

Alright. Hey everybody. Welcome to Valley Creek. We are so glad that you are here with us today. And what a great start to the year it's been here at Valley Creek. God is moving; people are responding. There are great things in store for us. And so today we're going to kick off a brand new series called A Different Way: Do What Jesus Did. And this is going to be a big series. It's going to be a long series, it's going to be a deep series. If you were here with us last year when we did Hope Carriers and went really deep and really long in that, that's what we're going to do in this series.

And I'm excited about the series. I've been praying for it. We've been preparing for it. We've been waiting for it. And here's why I want to do this series. I want to do this series because I want to live a different way and do the things that Jesus did. I want to do this series because I want to be a disciple. I want to follow Jesus. I want to know Jesus. I want to walk with Jesus. I want to be with Jesus. I want to learn to think like and talk like and act like and live like and believe like Him. I want to go deeper with God. I want to live like the kingdom is real and that I'm a citizen of it. I want to live like I'm a new creation. I want to live like I can actually take off the old self and put on the new self.

I want to live like I can count myself dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ. I want to live like I'm a partaker of the divine nature. I want to grow in grace and knowledge. I want to grow in holiness and humility and purity. I want to do this series because I am hungry and thirsty for righteousness. And I believe like so many of you are too. You see one of the things that I got to do in November and December is I went to every one of our campuses and I would spend an entire day in the atrium from 8:00 in the morning to 2:00 in the afternoon hanging out in the atrium talking to as many people as I could possibly talk to. And I got to talk to so many people and get a perspective that you rarely get. The perspective you get is, is your service at your campus and the section that you sit in. But I got to go and see everybody at every place and talk to everyone. And here's what I discovered. We are an incredibly diverse church. Like, you may not be aware of it, or you may not even think about it, but we are incredibly diverse.

Like we have people from every tribe, every tongue, every nation speaking all kinds of different languages. We have people of every generation. We have kids, and students, and young adults, and young marrieds, and single professionals, and middle age, and empty nesters, and later in life. We have people of every socioeconomic status you could think of. We have people who are homeless, people who are in poverty, people who are middle-income people who are multimillionaires. We have people on every different phase of their spiritual journey. Seekers and skeptics, sinners and saints and sages. We have people who today is their first time coming to our church, people who have been coming for a few months or a few years, and people who have been here for decades, serving and loving and walking with God. We have this profound sense of diversity. And yet in the midst of that, there's this profound sense of unity.

In the midst of all that diversity, here's what just about everyone told me is how grateful they are for the grace of God in their life and how grateful they are to be a part of this church and

what God's doing in them. Just about every person I talk to told me about how they got invited from someone else to come and be a part of this or invited into a Circle or invited into a serve team. And just about everyone I talked to had this sense of a hunger and a thirst for more of God. You see, I think if we're honest, there is a growing sense of discontent for American Christianity. A growing sense of this understanding that American Christianity just doesn't work, if we can say it like that. American Christianity, consumerism, convenience, comfort, control.

We identify with Jesus. We're a fan of Jesus. We speak the language of Jesus. And we want Jesus in our life. We just want Jesus AND our way of life. Jesus AND the world. Jesus AND my flesh. Jesus and something. And we almost treat Jesus like he's a buffet line. Like we can go through and pick and choose that which we want. Like, I'll take some joy and I'll take some of that peace and I'll take a big old scoop of forgiveness and a whole lot of eternal salvation. But I'll pass on the obedience. I'll pass on the holiness. I'll pass on servanthood and generosity. Those aren't really the things for me. And we have this lack of intent to actually obey and actually follow and actually become like Jesus. And it just doesn't work. Like we've been angry and we've been angry for the last 20 years.

