

Well, what's good Valley Creek? Hey, it's so good to be together today. Why don't we take a moment and welcome in all of our campuses. Whether you are in Gainesville and Denton, Lewisville, Flower Mound or somewhere in the world, joining us online. Come on, let's give it up for one another. Hey, if I hadn't had an opportunity to meet you, my name is Sebastian and I have the honor and the privilege of serving as our Central Students Director.

Simply what that means is that I have a front row seat to seeing our next generation, our students, just go for it with everything they have for Jesus. If you were ever wondering if Jesus is on the move in the Next Gen, man, I can tell you first hand, He is. Our students are loving Him and following Him with passion. Our students have had a great summer. But, guess what, we have had an incredible summer too. Because this summer we've been in a great series called 60 Days of Family. We've really been taking the 60 days this summer to ask the question, what does healthy family look like? When we say a healthy family, we don't mean a perfect family. When we say a healthy family, we don't mean a have-it-all-together family. We don't even mean a happy family. When we say healthy family, we're just letting God define what a healthy family looks like. All series long, we've been looking at one key Scripture that has really allowed us to take in the principles each week and lean into them at a different level. That Scripture comes out of the book of Joshua.

It says, "But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord." This has been an incredible Scripture all summer long. Every week, as we've been going through the principles, the invitation has been for us to lean into it with a different level. But, today, I have a different invitation for you. I would love for us to take this Scripture at its word. Because what this is telling us is that God's heart for family is servanthood. See, that is God's heart for our family. It all starts with, "As for me." This isn't for the person that you came here with today or for that member of your family that really needs to hear this. This is for you, this is for me, and this is for us; because God's heart for family is servanthood. It's interesting, as we've been looking at the Scripture in Joshua, like he didn't ask his family what they wanted to do. He's like, "You know what, as for me, I'm going to align my life with what God says." When we read the story of Joshua, we start to realize that the world that he lived in then was full of selfishness.

It was full of idolatry. It was full of self-centered living. But, honestly, as we look at that in the story, we realize the world he lived in is not so different than the world we live in today. All around us, we see the world careening itself to selfishness, idolatry, and self-centered living. Come on, tell me you don't see it. Tell me you don't see people out in the world just out to get theirs, full of selfishness. But, my question for you is this, what are you going to do to stop selfishness in your life and in your family? Because God's heart for your family is servanthood. That's why Joshua said, "You know what, as for me and my family, we're going to align ourselves with what God says and we're going to serve Him." Because God's idea for family was servanthood. That was His heart. If it's important to Him, then it should be important to us. We've got to just go ahead and decide and choose that we're going to serve our family no matter what, no matter the cost, no matter how hard it is, no strings attached.

Because that's what God's heart for your family is. I know that right out of the gate, this may be a challenge for some of us because everything we see in the world around us is selfishness; the idea of, "what's in it for me." The manipulation of circumstances to better my situation. The belief that my needs are more important than your needs. Or the idea that I deserve... fill in the blank; otherwise known as entitlement. You see, but when we look at the kingdom to learn about servanthood, we start to realize that the kingdom is upside down to the world. Jesus has a different definition for it and even His own disciples didn't fully get it. Check this out, "The disciples bickered over which one of them would be considered the greatest in the kingdom." Okay, time out. Have any of you experienced any sort of bickering in your family this summer? Like, maybe on vacation, maybe on that road trip, maybe at home, maybe on the way here today.

If you have, you're in great company because Jesus experienced the same thing with the disciples. You see, they're bickering over which one of them is going to be the greatest in the kingdom. Then, "Jesus interrupts their argument saying... 'You're going to lead by a different model. The greatest one among you will live as one called to serve others without honor. The greatest honor and authority is reserved for the one who has a servant heart. The leaders who are served are the most important in your eyes, but in the kingdom, it's the servants who lead.'" I mean, that's just so good. What Jesus is telling us right here is, hey, there is a different way to do family. Serve one another and have a servant's heart, and it's the servants who lead. It's the servants who are the greatest in the kingdom. All right, so I've got a question for you, based on Jesus' definition of greatness, who's the greatest in your family? Seriously, who's the greatest in your family? All right, spoiler alert, "all the moms in the room" is the right answer. If you said anything else out loud, I pray that there's no bickering on the way home in your car.

