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The Ministry of the Word!

5th in a series of 6

We live on the side of a hill, so water management is always an issue. Years ago, in order to control soil erosion from heavy downpours we decided to build a retention pond between us and the neighbors, so the rain could gush in quickly and leave slowly. So we hired an excavator and built a water retention pond with a 12" exit pipe. When we were done, I looked it over and said to myself, like God did in the creation account... it is good.

Sometime later we went to Dutch Wonderland for the day and mid day it poured, I mean it dumped, so we headed for the pavilions and waited out the storm and when it finished we went back to our rides and bumper cars and had a glorious day!

As we came down Stony Hill Road we stopped to get the mail and as I'm reaching into the box I looked down over our property and my hand froze in mid air and my kids heard me say, I don't believe it! I just don't believe it! And from the sound of my voice my kids knew that something was wrong... but they didn't know what was wrong so they started rolling down the windows and hanging out the door saying 'what's wrong dad', 'why are you saying that dad', 'what's wrong dad'. And Lisa, knowing full well that now was not the time to ask dad questions... told the girls to sit back in the car and be quiet.

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The retention pond that I was so proud of, that I had hoped would solve so many problems, that I uttered to myself that 'it is good'... was gone, I mean gone! The dam had blown out and washed down the hill, all over the yard and there was nothing left but a useless piece of 12" pipe still stuck in the mud.

Slide #1 Psalm 127:1 Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.

Our retention pond was one of many lessons I have learned over the years about construction, dreams, hours of labor and things of eternal value. Unless the LORD builds the house! Some of you here today know exactly what I'm talking about! You have worked hard to fulfill a dream or to complete a project or build a relationship... and like a sand castle on the beach... an incoming tide wiped it all away!

The messages that I have been sharing this past month are nothing... unless the LORD is doing the building!

Slide #2 Isaiah 10:17 The Light of Israel will become a fire, their Holy One a flame;

Unless the Holy One is doing the building... we labor in vain! Unless the fire of the Holy Spirit comes upon us... we are wasting our time!

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

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 We are inviting the Holy Spirit of God to ignite the fire of our Spiritual Gifts through this 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

2 Timothy 1:8-9 So do not be ashamed to testify about our Lord, or ashamed of me his prisoner. But join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God, who has saved us and called us to a holy life — not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace.

God didn't save us and call us to a holy life because we are such wonderful people... but rather because of his grace! And even though we don't deserve it... he has a plan for each one of us... he has a purpose for us to live for. What is that purpose?

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

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weeks... I thought it might be helpful if you would hear someone else talk about their SHAPE instead of me.

So I have invited Duane Harvey to come on up and we are going to talk about his SHAPE. Not how much he weights or his profile... but rather his SHAPE.

Interview: Duane Harvey

Here is what I want you to understand. What Duane shared with you is nothing special, it's just Duane and in the same way that Duane has discovered his SHAPE....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.

This series of messages is focused on the S – the Spiritual Gifts, and these gifts are given to us by the Holy Spirit. So week after week we have been bringing fire into the auditorium to encourage us to fan into flame these Spiritual Gifts of the Holy Spirit!

Interview with Dustin: This morning I would like to introduce you to Dustin Hershey (come up at this point). Dustin is married to Janell and they have been married for 3 1/2 years. Dustin, you grew up here in Lancaster County, but where is Janell from and how did you meet her.

Dustin works for an excavator named George Stoltzfus, but he doesn't do excavation, but rather

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property management. George owns some rental properties in York County and Dustin oversees them. He does just about everything from collecting rent, to plumbing, to carpentry, to electrical, to plowing snow or even just sitting down with tenants and listening to their problems. In fact Dustin drives this box truck with every tool and piece of equipment in it you could ever imagine.

How long have you been working for George and how did you get started?

I don't image that fire is a big part of your job, but at times you do get to play with fire and one of those ways is through soldering copper pipes, when they spring a leak.

1. When did you first learn how to do this and who taught you?
2. I have often heard it called sweating pipes, do you have any idea why they call it sweating pipes.
3. How often to you actually end up sweating copper pipes? Daily, weekly, monthly or very rarely?
4. Today most plumbing in homes is plastic. What are the advantages and disadvantages of using copper?
5. Show us some fittings and step us through the process of soldering a copper fitting?

Thanks Dustin for giving us a glimpse into a torching copper.

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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 Ephesians 4:11-12 It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be **prophets**, some to be **evangelists**, and some to be **pastors** and **teachers**, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.

