

“Hope Carrier Conversation” | Hope Carrier Initiative  
May 14, 2023 | Pastor John Stickl, Pastor Dave Scriven, Pastor Becca Reynolds,  
Pastor Jason Hillier, & Pastor Ben Moreno

Pastor John Stickl: All right, everybody, welcome to Valley Creek. Whatever your campus you're at today, can we just welcome each other together for a moment? Happy Mother's Day. We are so glad that you are here with us, and to all the amazing moms, we love you. All the mothers, spiritual mothers, stepmothers, those of you that have a desire to be a mother, grandmothers, women of every sort, we are so thankful for you because you show us what hope carriers look like. There is something about moms that have this ability to bring faith, hope, and love into situations and circumstances that no one else seems to be able to do. Moms carry hope in a way that really reflects and reveals the goodness of Jesus to us. For all of you moms, we love you, we're grateful for you. Literally, as we were worshipping in Flower Mound, we prayed – I'm not sure what was prayed at each campus – but I really just sense the Lord wanted to say to moms that He is the God who sees you. It's one of the names of God is, "I am the God who sees you."

To every mom, to every woman with a heart to be a mom, I think the Lord wants to say to you today that He sees you. He sees you in the dreams. He sees you in the desperation. He sees you in the situation and the circumstance, the brokenness, the pain, the triumph, the trial. He is the God who sees you and may you see Him. Happy Mother's Day. We love you. Next week, we finish up our series called the Hope Carrier Initiative. We started it in January and it's gone all the way to Memorial Day weekend. Who would have thought? Not me, and not us. As we begin to bring the plane down for this series, what I wanted to do today is just, instead of giving you one more message from me – you've heard a lot from me between January and now – is I wanted to invite some of our team up here with me.

I just want us to have a conversation together. A conversation of maybe some behind-the-scenes stuff for you, a conversation just so you can hear from some other voices and some other hearts what God has been doing, why this matters, and these are great leaders. They've all been here, at least, a decade. A decade! You don't you don't see a lot of leaders hanging together for a decade anymore, pretty much in any industry. We've been together for over a decade and these are amazing people. This is Dave. He's our Executive Pastor of NextGen. He oversees all things next gen. This is Becca. She's our Executive Pastor. She oversees all of our staff and all of our ministries. This is Jason. Jason is our Flower Mound Campus Pastor. He's on our teaching team and he helps oversee all of the communication in all the different environments that we have.

This is Ben. Ben is our Associate Pastor, and he oversees all things worship everywhere and all over the place. These guys are amazing. I love them and here's what I want you to know about them. We have so many other leaders, just like this, at all of our campuses and all of our ministries, and what I want you to know is they love Jesus. Like, they really love Jesus and they really love you. They're spending their lives being hope carriers in this space, so you can be hope carriers in your space. We're just going to have a conversation, so a little bit different today. Maybe just kind of get comfortable and just kind of believe that God has something that

He wants to say to you as we start pulling this whole thing together, because it has been a great journey. Becca, I'm going to start with you. I can't talk with things in my hand. I'm going to set that down. In 2019, we used the term “hope carriers” and “harbors” for the first time.

We were convinced in 2019 that we were going to do this big hope carrier series. We were so excited. We had it all planned and it didn't happen in 2019. Then, we were convinced 2020, and didn't happen. In 2021, we thought we were going to do it. Then 2022, we thought we were going to do it. Here we are, the end of 2023 and we're just like – feel like we're just halfway through the Hope Carrier Initiative. Talk to us about that journey and how we got from there to here.

Pastor Becca Reynolds: Absolutely! It's been a great journey and he kind of alluded that this is like a behind-the-scenes. Can I just say, tell you, this is what we do a lot, right. We'll do this, usually, it's over a cup of coffee at a table and Jay will come, be bopping in, and Ben will come in. We try to get Dave out of meetings to come in. But this is what we do is we talk about what's happening, what is it looking like, and what are we learning as individuals as we're all learning together? I hope y'all have great friends like this to be able to process it with. But to his question, yeah, it was – man, Valley Creek was growing in number.

We were booming back when we first made this discovery of hope carrier. We were all walking out the vision that God had given us at that time to help people take the next step on their journey with Jesus. We were all really learning how to live a lifestyle of following the cloud to know more about who we are, who God is, and what we were created to do. When God gave this word to us of hope carriers in areas of life, we were so excited. Even as a staff, I think there was a next-level excitement for us, because what you may not know is, many of our staff, we have transitioned from the marketplace into ministry. In fact, every one of your campus pastors was in the marketplace in some area of life as a leader before God called them to be the campus pastor where they are now. We were all so excited to be like, “Man, let's equip the body. Let's go. Let's take this charge. Let's carry hope!” And then the pandemic came along. It really – obviously, everyone had to pivot.

