

Hope Carrier. Noun. "A disciple." A student. A learner. A follower. One who becomes like the one they follow. "Of Jesus." The Way, the Truth, the Life, the Son of God, the King of Kings, and the Lord of lords. Living hope. "Living on Mission." To partner with what God is doing, seeking and saving the lost, filling the earth with the goodness of God. "To change their world." To see God's kingdom come. Not in the world somewhere "out there," but in my world "right here."

Alright everybody. Welcome to Valley Creek. We are so glad you are here with us today. We are in a series called the Hope Carrier Initiative. We're talking about, what does it look like to change our world? What does it look like to live on mission with God? What does it look like to live in the kingdom in the midst of this world? We're trying to speak to the deep purposes of your soul and call them to the surface. We're a couple of weeks in and so, here's my question for you.

How we doing? How we doing? Maybe a better question is, how are you doing? Are you engaging? Are you growing? Are you being challenged? Are you looking at your life a little bit differently? Are you thinking about some things differently? Are you starting to have some questions being stirred up in your soul? Is there a sense of discontent that's growing in your daily life? Are you dreaming with God? Are you using your field journal and making discoveries and writing things down? Are you going through some of the activities? Are you engaging with us on the reading plan? How are you doing? Because the whole point of this series is to activate your faith, is to stir up the things in your soul. What I want for you, more than anything else, is that you don't get to the end of this series, this season and say, "That was a nice series, but I'm glad it's over."

Or get to the end of it, and say, "I really don't understand much of what we talked about, so I'm glad to move on." Because God is doing a new thing in a new way. Don't miss what He's doing. Keep taking next steps. Keep moving forward. Holy Spirit, give us eyes to see and ears to hear that what you're doing. You see, a hope carrier is simply a disciple of Jesus living on mission to change their world. A disciple, a learner, a student, a follower; one who becomes like the one that they're following. Someone who is learning to think like, act like, talk like, live like, and believe like Jesus. To do the things that He did, where He did them, the way that He did them. Living on mission - someone who believes that all 168 hours of their week is a part of the very purpose of God to change their world. This belief that God wants His kingdom to flow through my life into the world around me. See, this is God's heart for you. It's always been God's heart for you.

In fact, at the end of Jesus' life on earth, He prays for you. He says, "My prayer is not that you take them" - you - "out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They" - you - "are not of the world even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth as you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world." How cool is this? Jesus prays that you would be a hope carrier. If you ever wondered if this is important to the very heart of God;

as He's heading to the cross, He prays that you would be a hope carrier; that you'd be in the world but not of it. That you would be sent, right into the midst of the darkness, the brokenness, the pain, the disillusionment of this world, but that you wouldn't be of the world, but that you'd have a different nature and origin than the world. That you would be in the world, but of the kingdom.

If this is true, and this is what Jesus prays, then we've got to rethink salvation, people. Salvation is not about getting to Heaven when you die. If that was true, the moment you put your faith in Jesus, boop, you would just be transported. Why be here? If the whole point is just to get to Heaven when you die, then just take me now, Lord, I believe. Boop, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop, boop; but we're here for a reason. In fact, the only people that would be left would be unbelievers, so I don't know who's leading this service, people, because I'd be gone. It's more than that. He says, "They're supposed to be in the world, but not of the world. Sanctify them, set them apart for the very purposes of God." The problem is we reverse this. A lot of us have stepped out of the world, but we're still of the world.

We're supposed to be in the world and of the kingdom. With a nature and an origin that's a different realm in reality, but a lot of us have stepped out of the world. We don't want to be around the brokenness, and the pain, and the dysfunction, and the disillusionment. But we're still of the world because we still think like, talk like, act like, and live like the world. When He says, "of," it's talking about an origin, a reality, and if you want to break this down, the reality is that the kingdom and the world couldn't be any more different. They have different values, and cultures, and languages, and systems, and realities. You're no longer a part of the world's system, you're part of the kingdom. This is why the moment you get saved, "He has rescued us from the dominion" - from being dominated by the darkness of this world - "and brought into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." You have a different origin, a different nature, a different reality as a follower of Jesus.

