

Alright. Hey everybody, welcome to Valley Creek. Come on, we are so glad that you are here with us today. Whatever campus you're at, whether you're in Denton, Flower Mound, Gainesville, Lewisville, The Venue, or online somewhere in the world, can we just welcome each other together for a moment. We are one church that meets in multiple campuses, that carries the hope of Jesus to thousands of locations. Hope is here, everyone is welcome. Jesus changes everything. We are a movement of hope for the city and beyond. I am so glad that you are here with us today because I am so grateful for how God is moving in our church right now.

I'm thankful for how God is moving, how God is working, how God is speaking. See, God is doing a new thing in a new way, and it's a privilege to be a part of it. And yet, if we're honest, so often in our lives, we can get stuck, disoriented, confused, and disconnected from God. It's almost like we forget the simplicity of Psalm 23. "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures: He leads me beside quiet waters. He restores my soul: He guides me in paths of righteousness for his namesake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for You are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies: You anoint my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

The Lord is a good shepherd to you. He who began a good work in you is faithful to complete it. He is working all things together for the good, no matter how you feel, no matter what's going on, no matter where you are, I speak over your life today that God is doing a new thing in a new way. Part of that new thing and a new way is we're about to start a new series called the Hope Carrier Initiative. This is a whole lot more than a series, it's really a season. Honestly, it's even more than that, it's a way of life. This has been a long time coming. For a long time, we've been praying and preparing and waiting on the Lord.

What we're going to do is we're just going to take some time to talk about, what does it look like to live on mission with God? Like, what does it look like to live in the kingdom of God in the midst of our daily lives? Like, what does it look like to carry hope into the world, to change my world, to dream with God and become aware of what He's doing? My hope, in this series, this season, is that this will become a part of the very ethos of who we are as a church, that it will get deeply ingrained into our identity, into our character, into the very nature of the foundation of who we are as a church and as a people. If you're here and you're thinking, "I don't even know why I'm here. Like, I don't know why I live in this city, why I'm at this church, why I'm even here today." Or maybe you're here, and you're like, "I'm not sure why I'm still here at this church."

I believe all that is for this. For such a time as this, I believe the Lord is bringing people together to raise up a generation that wants to live differently and think differently about what following God looks like. You were created to dream with God, to have a vision from God, to hear God's voice and align your life with it. It's so much bigger than you, and I think, and so I'm going to tell you right up front - in this series, in this season, in this way of life, I'm not going to answer all your questions. In fact, I've been asking God to create a bunch of questions for you. I'm hoping to stir up your faith. I'm hoping to open up your eyes. I'm hoping that you become discontent with the status quo, and it forces you to examine your life and look to God and ask Him to speak. See, all we're going to do in this series is we're just going to act like God is real. We're going to act like God is alive. We're going to act like God

is good and that God is speaking and we're going to act like God's kingdom has come and more of it is coming.

I think He wants to do a new thing in a new way. Because if we're honest, it's really easy to get bored in our faith. It's really easy to go through the motions. It's really easy to get stuck. It's really easy to get discontent. But here's what I speak over you, you are created for more. I mean, have you ever heard the story of the woman at the well? Really interesting story in the Gospels. One day, this woman goes to a well in the middle of the day to draw water. The reason she's going in the middle of the day is because she's just had enough of all of it. She's tired of the gossip. She's done with the slander. She's sick of the criticism. She's been married five times, and she's living with a sixth man, and she just doesn't want to hear none of it from no one. While she's there, Jesus approaches her and asks her for a drink.

She's shocked. She looks at him and basically says, "You, a Rabbi, Jewish man is asking me, a sinful, Samaritan woman, for a drink?" In that moment, Jesus completely interrupts her life. I think, today, God is interrupting some of your lives. They start talking, and they have this conversation. She tells Jesus all about her tradition, and her religion, and her worship, and her way of life. You see that she has all this religious knowledge in her head, and she begins talking about her relationships, and the brokenness, and all the things there. As she talks, if you read the story, you get this reality that here is a woman who is bored. She's just going through the motions. She's been there, done that, tried that. She's gone to the well of religion. She's gone to the well of the world. She's gone to the well of self, and it has left her thirsty, wanting for more.