We got so much lust inside of us and we can't even remember the last time we weren't full of lust. It's like every year, we're a year older, but the anxiety and the depression and the fear, it feels like they keep growing. It's like it doesn't work. I mean, think about what we have deduced American Christianity to, we have reduced it to a one-hour-a-week gathering, one-hour-a-week, a one-hour-a-month, a one-hour-a-quarter, or a one-hour-a-year gathering as if that's what Jesus has invited us to. Now hear me, the one-hour-a-week gathering that we're all in right now is incredibly essential to your life, but it is not sufficient. I mean, think about what we do in this gathering. We have the Word of God taught and spoke over our life. incredibly essential in your life. It's just not sufficient. I mean, just think of the last two, two and a half years' worth of series that we've gone through as a church.

Yahweh. Hope Carriers. Holy Spirit. Ancient Future. Heart of a King. Face Your Giants. Kingdom Culture. You remember some of these? Okay, well, if a one-hour-a-week sermon was enough, wouldn't we all be profoundly mature and free and loving? Because man, that's a lot. That's a lot. Essential but not sufficient. Essential. Why? Because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. God says His Word will not return void, but will accomplish the purposes for which He sent it. Humbly accept the Word of God, which was planted. It's essential but not sufficient. Now, think about what else we do. We meet with God in worship. Think of the last two, two and a half years' worth of encounters and moments and experiences where you've heard God, you've met with God, you've felt God, you were around God, God was here and you knew it.

Essential, but not sufficient. But it's essential because God says in His presence is fullness of joy and He inhabits the praises of His people. Surely God is in this place and I was not aware of it. Think of the community that we have when we come into that one hour, whatever frequency

we're at, there's community in this place. But we have reduced that down to talking about the Cowboys and the weather. American Christianity, incredibly essential, but not sufficient. I mean, the Bible says do not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but spur one another on. To each one of you, a spiritual gift has been given for the building and the strengthening of the body. Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. Essential, but not sufficient to just come and go.

And then think about the things we do in the rest of our Christian life, our quiet times, our devotions, our podcasts, our Bible studies, our influencer algorithms, our little quotes, our quips, all these different kinds of stuff. Nothing wrong with all of that stuff. Here's just what I'm trying to tell you. It just doesn't work, does it? I'm just trying to draw attention to some, maybe some things that you have been experiencing. American Christianity doesn't work. Why? Because it's a form of godliness without any power. It doesn't have any intent to actually obey or follow Jesus and become like Him. And what we would call the deeper life, the Bible would just call normal life. What we would call radical, the Bible would just call being a disciple. What we would call extremism, the Bible would just call a new creation in Christ. And so what we macro, this isn't pointed at anyone or anything, it's just macro, would call American Christianity, the Bible would call just being a part of the crowd.

In the Bible, there's the crowd and there's disciples. There's no in-between. There's people who identified and liked and were interested in Jesus, inspired by Him and loved the bread and the fish. And then there were disciples who had an intent to obey, an attempt to follow and wanted to become like Him. American Christianity as we know it and as we've done it, it just doesn't work. And there is a hunger and a thirst for a different way. A way to do the things that Jesus did so we can do some of the things that Jesus did. You see, the question I want to ask you is this really simple question at the beginning of this year is like, who are you becoming? Have you thought about this in a while? Like, like, like who are you becoming? Not what are you accomplishing? Not what are you doing? Not what are you acquiring?

Like, like you. Like what kind of person are you becoming? Are you growing? Are you changing? Are you becoming more loving and free and healthy and whole? Like are you different than you were two years ago? Who are you becoming? And maybe a better question is to ask you this. Who do you want to become? Have you ever just thought about that? Do you have any vision for your life of like, who do I want to be two years, five years, 20 years from my life? Who do I actually want to be become? And then you have to ask yourself this question. Does the current lifestyle you're living, will it allow you to become that kind of person? Who do I want to be 20 years from now? Well, if my life is just a result of my lifestyle, is the lifestyle I've chosen going to help me become that person I want to be in 20 years? And do I even think I can become that kind of person?

Or am I just sitting around waiting for God to throw a lightning bolt into my life, boom and just magically make me loving and peaceful and kind and gracious? Who are you becoming?