You're no longer dominated by the world, you're a part of the kingdom of God. In fact, when Jesus invites you to come and follow Him, what does He invite you to? Does He invite you to church? Does He invite you to religion? Does He invite you to good morals and ethics? He invites you into a kingdom. He invites you into a kingdom. In fact, Jesus only had one message that He preached, "From that time on Jesus began to preach and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.'" Jesus only had one message, all through the gospels, and it's this, "Repent for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Repent, change your mind, rethink your life. Re - go back; pent - penthouse, top floor. Get God's perspective on life, for the kingdom is at hand. At hand - within reach; meaning, it is now accessible and available to anyone and everyone who wants it.

Repentance is how we become a part of the kingdom. The problem, for most of us, is we repent enough to get in the kingdom, but not enough to live in the kingdom. We repent

enough for salvation, but not enough for abundant life. We repent enough for the forgiveness of our sins, but not actually enough to live as if the kingdom was real in the here and now. He says repent - think again, look at your life right now and ask yourself, am I really living the life that I was created for? Am I going in the right direction? Is there more than just going to church? Is there more than just religion? Is there more than just trying to be successful in this life? He says, "Yes." The kingdom is now one of the options available to you.

It's at hand; it's accessible and it's available. This is the message that Jesus preached. If the main message that Jesus was preaching was, "Repent, for the kingdom is at hand." What He invites us into is the kingdom, not just to church. Then it's probably pretty important for us to understand what the kingdom is. What's the kingdom? What's the kingdom? Isn't it interesting that we'd have a really hard time defining the kingdom of God? I've been thinking about this all week. It's the main message that Jesus preaches. Most of us, we could talk a lot about church, but you start talking kingdom, and we're like... That's probably pretty important for us to figure it out. The interesting thing about the kingdom is the kingdom is not cognitively understood in our minds, it's received by faith in our heart. This is why we need to have eyes to see and ears to hear.

What do we know about the kingdom? We know the kingdom is eternal; that it's everlasting and unshakable. We know that it's not a matter of talk, but of power. We know the kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy. We know that it is not of this world. We know that it belongs to little children, and that it is at hand and available in the here and now. Jesus spent so much time teaching parable stories to try to teach us what the kingdom of God is like, and He would say things, like, "The kingdom of God is like yeast that a woman works into a lump of dough." In other words, a little bit of the kingdom in your life will begin to influence and affect everything. He says, "The kingdom is like a man who found a treasure hidden in a field. When he discovered it, he sold everything he had in order to buy that field." In other words, once you figure out the kingdom, you'll get rid of everything else in your life so you can have all of it. He says, "The kingdom is like a man, who went out and sowed seed and the soil that was receptive to it turned up to a 30, 60, 100 fold return."

In other words, a heart that is receptive to God's ways will live an abundant and fruitful life. The kingdom is here and it's available to you and I. We need to learn to understand it in our hearts. Then you have to say, what is the kingdom? Well, you've been hearing me say this every week. Maybe, this is the time you write it down. The kingdom is the rule and reign of God. It's where things are submitted and surrendered to the lordship of Jesus. It's the range or the extent of the effective will of God. It's what God is doing and it is the very life of God. Break that down - the rule. Remember, in the bible, "rule" is not to oppress and push down. Rule means to lift up, so the kingdom of God is what God is blessing, serving, empowering, protecting. Reign means to be king and to have the highest influence, so it's where God is king and is influencing things. Submit - sub-mission; to come under the mission of someone else.

The kingdom is where things have come under the very mission of God. Surrender - where they have given up their will and no longer fight against God, but now align with God. In fact, the greatest way to probably understand God's kingdom, and this is what I will encourage you to write down, is God's kingdom is where His will is done. God's kingdom is where His will is done. In fact, when Jesus teaches us how to pray, He says, "Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." Catch it. "Your kingdom come, your will be done." Wherever God's will is done, His kingdom has just come. If it's, pray, "Your kingdom come, your will be done," then whenever His will is done, His kingdom has just come. Wherever His will is not done, His kingdom has not come. "Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven."