It brought with it a lot of chaos and confusion. As any traumatic event will bring, it brought us an opportunity to learn two things. Where are we strong? And where do we have some areas of weakness that we can shore up? I will just speak personally in my life. I think what I learned was being a disciple of Jesus, I think I thought I was a little stronger than maybe I truly was in that season. I really think that it was God's goodness of hope carrier to give us some time to get through that that crisis, to pull closer together, and then come out of it, and say, you know what, being a hope carrier, it's really about being a follower of Jesus, about being a disciple first. That's what this last season really has been, is going deeper in our foundation as individuals and as a whole church family of really becoming a disciple of Jesus. That's the short story. If y'all want the long story, I'll have coffee with them.

Pastor John Stickl: I think it's true. I think had we done it in 2019, or in 2020, or 2021, or even 2022, I think we would have spent most of the time and energy on the “change your world” portion of a hope carrier. If today was your first day, and you're like, “Hope carrier, what's that?” A disciple of Jesus, living on mission, who changes their world. But what we realize is that we needed to spend most of the time on being a disciple component, so that we could move forward. Really, give us one more thing for those of us that have never heard it, is really how did we decide when we were going to do it? Really, we would say, “follow the cloud.” Just tell people that have never heard, like, “Man, follow the cloud. What is that?” That's how we make decisions around here. Just give us a thing on that.

Pastor Becca Reynolds: Totally. Follow the cloud, it's a lifestyle. It's all about receiving from God and then following out what He has for us. We represent it in the three circles and we say we just want to experience His presence together and hear from God. Where is He going? Where do we need to follow Him? And then we go into relationship with Him.

And that's what we'll do as a leadership team is we'll pray together and we'll seek in unity together. Then, we walk that out by releasing His kingdom. Living a lifestyle of following the cloud, it means we don't have an agenda. It means for our own personal lives, we don't figure it out. It means as the leadership of this church, we don't figure it out first. We literally hear from God and then in unity we walk that out. We just go where He says go and do the best that we can, we do what He says do. It's a lifestyle.

Pastor John Stickl: That's one of the things that I hope can bring great comfort to you as a part of this church is that we don't do anything macroly if we don't, as a leadership team, hear from God in unity. If one person is the dissenting voice, saying, “I'm not hearing God say that right now.” We don't move forward. We wait, because we believe God only has one thing to say about any specific topic. If we're all hearing different things, then either somebody – somebody's hearing something wrong or God is inviting us to wait. We wait until we have unity and 2023 was the year of moving forward in unity.

That's great. Okay. Jay, so we have covered a lot of ground, a lot of content from January to May. Pretty much like one message turned into an entire series every week is pretty much how that deal was going. What would you say to somebody that's sitting there, and they're like, “That was a lot. That was a lot of content, a lot of information. Where do I start?”

Pastor Jason Hillier: Yeah. It was a lot. It was a lot for each one of us. If you're sitting in this part of the year thinking, “Man, I don't even know half the stuff we talked about or what it means.” But, can I just encourage you with this. This would be an overarching for my own life. I think the best way to think about the whole series so far is to think about it in terms of this phrase: The kingdom inside of you is supposed to become and will become the kingdom around you. This

idea that on the inside of you – it's far more important what's going on the inside than it is what's externally happening.

We live in a society that is way more interested in talking about all the things out there, the noise, the distraction, the politics, the things, the world. I think part of why that happens is because the enemy wants to distract us from asking the question, what's going on in here? The kingdom inside is going to become the kingdom outside. What's inside you will absolutely pour out to those around you. I think the Hope Carrier Initiative as an idea is this idea of like, man, I really need to live with a surrendered will and a humble spirit that really does say, "Jesus, You are right," and as I go on that journey, to live with a surrendered will and a humble spirit and let that kingdom be transformed by the King. Let my heart be taught by the Teacher. It really does impact every area in my life. I think, don't miss. Don't miss that fact. You can't control everything. You can absolutely control a surrendered heart and will to Jesus. You can't control the world around you, you can absolutely change your world by letting this world be transformed.

