

Well, what's up Valley Creek? Hey, whatever campus you're joining us from, whether you're in Gainesville, Denton, Lewisville, Flower Mound, or online somewhere in the world, come on, let's welcome each other right now. Hey, my name is Sebastian and I get to serve as our Central Student Director and I am so excited to be here with you on Father's Day. So shout out to all the dads joining us today. And in honor of Father's Day, I thought we would start our time by sharing a few dad jokes. You see, because I believe there is nothing better than a good dad joke to start a conversation. You see, earlier this week, I ordered a chicken and an egg from Amazon. I'll let you guys know which one shows up first. Hey, did you guys know that the guy who invented the ferris wheel never met the guy who invented the merry-go-round? See, I found this really interesting. I guess they just ran in different circles. I don't know if you know this about me or not, but at first, I didn't really like having a beard. But then over time, it just grew on me. Did you ever wonder what the part of your mind was called that helps you decide what sandwich to order? It's your sub-conscious. And hey, we all have pet peeves. I've got my own pet peeves. There's just one thing that I cannot deal with, and that's a deck of cards that's been glued together. Hey, I love you, dads. Your jokes are great. It doesn't matter what your kids say. They're awesome.

Hey, it's summer. We've been in an amazing series called 60 Days of Unfamiliar Promises, where every single week, we are taking a promise from God that is so familiar that it's unfamiliar. And our hope through this series is that we would take these promises and we would claim them, that we would declare them, and that we would walk them out in Jesus' name. Really, what we're saying is we're just going to believe that these promises are true in our lives. Man, come on. And the Bible is full of God's promises. It is full of God's promises. And the reason we're claiming it, declaring it, and walking it out is because faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God. You see, and that's what these promises have been. They are God's Word spoken out over us so that we can live them out in our lives. And Scripture is full of promises. You see, in my role, I get to hang out with the next gen a lot. You see, I hang out with our students, and our young adults, and I get to hear stories about, man, how their journey is going. I get to hear stories about how their life is going, the struggles that they face. And one of the things that's been common in both of these next generations is that, man, promises, like the ones we've been talking about, man, they look really good on paper. They sound really good in theory, but somehow, some way, man, they just don't play out the way they're written. You see, it's like students and young adults are experiencing pieces of the promises, but not the fulfillment of its entirety. You see, but that is not how God intended us to live our lives. And that's why 2 Corinthians says this. It says, "For no matter how many promises God has made, they are a 'yes' in Christ. And so through Him, the 'amen' is spoken by us to the glory of God." God has made many promises to you, and they are a 'yes' in Jesus. It's up to us to declare out 'amen' and claim it for our lives.

And today we're going to be looking at a promise that is going to be familiar to us, and we find it in Proverbs chapter 3, and it's this. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will make your path straight."

Man, that is a great promise right there. That's a great promise. And one of the things we've been doing in this series is we've been taking our promises each week and we have been declaring them out loud in unity. So I'm going to invite you to go ahead and read this with me out loud together. So come on, let's do this. "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him, and He will make your path straight." Man, that's great. I'm going to invite us to do it one more time. This time, we're going to personalize it. So everywhere the word your shows up, we're going to replace it with the word my, makes sense? All right. Let's read this together, personalize it now. Trust in the Lord with all my heart, and lean not on my own understanding. In all my ways, acknowledge Him, and He will make my path straight. In Jesus' name, let that be so. Come on. That is a great promise from the Lord. Man, it is inspiring. It speaks to the depths of who we are. It draws us closer to His heart. And that's why we have it framed in our office. Why we post it all over our social media channels. And why some of us in this room today may even have a tattoo somewhere on our body. And if that's you, that's awesome. You see, because this is one of those promises that just makes sense, right? If I do this, then God will do that. If I trust the Lord with all of my heart, then He will make my path straight. If in all my ways, I acknowledge Him, then He will make my path straight. If I lean not on my own understanding, then He will make my path straight. And so, can I ask you, what would your life look like if you actually believed that this promise was true? Not just true, but what would your life look like if you actually believed that this promise were true? How different would your life be? How different would it be? If I actually live this out, how different would my life be and how different would my days be? How different would I approach my struggles? How different would I do finances and approach relationships? How different would the mindset of anxiety, fear, and worry be in my life? Man, it would be like every single path you took would be a straight path. Every path of relationships, finances, circumstances would be a straight path. It would look like your mind would be full of the acknowledgement of the goodness of God in your life. You would have supernatural wisdom. You would have heavenly discernment. You would have, man, a holy imagination to bring heavenly solutions to earthly problems. Your life would overflow with the Fruit of the Spirit. Your life would be overflowing with love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control because you trusted in the Lord.