What's the difference? Well, in Heaven, God's kingdom has come. Why? Because His will is immediately and instantly done. What He wants, what He desires, what He directs, what He dictates through words and actions, it immediately happens in Heaven. He says, pray that His kingdom would come on earth as it is in Heaven. Why? Because, on earth, there are a whole bunch of kings with kingdoms and queens with queendoms that have their own will and want to do it their way. See, a kingdom is simply the king's domain and every king has a will. They have a domain and that will is released through their words and their actions. Wherever things submit and surrender to its words and its actions is the extent of the domain in which it rules and reigns. When God made us, Adam and Eve, in the Garden, He gave us a kingdom, this earth, a domain in which we would rule over with our words and actions.

He gave us free will. It's the whole concept - free will. Why? Because to be made in the image and likeness of God is to have a will, is to have emotions and preferences and desires and wants. The question was, were we going to submit that to God, or are we going to take our kingdom and rebel against it and try to be our own king of our own kingdom? The question you have to ask is, if His kingdom comes where His will is done, then what's the biggest barrier of God's kingdom coming to this earth? Those horrible people of the world and the way they live. No. The powers and principalities of darkness. No. Your will and my will are the biggest barriers of seeing God's kingdom come on earth as it is in Heaven.

See, sin is simply when I choose my will even though I know it's contrary to God's will. Obedience is when I choose God's will even when it's contrary to my will. The problem is, a lot of us are ruled by our wills. We have opinions and preferences and desires and wants and a lot of us live our lives like a 4-year-old toddler; demanding and expecting everyone to come to the beck-and-call of our will. When it doesn't happen, we freak out. In fact, did you ever wonder where anger comes from, and why there's so much anger in the world? All anger is, is any time your will is challenged, violated or broken. Think about it. When your will is challenged or violated, when it's not adhered to by the people around you, what's your response? Anger.

We get angry and we fight and we claw and we wrestle and we attack and we tear down. But isn't it fascinating that when God's will is violated or challenged, He responds with kindness, grace, and patience. Why? Because Jesus already decided, "Father, if it's your will, take this cup from me; but, nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done." Jesus didn't get angry, because He already decided, "It's not My will, it's His, and so even if My will is crossed or violated, I'm still okay. Because I say God, not My will but Yours." The next time you get really angry, which literally might be in like three minutes from this very moment, ask yourself the question, why am I angry? Because your will was just violated. In some way, shape, or form, it means your will is more important than anything else. You have yet to get to this point.

I mean, think about it, when Jesus invites us to follow Him. He calls the crowd along with His disciples, and says, "If anyone would come after me, He must deny himself and take up His cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save His life will lose it, but whoever loses His life for me and for the gospel will save it." In other words, Jesus says, "If you really want to come after Me, you've got to give up your will. You've got to surrender your will, take up your cross, do some things that you might not want to do, and follow Me and allow My will to become a part of your life. Your will leads to death, My will leads to life." You've got to surrender your will to the Lord. I love that He says, "the crowd and the disciples." In other words, He says, "All y'all." All y'all.

Not just like, oh, the super spiritual people that have been walking with God for years. Nope. No. The crowd and "all y'all." All y'all. He doesn't say, "Just come to church and it'll be great." Nope. He says, "You've got to give up your will if you're going to be a part of the kingdom." Why? Because the King has a different will and we need to learn to step into it. Or how about this verse? "I have been crucified with Christ and it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives within me." This is an awesome verse to put on your social media when you're about to play a big game. We put it on knick-knacks in our house. We have no idea what it means. I've been crucified with Christ, do you know what that means? My will has been crucified. My wants, my desires, my opinions, my preferences have officially been dead. They're buried and they're gone, and now His will is what begins to live and flow through me. The works of the flesh are your will, the fruit of the Spirit is His will.