But, it's so good because inside of us there's this innate desire to be great. Isn't it interesting that Jesus didn't argue with the disciples about that. He's like, "It's awesome that you want to be great. Let me just tell you what great in the kingdom looks like. Great in the kingdom looks like serving." If you're sitting here and you're like, "Man, I could do that. I could totally serve like that." You're probably thinking, like, "Man, I am the best servant in my family. I totally crush it at serving my family. You all remember when I did the dishes last month? I'm sitting there like LeBron James. I'm like, 'Yeah, I did that. That was me.'" Or maybe if you're a parent of a newborn, you change that one out of every 40 diapers. You're like with the baby powder, you're like, "Oh, yeah." Oh, come on. Tell me you haven't done that or haven't wanted to do that with baby powder if you're a parent of a newborn. Or maybe you're like, "You all remember when I did the laundry?"

But, then, they turn around and remind you "The laundry is still sitting there." You never actually put it in the dryer or did anything else with it. We all, honestly, think we're really good at serving. But, based on Jesus' definition, we actually have a longer way to go in our serving journey than we actually realize, which is why He tells us this. He says, "So the last will be first

and the first will be last." Otherwise known as, you can't out-serve your family. This isn't a game that you're going to be able to win with that worldly mentality. That's pretty upside down from what we see in the world around us, isn't it? The world around us says, "The first will be first and the last will be, well, not first." I struggle with this. I think the reason I struggle with this is because if you know anything about me, I love being first. I love winning no matter what it is, whether it's board games, card games, video games, whatever it is. You can ask my family.

I don't do anything to get a participation ribbon, you know what I'm saying? I do everything to win. But, this is telling us that the first will be last. This has really been challenging my own spirit in this season. Can I tell you something as this has been challenging me, it's not about being first. It's not about winning this game. It's about living your life as a servant. It really doesn't matter like, how much money you make. If you're not serving your family, you're the least and not the greatest. It really doesn't matter how fixed-up or Insta-perfect your house is. If you're not serving your family, you're the least and not the greatest. This has been really challenging me in this season. I know for some of us, we hear the word "servanthood" or "serving" and we're like, "Nope. Don't like it. Not for me. I'm checking out. I don't want anything to do with it." But, can I ask you, why? Why do we find it hard to serve our family?

Or why do we find it difficult to serve them? Or what gets in the way of all that? Maybe it's inconvenient. It has to fit your schedule just perfectly. Or maybe you don't feel like you have anything to offer. Or maybe you're like, "Yo, you know what, the people in my family, they don't deserve to be served." You're just probably sitting there thinking like, "Yo, do you know who I live with? Do you know what I have to put up with? Do you know what I have to do?" Don't look at the person next to you right now. Like, and okay, maybe you're right. Maybe they don't deserve to be served. But, think about Joseph with me, for a second. Remember Joseph, the "coat of many colors" guy? He served Potiphar, he served the prison warden, and then Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. They weren't worthy of it. Or what about David, a man after God's own heart? He served King Saul, the guy that's chasing him down, trying to kill him all those years. He wasn't worthy of it. Or what about Daniel? You remember Daniel?

He gets thrown into a lion's den, thrown into a fiery furnace. He served evil kings with evil plans. They weren't worthy of it. Or what about the first century church? They served the Romans. The Roman Empire, who's literally persecuting and killing Christians. They weren't worthy of it. You know what, neither were you. Yet, Jesus came to serve you. That's why He tells us this. He says, "But the Son of Man," I, Jesus, "did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." That is such a great verse. It's telling us that Jesus served His family. He served us, and the way He did that was all the way to giving His life for you. Can I ask you, in the interactions with your family, like, do you serve the way Jesus did? Do you expect to be served, or do you go and serve your family?

