

Alright, everybody, welcome to Valley Creek. We are so glad that you are here with us. Whether this is your first time here with us or you're here all the time, surely God is in this place, even if you're not aware of it. Surely, God is good to you, even if you don't believe it. Surely, God is on the move, whether you realize it or not. I'm glad you're here today. We've been in this series called The Hope Carrier Initiative and we've just been talking about being disciples of Jesus, living on mission to change their world.

The last couple of weeks, we've been talking about dreaming with God within that context of being a hope carrier. I acknowledge it's been a lot; it's been deep; it's been overwhelming for a lot of people. Today is going to be really simple and really short. I only have five slides for you. Really simple; really, really short. You see, one of the things that I do all the time is I'm always studying. I'm always studying God, trying to pay attention and call attention to that which God is doing. I'm always studying God's Word. I'm trying to discover what God is saying to us and pull it out to be able to share with you. Then, I'm always studying people. I'm always watching people, and studying them, and trying to figure out what makes them tick, and where they are, and what's going on and how they view the world. As I've just engaged in my own life over the course of the last month, and I've just kind of been studying people around me, here's what I've noticed.

Just about everywhere I go, people are tired, they're weary, they're worn out, they're beat down, they're burned out, they're disconnected, they're apathetic, and they are not present wherever they are. I mean, just about every environment that I go in, I'm watching people and everybody's ready for it to be over. What's the "it"? It, school, the semester, my commitment, the sports team, that thing I committed to that I wish I wouldn't have. Like people, everybody just wants it to be over. It's like we're tired, we're wore out, and we're not present. Now, for the world, that's no big deal because that's how the world lives. But for the people of God, not being present in your own life is a really big deal because we've been commissioned by God to have the ministry of presence.

If you actually think about this entire concept of being a hope carrier, do you understand the entire concept is the ministry of presence? It's going into the spaces of life, carrying the presence of God with you so that the presence of God can change the atmosphere and the environment around you. Hope carrier – you're supposed to carry hope. What is hope? It's not an emotion, it's not a feeling, it's not a wish. He's a person and His name is Jesus; living hope. We've got the Spirit of God inside of us. We've got the kingdom of God inside of us. We're salt, light, and leaven, sent into the world to be in the world, but not of the world. When we are not present, God's presence cannot flow through us and change the atmosphere and the world around us.

I mean, just think about Jesus. It's a ministry of presence. He didn't stay in heaven and say, "Here's the way you can get saved and enter My kingdom." No, He took on humanity, moved into our neighborhood with grace and truth and walked among us. He listened, He learned, He

loved. He was never in a hurry. He had time for everyone. He made eye contact with people. He listened to what they had to say. He was with them in whatever was going on in their life. He played with children. He just calls himself "The Great I Am." Not "the great I used to be here," and not "the great I will be here at some point in time." No, like, "I am." "I am here right now, present in this moment to be for you that which you need me to be." Bible says He is our ever-present help in time of trouble. The presence of God means He is present with us right now, right here in this moment. He sends us out to do and to be the same.

Can I just ask you a really honest question? Are you present in your life? Or are you disconnected? Remember that old saying, "Wherever you go, there you are"? Yeah, that's not true anymore. Wherever you go, are you there? Or are you lost in your anxiety? Are you lost in your mental battle? Are you lost in wrestling with something of the past, being worried about something of the future? Are you lost in your device? That's literally a portal that takes you to somewhere else. Have you ever tried to talk to somebody while they're on a device. You know they're there, but they're not there. Wherever they went, they went somewhere else. Are you present? The interesting thing is, you don't get to answer that question for yourself. Would your spouse say you're present? Would your kids say you're present? Would your parents say you're present?

Would your coach, your teacher, your boss, would they say you're present? Because if you're not present, how can you release God's presence into the atmosphere and the world around you? I mean, there are so many great hope carrier stories of the ministry of presence, just going into a space and making a difference because they're present. I heard a great story recently of a guy's Circle, and they meet in Chick-fil-A and they engage in scriptures and pray and talk about what God's teaching us. They're sitting there and they're having this great Circle, the ministry of presence. They brought the presence of Jesus to Chick-fil-A. Many of you think He resides there. He only resides there when we bring Him there. They're having this great Circle and a gentleman was having breakfast with his wife in the next booth over. He was so impacted by what was happening in the Circle, he told his wife to hurry up and finish her breakfast, drove her home and came back and said, "Can I join whatever it is that you guys are doing?"