I'm always amazed that people don't understand, like, the horrors that are out there, the things that you read about, the things that are shocking, the things that are crushing. Those are horrible. You know what's even more horrible? Is the darkness that's in the hearts to do it. What's even more horrible is that, that the kingdom on the inside is so dark and so broken that it leads to those actions. For each one of us, you know what we can do, we can go on the journey with Jesus, and say, "I may not have fully understood it. I may have a little bit of revelation. I need a lot more. I can go back." I can literally go back and listen to it, you know on a resource site, which is –

Pastor Becca Reynolds: ValleyCreek+.

Pastor Jason Hillier: ValleyCreek+, thank you. I know that. ValleyCreek+. By the way, we –

Pastor John Stickl: Clearly he knows.

Pastor Becca Reynolds: We're better together.

Pastor Jason Hillier: I go through that all the time, as you can see. It really is an amazing resource. All of the transcripts of all of our messages and all the content we put out is on ValleyCreek+. You can go back and you can listen to it and let His words transform. But even more than that, a surrendered and submitted will – it'll begin to change the world around you, your world.

Pastor Dave Scriven: Yeah, just real quick. It definitely has been a lot, but I think it's one of those things where we're invited just to remember like, what is the kingdom? The kingdom is

not complicated. It's not meant to be overwhelming. In fact, you have to – Scripture tells us, like, we have to be childlike in nature, humble in nature even to enter into it. I think, at any point, if it's felt like a lot, if it's felt overwhelming, if you've found yourself, like, "I don't know what to do with this." I think that's just one of those things where it's like, God inviting you to say, "Hey, I want to be your Teacher. Like, just come to Me. Run to My heart." He'll be the one that simplifies it for us. He's the one who says, "My burden is not heavy. My yoke is easy." I think those are those things where you could then start to – what are the bigger things that God is doing? What are the hard things that He's trying to draw to the surface? I think, for me, at least, that's where I've found a lot of clarity and a lot of peace of just trying to navigate through this season.

Pastor John Stickl: I hope you can hear that. That it's like, if you are like, "Oh my gosh, it was a lot." We're acknowledging it was a lot. One of my favorite things is, Becca mentioned at it, but like, these are my friends. Like these are the people I do life with. Like, I hope you have people in your life that when there's a lot of great revelation or a lot of things that are spoken into the atmosphere that you can sit and talk about it together and find the discoveries and the excitement. It's like one of my favorite things is if you've ever been around Jason, when he hears something or discovers revelation or finds a Scripture in the Bible, and he's like – the way he's like, "Oh my gosh," he does his hand and his head. It's like the whole thing. It's like and – yeah, exactly. That's exactly what it's like. It's like – and what I love about these guys is no matter how long they walk with the Lord, they continue to become more childlike and more excited about what God is saying to them. They don't have an attitude of like, "I've heard that before. I've got that." Like, "Oh, that was okay." They're like, "Ah! God is speaking to me about the simplicity and the beauty of the kingdom."

One of the things that we've said in the last couple years as we've – just kind of moving in this direction, is we've started to say that church isn't just a harbor, it's really a training center. A place where we come to be equipped and to grow and to learn. One of the best ways we think is through serve teams. What would you say to somebody that's like, "I like the hope carrier thing. It's very cool. I'm not sure how to figure it out in my space." What would be in a part of a serve team here help them figure out about being a hope carrier out there?

Pastor Dave Scriven: Yeah, that's great. What would I say? I would say that so much of just learning to live as a hope carrier, it's learning to live the way that Jesus lived. How do we follow the life that He modeled for us? How do we live believing that God is real, that His kingdom is at hand? How do we engage the mission of God in the everyday realities of life? I think the reality of that is none of us fully have that figured out, right? That's why we do serve teams. Serve teams are those spots. It's really the best spot to learn to live in the kingdom. It's where we get to practice our faith, right?

It's where we get to come together and be challenged, and equipped, and trained, and called up, and really live for something other than just ourselves. We do that with a bunch of people that are trying to figure out the same thing. Disciples of Jesus just trying to figure out, man, how do I take the next step on my journey to grow in what God's invited and called me to do? I think the other thing I would say with serve teams is, we really are trying to be intentional around here to create kingdom environments. We don't just want to get a task done. The task is important. The task is important to Jesus, but we want to get a task done following kingdom values, and kingdom standards, and kingdom principles. If you're really thinking about, how do I be a hope carrier out there in the area of family and business and education and healthcare? I always like to say those kingdom values and principles, they transfer no matter where you are. This is the space to figure that out. This is a space to practice that, to wrestle through it, to fail a little bit where it's safe; but to grow in it so that ultimately you could take that out there with you wherever God's planted your feet.