Ready? When did you surrender your will to God? When did you surrender your will to God? Notice, I didn't say, "When did you pray a prayer and raise your hand in church to get saved?" When did you surrender your will to God? See, God, I want Your kingdom to come and Your will to be done; therefore, it means my will must become submitted and surrendered to Yours. See, this is kingdom. This is not American Church. American Church is, "I'm saved. I've got a ticket to Heaven when I die." Jesus says, "I don't want you to wait till when you die to enjoy Heaven. I want to give Heaven to you in the here and now." But for His kingdom to come, His will has to be done and mine has to be crucified. We get lost in this concept of God's will as if it's this big mysterious, hard-to-discover thing.

No, no. God's will is easily discovered through what He says and what He does. Now, we choose to align our lives, what we say and what we do with it, and His kingdom comes. "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well." In other words, the life that you really want is only found in the kingdom, which means I have to surrender. How do I surrender? Everybody's favorite word - humility. Humility. How do you get in the kingdom and live in the kingdom? Humility. God opposes the proud, but He gives grace to the humble. Why? Because the proud have their own will. They want to be the king of their own kingdom, which is in resistance and rebellion to God's kingdom.

If we're going to actually live in God's kingdom, we have to have a humility that surrenders our will. Listen to me. Humility is not putting yourself down. It's not self-condemnation. It's not self-abasement. Humility is just choosing to agree with what God says is true. It's looking at your life through the glory and the grace of God. Humility is simply surrendering my will to God. The kingdom only flows through the surrendered will. "Your kingdom come, Your will be done." My will has to be surrendered for His kingdom to come and flow through my life. Jesus, on the way to the cross, "Not My will but Yours be done." When He surrendered His will, the kingdom was released. The life of God was released into the world for you and me. Come on. You with me on this? Think about a stallion for a second. Think about this big, beautiful, black stallion, and it's got muscles ripping off of its body everywhere you look at it. It's powerful. It's strong. It's majestic. It's beautiful.

What do we say has to happen to that stallion before it can be useful to the master? It has to be broken. We say "broken," we don't mean break its legs, so it's like, hobbling around. Its will has to be broken, because otherwise it bucks and broncs and it has its own will and it's wild and it does what it wants. If it hasn't been broken, the master can't use it. The master can't take it and ride it into adventures and great discoveries and go on missions. No, no; that stallion will stay in the stable. It's a great picture for us. Maybe, we don't really see the kingdom flow in our lives because we have yet to be broken. Submit our will to the master. Because once that stallion is broken, through a simple little bit and bridle in its mouth, the rider can take it anywhere he wants it to go.

The question is, have you been broken enough before the Lord that with a simple bit and a bridle, with a single word, can you move to the left or right, based on what God is saying to you? Because, otherwise you just get left in the stable. Maybe, the reason we don't see signs and wonders and healings and power and authority and miracles and all the things we want to see of the kingdom, because we have yet to be broken before the Lord. We buck and we bronc, and we're wild, and we want to do it our way, so God says, "That's fine, but you've got to stay in the stable then. I'm going to take the horse that will submit to a simple command." It's Peter saying, "Because you say so Lord, I will do it." He throws His net over the boat and has a full load of fish. It's Mary saying to the servants, "Whatever He tells you to do, just do it." They do what He says and water gets turned to wine.

Could it just be that we don't see the kingdom we long for, because we're still too prideful and too focused on our own will? I mean do you remember the story of the rich young ruler? He's rich, he's young, and he is a ruler. That boy got a will. He's got his desires, and his wants, and his preferences, and his opinions. He comes to Jesus, and says, "Jesus, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" In other words, "How can I be a part of the kingdom? How can I have the life of God in my life?" Jesus says, "Sell everything you've got, give it to the poor, then come follow me." At that, the man's face fell sad. He turned around and he walked away. Jesus looked, and He said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God!" How hard it is for the wealthy, for the independent, for the self-made, for the affluent, for the prideful, for the judgmental, for the condemner.

For those who think they have it all and don't need anything else, how hard it is for them to enter into the rule and reign of God, the life of God. Why? Because the more you have, the harder it is to surrender your will. The more you have, the harder it is to say, "Not my will but Yours." Can I ask you, what are you rich in? What are you wealthy in? Are you wealthy in money, in time, in possessions and relationships, in talent, in ability? What are you rich in? Because that's the place that's hard for you to live in the kingdom of God until you learn to submit it and surrender it to Him. Come on. If you're rich, literally with money, then you need to tithe. Why? Because it breaks your will.