That's an example of the ministry of presence, but you have to be present for that to happen. You will be as present as you are aware of God's presence in your life. You will be as present in any moment of your life as you are aware of God's presence, that He is with you. The question is, are you aware of God's presence so that you may be present? Because if God's presence is right here, where else would you rather be? Because in His presence is fullness of joy. The more I am aware that He is here, the more I then am now here. You say, what does it mean to be present? To be present, I would submit to you, means that you are wherever you are with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, fully available to do whatever God wants to do. That's what it means to be present.

Is that wherever you are, you're there with all your heart, your mind, your soul, your strength, fully available and ready to do whatever it is that God wants to do. That's how Jesus lived. Wherever He was, all His heart, all His mind, all His soul, all His strength, fully available to do whatever the Father wanted to do. Even right now, are you here with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your strength, fully available and ready for whatever it is that God wants to do? Jesus says, "Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humbling heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light." "Come to Me, anyone and everyone.

From wherever you are, whatever's happened in your life, whatever brokenness you're coming out of, come to me," Jesus says, "The kingdom is available and accessible to you. There is no boundaries, there is no borders, there is no barriers, there is no mediator between you and Me, whomsoever will may come, come to me," Jesus says, "All you who are weary and burdened." Are you weary? Are you wore out? Are you tired? Are you just like, "I've had enough. I can't do anymore." Are you burdened? Are you carrying something that's heavy, that's crushing you down? Are you burdened for your marriage? Burdened for a child? Burdened for your finances or your job or your future? Burdened for your body? Sometimes, it takes being weary and burdened to get to the end of ourselves and make us desperate enough to say, Jesus, "I need to come to You, because I have no other option." "I will give you rest." Rest is found only in Jesus.

Rest doesn't come from a nap, a vacation or medicine. It comes from Jesus. Only He has the power, the ability and the authority, the right to give you rest. He says, "I will give it to you. It's a gift." Rest is a gift. The more we acknowledge how exhausted the world actually is, the more we realize it is a gift that God gives us. "Every good and perfect gift comes down from the Father of heavenly lights." It's rest. Rest is not the absence of conflict or chaos in the circumstances of our life. It's the presence of peace within our soul. We think rest is God stopping all of this out here. No, no. Rest is God stopping all of this in here. "Peace, I give to you. My peace, I leave with you. In this world, you will have trouble, but take heart for I've overcome the world."

Rest is the righteousness, peace and joy of the Spirit of the living God inside of you. Rest is when you know that God is good, that God is good to you, and that God is good with you. That is a gift that comes from Jesus. "Take my yoke upon you." Yoke is a farming term. It's not a term we're used to using, but they would take two oxen and they would yoke them together, strap them together. The moment two oxen were yoked together, they would go in the same direction and their power increased dramatically. They could carry very heavy loads without it being hard on them. The moment you yoke yourself to Jesus, one puts a thousand to flight, two puts 10,000 to flight. Your life instantly becomes stronger, more powerful, more victorious because what you're saying is, "Jesus, I want to go with You. I want to be connected with You. I

want to follow You. I want to remain in You. I want to move with You. I want to stop with You. Where You go, I go. When You stop, I stop. I want to yoke myself to Your life, Jesus."

The moment you yoke yourself to Him, you say, "I'm coming to follow You." You've just set in motion – you now have a vision for your life. You now have a path and a way. There are built-in guardrails. There's a dream and a vision that's now set for you, even if you don't have one for yourself. As you walk with Him, your crooked life starts to straighten out. Because if I'm yoked with Him, I can't go in a different direction. You ever heard that term "unequally yoked"? Two people brought together and they're connected over something, but they're unequally yoked, like they have different visions and values. They pull apart. Yeah, that's an exhausting way to live. When we try to say, "I'm a follower of Jesus, but I live like the world. I do my own thing. I go in this direction. Jesus, speed up; Jesus, slow down." We exhaust ourselves.