But if we're honest, man, we don't often live that way, do we? More often than not, we're taking the long path of life. More often than not, we're taking the path with the twists, and the turns, and the detours and the roadblocks. I don't often live that way. And here's what it costs me. I don't know what it costs you, but when I don't believe that this promise is true in my life, here's what it costs me. It costs me creating a bond with God when I'm trusting more in my strength than I do in His. You see, it costs me strengthening my relationship with my family when I'm trying to lean on my understanding instead of seeking heavenly wisdom. You see, it costs me humility and freedom when my pride flares up and believes that self-dependence is better than surrendering God-dependence. Man, and it costs me feeling lost on my journey because it starts to be that every single path that I take is full of twists, and turns, and detours and roadblocks. So what does it cost you when you don't believe this promise is true? You see,

and maybe you're here, and maybe you believe this is true or maybe you're not there yet. But man, no matter where you're at, let's break this down together. So where does this promise come from? Well, it comes from God, but we find it in the book of Proverbs. And the Book of Proverbs is a set of practical skills for everyday life. It's for living in God's will. It's a roadmap for life. So how to have a healthy reverence and awe for God. How to understand that I'm not God, but He is. And the Book of Proverbs is also known as a book of wisdom. Everybody say wisdom. And what is wisdom? Wisdom is God-given and God-centered discernment for practical issues in my life. So then that means that wisdom is not just for the big decisions in my life, it's for all decisions in my life. You see, in most of the Proverbs we find in this book were written by a guy named Solomon. And Solomon was the son of King David. And as Solomon started to rule over Israel, he sought the Lord and asked God for wisdom, which spoiler alert, God gave him. And the Bible says that, man, Solomon was the wisest man in the world other than Jesus. So the words that he penned are going to be pretty important for us to pay attention to. You see, in the Book of Proverbs, man, it's wisdom for reigning in life. It is wisdom for reigning in life as a disciple of Jesus. So, man, it is up to us to get familiar with this book. And if we're actually going to reign in life the way the Bible tells us to, so much of Proverbs is the equipping for that. It's the truths of that. It's the path for that and even some of the promises within that. So with that in mind, man, when we look at this promise, man, there's wisdom all over it. And we're drawn to it. It speaks to the depths of who we are. But why is this promise so familiar? Why is this promise so familiar? You see, deep down, I believe that we all desire to trust in the Lord with all of our hearts. Deep down, I believe that we all desire to lean not on our own understanding. Deep down, I believe that we want to acknowledge Him in all of our ways. And deep down, I believe we all desire for all of our paths to be straight. But why doesn't it play out the way that it reads in our lives? Why doesn't this actually be as fulfilled together in our lives?

So let's break this down together. This promise starts with trust in the Lord. Everybody say trust. Okay. So what is trust? If I were to ask you, what would you say trust is? You see, trust is the firm belief in something or someone. So then this promise would mean that we would have a firm belief in the Lord. A firm belief that His promises aren't just based on what He does. They're based on who He is. But why do we struggle with promises? Why do we struggle with promises in our lives? Maybe it's because we're walking around life asking questions like, man, why did this have to happen to me? Why do they get to do that, but I don't? Why am I facing this circumstance? Maybe we're struggling because we're asking questions like that. But I believe that deep down, the question we're really asking is this one. Is God good and can He be trusted? I believe at the core of who we are, deep down, the question we're really asking is, is God good and can He be trusted? So maybe we don't believe that God is good, which means we don't trust, which then causes us to struggle. You see, a lot of us never give God an opportunity to be trusted because we take things into our own hands. And what is that called? It's our little friend called control. You see, the reason we struggle to trust God is because we want to take everything into our own hands. We want to make it happen. This is why we have to be the ones to load the dishwasher, because obviously, all of those years of Tetris