It says, "God, not my will, but Yours. This is not what I want to do with my money, but it's what You want me to do with my money. I need to break this thing in me." If you're rich in time, you know what you need to do? You need to get on a serve team where someone else is telling you what to do and when to do it. Why? Because you're rich in time, so you hold on to this thing and it needs to be broken - not my will, but Yours. If you're rich in influence, you know what you need to do? You need to be a part of something where no one cares about who you are, because it will break your will that everyone's not listening to you and wanting to know what you think. If you're rich in pleasure, you need to do something that causes you to suffer. Suffer, because it breaks your will. God's not trying to take anything away from you, He's trying to give everything to you. You just have to learn to think differently about this. Are you with me on this?

See, what I love about Jesus is Jesus doesn't just tell us to live in the kingdom, He came to show us what the kingdom was like. He literally is the King of the kingdom. When the King comes, so does the kingdom. Why? Because Heaven is not a place, Heaven is a person and His name is Jesus. If you can catch it, God is not in the kingdom, the kingdom is actually in God. In the beginning, God created the Heavens and the earth. He created it. In Him, all things hold together, including the kingdom. The Bible tells us that the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not in the kingdom, the kingdom is in God. Jesus came to show us what the kingdom was like and what it looked like to live in the kingdom. When we look at the life of Jesus, He's showing us,

this is what it looks like to be a man or a woman living in the kingdom of God in the midst of a broken and lost world. That's what the life of Jesus shows you.

He shows you, this is what it looks like to be free. This is what it looks like to do relationships. This is what it looks like to engage with other people. This is what it looks like to walk with God, to deal with crisis, to have a hardship, to be disappointed in people. Why? Because Jesus only did what He saw the Father doing, went where He saw the Father going, said what He heard the Father saying. He lived with a, "Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours." Not as God, as a man, living in the kingdom in the midst of a broken world. His life is actually fully available to you and I, because the kingdom is at hand. Thank you, at hand. Come on. Well, that was a good one, we missed it. When Jesus says, "A student is not above His teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like His teacher." What is Jesus trying to train you in?

This is what I'm trying to teach you in this series - ask questions about what you just see. Don't take it at surface value. We're like, "Yeah, it's a good verse." A student is not above, but everyone who is fully trained. What is He training you in? You're like, "I'm being trained by Jesus." What is He training you to do? "I have no idea, but when I'm fully trained I'll be like Him." He's trying to train you how to live in the kingdom. What a worthwhile pursuit of your life. What a worthy endeavor. That's a vision worth having. I'm going to learn how to live in the kingdom in the midst of a lost and broken world. That's the vision for my life, because that's what my teacher is training me in. You see, what I love about what Jesus does, is He also shows us who the Father was. The reason a lot of us will never surrender our will to God is because we have a distorted view of Him. We don't surrender our will because we don't trust Him.

We think He's going to take something away from us, or make our life hard. We don't believe in His goodness, and then Jesus shows up and He stops the men from stoning the woman. Was that bad? He tells the woman caught in adultery, "Go and sin no more." Was He trying to take something away from her? He tells Peter, "Leave your boat and come follow Me." He wasn't trying to ruin Peter's life, He was trying to give everything to him. Can you see it? We have to repent, for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. The life of God, it's fully available to you. Are you with me on this? See, the kingdom is already, but it's not yet. It's now, but it's then. It's here, but it's there. It's come, and more of it's to come. You're like, "What did you just say?" I know. Jesus says the kingdom is within you, but pray that "Your kingdom would come," so which is it? Is it in us, or is it more of it to come? Yes. It's already, but it's not yet.