To take His yoke upon you, you have to first take off the yoke of religion, you have to take off the yoke of self, you have to take off the yoke of the world, so that you can be free to take His yoke upon you and learn from Him. He wants to be your teacher. He literally wants to be your teacher. If you get nothing else out of this series, I hope you grab that concept that He says, "Come be My disciple, I will train you to be like Me. I will teach you. I will teach you how to have mental freedom. I will teach you how to be a good husband. I'll teach you how to be a great student. I'll teach you how to be a great worker. I will teach you how to do the impossible. I will teach you how to go through the valley of the shadow of death and come out on the other side and find green pastures. Let Me be your teacher. Learn from Me, for I'm gentle and humbling heart." One of the only places in the Bible where God straight up defines His heart for us, He says it's gentle and humble. Gentle.

It's not violent. It's not harsh. God's heart is not angry. It is not resentful. It is not judgmental. He is not edgy. He is not angry. He is not mean. It's soft. It's kind. It's compassionate and forgiving and it's humble. He submitted and surrendered. He's dependent, He's honest, He's vulnerable, He's authentic, He's real. He's not prideful and narcissistic and selfish. No, He's a servant and He is very secure in who He is. That's His heart. The Bible tells us, "Above all else, guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life." Well, if God's heart is gentle and humble, then everything that's in His heart that flows from His heart is gentle and humble. "Your mouth speaks out of the overflow of your heart." That means then that everything God says to you is gentle and humble.

"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart." That means that everything God does, all of God's work and God is working up until this moment, Jesus says is gentle and humble. This is what He's trying to form in you and me – a gentle and humble heart. Can I just tell you in my life, this is the verse that I've been praying for myself all year – I want to have a gentle and humble heart. In fact, our staff is going through a growth plan on humility. Many of our leaders are doing it as well, learning to have a humble heart, because why? It's the heart that Jesus is trying to form in us. It's His heart. You will find rest for your souls when I actually go after Him

and take His yoke upon me. I will find rest for my soul, the deepest part within me, "For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Easy and light, not heavy and hard. This is really interesting. Jesus says following Him is easy and light. Do you believe that?

He says it. Let's just ask ourselves the question, do we believe what He says that walking with Him is easy and light? Do we believe that? I appreciate the feedback, but let's go with honest feedback; because most of us think walking with Jesus is hard and heavy. That it's overwhelming, it's not possible. Yes. The way of Jesus is a narrow road with a small gate, but it is really easy and light. But it's only easy and light if you first come to Him, take His yoke upon you, learn from Him, let Him be your teacher, let Him form a new heart within you with a soul that's at rest, then following Him, it actually is easy and light. It's actually easy to follow Jesus when you're allowing Him to shape and form the internal realities of your life. In fact, 1 John tells us that, "This is love for God, to obey His commands and His commands are not burdensome."

It says obeying God is not a burden, it's not hard, it's not heavy, but what do you have to do? You have to first take off the yoke of religion, the yoke of the world, the yoke of self. For many of us, the yoke of our feelings; that's a heavy yoke. That is hard, that is heavy, and it will exhaust you. I mean, think about Jesus for a second. When Jesus hangs on the cross, and He says, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." Was that hard for Him to say that? It's an interesting question, isn't it? It's actually easy for Him to say that. Why? Because that was what was inside of Him. What would have been hard for Him was to curse people from the cross. It would have been so outside of who He was. Was it hard for Jesus, when the Father asked Him to do something, to obey that? No, it would have been hard for Jesus to disobey the Father. Why? Because that was what was inside of Him, obedience.

Was it hard for Jesus to wash the dirty feet of the disciples, including Judas, at the last supper? No. It would have been hard for Him to not wash their feet and demand them to wash His feet. Why? Because He had a gentle and humble heart. Whatever is inside of you will flow out of you. The kingdom within you will become the kingdom around you. As we come to Jesus, take on His yoke, learn from Him and He starts shaping and forming a new heart within us, then following the way of Jesus actually becomes easy and light. It becomes normal, it becomes automatic, it becomes effortless if you will. Because I've been so formed on the inside, it's the only thing that I would naturally do. Like, okay, let me – you know, when Jesus says all those times, "You have heard it said, but I say to you..." Like, let me ask you this question. Like, is it hard for you to not murder people? Is that hard? No, would be the right answer.