Pastor John Stickl: You hear us say a lot in this last season, like, practice your faith, practice your faith, practice your faith. Joining a serve team is where you get to practice dying to yourself. It sounds really good, doesn't it? Every time I say it to them, they're like, "Oh that's really going to inspire people." [Rolls eyes]

Pastor Jason Hillier: Come to Valley Creek serve teams and die.

Pastor John Stickl: But tell me another environment in your life where other people are also practicing that at the same time. If I want to be a good lacrosse player, I don't go to a soccer practice. If I want to good, be a good piano player, I don't go to a basketball practice. If I want to be good at theater, I don't go to piano practice. I have to go practice with other people who are trying to excel in the thing that I'm excelling in. It's going to be really hard to practice being a servant in a world that is selfish. If I really want to grow in the ways of Jesus, become like Jesus, to what Dave is saying, I have to get around other people.

It's like we're learning to deny ourselves together and wash feet the way that Jesus asked us to do. You have to ask yourself this question: Where are you practicing serving others, where you receive coaching, and feedback, and challenge, and inspiration, and celebration and encouragement? It's really hard to say I'm going to be a hope carrier out there, if I'm not a hope carrier first in here. Because we've tried to go through this series and say it's inside out. To what Jason says, it starts with you, and then in your family, then in the body of Christ, and then in the world. You don't get to jump from just you to the world. It has to go first your family, then into this body, then you can go into the world. I think it's so important for you to understand that Jesus says, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest to send workers into His harvest field." In other words, Jesus says there is more opportunity in front of us than we have people willing to participate.

Can I just tell you we have more hope carrier opportunities in our own church than we have people who are willing to participate, than we can take, than we're able to take care of the need. There are more students to disciple, than we have leaders who want to disciple them. There are more kids to raise up, than we have people who are willing to serve them. There are more opportunities to lead people into the presence of God, than we have band members that are willing to participate. It's like if you want to be a hope carrier out there, it really starts here. This is how we practice our faith. This is a training center where we're learning to do it together. Because of all that – part of the reason we've built it this way is because a statement that we've said for a long time is: We believe in the redemptive potential of humanity. We believe in the redemptive potential of you. Talk to us about that and how that kind of fits into this whole hope carrier dynamic.

Pastor Ben Moreno: Yeah, that's great. He looked at me because he believes in the redemptive potential. He's seen it in action. But it's true, Jesus met with sinners. He didn't meet with people who thought they were righteous. He always dined and ate and ministered to sinners. If you're a sinner, before you met Jesus, then you're in good shape because Jesus loves you. He wanted to meet with you. He didn't compromise on who He was, but He was full of life towards them. He wanted to give the life that He had to them. You can see it from the woman at the well who went on to be the greatest evangelist in history, to Paul who was persecuting Christians, to Ben Moreno who was a little thug on the street and just ready. If God can do that, He can do it for anybody.

I think that we can't forget that. When we receive God's grace, we can't help but share that grace with others. The reality is, it's, no matter how far away you are, there's always hope for you. If you remember that for yourself, then you will have that attitude towards others. It won't just be that the Bible says it. It will be like your heart overflows for the people in your life that need Jesus because if Jesus can reach me then He can reach you. I think that that's what we have to remember, if we want to continue to reach people. If we want to – you've got to remember what God has done for yourself, what He's done for you. This is what – I was thinking about this. As we were preparing, I was like, the church used to be the place where hurting people would easily know that they could go and they could find help.

I think, years ago, just even a few years ago, it had – it was like the culture of the world where if you went to the church you could find some help. I think that as if the few years, the pandemic, and a lot of things that kind of came in the way, I don't think that that's the culture of the world to say that anymore. The easy thing that we used to be able to do is just open up the doors and hurting, and lost, and lonely, broken people would come through the doors. That doesn't work anymore. I think it's okay that it doesn't work anymore, because God's raising up the church to go out and be hope to the lost and lonely and broken world. I think that that's why hope carriers is so important because there are lost and lonely and broken and broken and broken and broken people out there that need hope. I think that if you don't know and realize

how much God has done for you, you're never going to be able to share that hope for others. Think about it, did Jesus come and save you? Did He pick you up where you were?

Did He meet you on your darkest loneliest day? Yes, He has. Now, I can go and I can share that with others. Yes, Jesus does believe in the redemptive potential of every single person.