Jesus has come, but more of it is coming. The fullness of the kingdom will come when Jesus returns again and restores all things. We are in-between two eras where the kingdom is here and now, and it is at hand. Which means we have the availability to reach out and grab a hold of more of it and bring it into the realm and the realities that we live in, in the here and now. In fact, it says that when Jesus returns again, one day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. One day, through words and actions, every king will submit and

surrender their kingdom to the King. Why? Because I keep telling you, kings' rule their space through their words and their actions; so every knee will bow, action; every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord. Everyone will eventually, through words and actions, give their kingdom to the King. We get to, just, choose to do it in the here and now. We don't have to wait to be forced to do it.

We get to do it in the here and now because His kingdom is at hand. It's available. It's within reach. Come on. When Jesus was baptized, do you know what it says? It says the Heavens were tore open. In three out of the four gospels, when Jesus is baptized, it says the Heavens were tore, literally, tore open. Here's my question for you. When were they put back together? They were opened. You now live under an open Heaven. They were tore open, literally, can't be put back together. They were opened. The kingdom of Heaven is at hand. In other words, as much of God's kingdom as you want is available to you. You can reach right in there and grab His wisdom and His resources and His power and His relationship. In fact, when Jesus dies on the cross, it says the temple curtain was torn in two to show it once and for all the Heavens are open.

The rocks were split open. The hardest places on earth were broke open by the kingdom, and dead people rose from the grave and went into town and started preaching the gospel. The most impossible thing happened. In other words, God was saying, "You've got an open Heaven, baby. You can have as much of the kingdom as you want. You just have to learn to think differently about your life." In fact, this is why He says, "So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." In other words, He says, you need to learn to look differently at your life. You need to learn to be more aware of the spiritual than the physical. Why? Because the invisible influences the visible. The superior realities of the kingdom of God influence the invisible or the inferior, visible realities of this earth. If what is seen as temporary and what is unseen is eternal, which is superior?

The unseen, because it's eternal. We need to learn to think differently and not be so locked into what we physically see in front of us. We have to learn to look into the reality of Heaven. Because if you don't fix your eyes on what is more influential, more significant, more eternal, you will spend your whole life thinking that what you see with your physical eyes confines and defines your life. In fact, this is why He even says, "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." Your mind, your affections, your attentions, your energy, what you meditate on - not the problems in front of you, but the spiritual realities which are now available to you that you already have in your life. The kingdom has come, and as much of it you want to come can come into your life, if you'll surrender your will and look at it differently. You have to see, not with these eyes, but with these eyes.

Remember the story of Elijah and his servant? They're in a city and they're surrounded by an enemy that wants to kill them. The servant freaks out, "Elijah what are we going to do?" Elijah

says, "Don't worry. There are more for us than are against us." The guy looks at Elijah like he's crazy. He's like, "Bro, have you looked over the wall?" Elijah says, "Lord, open his eyes that he may see." The servant saw the horses and chariots of fire of God surrounding them in every direction. "Open his eyes." Which eyes? Not these eyes, they were already open. These eyes. He had to see from his heart. That's what I'm praying for you. That you'll see from your heart because we get so lost in these eyes. God wants to show us, by faith, with these eyes. Come on. How did Jesus walk on water?

How did Jesus heal the sick? How did He multiply the bread and loaves? How, when He was hanging on the cross, did He say, "Father, forgive them." How did He deal with difficult people? You know how? You say, "Well, He was God." No. He did it as a man living in the kingdom of God. He lived from a superior reality to the inferior reality. He lived from Heaven to earth, not from earth to Heaven. A lot of us live here in this earthly posture of like, "Oh my gosh, I don't know what to do. God please help us, wherever You are. I take Thor's hammer and summon the kingdom." That was good. Jesus is like, "No. The kingdom is at hand, within reach." There's an openness to this thing, and I can live from it to this world. Not from the world to it.

I know some of you are like, "Bro, I literally have no idea what you're talking about." Great. Listen. The Bible says by faith, we understand. We don't understand and then have faith. We have faith and then we understand. We have to release our need to logically understand what can only be discovered by faith. Reason is the enemy of faith. If I'm sitting here and trying to understand it in my mind, I'm not going to get it. It's why Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Unless you're born again, you will never see the kingdom." He says, "It's not up here it's here." That's what I'm hoping and believing this series will do that it's stirring something up inside of you. Even if you don't get it and you don't like it and it makes no sense to you, that it's calling the deep purposes of your soul to the surface and you're like, "There's something to this. Because I feel like a stranger and a foreigner and an alien in my own life." And as a follower of Jesus you are.