Because you're being shaped and molded and informed by something or someone. You're a disciple, a learner, a student, a follower of something or someone. Like we've got the Swifties, and we've got the Trumppers, we've got the Never-Trumppers. And then we've got the celebrities and the influencers and the bloggers and all these people that want to shape and form and mold us into some, but like, like who are you becoming and who is shaping and molding you? And so maybe it's time for a different way because whether you realize it or not, you have a way you live your life. You have routines and rhythms and patterns and attitudes and behaviors and perspectives. You have a way that you live your life. And a lot of the people that I talk to, if we're really honest with ourselves, we don't really like the way we live our life.

Stressed, anxious, afraid, worried, overwhelmed, always busy, chronically tired, chronically sick. It's like all of it, all the time. And we're exhausted and we're overwhelmed and Jesus sees that. And so He invites us to a different way. "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 humble and heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." We in American Christianity, read this verse as, when you've got problems, situations, storms, circumstances in your life, crowd to God, let Him fix it. And then you can go right back to the way you were living your life. But what He says is, "Come to me. Come one, come all. Wherever you've been, whatever's going on, whatever your life looks like, whomsoever will may come. All you who are weary, weary, tired, wore out, broke down, beat down, discouraged, defeated, exhausted and burdened, full of cares and worries and anxieties and fears and doubts. And I will give you rest."

He offers to give you rest, not circumstantial rest out here, but a deep inner peace where your soul and your mind and your heart can be at rest. And He says, "I will give it to you," meaning that rest won't be found with your counselor or your medication or your self-help programs without Jesus. Because it's only found in Jesus. "Take my yoke upon you." You say, what's a yoke? A yoke is like a wooden thing that they would put on two oxen that would strap them together so they were forced to go in the same way. Whichever way those oxen were going, they couldn't go in different ways because they were yoked together.

So they had to take the same way. And Jesus is saying, "Take my yoke upon you like come take my way of life upon yourself. Come do your life my way, the way that I do life. Yolk yourself in with my way of life and watch what happens. But to be yoked in with me, you first have to unyoke yourself with the world." You have to first take off the yoke of self, off the yoke of flesh, off the yoke of the world. Why? Because you can't be yoked to two things at the same time. You can't take two ways at the same time. And the reason so many of us have this divided tearing in our own soul all the time is because we have yoked ourself to the world and to Jesus at the same time. And it's pulling us in two different ways. So our soul is never at rest. It's always being torn apart because you can't walk in two ways.

"Take that way off and come with me on my way and learn from me. Let me be your teacher. Let me be your leader. Let me be your Rabbi and show you how to actually live your life and your circumstances and your situations. For I am gentle. I am kind. I'm patient. I'm gracious and compassionate and loving and I am humble. I'm not arrogant and narcissistic and prideful. I'm a servant and I'm submitted and surrendered to the Father. So the kingdom can flow through my life into your life and you'll find rest for your souls." Remember when the Bible says something twice in the same section, it's really trying to emphasize it and not just rest, but rest for your soul, the deepest part of you. "For my yoke, my way is easy and my burden is light." Easy and light. Not hard and heavy. A lot of us are convinced the way of Jesus is hard and heavy. And the reason it feels hard and heavy to us is because we've tried to be yoked to Jesus and the world at the same time.

If you've ever really fully taken off the yoke of the world and the yoke of self and the yoke of sin and really gone in Jesus' way a hundred percent with everything that you've got, He promises you'll see that it's easy in light. You know what's hard and heavy? The world, religion, your way of life is actually very hard and heavy. And you know what's easy and light? Not worrying, not being greedy, being able to love your neighbor and forgive those who hurt you and trust in God in all things, that's easy and light. You know what's hard and heavy? Idolatry, immorality, anger and lust and greed. The love of money, the love of self, that is a hard and heavy way to live. And Jesus invites us to a different way.