If it's not hard for you to not murder people, don't you think that at some point it could become easy for you to not be angry in your heart? Is it hard for you to not steal? Like, do you walk in a bank and you're like, "I'm so tempted. Someone hold my hands, I can't control myself. I'm about to take all the money in this place and run." Probably not. Don't you think that at some point it could become easy for you to become generous? Is it hard for you to not

commit adultery? Well, then don't you think at some point it could become easy to not have lust in your heart towards someone else? Is it hard for you to love those who love you? No. Don't you think at some point it could become easy for you to love your enemies? It's only possible when we take His yoke upon us and learn from Him and allow Him to shape and form the inner realities with inside of us.

Then, we start to wake up one day and we start realizing He's given me a new heart. He's actually written the commands of God on that new heart and put it back inside of me. The Spirit was within me working to give me the desire to act according to God's will. His divine power has given me everything for life and godliness. Sin is no longer my master, and I'm no longer controlled by the flesh. I now walk in the power of the Spirit. I've been crucified with Christ. It's no longer I who lives, it's Christ who lives within me. As I start to repent and be trained and practice my faith, like for some of you today, it was so hard to pray for someone else. The more you practice that, the more you walk with Jesus, the more that becomes easy and light, not hard and heavy because it's inside of you so it starts to flow out of you. Does that make sense? I mean, that's why Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in Him, He will bear much fruit; apart from Me, you can do nothing."

Here's a question, is it hard for a branch to bear fruit? It's harder for a branch not to bear fruit. Why? Because it's remaining in the vine and life is flowing into it, so life is flowing out of it. If I just remain in Jesus, if I take His yoke upon me, if I come to Him and I let Him be my teacher of life, I can't help but bear fruit. It starts to naturally and effortlessly flow out of my life. But it all starts with coming to Him and enjoying Him. I mean, do you remember the story of Mary and Martha? Jesus goes to these sisters' houses. It says, "Jesus came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to Him. She had a sister called Mary who sat at the Lord's feet, listening to what He said. But Martha was distracted," she's not present, "by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to Him and asked, 'Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me.'"

'Martha, Martha,' the Lord answered. 'You are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her.'" Jesus goes to Mary and Martha's house, and He begins to teach and Mary sits at His feet and just enjoys God. Martha, she's like an epic hope carrier. I like Martha. She's getting to work. She took ownership, she took responsibility, she took initiative. She's like, "Ain't nobody else going to do it. I'm going to get this thing done." I like me some Martha. Martha's problem was though, is she didn't start by enjoying Jesus. She started by working for Jesus, making a meal that He never ordered. Because He didn't ask her to do this. She decided it needed to be done. The more she does it, the more angry she becomes until she blasts in the room, yells at Jesus.

You know you're having a bad day when you're yelling at Jesus. But look at His response, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things." I wonder how that would

sound in your life and in mine. "John, John, you are worried and upset about many things." "Hey, hey, you're anxious and depressed about many things." "Hey, hey, you are overwhelmed and wore out about many things." "Hey, hey, you are angry and absent about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better." What I want you to see is that worry and being upset is a choice. It's a choice.

He's saying you chose to be worried and upset. Mary is choosing Me. How different would this verse read if He could say to her, "Martha, Martha, you are peaceful and joyful about the only thing that matters, and it's Me, and you made a great choice." Now don't mishear me when I say that Martha is this misguided hope carrier. No, like it's not just sitting at Jesus' feet. Like that's our job is to just sit at His feet. No, no, Mary's enjoying God. The more I enjoy God, the more I enjoy what God enjoys, and the more I want to do what God's doing. Make no mistake about it. Mary, in this story, is the epic hope carrier because it's Mary who later anoints Jesus' body with that perfume that's worth a whole bunch of money, incredibly generous. It's Mary who's standing at the foot of the cross when all the disciples have left and she is not worried about the crowd crucifying her because she loves Jesus so much. It is Mary who brings the spices to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body after He's dead.