You are in this world, but you are not of it. You are of a different realm and a different nature and a different reality, sent on mission by God. It's okay if you don't understand it. Actually, thank God for that. Thank You, Lord, that I don't understand it, because if I could understand it all, I would be God and You would not be. But because I can't understand it, I can trust that You're God. In fact, the first thing I surrender of my will right now is my need to understand. I don't think some of you caught that. I'm going to surrender my need to understand what can only be discovered by faith. Because that's giving up my pride and my rights and my preferences because I don't want to stay in the stable, I want to go for a ride. I've got to stop bucking and broncing though.

I've got to take a bit and the bridle and joyfully go where the master wants me to go because He's not trying to take anything away from me. He's trying to give everything to me. See, we

have to learn to live in the kingdom. I have so much more that I was supposed to say to you. It's really fun having kids that are now of the age where they can talk to their friends about what's happening in church. My son told me the other day, He said -- yesterday, we're driving home from one of his games, and he said, "Dad," he said, "My, one of my friends said to me, he said, man, your dad's really preaching a lot longer than he normally does in this series. In fact, a couple of weeks ago, he said that you said, 'I'm just about done, give me a few more minutes.' My friend -- he said, my friend said, 'So I put my notes away, thinking we were done and he went like another 20 minutes.'" Fair.

I'm excited about this stuff. Let me just close it with this, "Then Jesus went about," I want you to be excited about it. I really am done here because I can't get into the next section. "Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching..." 'Get saved so you can go to Heaven when you die.' Oh, let's try it again, 'Preaching: vote evangelical.' Hmm. Wow that one lingered a little longer than I thought. 'Preaching: go to church and be a really good person.' No. "Preaching the gospel of the kingdom." The good news that a superior reality is here and available to you in the here and now, not just the then and the there; yes, in the then and the there, but in the here and the now. That He has come to restore your identity, reconcile your relationship, redeem your purpose.

You don't have to be defined by the brokenness of this world anymore, because you are now in it, but you are not of it. He didn't just come to say it, He came to show it. "He healed sicknesses and every disease among the people." In other words, hey, the kingdom is here in word and in deed; in demonstration and declaration. As we get this and we understand that Jesus prayed for us to be people of the kingdom in this world, it changes the whole concept of what does it mean to be a hope carrier. We start learning how to dream with God about what is possible in the midst of the impossible. The more you learn to live in the kingdom, the more the impossible starts to seem probable. Because I am focused on the invisible, not the visible. I am learning to look past things into the open Heaven that is at hand.

It is fully available to me in the here and now if I will submit and surrender my will to Him. So, you close your eyes with me. Come on. What's God want to say to you today? What's He stirring up in your soul? My guess would be, there are very few messages you've ever heard in your life just on the kingdom of God, so don't be discouraged if you don't understand it. Don't be lost and think, "I don't get it." Don't look at it with your mind, receive it in your spirit. Where does God want to challenge your will?

Maybe you say, "God, I know I'm in the kingdom, but I want to learn to live in the kingdom, and so I humble myself." In fact, I just picture so many of you. You're that beautiful horse. You're in the stable, and you've just been taking your hoof and knocking on the door, saying, "Please, somebody, let me out. Please, somebody, take me for a ride. Please, somebody, give my life some meaning, because I'm tired of being in the stable." And the master is saying, "I would love to take you for a ride. Are you ready to put on the bit and the bridle, and let me

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saddle you up, so we can go and be a part of my kingdom mission in the spaces and the places you go every single day?" So, Holy Spirit, open our eyes, open our ears, and give us a heart of faith.

Give us eyes in our heart to see the very life of God that is available to us in the here and now as we choose to submit and surrender to You. In Your name we pray. Amen.