Jesus says to her, "Hey, if you knew who I was, and what I offered, you would ask me for a drink, and I would give you springs of living water." She says, "Sir, give me that drink." For the first time in her life, the kingdom of God enters into her. It's a spring of living water inside of her, flowing through her, and it is uncontainable. The woman gets up from where Jesus is, "Leaving her water jar," - because she's not thirsty anymore, and she doesn't have to keep drawing from religion or self or the world - "The woman went back to the town, and said to the people, 'Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?' They" - the whole city - "came out of the town and made their way toward him... Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony... They said to the woman, '...Now we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.'"

Do you catch it? One of the first hope carriers in all of the New Testament is a sinful, middle-aged, bored, outcast woman. It's almost like Jesus is telling us, "Hey, if she can be a hope carrier, so can you." All she did was go back to her town and tell people her story. She has no training. She has no equipment. She hasn't won any awards. She doesn't have any experience. She just goes back and tells people who Jesus is and what He did in her life, and it changes the entire city. It's almost like Jesus touched her knowing she was going to be the key to touching them. Jesus touches you knowing you're going to be the key to touching them. He's touched you because you're in the perfect place of influence, and authority, and position, and resources, and job, and neighborhood, and gifting, knowing that you will be the key to touching the city around you.

What I love about Jesus is, when He touches us, whatever He touches us with, we become. Jesus is the light of the world, and when He touches you with that light, you now become the light of the world. Jesus is the righteousness of God and when He touches you with that

righteousness, you now become the righteousness of God, the Bible tells us. Jesus is grace, and when He touches you with that grace, you become an agent of grace in this world. Jesus is forgiveness and when He touches you with that forgiveness, you become a minister of reconciliation in this world. Jesus is living hope and when He touches you with that hope, you become a hope carrier in Jesus' name. Hope carrier - a disciple of Jesus living on mission to change their world. A disciple, a learner, a follower, a student; one who becomes like the one they're following. A disciple of Jesus living on mission to change their world.

Not "the" world, because that's too big, and we get overwhelmed and quit, but "my" world where I am right here and right now. A disciple - someone whose life has been interrupted by Jesus and they have decided to submit and surrender their kingdom to His. See, you were created for more. You weren't made to just go to work, and just go to school, and just go home and watch Netflix with a bag of Cheetos. Come on, you are created to dream with God, to bring divine solutions to this world, heavenly wisdom, supernatural power. You're not meant to draw from the well of religion, to draw from the well of this world, to draw from the well of self. You're meant to have rivers of living water flowing through you. Come on, just think of how much God believes in you.

He not only has brought you into His kingdom, He's entrusted His kingdom to you. He says you're the head and not the tail. That the kingdom is within you, that the Spirit of the living God is within you. You have the keys to the kingdom. You are made in His image and His likeness. You have been empowered by Jesus to go and do the very things that He has done. God believes in you and you were created for more than to just live like everyone else around you. Come on, look at these couple of verses with me. "Living within you as a follower of Jesus is the Christ, who floods you with the expectation of glory" - this belief that there is the goodness of God on the horizon - "This mystery of Christ embedded within us, becomes a heavenly treasure chest of hope filled with the riches of glory for His people, and God wants everyone to know it." It says, the moment you put your faith in Jesus, He comes and dwells inside of you. Living hope is now in there, and it's almost like you walk through this life with a treasure chest of hope inside of you.

It's not meant to be closed and locked up and hidden away, it's meant to be opened up and shared with the world. It's almost like for that woman; the more you give it away, the more you discover it for yourself and you start to understand the mystery. Or how about this one? "Now May God, the fountain of hope" - the spring of living water - "fill you to overflowing with uncontainable joy and perfect peace as you trust in Him. And may the power of the Holy Spirit continually surround your life with his super-abundance until you radiate with hope." Man, that is a great verse. It says that the Spirit of the living God inside of you is literally a spring of living water and you start to radiate with hope. You become radioactive; radioactive with hope. Think of something that's radioactive. It's contagious. It has influence. It impacts and affects everything it gets around.