It's Mary who has the first encounter with the resurrected Jesus and goes back and tells the disciples that He is alive. No, no. Enjoying God brings me to this place where I enjoy what God is doing. I want to go with God and move with God and work with God. It all started with sitting and listening to what He said. Can I ask you an honest question? Are you listening to hear and are you hearing to obey? Are you listening to what God is saying? Are you listening to hear and are you hearing to obey? Like, if there's a lack of obedience in my life, then maybe I'm not hearing. If I'm not hearing, maybe it's because I'm not listening. See, all throughout the Bible, we listen to hear and we hear to obey.

This is the pattern of the people of God. We listen to anything and everything that God says, and then we try to hear, try to understand, and even when we don't, we choose to move forward by faith into a life of obedience. If there's no obedience, you have to question hearing. If there's no hearing, you have to question listening. If you're not listening, is it because you're not present? Martha wasn't listening because she was distracted by "all the." Can I ask you, what are you distracted by "all the"? If this was the story of your life and your name was right here, and we'd say, "Tom is distracted by all the..." what? "Susan is distracted by all the..." what? When only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen it and it will not be taken away from her, which here is the best part.

I will give you rest in your soul that even if anyone and everyone around you is chaotic, they don't have the authority to take the rest that Jesus has given you in here. Martha can't steal the peace of Mary's heart. When we say, I can't have peace because my spouse, because my kids, because of this, because of that, that's not actually what Jesus says. I know it feels like that, but that's not actually what Jesus says. It will not be taken from her. In other words, "Martha, you

can't steal what Mary has, but you can have what Mary has if you'll choose better." Does this make sense? See, we have to enjoy God before we move forward with God. Here's been my thought, I've been thinking about this for the last two weeks, right. Those of you that are here all the time, you study me too, you watch it, you know, it's fine. The last two weeks talking about dreaming with God, it's been a struggle for a lot of people. Here's my thought.

It's really hard to dream with someone you don't have a relationship with. It's really hard to dream with someone you don't enjoy. Are you enjoying God? Because maybe we don't have a dreaming problem, maybe we have a "with God" problem. I want you to think about a couple when they first get together and they meet each other and they fall in love and they spend all this time together and it's amazing, what are they doing? They're hanging out, they're talking, they're holding hands, they're going on dates, they're spending time together, all of the different activities and things. No one has to tell them to dream about their future. Here's the irony. A couple that gets together – no one has to tell them to dream about kids, and where we'll live, and what we'll do, what kind of house we might have, and where we will go, and what our future will be, and who will be like at 80, like all those things, no one has to tell them.

It's the enjoyment of the relationship that they naturally start to dream together. But then they get married and life happens. Disappointment, unmet expectation, hurts, wounds, offenses, misunderstandings, brokenness, life, pain, stuff, kids, bills, mortgage, and now we parallel through life like this and we're no longer dreaming. Why? Because we're not enjoying. No longer are we dreaming about our children or our grandchildren or where we could go or what we could do or what our purpose in life is or what our family values are, what our vision is. I don't even like you. I can't dream with you. Could this be our journey with God? Then, we say that dreaming is complicated and overwhelming. I promise you, this husband dreaming with this wife at this level is very complicated and overwhelming.

But no one had to tell them when they first fell in love to talk about what the future of their life could be together. No one had to even teach them how to do it; because relationship, healthy relationship, draws dreams to the surface. What would we tell a couple that had gotten to that point? We would say, "You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen. Repent and do the things you did at first." Here's some free marriage counseling. Go back and do the things you did at first. If you're this far apart, I promise you you're not doing what you did when you first met. Go on a walk, go on a date, have dinner together, hold hands, talk about the day, be kind and compassionate, do something nice, go out of your way, serve the other person. Oh my gosh. I like you.