He says, "Seek first His kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well." In other words, He says, "Arrange your life around me. Arrange your life, rearrange your life. Order your life. Reorder your life around me and my way and I will take care of everything else." Can I ask you a really honest question? At the beginning of this year, what is your life arranged around? What is your life ordered around? Like, what's the thing that you arrange everything else in your life? Is it finances? Is it work? Family, relationships, yourself? Because make no mistake about it, you seek first something, something is in the center, and you arrange your life around it, believing that if I arrange my life around that thing, it will take care of everything else. Jesus promises that if we arrange, rearrange, our life around Him, He will take care of the rest of it.

In fact, do you remember when Jesus says to Peter, "Come, follow me." Come follow me. What? What's He saying here? See, we've Americanized this and what we're saying is, "Come receive forgiveness for your sins and eternal salvation and go right back to your life." No, He says, "Come. There's an invitation to respond and move and follow me." It's very literal like, "Follow me." Like, "Be with me. Wherever I am, that's where I want you to be. I want you to do what I do, and go where I go. Learn to live how I live. When I stop, you stop. And when I move, you move. And the lifestyle that I've embraced is the lifestyle I want you to embrace." What He's saying is, "Come and let me be your teacher. Let me be your Rabbi. Let me show you how to live your life in this broken world. Let me teach you how to walk with the grain of grace. Let me teach you how to flow with the current of creation. Let me show you a different way."

And what we think is that Jesus invited Peter to come and learn how to do church work and preach the messages and eternal salvation. So we hear this and think, okay, I come. I follow Jesus. I'm saved. I'm forgiven. I'm good, we say. "Come be my disciple and let me show you a different way to live your life." In fact, this is why He says in the Sermon on the Mount, "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road" – a different way – "that leads to life, and only a few find it." Jesus says there are two ways. There is a wide and broad way. And that is the way of the world. Come one, come all. Do what you want, when you want, how you want. Take any way that you want. You can combine ways, you can do it your way. You can have religion; you can have all religion. You can have the world; you can have all of the world. You can do whatever you want, whenever you want, however you want.

And all it sounds so good and many go. But look what it says, that way leads to destruction. It's not a threat from Jesus. He's just telling you how it actually is. He's not threatening you saying, "If you go that way, there will be...!" No, He's telling you, "Hey, if you go that way, just so you know, at some point in time, like a bandit, destruction will come upon you when you least expect it, on your family, on your health, on your finances, on your soul, on your mind, on your spirit. But there's a different way, a narrow way that leads to an ever widening life. And only a few go on it." Which means, a different way means you are going to feel different than the people around you. If you take a different way, you decide to go the way of Jesus, not everyone's going to like it. Not everyone's going to get it. Not everyone's going to appreciate it. Your family, your spouse, your friends, your co-workers, the other kids at school. It's not going to make any sense to them, but it's a narrow way. And only a few find it. Jesus was a radical, a revolutionary, and a pioneer. So if I take the way of Jesus, I will be perceived by the people around me as radical, revolutionary, and as a pioneer, of which the Bible would just say is "normal."

Are you with me on this? I mean, think about it. You've been set apart. You are a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. You have a new nature. You're dead to sin and alive to God in Christ. You're a partaker of the divine nature. A royal priesthood. A holy nation. How in the world do you think you could live like everyone else and not stand out and not be set apart and not be a little different? We got to stop being afraid about other people thinking we're different. You are different because you're included in Christ, that's pretty different, in Jesus' name. One last verse for you. "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, 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 the Gospel will save it." See, we want Christianity without the cross.

We like Christianity with Jesus on the cross. We just forget that He also has told us we have to take up our cross. We want to be fans of Jesus without actually following Jesus. And we forget that to be a disciple means I actually have to deny myself, and I have to deny my way, and my flesh, and the world that screams and calls and begs me to come with convenience and

comfort and say, "I know, but I have to deny myself here because there is a different way. There is a way of Jesus." And we spend so much time trying to save our life, control it, hold it all together, put it together, be successful, be affluent, be prosperous. And the more I try to save my life, the more I lose it. But if I would just give it up and say, "God, I'm going to entrust all of this to You and take Your way," He promises that, "I will save it." Maybe it's time for a different way in Jesus' name. Okay, you ready for this? Here's what we're going to say all through this series.

If you want to do the things that Jesus did, you first have to do the things that Jesus did. Say, what does that mean? That means if I want to do the things that Jesus did, I have to first do the things that Jesus did. It means if I want His life, I have to take on His lifestyle. If I want to do what Jesus did on-the-spot, I have to be willing to do what Jesus did behind-the-scenes. If I want to do His works, then I have to be willing to take on His way. Say, what does this mean? Here's what it means. If you want to do the things that Jesus did, which we all do, like, heal the sick, and raise the dead, and cast out demons. You're like, "Those are big kingdom things." Like, okay, but how about just this? Like love your neighbor, and live free from money, and not be afraid, and have joy, and peace, and hope, and be full of faith, and deeply connected with God, and be free, and know what your life purpose is, and where you came from, and why you're here, and where you're going?

Those are the things that Jesus did, okay? But if I want to do those things, I have to first do the things that Jesus did, which are what? Things like, engage the Scriptures, and fast, and pray, and silence and solitude, and Sabbath, and celebration, and confession, and generosity, and service. You're like, "I don't know that I want to do what Jesus did anymore." It's foolishness to think I can do what Jesus did on-the-spot without doing what Jesus did behind-the-scenes. And so we have to look differently at the way He lived His life if we want to do the works of His life. I mean just, just look at this. This is just to try to bring everybody into the game. These are just some of the things that Jesus did, right? You read the Gospels and these are the things that we want.

Like, He had peace and chaos. The boat sinking, the storm is raging, everyone's panicking, He's sleeping. No matter how chaotic it got, Jesus had peace. How about self-control in the face of temptation? When the devil himself was trying to tempt Jesus, He had victory and walked in authority. He had joy in every circumstance, no matter how much grief or sorrow or pain or hardship. He had a sense of wellbeing with God. He had purpose in the mundane, whether it was serving as a carpenter, being hidden for 30 years, washing the disciple's feet, walking down the road, He saw purpose in the routine details of His life. He had hope in the midst of despair, right? When everything has fallen apart and Lazarus has been dead for three days, the little girl is dying, He's on his way to the cross, He still had a sense of the confident expectation of the goodness of God in the here and now.

He had wisdom in life. He didn't live down to the world's foolishness. He thought the very thoughts of God. He knew what was good, what was true, what is right. He had love in every relationship, whether it be difficult Peter, rebellious Judas, the woman at the well, the woman caught in adultery. He had freedom from the world. There's no anxiety in His life. There's no depression, there's no fear. He wasn't controlled by anyone or anything. And He didn't try to control anyone or anything. He didn't love money. He was free. He had security. He forgave no matter what. "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do." And He had this profound connection with God in a disconnected world. These are just some of the things that Jesus did. Aren't these the things you want in your life? Without sitting down and talking to you, my guess would be most of your life is spent trying to pursue these things.

This is what we actually want. The question is, how are you trying to get this? Are you trying to get it through counseling, medication, self-help? Are you trying to get it through striving, performance, struggling, earning, succeeding, acquiring more resources, controlling the things around you? Through hot baths and long walks? My guess would be this is what you want. But if these are the things that Jesus did, then I first have to do the things that Jesus did to access them. Because these are the things that are found on a different way, down the narrow road, through the small gate. I mean look at, this is going to basically be the theme verse for this series. "Train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come." Train yourself to be godly. It's a command, not a suggestion. It's not an idea. It's not a good hope or wishful thinking.

And notice it doesn't say "try" to be godly. Train yourself to be godly. What's your plan to train yourself to be godly? Do you have one? Because ironically, in every other area of life where we want to succeed, we know we need a plan and we know we need to train. Ain't nobody in this room thinks that if you want to play Beethoven, you can just sit down at the piano and try, try and boom, you got it. No, you know you have to train, you have to practice. And for two years you have to sit down at that piano every single day and practice chords, and practice charts, and practice reading music, and practice moving your fingers. But if you train yourself and you practice, two years later, you could probably play Beethoven pretty well.

Ain't none of us think that we could just put on a Cowboys helmet and a jersey and run out on the field and be a part of the game. I know they need some help, but, but ain't none of us think we can do that. We get smashed. What do we think? We think, well, if I really want to do that, what do I need to do? I need to train. I need to train like those professional athletes. I need to eat like them, and sleep like them, and work out like them, and push myself, and I need to learn the plays, and I need to get in a practice squad, and I need to practice, practice, practice. We would never think we could just show up to the game, put the helmet on the jersey and go out and catch a touchdown pass. You would train yourself. Okay? Ain't none of us think that we can just fly to Beijing and just walk down the streets and speak Mandarin and connect with everybody in China. No, you would starve to death. You'd be so hungry you wouldn't be able

to communicate. But if you actually want to do that, you could train yourself and for the next however many years, sit and learn the language, and learn the alphabet, and learn how to speak it, and how to listen to it, and how to hear it. And you could train yourself to do it.

Ain't nobody think that we could just decide one day to be a doctor and just look at somebody and say, "Hey, I've diagnosed you. I think it's your appendix. Why don't you lay down? We'll take it out right now." No thank you. But if you go through a lot of training, I could actually become a doctor. So why then do we think we don't have to train ourselves to be like Jesus? We just think we can just try on-the-spot, or that somehow God will magically do it because I'm saved. And here's what we do. We try to jump into the things Jesus did on-the-spot without doing the things He did behind-the-scenes. And we fail and we get defeated and we say it doesn't work. It's like, we leave church and we're going out here and we've committed we're not going to be angry anymore. And then someone, before we even get out of the parking lot, cuts us off. And there is a reaction with both words and gestures that just come out of us.

And you're like, where did that even come from? I said I wasn't going to do it anymore. Well, the problem was is you tried to do it on-the-spot without doing the behind-the-scenes, like engaging the Scripture to wash my mind, or practicing servanthood where I give up control of my life. We say, "Hey, I'm not going to be lustful anymore. I'm not going to look at that thing." And so we've committed to do that and then all of a sudden, here we are in the moment, on-the-spot, and we look at the thing, and we do the thing, and then we are so defeated and embarrassed and all this stuff. What was the problem? The problem was we didn't practice. We didn't train ourselves back here by doing things like fasting, which is a practice of denying yourself and bringing your flesh into submission to your spirit.

We say things like this like, "I'm not going to blow up at my kids anymore. Oh, I really want to be a patient parent." And then they come home, you've had a long day at work, and they've had a long day at school, and they're rowdy, and bang! You just respond. And you lash out at them and you can't even believe it. And you're so disappointed in yourself. What happened? You tried to do something on-the-spot that you hadn't practiced behind-the-scenes. Like take a weekly Sabbath to rest and reorder your life and remind myself that God is in control. Or we say, "I'm not going to be gossiping and judgmental at school at lunch tables. I'm not going to do that anymore. I don't want to be that kind of student." And then we get to lunch and we find ourselves engaging in all of it. And we're not even sure how that-- Why? Because I tried to do something on-the-spot that I didn't practice behind-the-scenes and I failed miserably. Why? Because maybe I didn't practice any silence and solitude like Jesus does, to help me learn how to not speak and be in tune with God. Are you catching me on this? If I want to do what Jesus did, I have to first do what Jesus did. And any person that excels in anything in life knows that to do something with excellence in that space requires a tremendous amount of training and practice and discipline.

And yet, we get to our spiritual life and that logic goes out the window. This is why Jesus says, "Follow me." We think He means "follow me on-the-spot." He really means "follow me behind-the-scenes," and you'll become the kind of person who does the right thing on-the-spot. "Follow me in my lifestyle and you'll learn how to live my life." Because just so you know, your life is a direct result of your lifestyle choices. So if I don't like my life, don't get mad at your life. Look at your lifestyle and say, what do I need to think about differently? I mean, think about this. What is he talking about, Paul in this, in this passage, he's giving us this example of our spiritual growth in terms of physical training. He's talking about like, like your physical body. Like if you could use an example of like, a marathon. If you want to run a marathon, you've probably got to train. Yes. Like, if you just decided today you're going to run a marathon and you're going to like, practice by running home from here. Most of you would blow a lung before you even got to the road.

But you could actually run a marathon. You probably just have to start by doing what? Buying a pair of sneakers. And then the next day, putting them on and walking to the mailbox. And the day after that, one loop around the block. And the day after that, two loops around the block. The day after that, a mile walk. The day after that, a two mile walk. The day after that, a three mile walk. The day after that, a one mile run. The day after that, a two mile run. Are you catching me? This is true in our spiritual life. These are called disciplines, practices. That's what we're going to talk about in this series. You say, what is a discipline? The discipline is doing what I can do now so I can do what I want to do later. A spiritual discipline is doing what I can do now so I can access God's grace in a way that forms me and shapes me so I can do what I can't do later.

This is what we're going to talk about in this series, doing the things that Jesus did so we can do some of the things that Jesus did. Because the amazing part about Jesus is when He was on-the-spot, he never had to try. Why? Because he was so well trained. He didn't have to try to not be angry. He didn't have to try to not, He didn't have to try to forgive. He didn't have to try to love his enemies. He didn't have to try to not love money. Why? Because He was the kind of person that those things didn't even exist in. So we'll get here, but it was actually easy for, easier for Jesus to say, "Father, forgive them" while on the cross than, "Father, get them good." Because He was the kind of person that, "Father, get them good" didn't even exist in. So could you become the kind of person who, when you're on-the-spot, doesn't have to try.

Because you've been training where you become the kind of person that like, if right now, if I handed you a pen, you're right-handed or left-handed, you wouldn't even think about it. You would grab it and just start writing. Why? Because you've trained yourself to write. If you know how to drive a car, you don't have to think about it. When you get in the car to go home, you've trained yourself to drive. It's automatic. You're the kind of person that can drive a car. If I throw something at you, you probably will dodge or flinch. Why? Because you've been trained to be the kind of person that sees things coming at you to get out of the way. Could we train ourselves in such a way that we become the kind of person that naturally and effortlessly just

does the things of Jesus? Because I'm a new creation in Christ. I'm dead to sin. It doesn't control me. I'm alive to God in Christ. I'm a partaker of a divine nature. I'm a beloved son. I live as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.

And so, if I'm not able to do the things that Jesus did, the problem isn't on the finished work of Jesus or the kingdom dynamics or realities. Maybe just the problem is, I haven't trained myself back here in the lifestyle of Jesus so that God can form my spirit here to become the kind of person that does what I want to do here. And so we're going to ask God and we're going to pray, show me Your ways and teach me Your paths. Show me a different way. God, show me a different path. And we've made journals for you in this series, A Different Way journals. They're available today. They're just at-cost. We made them as cheap as we possibly can. Here's my encouragement for you. Get one of these. And you say, well, why aren't you just going to give them to us? Because I think there's something that, that's like, \$7. The point is though, there's something about having something vested to say, I actually want to buy the pair of sneakers because I'm ready to go learn how to run a marathon. So I gotta have something vested in it.