You radiate with hope. In other words, I could say it to you like this, you glow with the glory of God, and the world longs for the glory of God. When you step into any space, you're radioactive with the influence of heaven, glowing with the very glory of God, like Moses did when he came off the mountain, after meeting with God, or like Jesus, when he was transfigured. You have that same glory inside of you, shining through, to show the world who Jesus is and what He has done. One more, "For if, by the trespass of the one man" - Adam - "death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant

provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ." It says when Adam sinned and fell, death reigned, but when Jesus came, He changed everything. Now, through His grace and His righteousness, we reign in life.

The word "reign" literally means to be king and to have the ultimate influence. When Adam sinned, death was king and had the ultimate influence; but now in Jesus, He is King, and when we submit our kingdom to him, we reign with Him and have the ultimate influence on this earth, ruling and reigning, co-commission with God as His representative on this earth. You literally reign in this life through the grace and righteousness of Jesus Christ. Are you with me on this? Okay, now, this is where this gets fun. You ready? Okay. The kingdom of God is a movement of hope. The kingdom of God is a movement of hope and the kingdom and the church are not the same thing. This is really important. Sometimes we interchange the word church and the kingdom, they're not the same thing.

The church is a part of the kingdom of God, but the kingdom of God is bigger than the church. God wants His kingdom to also be in family, and education, healthcare, business, government, arts and media, sports, and technology. The places of life that you and I go every single day. You say, "Okay, well, what is the kingdom of God?" The kingdom of God is simply the rule and reign of God. It's where things are submitted and surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus. It's the effective range of God's will. It's what God is doing. God, like any king, reigns or rules through His words and His actions. Isn't that how any king reigns and rules? Through their words, what they say, and through their actions, what they do, which is why your tongue and your actions have so much authority and power in your life. The tongue has the power of life and death; whatever you're saying is either aligning with God's kingdom or it's rebelling against it.

Your actions are either surrendering to the Lordship of His kingdom or rebelling and resisting it. God reigns through His words and through His actions. The church is the people of God, united by the Spirit of God, under the Lordship of Jesus sent to change the world. The church is an extension of the kingdom of God. It's not so much that the church has a mission, but that the mission of the kingdom has a church. A people through which God is doing His work on this earth, right here and right now. This is why Jesus, when He tells us to pray, says, "Pray, your kingdom come, Your will be done on..." - not just the church - "Earth as it is in heaven." It's why 1 John 3 says, "Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil." Where do the works of the devil need to primarily be destroyed? Hopefully, not in the church. That's really bad church, if it's true.

He destroys the works of the devil in us, but then He wants to destroy the works of the devil through us in the areas of life. How about John 20 when Jesus says, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you. The way that the Father sent Me into this world and the things I did and where I did them, I am sending you to go and do it the exact same way." Where did Jesus do His work? All the areas of life - the temple, in homes, in the synagogues, the education center, where sick people were, in the marketplace, through both the Jewish and Roman government, in media (He was the greatest storyteller that ever lived), He played with children, sports, and on the Roman road, the greatest technological advance of that day and age. It would be like the TikTok of today. You catch me on that. In the areas of life, Genesis 1:28, first thing God says to humanity, "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it using all its vast resources in the service of God."

"Man," God says, "I have commissioned you to rule and reign with Me. Get outside of yourself and go take authority over this place. Be fruitful - Live a life of productive beauty, bringing things to the fullness of their potential and multiply. Reproduce the life of God in you in the world around you and fill the earth or your areas of influence with the knowledge of the glory of the goodness of God and subdue things." Where did things need to be subdued? In the garden. Not in the Garden of Eden at the time; in the rest of the world. We'll talk more about that in the weeks to come. "Subdue things - bring order to chaos, bring hope to despair, bring wisdom to foolishness, bring love to hate, with the opposite spirit, and then use your resources to accomplish God's purposes in the lives of man." Come on. I'm giving you a bunch of verses here because I'm trying to build this thought process for you.

Matthew 28, the resurrected Jesus, one of the last things He says is, "All authority on heaven and earth Has been given unto me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and I will be with you always." Okay. If Jesus has all authority, then the giants in the areas of life have none. Because if He has all, they can't have any. The giants of disease and sickness and poverty and brokenness and divorce, they have no authority. Jesus has all authority. He says, "Therefore, I'm now giving that authority to you and sending you to make disciples of all nations." Now, when we hear disciples of all nations, we think going on a mission trip to a third world country. That's great. That's a part of it, but it's bigger than that.

