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The Ministry in the Supernatural!

4th in a series of 6

How many of you here today have ever owned a playpen? I remember our first playpen was a Graco Pac-n-Play and it was so cool. You could take the cover off... unfold it... pull up the sides, click, click, click, click... and that was it! It was good to go! It made me wonder what my parents must have had to deal with when they put up their play pens... if they had any play pens!

I got a little glimpse of that when Liesl was 4 months old and we were at a 2 week conference in California. Attending the conference was another couple who also had a young child and if I remember right, the dad's name was Peter.

I will never forget going down to the main session, which was in a large room, and Lisa and I pulled out our Pack-n-Play and went click, click, click, click and we placed Liesl in it and sat down... and in about 30 seconds... we were ready for the session.

Several minutes later I looked back and there was Peter... and he was holding a bunch of poles and pieces of padding and I think he even had a set of directions and he looked totally overwhelmed as he was desperately struggling to put his playpen together. If I remember right... it took him about 25 minutes of frustration... trying to fit everything together.

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It was embarrassing... because this was day after day for two weeks! We would come into the main session and go click, click, click, click, put Liesl in, and sit down. And poor Peter... by the end of the two weeks he had it down to about 5 minutes... but it was still embarrassing!

A play pen is designed to keep our toddlers safe and keep them from wandering into dangerous places like steps, fireplaces and traffic. But playpens are for infants and toddlers... not for adults. I shared this story so I could give you this quote.

Slide #1 Our fear of risk and perhaps failure... keeps many of us in our playpens.

When it comes to the fire of the Holy Spirit, we are so inclined to stay in our playpen. And I said 'we', because many times... I'm in the pen as well.

Slide #2 Isaiah 48:10 Msg Do you see what I've done? I've refined you, but not without fire. I've tested you like silver in the furnace of affliction.

What in the world does that mean! I have refined you, but not without fire.

Slide #3 Fire is hot, fire consumes, fire spreads, fire is contagious, fire is intriguing and fire purifies. Fire is essential for survival.

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Slide #4 2 Timothy 1:6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

Slide #5 So... each week we are inviting the Holy Spirit of God to ignite the fire of our Spiritual Gifts through a series of messages entitled, 'Fan the Flame'.

Spiritual Gifts are a part of God's bigger story... the story of discovering or rediscovering our purpose.

Slide #6 Romans 8:28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

All of us here today encounter 'things' that impact us. And God takes all of these 'things' and he uses them to work out His purpose in our lives. How does he do this? .

Slide #7 SHAPE One of the ways we can find out... is for us to discover what our SHAPE is... and since we have been talking about this over the past several weeks... I thought it might be helpful if I would walk you through my SHAPE.

S – One of my **Spiritual Gifts** is pastor/shepherd and we are going to talk about that gift next week. A shepherd leads, feeds, cares for and protects his flock and that is my calling at TL.

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H – My **heart** is to care for people. It's very difficult for me to walk past someone who is hurting and ignore them. If I do... I become unsettled inside... and I've been that way since I was in grade school.

A – One of my **abilities** is that I am a communicator. I can talk to people in a way that others can understand me. I often have people that are new to TL come up to me and say, I can understand what you are saying.

P – My **personality** is that of a Lion. I am dominant, I roar, and I don't back down very easily. My father said I was the most stubborn, strong-willed child he ever had! Not necessarily a compliment... but that's me. It doesn't give me a license to attack and eat other people... but it is my natural bent.

E – I have a whole line up of **experiences** that have shaped me into who I am. I grew up in a family where I was loved and valued... so I never struggled much with self esteem. My family was filled communicators and lions so I needed to talk and roar in order to survive. My father was a pastor, so Church was always a priority.

I played in band and traveled throughout the US and through that experience I discovered that I had the Spiritual Gift of Pastor/Shepherd. That was one of the reasons I left the band. Ask me sometime... and I will tell you more about that.

I married Lisa who is a Koala and a harmonizer and without her steady influence and encouragement... I would never survive as a pastor. Here is what I want

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you to understand. What I shared with you is nothing special, it's just me. And I can share this with you because I'm a communicator and I spent time processing SHAPE.