experience make us the superior dishwasher loaders. This is why we lock our thermostats because we all know that 68 degrees is the ideal temperature to cool the house in a hot Texas summer. This is why we have to be the ones driving because if they drive, we're not going to make it on time, maybe even at all. And this is why very few of us can sing, "Jesus take the wheel," and actually mean it. It's control. I trust myself more than I trust God. So I got to make it happen. I got to create the outcome. I have a better chance of making this happen. I don't trust because I control.

And what's interesting is that this promise doesn't start with I control all of my life. No, it starts with, "Trust the Lord with all your heart." Everybody say heart. Okay. I do it with some of my heart. I trust God here, but I don't trust God there. I trust God for my salvation, but I don't trust the Lord in my finances. I trust the Lord to take care of my children, but I don't trust Him in my marriage. I trust Him to be air to breathe tomorrow, but I don't trust Him for that provision in my life. So I've got to take control. I've got to put things in my hands. I've got to control the outcome and make things happen. I trust the Lord with some of my heart. So where's God inviting you to trust Him with all of your heart? "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding." Okay. My own understanding, what is that? It's the things that I can see. It's the things that I can experience. It's saying that my experiences and perception of life is what I've come to understand. And that is what I lean on. It's allowing things like the disappointment in that relationship, that job, that circumstance to determine how God moves in my life. I lean more on my perception than I do on God's faithfulness. But come on, God reminds us to do what? God reminds us to "fix our eyes, not on what is seen, but what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal." "Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him." Why? We talked about this last week, because we know that in all things, God works for the good of those who love and that doesn't say that all things are going to be good. It says that He's going to work everything for my good. Come on. So where's God inviting you to lean not on your own understanding? "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him." I acknowledge Him in some of my ways, like coming to church, posting on my social media profile or wearing that sweet Jesus crewneck all the time. But honestly, most of the time, I acknowledge myself or I acknowledge the world. And the problem is you can't do both at the same time. God does not share the throne of your life. So where is God inviting you to acknowledge Him in all of your ways? "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and..." Come on, say this with me, "and He will make your path straight." He will make. God promises that He will make your path straight. That as you follow Him, He begins to straighten it out, and you find yourself wasting less energy on the back and forth, the twists and turns. You waste less time wandering around lost and less time back and forth on all the detours. Your path is actually straight so you can run the race marked out for you. See, the Bible tells us that the path of the righteous is like the morning sun shining brighter to the fullness of day. So the path that He opens up, it gets brighter, it gets straighter. And then you can actually join the race that He's marked out for you and go fast. And then I know for me in this season, as I've been looking at this promise and

asking myself, man, is this true in my life? I've actually come to the realization that this has become more unfamiliar than familiar for me. And as I've been asking my family and my team to tell me if there are ways where I'm trusting more in myself than in God, if they see opportunities where I'm leaning way more on my own understanding than in the Lord's, if they acknowledge and see any areas of my life where my paths aren't straight, man, they helped me see and realize that this promise has become more unfamiliar to me than familiar. And I didn't think that at first. But man, here's a pro tip for you. If you want to know how to keep growing as a disciple of Jesus, man, I want to invite you, ask those people in your life. If you want to know if you have blindspots in your life, like not trusting the Lord and trusting more in yourself, ask the people in your life, they love you and they would love to share those with you. So, so through all of that, as I've become to realize that most of my life, I haven't lived out this promise as full. See, I started to realize that I trusted way more in myself than I did in God. I started to realize that I leaned a whole lot more on the things that I understood versus acknowledging Him. And I've come to realize that I really like controlling things. And maybe you can relate, like controlling projects, outcomes, situations, my family, the way people see me, how much people know about me. I've come to realize that as I've controlled all these things in my life, it's like I've been keeping people away at an arm's length, not being fully known, which meant I'm not being fully loved, which also means that I'm not trusting God. I'm trusting more in myself than in His goodness. You see, and as I was made aware of these things, man, I started to practice. I started to practice trusting, and leaning, and acknowledging, not myself, but the Lord. You see, I started practicing those things, and what those closest to me have also said is in this season, they're seeing this practice work on me. And I haven't arrived. I can still see twists and turns on the path that I'm walking on, I'm believing that as I'm learning to trust, learning to lean on, learning to acknowledge Him, then that He's going to continue to make my path straight.