Disciplining nations, the word "nations" is the word ethnos. It means "people-group." Yes, people grouped together by the country they live in, but they also group together by the areas of life in which they are living or have influence. The truth is, if you think about it, the NFL, as an ethnos, a people-group, probably has more influence in the world than the nation of Tonga. Do you agree? Okay. Hollywood, as an area of life, as an ethnos, people-group, probably has more influence in the world than Azerbaijan, agree? Yes. The US government probably has more authority and influence in the world than maybe, let's say, the nation of Panama, agree? When He's saying disciple nations, ethnos, He's saying think bigger. It's not just countries. Yes, it's countries, and yes, it's ethnicities. But it's also the people-groups in the way that we choose to group ourselves and go every single day.

We can literally take over an entire area of life to influence this world, to disciple them, to teach them to think the very thoughts and live in the very ways of God. This is why Jesus says that as a follower of Him, you are like salt, light, and leaven. Salt, meant to bring taste to a flavorless world. And salt, you don't pour it all out on one spot on your plate; it'd be a rough bite. You want to spread it out, so everything is seasoned. Light, meant to bring light to pitch-black darkness, and it's not supposed to be in one spot. No, it's supposed to be turned on so everyone can have eyes to see. Leaven. Leaven is yeast, it causes the whole thing to rise, and it's not meant to be in one place. It's meant to be sprinkled up, to cause the whole world to rise to the potential of who God has created and called them to be. You see, in the Old Testament, sin was the influencing agent.

If the people of God got around the sin of this world, they became unclean. If a clean person got around an unclean person, the clean person became unclean. But now, in the New Testament with Jesus, when Jesus, the clean one, gets around an unclean one, Jesus doesn't become unclean, the unclean becomes clean. The reason that matters is because we can't withdraw and hide out in the church, which is what the church has done for hundreds of years, afraid of being contaminated by the world. No, we're the influencing agent. Remember, we

reign in life. We have the highest influence or authority. We've got to spread out into the areas of life to change the world around us. You with me on this? Luke 17:21, Jesus says, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." The kingdom of Heaven is not somewhere in outer space. It's not some fluffy cloud that God rides on. The kingdom is within you.

Contained within the kingdom of heaven is all the answers to all the world's problems. Every problem the world has, the answer is in heaven - disease, poverty, brokenness, all of it. If the kingdom of heaven is within you, then when you walk into these spaces, the answer to the world's problems just showed up. You just walked in and the opportunity for divine solution, for heavenly wisdom, for supernatural power just showed up too. We've got to stop separating sacred and secular. Because if the kingdom of heaven is within you, then everywhere you go is sacred. Because the kingdom of heaven is there, so it's sacred space. When you go to work, and you go to school, and you go home, and you go into the areas of life; that is not a secular thing that you're just getting through to get back to one hour a week of sacred space. No, no, it's all sacred because the kingdom of heaven is within you.

Come on. Think about who we have in this church - moms and dads, and sons and daughters, and grandmas and grandpas, and brothers and sisters. We have teachers, and students, and administrators, and educators, and counselors. We have doctors, and nurses, and technicians, and operators, and administrators. We have CEOs, and contractors, and consultants, and supervisors, and managers and employees. We have town council people. We have first responders. We have amazing people that are constantly serving. Postal workers, and mayors, and council people. We have people that are professional artists, musicians, professional social media influencers, newscasters, people who tell amazing stories and make amazing things. We have professional athletes, and student athletes, and coaches, and trainers. We have a bunch of really smart people, that I don't even know what they do, but they do it. We're not all supposed to lump here. We're supposed to be this and then go there.

Here's the question, where do you go? Where do you go? What's the areas of life that you can instantly see yourself in? You've been sent there by God. Do you ever stop and you just ask yourself, like, "Why am I here?" You're here because you're on mission with God, who wants to do something great inside you. The problem is, we have a low view of what we're created to do because we have a low view of who we are, because we have a low view of who Jesus is. But when you start to see Jesus for who Jesus is, you start to have a much higher view of who you are in Him. All of a sudden, you wake up one day and you'd be like, "Man, my entire life is releasing the kingdom of God in the spaces I go every single day." See, all a hope carrier is, is someone who goes into the places of life they go every single day, and they're more aware of heavenly realities than earthly circumstances.