In the relationships with your roommates, your spouse, your friends, your kids, do you give your life to them, or do you demand and expect their life be given to you? See, because what this

verse is telling us is that Jesus did this for you and for me, and that's how He has a healthy family with us. It's how He's teaching us how to have a healthy family with them. Do you remember the story of the Good Samaritan? It's one of those famous stories in the Bible, and Jesus has a crowd of people around Him, and He's teaching. In that crowd, there's an expert of the law, and the expert of the law stands up and asks Jesus a question. He says, "Hey, Jesus, who is my neighbor?" He asks that in a way, as a way to justify himself of who he does and doesn't have to serve, and who he does and doesn't have to love. Then, Jesus tells him this story. There's a man walking down the side of the road, and he gets attacked by two robbers. They beat him up, they bloody him up, and they leave him for dead.

Then, along comes a priest, and he sees the man on the side of the road, but he decides to cross over on the other side and pass by. He says, "So too a Levite came and saw where the man was lying on the side of the road, and he too chose to cross by on the other side of the road." But, then there was a Good Samaritan, and as he's walking by, he notices the man on the side of the road. He goes over to him, has compassion for him, binds up and heals his wounds, puts him on his donkey, takes him to an inn, gives two silver coins to the innkeeper, and says, "Hey, I'll be back tomorrow, and I'll cover the cost for whatever is needed to make sure he is okay." Then, Jesus looks back at the expert of the law, and he says, "Which one of those three was a neighbor to the man in need?" In other words, which one served him the best? The expert of the law stands up, and says, "Well, the one who had mercy on him." Then Jesus replies back with this. Jesus told him, "Go and do likewise."

Go and do likewise. Hey, let me ask you, in your family, do you go and do likewise? Do you go and do likewise in your family? What this is telling us is, pay attention. Pay attention to what's going on in your family. Meet the needs that you see right in front of you. Or more specifically, do you show mercy to your family by honestly just doing that one thing you know you shouldn't have to do? Come on, think about it. Here you have a man who is in need. He's been beaten up by life. He's on the side of the road. It says that a priest and a Levite walk by. A priest and a Levite, two people that are the elite class of the Jewish custom, two religious leaders. Two people we would think, man, they would actually do something about that. But, it says the priest and the Levite both saw the man, but they decided to cross by on the other side of the road. It's like they were thinking to themselves, "Man, if I see him and I go over there, man, I'm going to feel obligated to get involved in whatever mess that man is in."

But, the Good Samaritan says, "Man, I see him. I'm going to have compassion on him. I'm going to take care of him. I'm going to take you to the end. I'm going to cover the cost no matter what it is to make sure that you are made whole." That's a great story because it teaches us a lot about servanthood. We probably hear that story, and we're like, "You know what, I would have done likewise, Jesus. I would have done exactly what you would have said." But, what if that man on the side of the road was a member of your family? What if that man on the side of the road was a member of your family that you recently had a falling out with? Or what if that man on the side of the road was a member of your family who just recently hurt

you? Or what if that man on the side of the road is a member of your family that you've had tension with your entire life? Come on, honestly, y'all, if it's a member of our family in that story, we don't want to serve them. We don't want to go on the other side and take care of them and have compassion on them.

Think about it. We see our family in a light that most people never will. I know you can relate. You see all the crazy bedhead in the morning. You're smelling all that ranky morning breath as well. You're sitting there wondering like, "Man, why are you still wearing that holey sweatshirt? Like, come on, man." I'm going to go out on a limb and say I'm going to serve somebody with this one right here. That t-shirt from high school, bro, you're not a shmedium anymore. Get rid of it. Or we see our family with all this snot when they're sick. Come on, you get it, right? You can relate with that. Honestly, if it's our family on that side of the road, we don't want to serve them. It's so much easier sometimes to pay it forward at the line of Starbucks to a complete stranger than to that person in our family who just drives us nuts all the time. But, Jesus says, "Go and do likewise." Or maybe you're sitting there thinking, like, "Man, my family is just so needy."