Pastor Jason Hillier: I want to speak one more, too. He also believes in the redemptive potential of your years to come. I felt really strongly this morning that I would just wanted to say, like, you still can. You feel like you wasted some years. You feel like you've missed it. You feel like you haven't led your family the way that you hoped you would. You felt you didn't make the decisions that you were supposed to. You feel like you didn't engage the series or engage this journal like it was laid out for you during this season. You still can. In Jesus' name, you still can. I believe that the Lord wants to redeem a lot of the years the locusts have eaten in your life. I believe that He wants to remind us that there is an amazing future to be built, not just on in this life, but in the life to come. That everything you're doing is playing for legacy and is playing for like a spiritual legacy in your family that redemptive potential.

Pastor Ben Moreno: Yeah, and I'll piggyback on that because I was thinking about this as well. It is Mother's Day. Happy Mother's Day. My mom's watching online. Yeah, great. Hey. God can redeem your past. He can redeem so much. I remember growing up and my mom had some addictions. Lots of addictions that were – it was really tough on our family. I remember writing a note where I said, "Man, if my mom can just quit this our family would be in great shape." Well, she didn't, and I just kind of hid it in my room. Well, when I move out for college, it's like, okay, she's going through my room and everything and she finds this note and it breaks her heart. It breaks her, but then she came to faith in Jesus. She started putting her trust in Jesus. The years that the locusts were eating away at, man, my – she's not even the same person that, that I grew up with. I look at that and I see there's so much that God wants to do.

There's so many things that God can redeem back to Himself. She's the most joyful, playful, most awesome grandma in the world, and she's an amazing mom. God can redeem. It's not too late to redeem that.

Pastor John Stickl: Yeah, the redemptive potential of humanity. One of the things that we're always trying to do and what part of a heartbeat of the series was is to open your eyes up to that for you. Not for everyone else, but just for you. Because I would bet that a whole lot of us have an oppressive, religious tradition, background somewhere in our mindset that pushes us down and creates separation between us and God. Like God can't really believe in me, can He? Remember, we define belief as acting as if it were so. Oh, God believes in you because He acts as if it were so, because He has empowered you with His very kingdom in the here and the now. One of the reasons, as silly as it is, that were – like, most of the time I preach in a t-shirt.



I dressed up for Mother's Day, is it's just – and there's no like, bully pulpit, is the whole point is. There's no separation. We're right here with you. Like, everything we're saying is we're trying to live in our life. Everything that you think, you look at these guys, and you're like, "I can't be like them." Yes, you can. Yes, you can, because all you have to say is, "I want Jesus to be my Lord and to be my King. I'm going to take one next step at a time." Because everybody gets to wherever they are on their journey by taking one step at a time; one step, one step, one step. With all that, right. I mean it's been a lot. Here's the question then, is how does this not just stay a series? How does it not just become one of many series that gets logged on ValleyCreek+ and you can go back and watch it, but it was like, "Ah, it's a cool series. Remember that. Hey!" How do we like, give it life so it actually walks out with us into the future? Ready? Go.

Pastor Becca Reynolds: I'll go first. Yeah. It's a great question. It's one of those things that I do think because of the content is so deep that it could – or so just large in volume. It's really not – it's deep and wide. But I do believe that if we take one piece at a time, you just light that up beautifully. It's really just about walking with Jesus one next step at a time. Even just taking one piece of it at a time and asking the Lord, spending time with Him, saying, "What do you want me to see today? What do you have for me today?" You say, okay, take that down a notch. How do we do that practically? All of the messages are online at valleycreek.plus. You can go back and you can re-watch each one. You can pick one principle or one concept. The kingdom is at hand – maybe that's something that you just want to meditate on. Pop it in your phone as a recurring little alarm that pops up and just keeps it going throughout the day. I'm all about practicality. The guys know this. They call me "The Handle Lady" because I want to put handles to everything.

But that would be my thought, is just don't lose sight of it. If you have to put sticky notes of it on your mirror, do that. Have I carried hope today? Do that. Pull the pieces out of the journal that are just the real practical steps, lay that on your dinner table, and when you have dinner with your family say, "Who's done one of these lately?" It's just keeping it alive through conversation and being creative with it. That's one idea. Y'all got more ideas?

Pastor Jason Hillier: Yeah. I agree. I think something like this can stay with you and portions of it can stay with you, even when you fill out the journal. Let's say, you fill it all the way up. You don't use it. Like, let me give you an example. There's actually a page that says, "Do the heart work." It's page 17 in my journal. You could do the heart work at any time and any season of your life. You could just choose and say, like, "All right. Jesus, reveal the places in my heart that are not fully submitted and surrendered to Your will. Reveal the places inside of me that I need to surrender to that." You could do the heart work in any given season. You could write it down and go back and reflect on it to say, like – yeah, you can't say "it is written" if you don't actually know what He said in the first place and what He's spoken to you.