They just have an expectation of the goodness of God flowing through their life, and they're paying attention to what God wants to do and what God is doing, and say, "God, I just want to be a part of that." In fact, the Bible tells us that all of creation, all of the areas of life, are waiting for the sons and daughters of God to awake and arise and actually go release the Father's kingdom that they've been entrusted with. If you think about this, hope leads. Hope leads. Any area of life, any place, any circumstance, any situation, the person who has the most hope is the de facto leader. It's not the person with the title. It's not the person with the position. It's not the person with the training, the education, the authority. It's the person who has the most hope, is the de facto leader. If we would just radiate with hope into places we go

every day, we instantly become the influencers, because people are longing for hope. You with me on this?

We've got to stop complaining about the world and realize we've been empowered to change it. If you can catch this, everyone takes their theology into the places they go; everyone. Atheists take their theology of that there is no God into the places they go, so they believe they're in charge, they're in control, and they've got to make it happen. Agnostics, people who don't believe in anything. They take that theology with them everywhere they go. They believe it doesn't really matter, why bother? Who cares anyways? Religious people take their religious theology into the places they go all the time. They think they've got to perform, they've got to earn, they've got to strive, they've got to judge everyone else and make sure everything's right and wrong, and good and bad. Selfish people, who, their theology is themselves, carry that into the areas of life because it's all about my success, my significance, and my money.

Disciples of Jesus, carry their theology into the areas of life, and say, "I've had been placed here by God to see His kingdom come and His will be done." If you want to know what you really believe, don't look at what you do for one hour a week. How do you behave in the rest of your life; that will show you what you actually believe because your behaviors always reveal your beliefs. You take your theology to work, and to school and home every single day, whether you want to admit it or not. You with me on this? Come on. Look at this. "From one man he made every nation" - every ethnos - "of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and He determined the time set for them and the exact places where they should live." Out of thousands of years of history and billions of people on this world, God determined that you would be alive here and now, placed in the position that you are.

He decided that you would live in that neighborhood, with that job, and that gifting, and that role and those resources, and that office, and that co-worker and that opportunity. Why? Because He is the one that's determined the ethnos, the people groups, and He has picked for where you should be. This gives us so much trust and confidence in the Lord. All of a sudden, it's like, if I get fired, I'm good, because God's the one who's leading me. If I'm in a spot that I don't want to be, I'm good, because God is the one who is leading me. If God has asked me to live in this place or do this job or be responsible for this thing, and I don't want to do it, I can still have so much trust, because He is the one that has determined it. Not me, because He wants to do something through me. Or how about this, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." God says, "I formed, I knew, I set you apart, I appointed you." To what? To be a hope carrier to the ethnos that you go every single day.

In other words, "I'm the one that designed you exactly as you are." Listen, some of you get so down on yourself, you have so much self-condemnation. You look at everyone else's life and you think they're better than you. This is God saying, "I made you exactly as I wanted you to be for the purpose of which I have created you, to be a hope carrier to the ethnos that you are." You with me? You're created for more, is what I'm trying to tell you. Not to just go to work and go to school and watch Netflix with a bag of Cheetos - you're created for more. You don't need to go to the well of religion. You don't need to go to the well of this world. You just need to, like, realize, "Oh my gosh, God has created and called me for so much more." What is that? It's to be a hope carrier. A hope carrier - a disciple of Jesus living on mission to change their world.

You're either a disciple of Jesus or you're a disciple of the world. Who are you being shaped and molded more into the image and likeness of? Because a disciple of Jesus lives on mission to change their world, but a disciple of the world lives for themselves and is changed by the world. Notice it says hope carrier, not hype carrier. It's not about emotions and feelings and humanitarian do-gooderness. Hope - confident expectation of the goodness of God. The belief that God's kingdom has come and more of it is coming, that it's in me, and it's flowing through me. But it has to start right there. Listen, if you've been a part of our church, in 2019 was the first time we use the words "hope carrier." We shared it with you in Missional Move: Hope For the City, and we rolled out our new vision and we believe that, later in 2019, we were going to come back around and really launch hope carriers like we're doing right now.