However, every one of us here this morning, can know our SHAPE... if we are willing to pray about it, read the scriptures, study, talk to other mature Christians and just give it time and attention. SHAPE had a huge influence on my life long before Rick Warren invented the Acronym, and SHAPE is what propelled me to become a pastor. This series of messages is focused on the S – the Spiritual Gifts, and these gifts are given to us by the Holy Spirit. So for the next several weeks we are going to continue to bring fire into the auditorium to encourage us to fan into flame these Spiritual Gifts of the Holy Spirit!

Interview with Ben: This morning I would like to introduce you to Ben Zook (come up at this point). Ben is married to Angie and since Angie was a youth leader for many years... most of the youth group at that time, would like to take credit for getting Ben and Angie together....
but I seriously doubt they had much to do with it because Ben and Angie are both very independent... and make their own calls in life.

Ben is experienced at working with concrete and for a little over a year he has owned his own business called Zook Concrete Contractors. I don't know that fire is a big part of the concrete business, but Ben

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brings to the table a totally different angle on fire. Ben grew up in an Old Order Amish Home and so for the first 24 years of his life... he basically lived with no electricity.

Even though we live among the Amish, most of us cannot seriously fathom the implications of no electricity day after day. When the power goes out, we get all bent out of shape and immediately call PPL. So Ben, tell us a little of what that was like.

1. If you didn't have electricity, how did you heat your house?
2. Since we are a rural congregation, most of us have electric well pumps to bring water to our faucets... how did that work for you?
3. How did you heat your water?
4. What did you do for light when it got dark?
5. What is this called? (a propane pole light) In Dutch?
6. Who would light it in the evening? Would it stay lit all evening or would it get turned on and off a bunch of times? (flipping switches)
7. So show us how it works (open up and explain) and then give us a demonstration and light it for us.
8. Can you vary or regulate how bright it gets?
9. Before you shut it off... show us what the mantle is and then break one off and show us how it burns without a mantle. (come back to the stool)
10. So what is the barrel all about?
11. What are some of the advantages of the pole light over electric and what are some of the disadvantages.

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12. Did you grow up always wishing for electricity or didn't you really think much about it?

13. Before you leave, show us what a new mantle looks like and what do you need to do to install it.

Thanks Ben for giving us a glimpse into a very different kind of fire, let's give him a hand! Fire out of control is disaster. Fire under control is so beneficial! It brings life! Who would have ever thought that fire could be so useful and so effective!

Let's stand together as we read from the Word of God and please pay special attention to the gifts highlighted in red.

Slide #8

1 Corinthians 12:7-11 Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of **healing** by that one Spirit,

Slide #9 to another **miraculous powers**, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another **speaking** in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the **interpretation** of tongues. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines.

Let's pray: Be seated

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Over the coming weeks we are going to be looking at a total of 19 different Spiritual Gifts and this morning we are going to be focusing in on Ministry in the supernatural gifts. Let's go to our notes.

Slide #10

1. Miracles (Miraculous Powers) are the Spirit given capacity and desire to supersede the laws of nature by performing powerful acts of faith for the purpose of displaying the power of God.

The scripture refers to them as signs, wonders and powers. Water was turned into wine, a borrowed axe head was made to float on water, men and women were raised from the dead, a poisonous snake was simply shaken off into the fire, the sun stood still, a blazing hot furnace became of little consequence, lions mouths were shut, bodies of water were rolled back so people could cross over on dry ground, men were able to subdue ferocious beasts with their bare hands, and the list goes on and on and on!

The Apostle Paul was an example of an individual who had the gift of miraculous powers.

Slide #11 Acts 19:11-12 God did extraordinary miracles through Paul, so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them.

Paul had the gift of miraculous powers. How did he exercise this? What did it mean for him to minister in

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the supernatural? We have this story in Acts 20 that is rather embarrassing for a pastor. Paul was teaching one evening in a room in the upstairs of a house... and because he planned to leave the next day he talked until midnight.

There was a young man listening named Eutychus and he was sitting on the window sill of the 3rd floor and as Paul talked on and on... his eyes grew heavy and eventually he fell into a deep sleep... and the inevitable happened... he fell out the window and landed on the ground below.