Like, "it is written." It's a pretty critical tool that Jesus shows us when He faced temptation. "It is written," and then He defeated the temptation through the Word of God. It's going to be important that you go back and actually reference it, and say like, "What did You say, Jesus? And what did that mean? And what are You still speaking to me actively right now?"

Pastor Ben Moreno: I feel like this season that we are in, it is monumental for just us, in our thinking. It's helping us to think differently than what we've ever thought. I remember years ago whenever Pastor John became pastor. It was like, we're going to be a worshiping church. That was the first thing that we said, right? We're going to be a worshiping church. I think year-after-year of pursuing, pursuing after that, we see worshipers all over, all of our campuses that are leading the way in worship. We've become a worshiping church so much that we don't even have to say that anymore. I think that we want to develop hope carriers.

We want hope carriers to fill our cities. We want hope carriers in every area of life. I think that as we continue to pursue after that, you'll see the Titanic starting – man, that's the wrong word. Hopefully, it's not the Titanic. But you'll see the ship start to turn and you'll see as we slowly and we continue to drip, drip. I just lost all of them.

Pastor Becca Reynolds: You had them. You had them till right there.

Pastor John Stickl: It took everybody a minute to get it and then they're like, Ah.

Pastor Dave Scriven: We're not going down. We're not going down.

Pastor Ben Moreno: Now I know how you feel.

Pastor Dave Scriven: I'll just, I'll just say real quick. I want to say it's – yeah, we're not on the Titanic guys. It's okay. Scripture says, "Consider carefully what you hear," right. That was in response to your question, not Ben over here. But "Consider carefully what you hear." In other words, like, steward. Steward what God's been saying to us, right?

"To the measure you use it, it'll be measured to you." I think that's – I don't know. I just think that's the invitation in all this. When it's been a lot, when God's speaking, when God's moving, how do we steward that? I like what Pastor Becca said. Just in our daily life. I think one of the questions we asked a few weeks ago is, like, how are you living as a disciple today? That's where I would really encourage all of us to live and we said, right at the outset, that, man, we're going to probably create more questions than really answers through this. That's because this is a necessary place. We need to be part of what's happening here. But more than that, is to equip us to, like, wrestle with the spirit for ourselves. I think more than anything in this season God's inviting us to this next-level relationship where we really are learning to live Spirit-led. To be sensitive to the Spirit within us. I think that's ultimately what keeps it alive. How do we stew

on some of these questions that are coming up? How do we not settle when we don't have an answer?

But we sit and we meditate and we wrestle and we cry out and we pray and we get around people that want to do the same thing with us, so that we can start to identify, okay, what's that? Just the next little step that God's inviting me to take. I think when we do that, all of this stays alive and we could then, like, sit here today and look back to where we were in January and be like, 'You know what? I don't know. Maybe I missed a lot, but I think I look a little bit more like Jesus today.' I think that's really what it's all about.

Pastor John Stickl: And that our heart was to get it into the foundation, and the ethos, and the DNA of who we are as a people, so I like that. I might not remember everything that was said. I might have lost a lot of the concepts, but if it can be in the very fiber of who you are as a person, a little bit of revelation, repentance that unlocked some different ways of thinking about your life. We're on a journey and we're moving forward together. That's what series, message series, do. We build them in a way that they're meant to build on top of each other, laying foundations, so you can build a life in Jesus that will withstand the storms, but will also experience the abundance that He offers.

What would you guys say then though to someone who might be sitting there and they're like, "All this is great, sounds really good, but like, my life. I'm broken. My life is hard, my marriage, my season, my family, my reality. I don't have any hope, so how can I be a hope carrier?" What would you say to someone that's sitting there and they're like, "I'd love to do it when I get some hope because I don't really have any."

Pastor Jason Hillier: So a king rules by words and actions. You can – in your life, you can just choose to speak and act as if Jesus were real and as if it was so. You can start to do that by just as simple as like, "Jesus, I need You. Jesus, be my Lord. Jesus, help me in..." Just start that conversation. It could be that small, that simple and it's amazing what that start, and what that heart posture can do if you'll start walking with the Lord. You can't control it.

You, absolutely, through your words and your actions, through word and deed. Whatever you do, in word and deed, do it all for the Lord. You can do that now. You can start now. Even if some of this didn't make sense here, it's actually not supposed to. It's not supposed to be just understood cognitively. It's supposed to be received by faith. You can start to live your life by faith in all kinds of areas. When you do, you're going to see transformation among those that you love, in your workplace, and in your own life, and in your, in your own beliefs. You can live by demonstrating and declaring the kingdom in your own life and watching where that leads you.

