

May that just be the prayer of our heart is that we want more of You, Jesus. We want more of who You are and Your kingdom and Your realities. One of the ways that God's been showing us so much more of who He is, is just through Scripture.

Scripture has been powerful in this season. It's always been powerful, but we're experiencing it in just a different way as a church family. We want to take a moment and we want to meditate on Scripture. To meditate, to consider over and over. To meditate - to think on; to contemplate. Now, you may not be familiar with that word, but I can explain it to you really easily. If you've ever worried about something, you know how to meditate. Because it's the same muscle, it's the same thought, it's the same reality. It's just, now, we're going to meditate on God's Word. It's living and active. It's sharper than a double-edged sword. It pierces through to us. I'm going to read a verse. I'm going to read one verse. There's going to be three total. I'm going to read it and for about 30 seconds or so, we're just going to meditate on it, quietly, and just ask the Lord. What do you do? Re-read it, and think on it, and consider something differently, and ask the Holy Spirit, what does that mean, and take it in. Here's the first one.

"You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You. All whose thoughts are fixed on You." Let's begin to meditate on that verse. Here's the next one. "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'm gentle and humble in heart; and you will find rest for your souls."

Now, to Hebrews 4, "So there is a special rest still waiting for the people of God. For all who have entered into God's rest have rested from their labors, just as God did after creating the world."

Thank You Jesus, that Your word is powerful in our lives right now. Thank You Jesus, that Your word gives us rest.

"God is good. Jesus has forgiven you. You are loved, and everything is possible. The Father's heart is for you to live free. He sent Jesus that you may experience life, life to the full. It all starts by simply receiving His grace. Grace is undeserved favor and supernatural empowerment. Grace not only forgives you; it changes you. In Jesus, you are fully forgiven and completely free.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith. This is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God; not by works, so that no one can boast. He has forgiven your wickedness, and remembers your sins no more. He forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases. As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has gone, the new has come. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. How great is the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God, and that is what we are.

"You are My beloved son, My beloved daughter, in whom I am well pleased." In Jesus, you are fully forgiven and completely free. You are loved and wanted. You are holy and righteous. You are set apart. You are a masterpiece and made in the image of God. You are pure and blameless. You are seen, you are chosen, you are victorious, and you are an overcomer. As you receive His grace, you will start to experience His presence. You are fully known, fully loved, with no fear of rejection.

God is with you. He is above you and below you. He is to your left and to your right. He is in front of you and behind you. He is in you and upon you. His presence is in the very air you breathe. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. In His presence is fullness of joy. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

God has said, "Never will I leave you. Never will I forsake you. I will be a Father to you and you will be my sons and daughters," says the Lord Almighty. Let us, then, approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. I pray that you may have power together with all the saints to grasp how wide, and long and high, and deep is the love of Christ. To know this love that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear. What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? God is good and gracious. He is tender and merciful. He is kind and compassionate. He is with you and He is for you. God is love. He is a counselor and a comforter. He is a father and a friend. He is a guide and a companion. He is light and life itself.

He is king, Lord of all, and He is exactly who you need him to be. As you experience His presence, you are empowered to release His kingdom. You have been created to rule and reign with God. Your purpose is to bring the reality of His kingdom into the circumstances of this world. God believes in you so much that he has entrusted His kingdom to you. For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Jesus said, "I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy. Nothing will harm you, but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth."

God blessed you and said, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations. I will build my church and the gates of hell will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom. Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. He has committed to us the

message of reconciliation. We are, therefore, Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making His appeal through us. For nothing is impossible with God. We pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

You are made to lead, to create and build, to dream and design, to inspire and encourage, to increase and advance. You are anointed, empowered, and commissioned. You are made to laugh and to play, to sing and dance, to preach and prophesy, to heal and to honor, to bless and serve, and give and love. You are a hope carrier. So repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith. Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your request to God, and the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. We know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.

It is for freedom that Christ has set you free. Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us. We know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in him. I have told you these things so that in Me you may have peace. In this world, you will have trouble, but take heart for I have overcome the world. God is good. Jesus has forgiven you. You are loved, and everything is possible. The Father's heart is for you to live free. He sent Jesus that you may experience life, life to the full."

In Jesus, you have a restored identity, you have a reconciled relationship, and you have a redeemed purpose. In Jesus, you discover more of who you are, and who God is, and what you are created to do. In Jesus, rest. In Jesus, peace. Even as those words are spoken over us and the scriptures declared over our life, I just know it. I know you can just feel like a [deep breath], because that is like, the goodness of God washing over your life. Another way that we want to experience that is by taking communion, right now, so I want to invite all our teams to come forward. Communion is for everybody that has placed their faith into Jesus, that has made Him Lord. If that's you, you're invited to take communion here at Valley Creek. Communion is ultimately -- it's a reminder of all of the rest and the peace that we've been trying to practice together today.

There's two elements to communion – it's the bread and the cup that we experience. Kind of, from this day onwards, when you take the bread and the cup, I would like you to remember these two words – rest and peace. The bread and the cup – rest and peace. Because through the body that was broken, Jesus' broken body, we experience rest in our life. One of the crazy

parts of the story is, it says that Jesus felt sorrowful to the point of death. That His soul and all that He was going through was far from restful. That He experienced a brokenness in His physical body and in His self during His crucifixion that we'll never know. We won't have any comparison to that.

He did it in a way that gave us, ultimately gave us, His rest. The bread, that's like His body, is a reminder of the rest that we have in Jesus. The cup – the reminder that through His blood we have the forgiveness of sins; that is ultimate peace with God. Because in the old way of doing things, you had to try to gain access to peace with God through the shedding of blood, through a sacrifice, through an old agreement, an old covenant. But no longer. Because in Jesus, the shedding of His blood reminds us that we will always have peace because of the Prince of Peace, that Jesus is our peace. Even as we take the cup together in just a moment, I want you to remember that the peace of God was found in the finished work of Jesus, in the shedding of His blood. Bread and cup – rest and peace, aren't you just so thankful for the rest and peace of God?

Aren't you just so thankful to get to remember who God is and what He's done for us? I am. How much of my life is found trying to do it on my own? How much of my life is a struggle, and a strive, and a performance, and trying to hurry to get somewhere? But communion sits as a reminder that you don't have to be in a hurry to get anywhere, you can just walk at a peaceful pace with Jesus. Because of His body, because of His blood, we now have rest and peace. On the night He was betrayed, Jesus took the bread, and He said, "This bread is like My body, it's going to be broken for you. I'm going to be broken so that you can be made whole."

"My soul is going to be sorrowful to the point even of death so that you can live a life at rest." May we remember Jesus as we take it together. In the same way, He took the cup, and said, "This is a cup of a new agreement." As soon as we remember that Jesus has actually poured out His blood for the forgiveness of sins and received His life, His life comes into our life. His life gives us His peace. His life brings peace to our soul, so may we remember what He's done, together. Let's take the cup. Jesus, thank You for everything You've done, for the rest and the peace that You offer.

We choose to remember You right now. May we never take it for granted. Thank You that, in You, we don't have to rest from life, we rest for our life. In You, we don't have to try to escape, we lean into everything You've called us to and every part of the life that we live with You. Thank You Jesus, we choose to remember You right now. In Your name, amen.