But the Lord stopped us and we didn't know why. Then we got into 2020, and you all know what happened in 2020. Then 2021, we thought it was going to happen. The Lord stopped us. 2022, we were convinced we were going to do it. The Lord stopped us. At every turn, I kept being like, "Lord, why? This is like, Your thing, why are You stopping it?" Then, I realized that the Lord said we didn't have a high enough discipleship quotient within our church. You have to be a disciple before you can go change the world. We had to spend the last bunch of years learning how to be disciples, learning how to engage the Scriptures and pray. Go through the Ancient Future series, the Becoming series. It literally feels like we spent an entire year last year on Kingdom Culture. Oh, I get it now. Yeah. Because you've got to be a disciple first. Because if we would have pre-rolled it out before we grabbed a hold of this concept of really being a disciple, we would have gone and done a bunch of things for our good and our glory.

It would have been about, "Oh, this is going to be good for my business." "Oh, this is going to look really good on social media." "Oh, this is going to make me feel so good about myself." It's not about you. It's about the good of others and the glory of God. That's what disciples understand, but hype carriers don't. See, I think we're in a season right now where God is doing a major change in His people. The best words I have for you, and I'm just going to share it from the heart. The best words I have for you is, I think we're in the process of going from "good American church" to "kingdom come." It's the best words I have for you, good American church. Listen, in the last 40 years of church in America was the season of the mega church and the multisite. For 40 years, there was a lot of great things that happened. It opened up our eyes to break off religion of the past generation. A lot of people got saved, but we Americanized it - bigger, faster, better, stronger. While there was so much good in it, and God was moving through it, it drifted into consumerism.

Here's a typical good American church on a Sunday morning. I know this is no one here, so let me just go ahead and say that, but here's how it goes. It's Sunday morning. It's about 20 minutes before service starts, and we just are like, "Yeah, Let's go to church today." We get there and now we're about 20 minutes late. We come in and we have our kids and we want to check our kids in exactly where we want them to be. We expect a room that's fully prepared for them and we don't want them to go to their age-appropriate room. We want them to go with their friend Billy over here because Tommy likes Billy. Even though they're seven years apart, I expect Tommy and Billy to be able to be in the same room, and you're going to do exactly what I want for my kid exactly how I want them, and your systems and protocols don't matter. Then, after I check them in exactly where I want, I go out to the Cafe and I expect a full



American breakfast. I mean like everything - waffles, and pancakes, and syrup, and bacon and eggs. And a Venti, frothy something, right, whatever the thing is.

I don't want to eat it out there because I'm late, but I want to bring it in here because it's like I'm at a dine-in theater, like, I don't need my hands anyways for what we're doing in there, I'm just watching. I'm going to do my thing. We come in and I don't want to be sat where I'm asked to sit. I don't want to sit too far in the front, and I don't want to sit too far in the back. I expect there to be really good music, but not too long. Then, there should be a message. But the message should be really relevant, inspiring, and funny. Don't make it be too convicting or too challenging, because I'm not here to be convicted or challenged. I'm here to feel good about myself. Because really, I didn't come to me with God, I expect God to be there to do something for me. Then, I leave and I get my kids and I go home, and I'll come back when I expect God to do something for me again, 6 weeks, 6 months from now, and I expect everything to be exactly as the way I remember it. Kingdom come is, I'm here today to meet with God.

I've come with some awe and some reverence and some wonder, because I'm a disciple learning to walk with Jesus, learning to follow Him and become like Him. I'm filled with the Spirit of a living God. I'm practicing my faith, so I actually do expect to be challenged and to be stretched and to be convicted by the Holy Spirit. Because I'm a hope carrier all week long. All week, I've been out there doing this stuff. I can't wait to be with the people of God and meet with God. I think that old wineskin is drying up, and this is where God's pouring wine. What I love about God is, He doesn't tear an old wineskin down. He just lets it dry up. You can sense that this is drying up. If you're offended here by anything, I said, why? It's the greatest thing - here's - pause. The greatest thing you never asked yourself, if you're in church and you're offended, don't just run with your offense, stop and say, why am I offended? What is God trying to show me in my heart?