Pastor Becca Reynolds: It really is the Proverbs, "He who refreshes others will himself be refreshed." That's part of great being on a team as well. I mean, if you're having a hard day, you come in and you're on your team and your teammates will lift your spirits. They will pick you up. They will lift your head and point you back to Jesus. Sometimes it can be just that. It's being involved, refreshing other people by serving them with a smile. You would be surprised. You'll just be surprised at how God will be faithful in that.

Pastor Ben Moreno: Yeah, I think it's good, too. You can acknowledge where you're at as a person in your life. But it's really important that you don't line up with a lie. You don't say, "This is my identity," and it's a lie that you're building your identity on. You always have to come back to the truth of God and who He is and remind yourself of that. "Yes, I am in a mess," and it's okay to acknowledge that. "But in Jesus name, I'm not a messy person. Jesus has redeemed me. He set me free. I can claim that." If you just align yourself up to one of the – if you're – if you feel like you have no hope today, align yourself up to one truth that God says about you. You know what that is. That's getting – I always – the sports analogy. It's getting up to bat. "I missed a million times." Well, what's the best thing to do? Get up to bat again and swing. Keep swinging.

Pastor Dave Scriven: Yeah. I would just say something. We say it all the time around here. Sometimes the best way to find hope for yourself is to give it away, right. I think a lot of times when we're struggling to find hope for ourselves, we fall into that trap of, like, "I've got to get myself right. I've got to get myself healthy. I've got to fix whatever it is that's just off within me and then I'll engage in the mission of God." I think back to the week where we taught on the Gospel of the Kingdom, and we went back through The Three Circles. Really, the big takeaway is the target of living in the kingdom. It's the center of the circles. We're not meant to just pick and choose one circle or the other. We don't get extended seasons to only work on our identity or only to work on our relationship with God. We're meant to do those all at the same time. Because there's a facet of who you are that you can only discover in living on mission with God. There's a facet of the relationship that God calls us to that we only discover when we're put into situations where we're desperately dependent upon Him. It's kind of what we say when we just say, like, point your feet in the direction your heart wants to go, right, or that you want your heart to go.

That's really what it comes down to. I think one of the gifts we have is we get a front row seat to life change. We get to be part of it. We get to see it. We get to experience it. We get to share it in that joy. I think sometimes we find ourselves on the sidelines of life and we actually are removing ourselves from the very thing that can bring us the hope that we so desperately long for.

Pastor John Stickl: Okay. Last question. See how fast time goes when you're up here? It goes very slow when you're out there sometimes, I know. Up here, it goes very fast because they feel

like they didn't even say anything yet. What's one thing, if you could say one thing to everybody as we bring this series to an end, what is it that you want them to grab a hold of to walk out with? You can go in any order you want, but it's just like, "Hey, I just want you to hear... I want you to know... I want you to take hold of... this."

Pastor Jason Hillier: The Gospel of the Kingdom is the King is good, and He's good to you. And so even if you didn't know exactly where to go next, just believe Him by faith. Like, God is good and He's good to me and He wants to lead me into whatever's next.

Pastor Becca Reynolds: Okay. Yeah. My encouragement would be the words that God gave Gideon, which was, "Just go in the strength you have." That's what He told him. Gideon felt like He had all the odds against him. He didn't have hope. He had everything taken away, but God just said, "Go in the strength that you have." My encouragement would be, whatever you have, take that and by faith go in it and declare, "Jesus, You are right in everything." And just keep coming back to that over and over, "Go in the strength you have." "Jesus, You are right." Just continue following Him.

Pastor Dave Scriven: Yeah. We were talking about it this morning. I think sometimes we think that life in the kingdom, it's all the big things. It's the signs. It's the wonders. It's the healing. It is all those things and we should expect it, but I think more often than not, life in the kingdom, it looks a lot more like that Bill video that we got to watch before we got started. It's the little things. It's blessing people and helping people and serving people and just being kind and walking with the opposite spirit of the world. I think that has so much more of an impact on the world around us than we realize. Then, just always being willing to give the reason for the hope that we have and that we can carry into those spaces.

Pastor Ben Moreno: I think success is obedience. Our success in life, our success in the kingdom, whether you've been praying for your grandchild for years and you haven't seen any results, success is obedience. God knows. He's there. I think that if we can live a life of that, that the journey is about being obedient and walking in those ways. I think if we as a church can grab that, then we're not building on our success on how many widgets we make or how many people we get saved. It's really not on that at all. It's about, success is obedience. Listening to what the Father has to say. Listening to His word, stepping out, and doing it.