If you're thinking that, maybe Jesus is just trying to expose how needy you actually are, and yet, He still came to serve you. Maybe we hear that story, and we're like, "Man, that Good Samaritan, what a guy. Maybe I could be like that someday." But, what I want you to catch is the story of the Good Samaritan is not about a Good Samaritan. The Good Samaritan story is about Jesus. See, here Jesus is telling us a story of how He does family with us. Jesus says, "Hey, when life has beaten you up and left you half-dead on the side of the road, I walk by on your side. I see you. I have compassion on you. I heal your wounds. I want to take care of you. I'm going to put you on my back and do whatever it takes to make sure I take you to a safe shelter. Then, I'm going to pay the cost, no matter what it is, to make sure you are made whole." That's what healthy family looks like. That's what Jesus is telling us right there.

I love that he says, "Go and do likewise." The other thing I love is He doesn't actually give us examples of what that means. He says, "Just go and do likewise." You're like, "Okay, so what does that mean, Jesus?" It just means pay attention to your family. What do you notice in your home? What do the people in your life need? What Jesus is saying is, just pay attention and be aware. What does your family need in this season? Husbands, maybe all your wife needs right now when you come home from a long work trip or a long day is just the acknowledgement that she's had a long day too. Hey, siblings, maybe all your brother or sister needs in this season is for you to take on one of their chores because they just have a lot going on in this season. Hey, roommates, maybe all the people in your life need is for you to take those dirty dishes out of the sink and put them in the dishwasher and then actually start the cycle and then wait patiently for said cycle to finish.

Then once it's finished, you take them out and you put them back where they belong, even when it's not your turn. That's what Jesus is telling us to do. He says, "I've come to serve you.

Now go and serve your family because I didn't come to be served, I came to serve." Isn't it cool that Jesus, the one who knows us at our worst, is the one who serves us best. Jesus is the one who knows all of us at our worst, and yet He's the one that chooses to serve us best. This is Jesus; the one who literally washed the feet of the disciples. He washes Judas' feet. The one who's ultimately going to betray him. Honestly, I think you may feel like there's a Judas in your own family. I think you may actually feel like somebody that's out there to get you, always working behind your back, and maybe you feel like your sibling is a Judas. Or maybe you feel like your roommate may be a Judas.

Or maybe it's your child or your spouse might be a Judas. When I say a "Judas," I just mean somebody who's constantly hurting you. You see, we don't serve the people in our lives because they deserve it. We serve them because we want to become more like Jesus. Serving is how we practice the ways of Jesus. He gives us a family to practice that in, because He knows what it's like to be in a family and to serve those closest to Him, even those people that He washes feet for, which means we are not above that. Dads, we're not above that. Kids, we're not above that. Roommates, friends, grandparents, we are not above that. If Jesus came to do that for us, then we are invited to do that for the people in our family. What would it look like for you to wash the feet of your family? What would it look like for you to serve them?

When you do, are you serving to be served? When you actually go out of your way and do something for your family, are you serving to be served? "I served you this way, so now I'm expecting you to serve me that way." It's what the world would call brownie points. You ever heard of brownie points? All brownie points are like this fictional social currency that is earned by doing something for somebody to gain their favor. I do this, and then you do this for me. Honestly, in this past season, I've realized that a lot of the serving that I've done has been like that. I've looked at serving as a currency, like, "I'm going to put this in and then I'm going to make a withdrawal from that later on. I serve you this way, so then I expect you to serve me that way." But, I don't want to just get what I put in. I want to expect some compounding interest. You know what I'm saying? But, all that is, is selfishness. As I've started to realize this, it's really doing a work in my heart and in my spirit. All that is, is selfishness.