Now, please for those of you in that situation don't hear me be like, "John said our marriage could be restored in six days." If you got to here over 20 years, it's not going to take you 20 years to get back, but it's not going to happen in 20 days either. Okay, but go back and "do the things you did at first." Okay. Let's apply this to God, because this is Jesus speaking here. You, we, maybe we've forsaken our first love and we've fallen, "Repent and do the things you



did at first." Hear me, if your relationship with God is not as good in this moment as it has ever been in your life, then you need to go back and do some things you used to do. That's it. I'm not even saying your relationship – "Yeah, me and God are good." No, if it's not as good as it's ever been, then you have a clear next step to do. Go back and do what you did when you and God were great. You say, "That was 30 years ago." Who cares? Do what you did at first. Well, what did you do when you were in love with God? "Man, I was in a Sunday school class."

Okay, great, get in a Circle, same thing. "I read my Bible." Great, jump in on the reading plan. "I gave money to the things of God." Great. Start giving again and watch what God will do. "Man, I talked to other people about who God was in my life." Great, start talking to people about God. You say, "I don't feel like doing it." Great, feelings follow faith. Nowhere in here does it say, when you feel like doing it, go back, and go for a walk and hold hands. "I don't like her." I don't care. Do it. Do it by faith and watch what will happen. One day Jesus is approached by a teacher, a teacher of the law, and He says to Jesus, "Jesus, what's the most important commandment? Out of all the commandments, what's the most important one to God?"

Jesus responds back, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and the prophets hinge on these two commands." In other words, Jesus says, if you will learn to love God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength and you'll love your neighbor as yourself, any and every other commandment that God has for you, you will naturally and effortlessly fulfill. If you come to Him and take His yoke upon you and allow Him to form a gentle and humble heart within you and you become integrated in heart, mind, soul and strength, present where you are, then you will naturally and effortlessly do any and every other thing God asks you to do. If that's the greatest commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength, love your neighbor as yourself," that should probably be something we understand. Don't you think? You can quote it, but do you understand it? Have you ever actually meditated on what He means by that?

What does that mean? If I was a stranger and I walked up to you and I said, "Hey, you're wearing a really cool hope carrier shirt, I want to ask you, what does it mean to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul and strength?" How are you going to answer that? Well, the first question you have to ask is, what is love? Love is not an emotion or a feeling. Love is seeking the good of others. Love is literally the Bible translated, it's "good will." It's my will set for your good. My will, my choice, my actions, my words, my domain, my kingdom, the place that God has entrusted to me, I am using any and every one of those things to seek your good. Couples who love each other, it's not emotions and feelings if they seek the good of the other person with their will, with their domain. To love God is to seek God's good through our will. We're supposed to do it with our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Well, what's your heart?

Your heart is your center, it's your spirit, it's your will, it's the center part of who you are. What's your mind? Your mind is your thoughts, your emotions, your feelings, the way that you perceive and understand reality. Well, what's your body? Your body is the place that gives your heart and your soul expression. If you didn't have a body, we wouldn't be able to engage with you. You'd be a floating spirit. Your body is this domain that God has given to you in the here and the now. Then, what's your soul? Your soul is the deepest part of you that encompasses everything. When it says, "love God with all your heart," what does that mean? It means to seek God's good with my heart, with my center, with my will, with my spirit. "Search me, oh God, and know my heart. See if there'd be any offensive way in me and lead me in the way of understanding." In other words, God, is there any part of my will that is not looking for Your good? How about mind? What does it look like to love God with your mind?

It means to think thoughts about God. It means to dwell on God, to meditate on God, to make sure my thoughts glorify God, to make sure my thoughts perceive reality in a way that leads my emotions and my feelings to seek the goodness of God. "Take every thought captive and make it obedient to Christ." That seeks God's good. "Whatever is lovely and true and noble and worthy and admirable and praiseworthy, think on such things." That is the good of God. Love God with my body. What does it mean? It means to use my body, my words, my actions, every member of my body for the good of others and the glory of God. "Offer your body as a living sacrifice. This is your true and spiritual act of worship." Then, love God with your soul. What does that mean? It means to seek God's good from the deepest part of you, your very breath of life. "Bless the Lord, oh my soul and all that is within me." Seek the good of God.