Pastor John Stickl: I hope that somewhere in listening to these guys talk you can find a way to, somewhere in listening to these guys talk you can see the Spirit of God at work. That you can see the unity. That you can see that a relationship with God manifest in our lives. We're all on the same journey together. There should be a ton of unity and a ton of alignment and a ton of moving in the same direction, because He's the same Father who doesn't change, but who is always inviting us to change, to grow, to break through, to move forward. You have an amazing

group of leaders at this church that love Jesus and they love you. I know, I don't get to talk about them a lot, but I would say it like this.

All campus pastors and our Central Team and all of our staff and our elders and our shepherds, our Circle leaders, our student, kids leaders, our worship team, there's – I think one of the most underappreciated things in today's day and age is spiritual leaders who actually are faithful following Jesus who love the people that they're serving. I hope, today, in some way you can just see that there are people who are literally praying for me, laying down their life for me, and they're not telling me to do things that they themselves are not going after with all their heart. They're just saying, "Hey, follow me as I follow Jesus. I'm going this way because that's where Jesus is. Come on with me. I will make it as easy as possible for you because this is the way of life." My closing thought for you is in Genesis 12, God says to Abraham, and we've talked about him in this series. He just says, "I will bless you and you will be a blessing. All the peoples on earth will be blessed through you."

In other words, God says to Abraham, "Hey, I'm going to bless you and my relationship with you is going to be a blessing to the world around you." Whether you realize this or not, God has blessed you and the greatest blessing He's given you is a relationship with Him. That relationship with Him is meant to bless the world around you. "I have blessed you and all peoples of this earth. All areas of life, all people groups, all the places you go will be blessed through My relationship with you." That's the heart of being a hope carrier. It's to have a relationship with a God who blesses me, who loves me, and that relationship isn't contained within me. It blesses anyone and everyone that I come in contact with. That's what a hope carrier looks like and that's what a hope carrier does. This has not been a series. This is not the end. It's really the beginning of a journey.

Next week we're going to kind of pull this phase of it to a close with a commissioning and a special experience. Do whatever you need to do to be here because I believe God is going to anoint you in a powerful way with His spirit as He sends you out into this next season. But Valley Creek, we're not just a church full of consumers and entertainment and comfort and convenience. You're like, "We know it's Mother's Day and you're talking about hope carriers and dying to self." Exactly! Because we're just walking with God and this is what God is doing right now. We're not going to pivot for Hallmark, we're going to stay focused on the kingdom. You hear what I'm saying? Now, that's not saying anything bad about moms. My mom's watching too. She's amazing. My wife's here. We love moms. All that's really important and we said moms are the greatest hope carrier, but hear me. This is what God is doing right now. This is what's urgent. This is what's important, and this is what it means to be a people of God on a journey with God. Okay.

Close your eyes with me. Come on, what's the Holy Spirit want to say to you today? In some way shape or form, God was in this place. God is in this place. God is moving in your life.

What's He want you to grab a hold of, to open your eyes to, or loosen your ears for, or soften your heart around? Jesus, thank You for a community of faith. Thank You for the people of God. Thank You for the body of Christ and this supernatural spiritual family on mission. That, right now, I am surrounded by thousands of other people who are saying, "Jesus is my Lord and I am following and He is the King of my kingdom and He is right. I don't have to do this alone. Even if I don't feel like I've got it figured out there are people around me showing me the way."

Jesus, may this whole concept of hope carriers show us the importance of the church of Jesus. Not the church of religion, but the church of Jesus. I even just speak over your life today. It was prophetic for us to end this part of the journey in a community of speakers, to see that it is not about a person or a thing or my perspective or my opinion for any of us as individuals. No, no. It is a community of faith following Jesus together with one heart, and one voice, and one mouth, and one vision, and one Lord, and one Spirit, and one baptism, and one faith, and one pursuit that matters.

That is, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and everything else will be added unto you." Thank You, Jesus, for what You're doing in our church in this time, in this place, and we bless every mother. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Hey, I am so glad you came to be with us today at Valley Creek. For those of you that want to give, giving a response to the goodness of God as part of living as a hope carrier, you can give at all the boxes on your way out or online at [Valleycreek.org](http://Valleycreek.org). Next week will be a really special weekend. Don't miss it. But as you go this week, may you go knowing that God is good. Jesus has forgiven you. You are loved, and everything is possible in Jesus' name.