What about you? What's the path that you're walking on? How are you preparing the way of Jesus? Man, by trusting, by leaning, by acknowledging, the more you do that, you're preparing the way of Jesus in your life. You're learning to walk like Jesus, and think like Jesus, and live like Jesus. So come on, learn to trust, lean, and acknowledge. All right. So then how do we fully claim this promise for our lives? So how do we cash it in and experience the blessings that God has for us through this promise? So when we look at this promise, man, there's wisdom all over it, the entire embodiment, there's wisdom in it. And when you look at that, it's the invitation to move and to walk. You see, I don't know if you knew this or not, but paths are not just made to stand still in them. They're made for what? For walking, for moving. That's why Jesus says, "Come follow Me." Man, the entire invitation was to move, to walk. Man, every time He invited a disciple, He said, "Come follow Me. Come follow the promise. Trust with all your heart. Walk in truth, the straight path. Learn to lean on Me, not on you. Learn to lean on, rely on, be supported by Me." You see, and that's why the disciple, John, at the Last Supper could lean back into the arms of Jesus. You see, the Bible references John as the disciple whom Jesus loved. And because he knew he was loved, he knew he could trust Jesus and lean back into Jesus's arms. He knew that he could trust Him to let go of whatever he was holding onto to

lean back into the arms of Jesus. But what about you? What is that thing that Jesus is inviting you to let go of so you can lean back into His arms? What's that invitation look like in your life? Do you guys remember the story of Peter's encounter with Jesus while he and his brother were fishing on the Sea of Galilee? See, here you have two brothers going about their day. They're out in the sea, casting nets, preparing for a great catch of fish. And along comes Jesus along the shore. And He says this, He says, "Come follow Me and I will make you famous with a lot of money." No. He says, "Come follow Me and I will make you influencers of millions." No. He says, "Come follow Me and I will make you fishers of men." Okay. What even is that? What does that even mean? I don't know about you, but if I am going on about my day, doing my thing, the thing I'm comfortable doing, the thing that makes me money and provides for my family. And some guy walks on the shore of my life and yells out to me, "Hey, come follow Me. I'm going to make you a fisher of men." I don't know about you. I'm going to be having some questions. First of all, what does that even mean, fishers of men? How do you even do that? Is this going to be like a long journey or a short journey? Is my family staying back or are they going with me? Hey, am I going to get paid for this way of fishing? Do I need any special kind of training? I've got a fishing license. Do I need a fishing for men license? Is this like catch and release? I don't know. I don't know about you, but I'm going to be asking some questions. And those are reasonable questions that we would all ask. But look at what Peter and his brother do. At once, they left their nets and followed Him. And at once, they didn't need to understand. They just followed, and trusted, and leaned on Jesus and they trusted.

But what about Matthew? You guys remember Matthew? He's one of the disciples. And if anyone would have wanted to understand, it would have been Matthew. Understanding was Matthew's thing. You see, he was a tax collector. So he had to understand who was caught up on ledgers and who was not. He had to understand the ins and outs of all the things that he was collecting. He had to understand what it looked like. He had to understand what it looked like to operate as a Jewish citizen in a Roman government and culture. But then along comes Jesus. And Jesus says this. "As Jesus went on from there, He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' He told him. And Matthew got up and followed Him." Again, no need to understand. No need to figure out the things first. He just simply stood up, trusted in Jesus and followed Him. Man, isn't it interesting? These guys didn't understand and then follow. And they followed and then they began to understand. In both of these stories, the invitation from Jesus was to, man, move and follow. Peter was standing on his boat and Matthew was sitting in his tax collector's booth. So can I ask you, what are you standing on? Where are you sitting in this season? Are you standing on the confidence in yourself? Are you sitting in the comfort of the things that you've always done? What is Jesus' invitation for you to move and follow? Jesus invited them to step out of the boat, to step out of the booth, to come and follow wisdom, to trust and acknowledge Him, and He would make the path straight. This was them claiming the promise of trusting the Lord with all their heart. This was them claiming, you know what? I'm going to lean not on what I've understood or seen. I'm going to trust Him. I'm going to follow wisdom. And I believe that as I do, my paths will be straight. So what about you? What about you? Where is Jesus inviting you to move and follow

as a way to claim this promise for your life? Maybe you're here and the invitation for you is to let go of that job that's got a hold on you, that's leading you down a windy and twisted path. Or maybe you're here and it's to let go of that desire to fit into that friend group that follows the ways of the world as its example. Or maybe for you is to let go of the pursuit of the American dream and all of the materialistic things that come with it to pursue simplicity in your life. What is the invitation for you? And in order to trust and follow, we have to acknowledge like Jesus, I need your wisdom for all of these things. And man, if that's you today, Jesus says, ask Him, look what it says in James. "If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God." That seems pretty wise. "He gives generously to all without finding fault and it will be given to you." Man, it's acknowledging and declaring, God, I need Your wisdom for what job to take or what job to not take. It's saying, God, I need Your wisdom for what friend group to pursue in my life. It's saying, God, I need Your wisdom for how to prioritize my life and experience simplicity. Man, it is declaring and asking God for wisdom. But when you ask, you must believe. Check it out. "But when you ask, you must believe." Not my words, James. "And do not doubt. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do." Okay. And this is why promises, specifically the promise we're talking about today, trips us up more than anything else. Because when we doubt, we're double-minded. You see, we trust God with some, but not all of our heart. So we're double-minded. I'm back and forth. I'm good to trust God here, but I don't trust Him there. I'll surrender this, but I won't surrender that. I believe this is true, but I don't believe that is true. And all of a sudden, I become so unstable, so double-minded that it's like running a race with vertigo. And you feel like you're about to fall down because you're so double-minded. Man, you're so disoriented in life because those two things can't coexist. Trust and doubt cannot coexist. That's double-mindedness.

So man, dads, any area of your life where you are doubting God's goodness and not trusting Him, is an area that's leading you down a twisted path that's preventing you from leading your family well. Hey moms, any area in your life where you're doubting the goodness of God and not trusting Him is an area where your path as you're raising your children or pursuing in your marriage is going down to detours and to roadblocks. Hey students, any area of your life where you're doubting and not trusting God's goodness for you is an area where you're not stepping into the fulfillment of the promise that you're created for, so much more than you even realize, in the world around you. Come on. The invitation for us in this promise starts with what? It starts with trust. Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will make your path straight. To lock it in and actually surrender with all your heart in all your ways. Not with some of my heart and in some of my ways, with all of my heart and in all of my ways. And so maybe you're here and you're struggling to surrender that relationship to God. Or you're not trusting God for your marriage or with your children. Or maybe you're here and you're half-hearted in that job or you're struggling to understand that diagnosis. But can I ask you, what does this promise look like for you in those situations? What does it look like for you? You see, and the paradox is that I can't give you one or two practical ways for your circumstances. Trust looks different for different people based on different circumstances. Trust looks different for different people based on

different circumstances. But it all has the same commonality. It is complete abandonment. It is relinquishing all control. It's trust. It's like giving God the password to your phone and your social media. And the students were like, "Wait, what?" And it's like giving God the keys to your car. It's giving God the PIN number to your account. All those things are what it actually looks like. So then what is the invitation for you to learn to trust Him in? And what would it look like for you to give Him the PIN number to that account and give up control? You see, and God knows that this is really hard for us to do. He knows that. And one of the hardest things in the human heart to do is to relinquish control. And He knows it's not something that we can do lightly, that we can do easily. So He actually gives us places to practice this. Have you ever thought about how good God is? Man, God is so good. And He's so good that He builds His entire people around two things, Sabbath and tithing. See, those two are both issues of tangible trust that allow me to practice setting aside one day a week to rest while God works and 10% of my income and believe that I can have more with 90% with God than with 100% on my own. You see, we think that Sabbath and tithing are these archaic religious oppressions, but it's actually God's goodness to help us practice learning to trust Him in the tangible so we can learn to trust Him in the intangible. Because one day of rest and 10% of my income, man, that is objective. That is tangible. It is the physical realities of my life. But if I practice those, then eventually I'll be able to trust Him in the spiritual, the state of my mind, the condition of my soul, and the dreams of my heart. And then maybe you're here and you're hearing all of this and you're like, "Okay, bro, all that sounds good, but you don't know my story. You don't know what I've been through, and you don't know what's happened in my life." And you're right, I don't. And I get it. We all fall into this trap of doubt and not trusting because of the experience in our lives may not reflect this promise as being true. The experiences in our lives that we've all gone through, maybe not reflect that this promise is true for us. Maybe we struggle with this promise because the people that we've trusted, they've broken those promises, and it's now created a break between how we see God. You see, and if that's you today, I just want to say I am so sorry that those people in your life, that relationship, that friend, that father figure created a break in trust in them that now created a break in trust between you and God, where you believe that His promises can't come true for you and that He's going to hurt you. But you know what? God is so good. Man, God is so good to you. It's who He is and what He does. All good gifts come from above, including the gift of trusting Him. And although some people may not be trustworthy, we know somebody that is. Check this out. "The Lord is trustworthy in all He promises and faithful in all He does."

So even though people in your life may not be worthy of trust, we know that God is worthy of trust because He is faithful in all He does, including the promise that we're talking about today, to trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He will make your path straight. So then how do we actually make this a realization in our life? We got to claim it, declare it and walk in it. Come on, we got to claim it. You got to claim it for yours. You got to say the Amen in Christ Jesus and claim this promise as yours. And then you got to declare it. Come on. One of the best ways to acknowledge Him in all of your ways is to declare this out in the morning, in the middle of the day, in the evening,



whenever you're going to school, or work, or you're in the car and declare it out loud. Declare, I can trust in the Lord with all my heart for my day ahead. Man, I can lean not on my own understanding, but I can seek heavenly wisdom for every decision that I need to make in my life. Man, I choose to acknowledge Him in all of my ways and acknowledge me less in my life. And I believe that as I do that, every single path of my life will be straight and I can experience the full blessing that He has for me. Come on, you got to declare it. You got to declare it. You got to declare it over your life. And then you got to walk in it and act as if this was so. God is making a straight path in your life, so walk it out. A promise from God is an invitation to a process to claim it, declare it, and walk it out. So come on, trust in the Lord with all your heart. Lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways, acknowledge Him and He, He will make your path straight. In Jesus' name, let that be so in your life.

Will you close your eyes with me? And so Jesus, thank You for the promise today. Thank You that in Your name, every single promise is already a yes and amen. So we declare over every single person here that we will trust in the Lord, not with some of our heart, but with all of our heart. That we choose to not lean on the things that we've experienced or perceived, but we choose not to lean on our understanding, but on yours and seek your heavenly wisdom for our lives. And that we choose to acknowledge You in all of our ways, no matter what the circumstances around us look like, whether they're good, bad, or in between, we choose to acknowledge You and Your goodness and declare that over our lives. And we know that as we do, our paths will be made straight by You. We are preparing the way of Jesus in our life as we do that. So Holy Spirit, thank You for the promise. Thank You for Your goodness. And thank You for showing us the way that as we trust in You with all of our hearts, and we lean not on our own understanding, we can begin to acknowledge You with all of our lives and all of our paths will be straight. Let this be so in the name of Jesus. And everybody said, amen.