My soul, the deepest part within me, the very breath of my life. Are you loving God, seeking His good with your heart, mind, soul and strength? If not, that's okay. Come to Jesus. Take His yoke upon you. Learn from Him. Be real honest. "God, I kind of love You with emotions and feelings when you hold my hand just right. I want to learn to love You with my heart, mind, soul and strength seeking Your good." Isn't that fascinating? We all want God to seek our good. When was the last time you thought, "I'm in a relationship here and I need to seek the good of the other person in the relationship? I need to use my will for the good of the one I love. Does my heart, mind, soul and strength align with that?" Last verse; that was all bonus right there. Jesus says that back to the man.

I would encourage you to think about what that actually means, the great commandment. "'Well said, teacher,' the man replied. 'You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but Him. To love Him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices.' When Jesus saw He had answered wisely, He said to the man, 'You are not far from the kingdom of God.'" Ready? "You are right." And "You are not far from the kingdom of God." Whenever I say to Jesus, "You are right," I am not far from the kingdom of God. When I say "He is right," I've just moved towards the kingdom of God. When I say "He is right," I just

stepped into the kingdom of God. When I say "He is right," I just went further into the kingdom of God.

When I say "He is wrong," when I say, "I refuse to believe," when I make Him prove it, when I'm skeptical, when I'm defensive or resentful, I am moving away from the kingdom of God towards the world. Here's the question. Just look at the, "Well said, teacher. You are right." Where do you need to say, "Jesus, You are right?" That's it. "Jesus, You are right about sexuality." "Jesus, You are right about my finances." "Jesus, You are right about this anxiety and this depression." "Jesus, You are right that, that is not impossible." "Jesus, You are right on what you have called and created me to do." "Jesus, You are right. Even though I don't understand it, I don't like it, and I don't get it, I can still say You are right," because only He gets to say what is a good life, a blessed life, and a happy life. "You are right. You are right about what is true. You are right about what is real.

You are right about what is good. Jesus, You are right." You are not far from the kingdom of God. In this Jesus' main message that we spent so much time in the series talking about, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Change your mind, stop thinking you're right, or the world's right, or that other person's right. "Jesus, You are right." The kingdom is now at hand, not far from me. I can take a hold of it and walk right into it. "You are right." Maybe this is the breaker for some of you in this series and the season that we're in, is to just finally humble yourself enough to let go of your pride and selfishness and self-centeredness, and say, "You are right. You are right. If You are right, there are many implications to that. There are many things I must move away from and many things I must move towards, if You are right.

If You are the way of the truth and the life, then you are right about everything or you're right about nothing." Here's what you need to catch. Either Jesus is right about everything or He's right about nothing. If you're going to decide to pick and choose what He is right and wrong about, then you've got to be really concerned about your own salvation. Because how do you know He's not wrong about that? Jesus, you're wrong about sexuality and finances and my time; in particular, my time, but you're right about salvation. That's a tough one. I'm not sure I want that guy to be my Lord. Because if He can not get time and sex and money right, how is He going to get the salvation of my soul right?

But maybe He's actually got all those things right and I'm the one that's wrong. "Well said, teacher." We all want a teacher. This is why we go on YouTube and Instagram and all the things and have so many tutorials about how to put on makeup, how to fix a leak, how to lose weight in three minutes, right. The how-to's. We all want a teacher. Jesus offers to be your teacher about life. He's right about it all. When I accept what He says, I step into His kingdom and everything changes. "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened and I'll give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls for my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

In Jesus' name. Close your eyes with me. Come on. What's the Holy Spirit want to say to you today? There's a variety of options for you to pick from today, but I believe the Lord's speaking to you about something. Maybe you've just come to the awareness that it's not a dreaming problem, it's a "with God" problem. Tell Him that. Maybe you're realizing that you've been telling God He's been wrong and you've been right. You're ready to repent. Say, "God, You're right. I want more of Your kingdom."

Some of you, honestly, your takeaway from today is just start doing the things you used to do when you loved your spouse, when you sought their good. Start doing that again. Maybe, for some of us, we just even realize how un-present we even are in this very moment, how there is a torrent in our own soul, but Jesus offers to be the one to calm it, restore it, and transform it. Jesus, we love You. Sometimes our emotions and our feelings align with that Lord, and many times, they do not. But we want to be people who seek Your good with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our strength, with all our soul. Would You lead us deeper into Your kingdom as we continue to say You are right. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.