Slide #9 Romans 12:6-8 We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is **prophesying**, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is **teaching**, let him teach; if it is **encouraging**, let him encourage;

Let's pray: Be seated

We are in the process of looking at a total of 19 different Spiritual Gifts and this morning we are going to be focusing in on the five Ministry of the Word Gifts. These are some of the more practical of the gifts and I would imagine that some of you will connect some dots this morning. Let's go to our notes.

Slide #10

1. Teacher - The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by understanding and clearly communicating the truth of God's Word with accuracy and simplicity.

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The teacher love research, charts, graphs, lists and is technical and methodical. They are the kind of person that loves to read and study. They place great value on education and get energized by communicating knowledge. They are quick to question those who teach them. They have a special love for the Word of God and get very upset when Scripture is taken out of context.

If you listen to the way the Gospel of Luke begins you can get a picture of the teacher.

Slide #11 Luke 1:1-4 Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word.

Slide #12 Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Do you hear the technical, the methodical and the precision in his voice? Do you sense his discipline? Do you hear his love for knowledge and the concern that everything is accurately portrayed... that's a teacher. We need people like this! The Greek word for teacher means master or doctor, so it is not surprising to learn that Luke, the Gospel writer, was a medical doctor. Wouldn't you want the doctor who is

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diagnosing you and in charge of your care to be a person who has the teaching gift... someone who is careful, accurate, meticulous and concerned about truth! Who are the teachers among us... write their names down!

Let's go to our notes.

Slide #13

2. Pastor/Shepherd - The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by overseeing, equipping and caring for the 'called out' ones.

The NT word for Pastor is translated as both Pastor and Shepherd. So we can use these terms interchangeably. The shepherd has four main responsibilities: leading, feeding, caring for and protecting the sheep. The shepherd is primarily concerned about the welfare of the sheep.

In the OT we have a prophet named Ezekiel that is prophesying against the Shepherds of Israel and in this prophecy we see the heart of a true Shepherd.

Slide #14 Ezekiel 34:1-6 The word of the Lord came to me: "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: 'This is what the Sovereign Lord says: Woe to the shepherds of Israel who only take care of themselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock?"

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Slide #15 You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally.

Slide #16 So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them.

The person with the pastor/shepherd gift loves people. They are expressive, sensitive and have a way of drawing people to themselves. They lead and therefore others follow. They are more relational than task oriented and are often found helping others resolve their problems. Who are the shepherds among us... write their names down.

Let's go to our notes

Slide #17

3. Prophet - The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by understanding, interpreting and declaring God's revelation with clarity and power.

The prophet is the kind of person that can walk into a room and immediately find 25 things in the room that are wrong, but they struggle to find one thing that is

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right. So sometimes they are labeled as 'negative' and in reality... they just have the gift of prophet. We need people to tell us what is wrong.

Prophets speaks the mind and counsel of God when it comes to sin and righteousness. When someone is living in sin and they are unwilling to confess it... that person cannot walk in freedom or victory... they just can't... and this is where the prophet's ministry takes place. The prophet has the guts and the courage to point out sin, but they don't do it just to be negative... they do it because they carry a burden for people far from God.

The NT word for prophet comes from a Greek word that means to 'shine before'. When a prophet speaks he is like a light shining in a dark place.

Slide #18

2 Peter 1:19 And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.

Slide #19 There are two components of this gift:

Fore - Telling: Predicting the future

Forth - Telling: Speaking the mind of God

John the Baptist was that kind of a guy. In Matthew, the first book of the NT, we have this story about John pleading with people to repent. And people went to

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John and confessed their sins and were baptized. Now this baptism wasn't the same kind of baptism that we have down at our pond, because Jesus had not died yet, so there was no Christian baptism. This was a baptism of repentance. Do you remember what the word repent means? It means to do an 'about face'... it means to confess that we are going the wrong direction... and we repent and turn around.

So people were flocking to John, saying... I repent, I will change... and in the midst of it all the religious legalists show up... the Pharisees and the Sadducees... and here is what happened.

Slide #20 Matthew 3:7-8 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.

John could see through their hypocrisy. They had no intention of repenting... they just wanted to look good by being baptized... so he had to speak the truth... this is what a prophet does... so he called a spade a spade... only he didn't call them spades... he called them snakes!

Slide #21 Matthew 3:9-10 And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of

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the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

And he had more than questions for them... he pointed out their sin and declared God's truth for them if they requested baptism without true repentance. This is what a prophet does! Do we have any prophets at TL... write their names down.

Let's go to our notes.

Slide #22

4. Evangelist - The Spirit given capacity and desire to serve God by leading people beyond their own natural sphere of influence, to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

The Evangelist is constantly consumed with the need to share the gospel with others and is quick to encourage others to do so as well.