See, I think God is pouring out the wine here, so that's why we're trying to go this way because I want to be with wherever God is moving. The reason this never works is because it's consumerism and your soul was not built to consume. It was built to release God's kingdom and work with God and walk with God. No matter how great the breakfast is here, it will never satisfy your soul. It's the woman at the well going and getting religion and it will never quench her thirst because you're not made to consume. You're made to contribute and engage and walk with God as a disciple. Look here, I love what Jesus says, "Come, follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Come be a disciple and you'll be on mission with me. Discipleship and mission are linked together. If you're a disciple, you will engage in the mission, but you can't engage in the mission without first being a disciple. What I love about what Jesus does is He speaks their language. They're fishermen. If they were family people, He would have said, "Come, follow me, I'll make you fathers of men."

Educators, "Come, follow me, I'll make you teachers of men." Healthcare workers, "Come, follow me, I'll make you healers of men." Business people, "Come, follow me, I'll make you builders, prosperers, blessers of men." Government, "I'll make you servers of men." He speaks our very language. What you have to understand is, you have to be a disciple before you can change the world. Ezra and Nehemiah in the Old Testament; Ezra had to go back and rebuild the temple that had been destroyed by the world, and then Nehemiah could come and rebuild the city. You have to rebuild the temple before you can rebuild the city. The temple is not a building, it is a people. You are now the temple of God. You have to be rebuilt as a disciple of

Jesus before you can go and rebuild the city. Because if you rebuild the city without first rebuilding the temple, the city will just be torn down again, because you won't know how to live in God's kingdom in the midst of that city. Does that make sense to you?

The irony of all ironies is this, if we just lived as a disciple, you would instantly be a hope carrier everywhere you went. The sad part is that we have to use a word like hope carrier to break open our thinking of what really Jesus means when He just says, "Come, be a disciple." If you just did what Jesus said in church, "Don't forget the assembly of gathering together and serve and build-up the body of Christ," you'd instantly be a hope carrier. If you were just a disciple in family and said, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. I will raise up my children in the ways of the Lord. I will honor my parents," instantly a disciple. Education, if you just went and did things with all of your heart and fanned into flame the gifts that have been given to you, and pursued wisdom and understanding as if searching for gold and silver and treasure, instantly, hope carrier. If you just served people, and washed their feet, and prayed for healing the way that Jesus tells His disciples to, instantly, hope carrier. If you just had some fruit of the Spirit, and character, and didn't love money, instantly, hope carrier.

If you just said, "It's not about my career or my profession, I'm here to serve people because Jesus tells me just serve everyone around," instantly, Hope Carrier. Are you catching it? It's ironically that simple. The kingdom within you will eventually always become the kingdom around you. The kingdom always starts from the inside out. You can only release the kingdom to the level you're surrendered to it. To the degree you're surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus is the degree you can actually release His kingdom in the world around you. I can't change the world until He first becomes king of my world. The authority and the power that you walk in is directly connected to your submission and surrender. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to go discover how to live in the kingdom of God together. We're going to go on a journey, an adventure of being like, "God, I want to learn how to be a disciple, follow you into your kingdom, and carry that kingdom into the places I go, every single day."

In a moment when we release, you're going to be able to have the opportunity to go pick up a free Hope Carrier Field Journal. We didn't want to hand it to you when you came in or when you came out, because it needs to be a step of faith. It's free, you can have one. Just take one, but basically a field journal. Think of old time explorers. What did they do? They had a field journal, and as they explored things, they wrote it down because they didn't want to forget it, because it was so magnificent to them. We're going to go explore God's kingdom, and what does it look like to have a life of purpose, to live bigger than ourselves. We're going to explore things and we're going to write things down. There's a section on, what is a hope carrier. There's a section on, how to get started, to activate your faith, and go through some exercises that will open up your mind and your heart. There's a bunch of journal pages for you to just write things down of your discoveries. Then, there's the whole reading through the New Testament together.