We don't know how he landed... all we know is that the fall killed him.

Slide #12 Acts 20:10 Paul went down, threw himself on the young man and put his arms around him. "Don't be alarmed," he said. "He's alive!"

So, Paul brought the young man back to life, went back upstairs, broke bread, ate and talked again until daybreak and then left. And by the way... the young man was just fine! It was a miracle!

Does this kind of thing happen today? Yes? Does it happen here in the United States? It can. Can it happen here at TL? It can.

Slide #13 Several things to keep in mind:

1) We are not the manufacturers of miracles... God is!

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2) Miracles don't guarantee faith! Moses performed miracles and Pharaoh didn't believe. Jesus performed miracles and the Pharisees didn't believe.

3) Miracles don't increase faith! Jesus said... it's a wicked and adulterous generation that craves a sign.

4) All miracles aren't from God! Pharaoh's magicians did miracles.

5) The greatest miracle of all time is the 'new birth'! Jesus said... no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again.

But miracles do happen today! New birth, people survive accidents, weather related situations... Belize. Let's go to our notes.

Slide #14

2. Healing is the Spirit given capacity and desire to intervene in a supernatural way as an instrument for the curing of illness and the restoration of health.

The Scriptures refer to this gift as 'gifts of healing' and in the Greek text, 'gifts' and 'healing' are both plural. Normally we think of this gift in the sense of physical healing, like making the lame walk and the blind see and the deaf hear. However, plural indicates different kinds of healing such as Physical, Emotional, Spiritual etc.

Two weeks ago when I was defining the gift of faith, I told you a story about the Apostle Paul when he was on a ship in the midst of a storm. Well, they finally sighted land and attempted to run the ship a ground but in the process they struck a sand bar and the ship

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began to break apart, so everyone jumped overboard and floated in on pieces of the ship or swam to shore... everyone survived!

The island they landed on... was called Malta and the book of Acts tells us that the islanders showed them great kindness.

Slide #15 Acts 28:7-9 There was an estate nearby that belonged to Publius, the chief official of the island. He welcomed us to his home and for three days entertained us hospitably. His father was sick in bed, suffering from fever and dysentery. Paul went in to see him and, after prayer, placed his hands on him and healed him. When this had happened, the rest of the sick on the island came and were cured.

Does this kind of healing take place today... of course! In the early 70's my father was pastoring a Church and was facing some very troubling circumstances and as a result he was forced to resign. He became ill and hiccupped incessantly for several weeks... day and night until his body ached. Medication and doctors were of little help. It wasn't just physical!

One day a young man named Sam came to visit him. Sam had recently committed his life to the Lord and prior that he was a party guy and when God got a hold of his life... he got a hold of his life... talk about a miracle... and he was radically changed! Sam came in, laid hands on my on my father and prayed for healing. When he was finished praying, Sam walked out the door and when the door closed, the hiccups

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stopped, never to return. Perhaps Sam had this supernatural gift, I'm not sure.

The N.T. model for the ministry of healing is in James 5 and this is one of the reasons we are going to have a healing service this coming Wednesday at 7 PM. This isn't just for people that are ill. This will be a great opportunity to worship, pray and call upon the name of the Lord for any type of need. Here are the instructions.

Slide #16 James 5:13-16 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord.

Slide #17 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

Slide #18 There are several messages for us in these instructions.

- 1) If we are in trouble... pray. There are many ways to be in trouble!
- 2) If we are happy... sing. This is why we do this every Sunday morning!
- 3) If we are sick... call the elders and be anointed. Any sickness!
- 4) When we pray... pray in faith.

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5) When we sin... confess these sins to each other.

Did you know that refusal to confess our sins can cause all kinds of physical issues.

Slide #19 Psalm 32:3 When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.

When it comes to our sin... secrecy is deadly. I have seen people waste away because they are unwilling to confess their sin. There is something therapeutic about confessing our sins. Let's to our notes.

Slide #20

3. Tongues and Interpretation of Tongues are the Spirit given capacity and desire to communicate or receive a message from God through a divinely anointed unlearned language.