It really is an if-then belief system. If I do this, then they will do this for me. But, Jesus never had that belief in you and in me and in our family. You see, because serving isn't a currency. Serving is a gift. Currency is when you exchange something for something else, a gift is giving somebody something without any expectation of anything in return, no strings attached. I love that that's the model that Jesus gives us to learn how to serve those in our family. But, if we're honest, some of us go down these paths and we create these games in our family. But we don't actually say that we're playing a game, but we're playing a game for sure. Then, I get mad when you violate the rules of my game, but we never actually talk about what those rules are. They become these loops and these patterns that get ingrained and rutted in us. Somehow, someway, our family has dysfunctionally, functionally figured out how to function like that in our family. You know what I'm saying?

Let me ask you this, what game are you playing in your family? What's the game that you play in your family? Because if you're using servanthood as a currency, it's not servanthood, it's selfishness. That's the lesson that I've been learning, and that's the lesson that I think Jesus wants us to learn in this season too. The truth is, most of us in our families have learned how to function in that dysfunction of the things that we do and the games that we play. It's like you're playing Backgammon, and your family thinks you're playing Chinese Checkers. Or you have a scoreboard of how many times you've served them and how many times they haven't, and you're winning? Come on, maybe it's time to break free of those patterns and those loops and be like, you know what, in Jesus' name, let's do life different. Let's serve one another with no strings attached. Because serving isn't what we do. Servant is who we are. See, servants are never offended when they're asked to serve.

If you ever feel like you have to serve and you're offended, you've got to ask yourself, why am I offended if the Bible calls me a servant? See, that's who Jesus was. He didn't do serving because that's an action. He served because that's who He was. In Philippians 2, that's one of the most profound blocks of Scriptures that talks about Jesus in this way. Here's a little bit of it. It says, "Each of you should look not to your own interests, but also the interests of others." It kind of sounds like serving. "Your attitude should be the same as of Jesus Christ: Who... made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant. He humbled himself." That's so good. Can I ask you, what would it look like if you had the attitude of Jesus in your family? Or what if you took on the nature of the servant in your home? What would your family actually look like if you practiced some humility in this season? You see, because what this is telling us is that Jesus came. He took on the nature of a servant, and He was okay considering Himself nothing.

But, what about you? Are you willing to take on the nature of the servant and consider yourself nothing for the good of your family and the glory of God? That's what that's telling us in that Scripture, because serving is in our DNA. It's embedded in us. When Jesus came to earth, that's what He came to show us, that servanthood was our identity. It's actually one of the first things that God declares over humanity. In Genesis 1, it says, "God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. Subdue it, using all of its vast resources in the service of God and man." In the service of your family. Could it be in this season that you may be experiencing a season of fruitlessness or a season of division? I submit to you that maybe there's some fruitlessness or division happening in your family. You just want the fruit of joy to be evident in your family. You just want to multiply kindness as a part of your family.

Could it be that that's not happening because you're not subduing selfishness and you're not doing it in the service of your family? This is what Jesus first declared in us. That was God's original design for you, for me, for our family. He wanted all of us to take on the nature of a servant in this world. To be fully human, to be fully alive is to be a servant, not as an action, but as an identity statement. It's in our DNA and it's why you feel so good when you do it, because we were created for that. Our flesh wants to take, but our spirit wants to serve. That's why

Jesus came, to show you, to show me what servanthood looked like. You see, when you put your faith in Jesus, it's no longer I who live, it's Christ who lives in me. This is a great Scripture right here out of 1 John, is "As He is, so are we in this world." All right, let me ask you, are you part of "we"? This is an invitation for you. "As he is, so are we." We love this Scripture. "Because He is righteous, so am I. Because He is love, so am I."

We get excited, we love it, we own it. Because He is free, so am I. Because He is a servant, "Yeah, call back later." Come on, "Because He is a servant," say it with me, "so am I." Let it be so in Jesus' name. Who you are will always determine what you do. That means that servants serve. But, how do you know what to do and how to actually walk that out? All right, well, let me ask you these questions. What captures your attention in your family? What are you convicted by? What do you have compassion towards? Whatever the answers to those questions are, that's a need that Jesus is pointing out to you, because He wants you to do something about that. Every single place you think, "Yeah, somebody should actually do something about that." You're right, you should, and I'm so glad today's your opportunity to do that. Because remember, our anchor Scripture starts with what; "But as for me." Maybe your family doesn't want to serve, but you can. Maybe your spouse doesn't want to do it, but you can.