There's a page for every book of the New Testament that we're going to go through. I know some of you are like, "Really, what does that have to do with hope?" Everything; everything. Why? Because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. The reason we don't have a faith to live the life God's called us to live is because we don't engage the Word of God. Your faith is in proportion to the level you engage God's word. If you want your faith to grow, don't try to grow your faith. Do what the Bible says grows your faith, which is to engage God's Word. A lot of us have never read what we say we believe. This screen is not glitched. A lot of

us have never read what we say we believe. The New Testament is who Jesus is, what He has done, and what it now looks like to live in the kingdom. If we grab that, we become hope carriers in Jesus' name.

When God speaks, faith is activated in our lives. I'm believing faith is going to be activated. Parents, I've got to say this to you, "These commands that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." He says, "Hey, parents, you're the primary discipler of your children, and the primary area you need to be a hope carrier is in your family; when you sit at home, when you walk along the road, when you lie down, when you get up." In other words, in the midst of daily life, impress these upon your children. Listen to me, you won't let your kids not do their homework, not go to practice, not do their chores; why would you, not as a family, then say, "We're not, not going to read the New Testament this year." We're going to do it together, and we're going to talk about it. But you can't impress it on them unless it's first upon your heart. There, the reason I don't want to impress it upon them is because I don't want anyone to impress it first upon me.

Dads, ready? New season, new thing. Lead your family. Don't worry about being a hope carrier in business until you first start saying, "I'm going to be a hope carrier in my own home," which is going from good American church, we're the disciplers, your kids to kingdom come, I'm the discipler of my kids. Listen, don't feel bad about this. Listen, here's the freedom. If you're like, "Oh, man, it's going to be hypocritical. I don't do it. I've never read it." Great, sit down and tell your kids all of that. Be super honest. Say, "I have not prioritized my faith, and I've never read what I say I believe, so we're going to do this as a family. I don't know all the answers. I'm not going to get it all. I'm going to miss a bunch of days, and I'm going to make mistakes, too. But we, as a family, are going to figure out how to follow Jesus and learn to live aware of his kingdom. I repent to you, kids, I repent to you, wife. I'm sorry for not leading our family differently. I want to try to figure it out now, because I'm responsible for this before the Lord."

Hear me. Remember, a disciple of Jesus first. Before we're like, "Yes, this is going to be so good for my business. I'm going to pick up so many clients. Oh my gosh!" Pause, there's a reason. Oh! Garrett take me back. There's a reason family is first. Don't worry about this, until we just go here. Okay? Sorry. You're created for more.

"Arise, shine..." Wake up. There's so much more for you than going through the motions, eating Cheetos, going to work, going to school, watching Netflix; catch it. There's no Cheetos in my house. "...For your light has come..." Come on. You are radioactive with hope, a treasure chest of hope, springs of living water, you glow with the glory of God. "...And the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth..." Darkness covers the areas of life. Darkness covers family, darkness covers education, darkness covers healthcare and business. Darkness covers government, and arts and media. Darkness covers sports and technology. Darkness even covers the church. "...And thick darkness is over the people..." They're lost, lonely, and broken. "...But..." - best word - "...But the Lord rises upon you..." You. "...And His glory appears over you. Nations..." Ethnos, people groups, the people groups you go every single day. You don't even have to do anything different, but be aware that God is with you where you already go. "...Will come to your light..." They will see the hope. "...And kings..." The influencers of this world. "...To the brightness of your dawn." God's kingdom will come and His will, will be done. Come on church, we have a city to serve and a kingdom to release.

God is doing a new thing in a new way. Let's go on a journey together by faith. Get a Hope Carrier Field Journal. Say, "God, I don't even know why I'm here, but I believe today that I'm here for a reason, and so by faith, I open up my eyes, open up my heart, change my life, so I can be a part of what You're doing." Come on, close your eyes with me. Holy Spirit, thank You for today. Thank You for Your goodness and Your Grace. Thank You for Your kingdom. Thank You that You are moving in our lives, and even if we don't know why we're here, You know why we're here. For such a time as this, because You've put me on that team. You've placed me in that job. You've put me in that neighborhood. You've given me those resources. You've blessed me with this gift. You've given me this opportunity, because there's something You want to do through my life in the world around me.

Holy Spirit, I just ask that You would stir some things up inside of us; a discontent for the status quo. Stir up our faith, open our eyes, open our hearts, open our minds, and may we go with You on a new adventure of discovering what a disciple of Jesus living on mission to change their world is all about. May we become hope carriers. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.