Tongues bring about a lot of emotions. Some claim they are real... because they have experienced them. Some say they are too weird... too weird for them to deal with. Some say their day is past... they were only for NT times.

Tongues is communicating a message from God... and the interpretation of tongues... is receiving a message from God... so for the sake of this teaching this morning I am placing tongues and the interpretation of tongues together as one gift. As far as I can tell from Scripture there are three different kinds of tongues.

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Slide #21 Three different kinds of tongues:

1) An intelligible language that warrants translation.

These are tongues are languages that are spoken and understood by different people groups around the world, but are not understood by the speaker. It would be like me standing here this morning and God giving a message to you, through me, in Spanish or Cantonese. This is what happened at Pentecost in Acts 2.

Acts 2:4-6 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.

Now there were staying in Jerusalem God-fearing Jews from every nation under heaven. When they heard this sound, a crowd came together in bewilderment, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

2) An unintelligible language that warrants interpretation.

These tongues can't be translated because they are unintelligible... they are not a spoken language. They can only be interpreted. There is an example of this:

1 Corinthians 14:13 For this reason anyone who speaks in a tongue should pray that he may interpret what he says.

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And the context here is like in Acts 2, it was done in public. And if we read further on in this chapter we find that unintelligible tongues, must have an interpreter, must be done in an orderly way, must edify the Church and must glorify God... because the purpose of tongues is for the strengthening of the church.

3) A Private prayer language.

These tongues are given for the purpose of self edification and they are just between us and God. Paul refers to this in...

1 Corinthians 14:2 For anyone who speaks in a tongue does not speak to men but to God. Indeed, no one understands him; he utters mysteries with his spirit.

The complication with private tongues is this: Spiritual gifts are generally given for the strengthening and edification of the Church, so to do it privately... doesn't seem to be in keeping with the purpose of the gifts... but Paul recognizes it and doesn't condemn it, so if it is helpful... go for it!

One of the big questions that Churches have dealt with over the years is this question: Are tongues and the interpretation of tongues normative for today or was it primarily a NT function. In other words, are tongues something that we should aspire to and take

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initiative towards... to make sure it is included in our worship services today?

There are some who go to great lengths to say that tongues need to happen and when they pray for someone to receive tongues and that person doesn't receive them, they may encourage them to start making sounds that are not English... or sounds that are meaningless... and then invite the Holy Spirit to begin forming these sounds into tongues.

When I was in short term missions back in 1989, we had a teacher who believed this and taught accordingly and I remember sensing this check in my spirit. The complication with this teaching is that tongues are a gift, and a gift is something that is given... it is something that the Holy Spirit does in His sovereign operation... it is not something we manufacture or bring about... so I would be cautious about just making meaningless sounds.

Tongues happened in the NT and no one can argue about that and I don't find any solid evidence to say that tongues should not happen today. But just because they did happen and can happen doesn't mean we must make them happen. The Spirit of God is awesome, beyond understanding and comprehensive...

he is connected to every aspect of our spiritual lives... so let's be very slow to condemn something that the Holy Spirit might be doing.

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1 Corinthians 14 is one place where we can learn about tongues. This morning I want to give you several nuggets from this chapter to encourage you to go home and read the whole chapter.

1 Corinthians 14

So if God has given us this gift... let's use it and not limit God. If not... let's not demand it or make it up. I know there are some here at TL that speak in tongues... I have heard them... and that pleases God.

So during our prayer and reflection time this morning... let's listen carefully what God may be saying to us about the supernatural gifts. Maybe we have been critical of them and need to make a confession. Maybe we have been closed to them and need to thaw out. Maybe we are in need of healing, or a miracle, or a message through a tongue. Let's invite the fire of the Holy Spirit to fall on us today.

Slide #22 Prayer and Reflection – audio clip

Invite Prayer Team: marlin

9:00 Frank and Jen 10:30 Loren and Elsie

Benediction:

Miracles enliven the minds of the dead.

Healings lift the infirmed from their beds.

Tongues speak of the wonders of the Kingdom of our God when words have long failed.

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Beyond reason or understanding, marvel at the wonders wrought in our day.

Remember that all things are possible through Him.