Maybe your kids, your grandkids, your roommates don't want to do it, but you can. "As for me." Come on, listen, we're waiting for Jesus to raise the dead and heal the sick and release a miracle out there. I think He's just waiting for us to partner with Him and release miracles in our family. What are the needs that you can meet in your family? Maybe instead of waiting for Jesus to raise the dead, heal the sick out there, come on, we can raise to life those dead things in our family. We can heal those relationships with our brothers and our sisters. We can release a miracle in our family in Jesus' name. Come on, maybe the reason our families are struggling is because we come to be served and not serve. But, come on, remember, Jesus says this, "I did not come to be served, but to serve and to give my life as a ransom for many." In other translations, it says, "For the salvation of many." Salvation – to save, to heal, to make whole. Jesus gave His life so that you could be saved.

He served His family, you, me, our family, so that He can save His family. He did all that to reconcile us back to Him, to bring us home for the salvation of many, the ransom for many. What is a ransom? It's a price paid for captives. Whatever held you down, whatever had tied you down, Jesus paid that ransom, and that ransom was His life. But, who did He do that for? He did that for the many, for those that have put their faith in Jesus, for the children of God, from whom every family on heaven and earth derived His name. Every family first comes from being a part of His family. Jesus did all of that for us so that we can go do that for them, for our family. Jesus knew that to serve was to save. Jesus knew that to serve His family meant He saved His family. That's what Jesus invites us to do. What can be saved in your family by serving your family? Maybe for some of you, it's that argument that you get into once a quarter.



Or maybe it's a missed opportunity with your kids or a missed opportunity to deepen your relationship in your marriage. What can be saved by serving your family? Jesus paid the ransom for His family so He could save His family, and He asks us to do the same. Maybe that thought pattern that your roommate is being held captive to, or the way your grandkids are living their life, maybe the best way to set them free is by you serving them. Dads, maybe serving your spouse may be the way you unify and save your family. Hey moms, maybe serving your kids is the way you heal and save your family. Hey students, maybe by serving your parents, that may be the way you save your entire family. I know that there are so many students that are a part of our church whose families and parents want nothing to do with Jesus.

But by you serving them, by you showing them the servanthood of Jesus, by you showing them His love, His grace, His mercy, His goodness and kindness; that may be the one thing that saves your entire family. Jesus served to save His family, and He asks us to do the same. "But as for me, and my family, we will serve the Lord." That's not just a declaration for back then, it's for right now. It's for me, it's for you, it's for your family. I just want to declare that over you. "But as for you, and your family, you will serve each other, and you will serve the Lord." God's heart for your family is servanthood. Will you close your eyes with me? Come on, what is the Holy Spirit trying to say to you right now?

He's here in this place. He wants to meet you where you're at on your journey of serving your family. What is He saying to you? Maybe for some of you He's saying it's time to lay down my preferences and opinions. It's time to lay myself down and put my family first. Or maybe for some of you He's saying, it really isn't about you. It's not about being first. It's about serving and showing the love of Jesus. Or maybe He's been telling you, "Can you be reminded of how I served you so you can serve your family?" Jesus, thank You for Your goodness. Thank You for Your kindness. Thank You for loving us first. Thank You for coming down and laying down Your life so that we could be set free.

Thank You for serving us in that way so that we can experience the abundant life the kingdom offers. I pray that we, as a Valley Creek family, would go and step into this invitation and serve our families the way You served us. I just pray that You loose the realities of the kingdom of servanthood in the families that are here today. I pray that You loose Your goodness and Your kindness and that selfishness and self-centered living dies. I rebuke that in the name of Jesus, and that Your love, Your servanthood, Your heart for each other is what's prevalent in this season as we step into this invitation. Thank You for loving us. Thank You for serving us. Thank You for being with us today. We love You, Jesus. You are good. You are worthy. You deserve all of our praise and adoration. It's in Your name we pray, Amen.