When our girls were young we would invite their teachers over to our house at the end of the year, in appreciation for the investment they made in our daughters. This one year we had both Liesl and Laura Lee's teacher over. The one teacher was religious but most likely did not have a personal relationship with God. The other teacher was a Christ follower and she was married to a guy named Tim. Tim became a Christian as an adult and when he crossed the line of faith... everything changed... and he was on fire for God... he couldn't keep quiet about

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it if he tried. And I was about to learn that he had the spiritual gift of evangelism!

At one point we were in our living room having a conversation and I'm very discreetly trying to pave the way for a spiritual discussion and so I'm asking some spiritual questions and I'm patiently waiting for the right opening and I will never forget what happened next, Tim looked over at me and said something like this... is it alright if I take it from here?

And before I had the opportunity to say yes or no, he picked up right where I was at in the discussion and shared the Gospel with her. It was a first ever for me! I watched someone build on the foundation that I was laying and he shared the message from his heart with great passion and excitement.

Evangelists are often lighthearted and expressive in speech and communication... and that was Tim! They also work hard at remembering names and faces and listening to people because every person has the potential to be introduced to Jesus... and that was Tim!

Philip is the only person in the Bible called an evangelist.

Slide #23 Acts 21:8 Leaving the next day, we reached Caesarea and stayed at the house of Philip the evangelist, one of the Seven.

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In Acts 8 we have a story that explains why Philip was called an evangelist. An angel appeared to Philip and told him to go south on a certain road and it was not a special road at all... actually it was a desert road... and that is all the angel said. He didn't tell him what to do or what to say.

So Philip obeyed and once he started down the road he saw an official from Ethiopia, a servant of the queen, riding in a chariot and this man was reading from the book of Isaiah. And the Holy Spirit said... go to that chariot and stay near it. And again... that was it... he wasn't told what to do or say... so he went over and stayed with the chariot.

And he heard the man reading from the OT book of Isaiah. Now what would you have done? Most of us would have done nothing or asked God what to do next or maybe asked him how his day was going. But remember his gift... he was an evangelist... and he was consumed with the desire to share his faith. So he asked him... do you understand what you are reading? And the official said, how can I, unless someone explains it to me...do you want to come on up and explain it to me?

And in a spit second Philip was sitting beside this Ethiopian.

Slide #24 Acts 8:35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

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And as they traveled together, they came to some water and the official said... look, here is some water. Why shouldn't I be baptized? And Philip said... no reason... let's do it... and so they went down into the water and Philip baptized the official.

Do you know anyone like this at TL... write their name down. Let's go to our notes.

Slide #25

5. Exhorter (encourager) - The Spirit - given capacity and desire to serve God, by motivating others to action and calling forth the best within them.

The exhorter is a 'how to' person and everything they teach revolves around telling others 'how to' do it. They are very practical and refuse to get bogged down with deep heady information. They are results oriented and seek to motivate people to action because they see the big picture and know the path from problem to solution. They are not as concerned about taking scripture out of context or getting their facts straight as what the teacher is.

You will often hear them say things like, 'get with the program' or 'just get it done' because the exhorter knows how to live and how to fix things and how to carry out God's work.

The word Exhortation is derived from two Greek words, para - 'alongside' and kaleo - to call'... to call alongside.

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Probably the most popular Exhorter or Encourager in Scripture is Barnabas.

Slide #26 Acts 9:26-27 When he came to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, not believing that he really was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. He told them how Saul on his journey had seen the Lord and that the Lord had spoken to him, and how in Damascus he had preached fearlessly in the name of Jesus.

This is referring to Paul, who was earlier known as Saul. Saul hated Christians and had become obsessed with tracking them down and arresting them. Now he had become a Christian and none of the disciples trusted him... except Barnabas and Barnabas did what exhorters do... he came along side of Paul because there was a problem... and exhorters know how to fix problems... and he shared with them how to fix the problem.

Several chapters later we have another story about Barnabas. Once again there was a problem. The Good News of Jesus was being preached to those outside of the Jewish faith and some didn't know what to do with this. They had always been instructed that Salvation was only for the Jews and now the message had gone out to a group of Greeks... and the Greeks responded to the Gospel... and what were they to do. An exhorter always knows what to do!

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Slide #27 Acts 11:22-23 News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.

Do we have any Exhorters or Encouragers here at TL... write their names down.

Now all of us have a little of each of these gifts. We all teach and shepherd and prophecy and evangelize and encourage... at least some. But there are some among us that are really strong in some of these gifts and knowing which one... will help us discern our SHAPE and our purpose in life.

Slide #28 Prayer and Reflection: with audio clip

Invite Prayer Team: marlin

9:00 Julie and Mel 10:30 BJ and Lydia

Benediction: