

So, God, You're good to us. You're good in the future. You're good even when we didn't see it in the past. You're good when we think things are not looking good. And when the world isn't good, You are. You are. Your goodness goes before us. It's behind us. It's beside us. It's around us. For those that are in Jesus, it is in us. So, even as we sang that out, I'm going to believe by faith that the goodness of God is changing whatever it is that you're facing right now. The situation, the circumstance, the relationship, the thoughts are being transformed by the goodness of God because He's so good. You are so good. Thank You, God, for Your goodness in our life. Thank You, God, that You're good. In fact, I even just want to invite you, take just a second. Take in a big breath. Breathe in the goodness of God and exhale. We even just take a moment and stand in Your presence. We take in Your goodness. We let it wash over us, Jesus. Thank You, God, for Your goodness. All right, let me invite you to go ahead and find your seats. So, we've been in about two months of a series called A Different Way. We're learning to follow Jesus in a different way. We're learning to live in a different way. And it's a season of invitations. It's invitations to come and see, to follow, to become like, to taste and see that the Lord is good, and to rest and receive from Jesus. So, last weekend at the beginning of Spring Break, we experienced something called Selah. Selah, what is that word? Well, it comes from the Psalms. It means a break, a pause, a breath. To experience Selah means that the song doesn't just keep driving, driving, driving, driving, going, going, going, going, going. Sometimes the song has a pause. And the space in between, God can speak to us. He can redefine and define truths to us. The interlude, the breath that He wants to speak to us, it revives us.

In that space between, we find a rest and a refreshment. So, we know that Selah is one of the invitations for us for this year. We actually started the whole year with this word in the forefront of our minds, this interlude, this pause, this breath. And so, we started it last weekend as we began Spring Break. Most of us have been on Spring Break this week. And we're going to continue Selah today because we believe that Jesus wants us to both rest in and remain in Him. Today, we're going to get a chance as campus pastors to speak to each of our respective campuses. I'm going to talk to you guys here in Flower Mound and for those that are watching online. And just have a conversation about what we've been learning in this different way of season, what God's been teaching us. And so, it's going to be a very different kind of message for me because it's going to require a very different level of vulnerability. Because it turns out I do not have it all figured out.

Contrary to, I guess, being a legend in my own mind sometimes. I'm not even close. And so, what I'm really learning in this season is that I am a disciple first. I'm a leader second. I'm a disciple of Jesus first on my journey. And He's teaching me and He's showing me and He's revealing things to me. And He's speaking to me in deep ways. And when you first come on staff at Valley Creek, you hear people say, "It's going to be more about what God wants to do in you than what He wants to do through you." And then, you hear that and you're like, "Oh, yeah, yeah, that would be awesome. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." But it turns out that even beyond the miracles and the restorations of marriages and the things that

you get to be a part of and see, it really is about what God wants to do in me even more than what He wants to do through me. So, a few weekends ago, we had a chance to just reflect on our notes and try to just take stock of what God's been speaking during this A Different Way series.

And we actually got a moment where we had a chance to just write down a summary statement of what the Lord's been speaking. And you got to be careful what you ask for because if you ask the Lord to speak to you, He will. And He'll tell you profound things. And He'll use simple words that have such a deep meaning of your soul that it's hard to express why they're so deep. And it's hard to express why they are so profoundly impacting to you. And so, I just sat there and I wrote down my sentence as did a lot of you from a summary statement. And the summary statement was this: I am increasing in gentleness. I'm decreasing in judgmentalism. And I'm becoming a person of love. So, I get to hear something like that from the Lord. And it brings a couple things to my heart. One is if I'm increasing in gentleness, that means that I don't have a whole lot of it right now and I need more. If I'm decreasing in judgmentalism, then that means that there really are places in my heart that are unsubmitted and unsundered to Jesus that He wants to bring into alignment. And if I'm growing as a person of love, then that's a lot to look forward to. And so, I was really struck actually by a verse out of 2 Timothy. It talks about the servant of the Lord. It says, "A servant of the Lord must not quarrel and must be kind to everyone and must be able to teach and be patient with difficult people and gently instruct those who oppose the truth." So, when I read that, I thought, okay. A servant of the Lord must not quarrel. I'd stay out of fights for the most part. Kind to everyone. Man, I try. Able to teach. I do that sometimes. Be patient with difficult people. Yeah. Gently instruct those who oppose the truth. Yeah. And so, I was really taken in by that.

I'm not sure that the average person who would describe me on the personality level would say, "Oh, you're a gentle person." There may be a lot of things to describe my personality, but I'm not sure that's one of the first ones. And, man, I want it to be. I want that to be one of the first things that's said about me. That I'm truly gentle and patient even when it's difficult. Notice that it doesn't say patient with the people that are just having a bad day or people in my life that are struggling just a little bit. It says patient with difficult people. And it doesn't say gently instruct those who are a little bit confused. It says those that just straight up oppose the truth. To be gentle in those situations. And what I've realized about those two words is sometimes in my leadership and my maybe A-type personality and who God's created me to be, I just drive forward and sometimes drive over people instead of are really gentle with people. And sometimes in my struggle and judgmentalism, I really think that I use it as a protection from my own insecurity sometimes. That is, I'm going to, like, "Judge you before you judge me." You know why those people didn't like Valley Creek or messed up everything? Because they just dah, dah, dah. And my mind carries off and trails off from there. And, man, that's not right. And so, even just to speak it out loud is I'm believing by faith is confessing so that I will be healed. Confessing that I'll be healed and that the Lord will start to move in me and through me. And the craziest part about telling you that I struggle in the area of

judgmentalism is that I think that judging and the word justify are closely tied together. And a lot of times when we say something that's really judgmental, we justify it. So, they'll be like, "Oh, no, it's not, though. It's not." No, but it kind of is, though. Because it places me in a position where I think that I, what am I, better than?

I know better than? Because I've seen it before, I can just tell what's going to happen and then I can just be judgmental against you. And so, what you're getting to hear today is what the Lord is teaching me. He's growing me in gentleness. He's decreasing my judgmentalism. And you might think, "Well, does that mean I go to church and the campus pastor is judging everybody?" Well, maybe a little bit. But you know what you do? You go to a church where the campus pastor is saying, "I'm going to repent in Jesus' name. And He's changing me and He's moving in me. And He's transforming me. And I'm becoming more in His image and likeness. I am becoming a person of love in Jesus' name. I am transforming." Because my gentleness, anything that I'm struggling with gentleness is a production problem. But it's not my production problem. It's the Holy Spirit producing it in me. Look at Galatians 5. Check this out. "The Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives. Love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control." And so, it's not me trying to conjure it up. It's not me being like, "I'm going to be gentle with that difficult person." It's the Lord growing it in me. And if you want to grow any of them, you have to be willing to grow all of them. To get any of them, you have to have all of them. It's not the fruits of the Spirit. Fruit with no 's.' It's the whole thing. And so, as I grow in the other areas, I will grow as a person of gentleness. I will grow as a person of self-control. And everything else that goes with it, I'm so excited about that. That's the goodness of God in my life. That's the goodness of God in your life. But it's not that I produce it. It's not that I conjure it up. It's that the Holy Spirit will produce it in me. How? When I remain in Him. When I stay close to Him. When I stay rooted in Jesus. It's not like a tree tries to produce fruit like, "Oh, try really hard, really hard, really hard." It just does.

When a tree has nutrients and is in the right kind of soil and the sun shines down upon it, that's when it produces fruit. And so, I'm believing by faith that God's going to continue to produce that fruit in my life as I have this statement. He's speaking to me really at a deep level about that. I'm excited about that production. So, my question for you is, which one of these do you want God to produce in you? Like if you just even had to look at that list and you're like, "I want to grow in one of these," which one would that be? Which one would you want to grow in and the Holy Spirit move in you and produce that kind of good fruit in you? See, if I want to actually be transformed, if I want to be a person who's being taught by the teacher, I have to choose to create a new rut in my life. We've been talking about the ruts of the world, that the world has a certain way that it's conformed you and tried to shape you and mold you. And so, you have to create a new rut. Look at what it says in Hebrews. It says you got to "take a new grip with your tired hands. You got to strengthen your weak knees. Mark out a straight path for your feet so that those who are weak and lame will not fall but will become strong." Okay, this is a profound verse. It's saying that sometimes you have to learn a literal new golf swing, a new grip, a new way of doing it. And that new grip, that new way of living your life and of thinking

and of letting the Lord transform you, it's like creating a new straight path. And that new straight path will be a path that when you start to follow it and when you start to have Jesus mark it out for you, here's what it does. It gives you a path that you can walk on that's not like the ruts of the world. It's a new way. It's a different way. And when you walk out that path, those in your life who are maybe just like, maybe just one step behind you, like follow me as I follow Christ, your family, your coworkers, your neighbors, your friends, look what it says.

It says that they will not stumble and fall, but they will become strong. And so, what does that mean for me? That means that one of the promises in my life is as I am taught by the teacher, as I live to live a different way with Jesus, I can create new ruts of thinking, grow in gentleness, decrease in judgmentalism, become a person of love. And so, many people that are following wherever God is leading me, they will have a chance to not just stumble and fall. They're going to stand up strong in Jesus' name. They're going to rise strong. So, I want you to even consider that in your life. Is there a place that the Lord is inviting you to consider for your own journey where it's like, man, if I actually don't do what He told me, then the inverse of what this says is that people who are already limping a little bit, they're literally going to fall on their face. But the opposite is true. If I walk out, if I follow Jesus, if I obey Him, if I step into a different way of living than those that are limping, can suddenly start to walk forward and they will be strengthened in Jesus' name. May so many of the people that are following us as we learn to live as a disciple, be strengthened in Jesus' name. May your kids be strengthened in Jesus' name because of your journey. May your friends who are far from the Lord be strengthened in Jesus' name because they see the life of Jesus in you. May your coworkers who don't even know what it looks like to live anything like what we're talking about. May they see it in you to such a profound way that they start to become strong in the realities of Jesus. Wow, that would be beautiful. And so, as I think about my journey, as I share this with you, my question for you would be this, that's what He's teaching me. That's my summary of where I'm at so far on my different way journey. What about you?

What's He teaching you right now? What is He speaking to you right now? What is He doing in you and through you right now? What about you? Because I think He's doing profound things among us. I mean, like I'm hearing stories that would blow your mind of transformation. What's yours? Have you had a chance to either speak it to somebody, say it, or have you had a chance to start to walk out a training plan? Like how you're actually going to do it? I'll even just tell you this. I'll tell you, here we go. So, for me, I'm going into conversations and I'm actually using the word gentleness and asking the Lord to bring that to my mind and trying to start the conversation with a thoughtfulness of being gentle in the convo, the whole thing. Every single time I'm starting a convo. For judgmentalism, I'm capturing those thoughts. They're starting to actually hit me in the face pretty hard. And so, instead of justifying them, I'm capturing them. I'm taking them captive and I'm giving it back to Jesus. Be like, "That's not from You. That's not from You, Jesus. So, I don't want that." And so, that's part of my training plan. That's part of what I'm walking and working out right now. But what about you? How are you training truly in righteousness? How are you training and what Jesus is teaching you right now? See it's a

production problem. It's just not our production problem. It's the Spirit. He's the one that produces the fruit in us. So, what does that mean? It means that we must remain in Him to rest and to remain. And so, I'd like to invite you to go ahead and just close your eyes as we continue along. And I just want to pray over you the words of Jesus out of John 15. It's probably the most profound passage in Scripture of remaining in Jesus. And I just want to declare it over you. And I want to receive it from myself fresh today.

Jesus says, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit, He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit on its own, it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. 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. If anyone does not remain in me, they're like a branch that is thrown away and withers, such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now, remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this, love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything I've learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last. And the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command, love each other."

So, thank You, Jesus, for Your words. Your Scripture is a voice in our life. It speaks to us. It wounds us so that you can heal us. So, in Jesus' name, I just declare that we would continue to be taught by the teacher, that all of us would live as a disciple first, and everything else that we do in our life is a far second. Thank You, Jesus. That as we remain in You, we will bear much fruit in Your name, amen. All right. So, as we continue on and just experience the goodness of God, let me just start by saying thank you for hearing my story. Thanks for letting me just speak to you as much from my heart as I can. As you can tell, that's a very different kind of teach for me. But I'm growing. I'm learning. I'm changing. I'm excited for what God's doing. I want to go and invite all our teams to come forward for communion. We're going to take communion because communion is just communication. God communicates with us, and He communes with us. So, communion is for anybody who has placed their faith in Jesus. If that's you, you are invited to take with us. And one of the things that's amazing about communion is it's this reminder of remaining in Him, of staying with Him. I was thinking about the communion story, and every time I have to prepare to lead it or think about it, I feel like God gives me little nuances, little elements of the communion story in the Scriptures. Well, part of the story of

Jesus is that before He goes to the cross, He spent time praying in the garden of Gethsemane. And in that story, He asks His disciples to stay with Him, to remain with Him. Now, the common part of that part of the story is that remaining with Him, being with Him is because His heart really was troubled. And that's true. He says that it was.

But I got to thinking about it, and I was like, wow, isn't Jesus so amazing? He would ask for help in ways that would actually do something in those that He was asking the help from and for. So, He'd go to a woman at the well and say, "Will you give me a drink?" So, it starts a conversation about how she needs living water. And He would go to the disciples and say, "Will you stay here with me? Will you remain with me?" And I can almost imagine later in their life, the disciples were like, "Remain. Stay with Him. Stay with Him. Stay with Him." They probably remembered that moment, and they probably remembered those words. And it acted like a guide for the rest of their ministry here on earth. That if they would stay with Him, if they would remain in Him, they would bear much fruit. If they would stay with Him, they would have access to all of the heavenly realities that Jesus had, because He would give that to them through anything they were facing, through any challenge they had, through anything that was in front of them, for any difficulties or sin areas the Lord was trying to expose in them.

If they would stay in Him, if they would remain, they would truly bear much fruit. I love that. I love the idea of Jesus just planting that one line in their heads, that night, praying in the garden, "Stay with Me. Remain with Me. Be with Me." That's what communion does. That's why communion is Selah. It's a rest. It's a breath. It's a pause from our normal, and it breaks us out of our own selves and our routines and our thoughts and our mind, and it brings us back into alignment to what really matters. Staying with Jesus. Being with Jesus. Receiving and resting in Jesus. So, communion reminds us of who Jesus is and what He's done. It's this constant reminder to stay with Him. To be with Him. So, on the night He was betrayed, Jesus took the bread. And He looked at it and He said, "This is like My body that's going to be broken for you. Take it in. Let My word give you life. Let it speak to you in a deep way. And let it transform you as it goes into you. So, that later the Spirit, Me, I, can come out of you. My body broken for you. Whenever you eat it, do it in remembrance of Me." Let's take it together.

Then, He took hold of the cup and He said, "This is a cup of a brand-new promise between God and mankind. No longer is your life going to be based on whether you've strived, you've done it, you've figured it out. It's going to be based on what I do, My work, the production of My fruit inside of your life." That's what this is a reminder of. And the forgiveness of sins and the renewal that we have in Jesus. He's always changing, always transforming, always moving in us. Thank You, Jesus, for what You're doing in and through us. Let's take it together. So, Jesus, may we just stay and remain and be with You. May Selah not just be something that happens sometimes on a weekend here at Valley Creek. May it be how we live our lives from a place of peace, with some breath, with rest in You. God, I pray that everything that's even happened in and among us today will serve as like, this encouragement to where You're leading us and how You're moving in each one of us. That each one of us would continue to be

taught by the teacher. That we would continue to be led by our leader. I pray, Jesus, You start to transform our minds so that we're not just having a vision for who we're going to be five years from now. We have a vision for who we're becoming 5,000 years from now. Who are we becoming? Man, I'm thankful that I am growing in gentleness, decreasing in judgmentalism. I'm becoming a person of love. I'm thankful that You're moving in our church and You're doing the very same thing among the people of Valley Creek. Jesus, thanks for what You're doing. Thanks for Your goodness to us. Thanks that You are helping us live and think and do things a different way. And that we do all this in Your name. Amen. Amen.

Alright. Thanks guys. Thanks for going on the journey with us today. Doing things a little differently. Just a few quick announcements as we finish out. One of those is that, I just want to remind you, you are the 9:30 service. Okay, so here's why that's important. The 9:30 service is our capture service for all of our other campuses. What does that mean? That means that our level of faith, our anticipation, our excitement, our readiness to meet with Jesus is captured in the service. And it goes out to all of our other campuses and everybody else online. What does that mean? Well, that means that you're not just worshipping for you or you're not just saying amen for you or you're not just like engaged and leaning in for you. You're also doing it for that single mom in Gainesville. And you're also doing it for that family that's hurting in Denton. And you're also doing it for the guy that's watching online in another part of the country that has absolutely no idea if God is real or if the people of God actually are, really want to meet with him or what's happening among us on any given weekend.

You're doing it. It's for all those people. It's not just us. So, we really aren't here for ourselves and we're not here to just experience just something for me. It's the people of God gathering together with the Spirit of God and the Word of God. And we are a living, breathing organism that gets to do this and gather together at least once a week, hopefully more, in our lives. That's a gift. That's amazing. So, why do I tell you that? Well, I tell you that to say every time you come to the 9:30 service, come with an anticipation and expectation for God to move. Quite frankly, any time you come to any service, do the same thing. Specifically, at this 9:30, we are very, very busy right now. This is our second week of Spring Break. This room is full. So, that gives you an idea of how God's moving. Here's what I'd ask. I would love it if there's like 200 of you that says, "I'll take a missional move and I'll go to the 11:00." There's space at the 11:00. There's room in there right now. It's the two services are not commiserate on how many people are in each one. So, if that's you, if it won't affect your serving role, if you have space to do it, man, you're invited to go to the 11:00.

We'd love to have you there as we continue to reach more people in the name of Jesus and they get to experience this thing called the family of Valley Creek. I want to let you know, you heard about baptisms. Baptisms are coming up. If that's your next step, let's go. Let's go in Jesus' name. That's a great step of discipleship. And so, you can register at the guest towers. You register online if you want to do that. Next week, we will be back with A Different Way series. You're not going to miss that as we continue to learn how to practice the way of Jesus. If

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you need prayer for anything before you leave, there's going to be people right down front that want to pray with you. People around you will pray with you. If you want to give, giving is always a response to the goodness of God. So, you can give at the boxes as you go or online at valleycreek.org. But as you go this week, may you go with Selah in your heart. May you go and rest and know that God is good. Jesus has forgiven me. That I'm loved and that everything is possible. See you back next week. Blessings.