surrounding Jesus, and they are worshiping Him and they are praising Him, and they are rejoicing in Him. And they may be doing so in the language of heaven. And as we pray, and as we sing, we are going from the seen realm to the unseen realm. We're going from the natural to the supernatural. And we are inviting the Kingdom of God to come into our midst. And we're inviting the Holy Spirit to come and to heal those of you who are sick, to speak to those of you who need a word from God, to give obedience and faith to those of you who have heard from God, but need to act upon what He has said. The Bible says, "Do not grieve the Holy Spirit." What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?

What is He doing right now in our time together? The Bible says "Don't resist the Holy Spirit." What is God pushing you in a loving way to do, forgive someone, walk away from sin, change your mind about something, say that you're sorry, apologize, serve, give, trust. The Bible says as well, "Do not quench the Spirit." Is there anything in your life because of pain or fear or the abuse of a gift that has caused you to quench, grieve, resist the Holy Spirit? Don't, welcome the Holy Spirit, trust the Holy Spirit. Invite the Holy Spirit, enjoy the fullness of the Spirit. Be filled with the Spirit, and see what the Holy Spirit would say to you, what He would do in you and the ministry that He would do through you. Father God, as we go into a time of testimony and worship, we invite the Kingdom of God to come into our midst and presence. We invite King Jesus to rule and reign, and we invite the Holy Spirit to bring for us whatever He would have. And God, as people are singing, if they need to kneel, may they kneel. If they need to clap, may they clap. If they need to raise their hands in surrender, may they raise their hands in surrender. If they need to go to someone in the room and apologize, may they apologize. If they have a sin to repent it to you, may they repent of it and give it to you gladly. If they have a calling on their life, may they seek it humbly and boldly. If there's someone that they need to encourage, may they put an arm around them and speak the truth of your word over their life to give them hope and peace. And God, we ask that we would be a people who would not chase signs and wonders, but that they would follow us as we chase Jesus in whose name we pray, Amen.

- My name Alex Otero and I've been attending Trinity four months, five months, got engaged May 14th to my beautiful fiancée, Lauren Gray. Funny enough, we met on a dating app and I invited her at our church. We were just blown away by Mark's straightforward teaching. And why we stay here is because of the amazing Bible teaching and also the amazing church family that we have. So I can truly say that having Jesus at the center of our relationship has made all the difference. Something that I am passionate about is music and truly just serving in the church. It is probably the most fulfilling thing I've ever done in my entire life, just so much fun. And the people that I got to meet, the relationships I've formed, and it's just a blessing. As a kid growing up, my parents split when I was about two years old, my father, I saw him pretty much every summer and every now and again. We lived in Jersey and he lived in Virginia, so I didn't see him very often. The last time I ever saw my dad was when I was eight years old. So as you can imagine, that probably had a really negative effect on my relationship with my Heavenly Father. I was pushed on to the side. There was truly nothing worse than growing up and feeling lost all the time. I grew up Catholic and I went to a Catholic high school and it was more for sports because we were good at sports. And I thought church was boring. God was, I think, as Mark says, children in the sky, and ended up moving out to Arizona back in 2017 and I was playing football at Arizona State. It was a tight end, long bill washed up now. Graduated from ASU in December of 2018. I went through a major identity crisis. I mean, I also ended up getting a concussion. And so I was told that I really shouldn't play anymore. And when I no longer had football, I completely lost myself, I went off the deep end. I ended up going down this whole spiritual guru route. Lauren and I laugh about it all the time because it was so silly and so foolish, healing crystals, healing rocks. Yeah, I would actually go up to Sedona quite a bit and go sit in the vortex. I was so lost. I think it's really special, especially since meeting Jesus and answering that call. It has been an unbelievably amazing thing to know that love is not just a

feeling, and for so long I had been chasing a feeling of love, but it was actually one of the first sermons that I listened to by Mark. He gave some statistic that if men are the spiritual leaders of the family, the children that grew up in that family have, I think he said like a 76% chance of continuing that tradition and being the spiritual leaders in their family. And just the emphasis that he puts on being a strong leader and a real man. And I was actually able to call my dad and just tell him that I loved him and I forgave him for everything that he did wrong. And our relationship has improved since then. Two days before our wedding is gonna be the first time I see my dad since I was eight. I currently serve on the worship team as one of the worship leaders. I showed up at Join The Team Weekend. I remember what I said was like, "I know I look like a security guard, but I love to sing and play the guitar, and I love to express myself. I don't care who's looking at me. I don't care who's watching. It's the most rewarding and fulfilling thing that you could probably ever do. Wherever you are in the church, wherever you plan on serving, and just knowing that you're honoring God. And if you're struggling, just do it. And remember that the only thing that is really holding you back from having a great time and serving on this team is yourself. It's yourself. It's the enemy that's telling you, no, don't do it. Don't don't step out of your comfort zone. So the role that you play regardless of where you are, and even if it's not the right role for you at this moment, let God lead the way. My name is Alex, and I found my position on Team Jesus.