And, and my hope for you is, is this is going to be like, we're going to do this series like, a long time. So I will get one of these so you can have all your notes and all your practices and all the things that God is going to be saying to you. And watch what God is going to do along the way. Because these are the kinds of things that Jesus did. And these are the kinds of things I know you want in your life. The question we have to ask is, is then how do we become this kind of person? Could you become the kind of person who doesn't worry and who doesn't love money and forgives those who hurt them and has hope in despair, and joy in grief, and lives this posture of love? Can you become that kind of person? I'm genuinely asking you that question. You don't have to answer out-loud, but can you become that kind of person?

Can you become this kind of person? Jesus seems to think that you can, but it's only possible if I'll go a different way. And the prayer that I want to invite you to just start is, Jesus, help me be open to a different way. Don't decide today whether you're going to take this way or not. Don't say, "Nope, I'm good with my life. I'm great. I like what I got going." And don't say, "Yeah, yeah, I'm going to do all of it." Like, we need to actually start this whole process with a sense of humility. Like Jesus, help me be open to a different way of doing my life. Because I've been so formed and conformed, and shaped and molded in my mind and my heart, in my soul and my body that I just kind of, do my rhythm and my routine and my patterns and my attitudes and my habits. And I don't even know why I do them all. I just do.

And some I like, and some of them I don't. But I need You, God, to search my heart and show me a different way, a way that leads to life. But I first need You to help me be open to it. See, Jesus says, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened. Take my way upon you for it is easy and light." Here's the invitation for this series, for this season. Jesus says, "Hey, do you not like the way your life is going? Are you tired, and worn out, and stressed out, and burned out, and anxious, and depressed, and afraid, and feel like everything's outta control while

you're trying to control everything? Just, is it not, if you're honest, is it not working? Then come to me and I will show you a different way. And that way is easy and light."

But when we start on the different way, it will feel awkward and uncomfortable and unfamiliar and it will be unknown and it will not be what you want, but it will be exactly what you need. And in that way, you will discover immeasurably more than you can even ask or imagine. Jesus invites you to a narrow road a different way. If you like your life and you think it's going great and you want to keep going, then go for it. This is the cool part about this series. This is the cool part about Jesus. There are no expectations. There are only invitations. And Jesus would just say, "Think about the trajectory of this way and where it ends up." Because destruction will come like a bandit. It's not a threat, it's just the way things are.

Or you can try a different way that's a little more narrow, but it leads to an ever-widening life. Because as I follow Him on His different way, He will take me through dark valleys and green pastures, and He will prepare tables for me in the presence of my enemy, and lead me beside still waters. And while I follow grace and truth into the future, goodness and mercy are following me into the present. Maybe, maybe, maybe it's time for a different way in Jesus' name. Maybe we can do the things that Jesus did if we just start by learning, because we gotta learn how to do the things that Jesus did. So close your eyes.

What do you feel like the Holy Spirit is just inviting you towards today? What's He speaking? What's He saying? Is there anything in your heart that was stirred? Anything in you that caught your attention? Anything in you that made you think, man, there's more and there's a deeper life and, and there's a different way. And hear me, saying, "I want to take a different way." I'm not, it's not questioning your salvation or your forgiveness or your eternal security. I'm not. I'm talking about saying, "I want to be a disciple of Jesus," and actually follow Him and let Him teach me how to live my daily life. And so, Jesus, I just, I just want to invite You into this series and the season of our church.

Thank You that You are gentle and humble in heart and in the way that you deal with us. Come with that gentleness and that humility and be our teacher and help us learn how to live differently. Jesus, come and help us have courage and faith to take off the yoke of the world, the way of religion and self. And take Your way. Show us that it is easy and light. Come lead our church into deeper places. Come teach us how to be disciples of Jesus in a broken and lost world. Come stir up a hunger and thirst for righteousness in the deepest parts of our soul.

And we can't shake that. We can't shake. It can only be satisfied in You. I pray for every person that's a part of this church, myself included, that we will hear Your voice, that we will follow You by faith and that You will do a new thing in us as we take an ancient path towards the green pastures and still waters that You offer all of us. Jesus, help us be open to a different way in Your name. Amen.