

All right. Hey everybody, welcome to Valley Creek. Come on, whatever campus you're at today, Denton, Gainesville, Flower Mound, Lewisville, the Venue, or Online. Let's just welcome each other together. We are one church that meets in multiple campuses, that carries the hope of Jesus to thousands of locations. We are in a series, really, we're in a season called Kingdom Culture 101. We're talking about, what are the kingdom values? What does kingdom culture look like? Because the values of your heart will determine the culture of your life. The more I walk with Jesus, the more the world's values should get displaced from my heart and God's values should become a part of my heart. I should start to value the things that God values.

God's been working and He's been moving in this season. He's been challenging, exposing, bringing things into light, interrupting our lives. Here's what I really want to say to you. God is answering our prayers. You say, "What?" Yeah, the prayers that you and I've been praying for years, things like, "Jesus help me become more you." "God help me hear your voice." "God, show me your way." "God, set me free." "God, bring revival." "God, purify us, help us be a people who really follow you." "God, I want to know you." He's answering those prayers in this season. But remember, God often answers our prayers in packages we don't like. Some of these interruptions and some of the exposures and some of the bringing things into light is actually God answering our prayers. We're in no hurry to move on. My job is to pay attention and call attention to that which God is doing. We just want to keep walking with God through this.

Holy Spirit, we invite You in. Come search our hearts, show us any offensive way in us, and lead us into everlasting life. You see, one of the values of the kingdom, and therefore, one of our values is that we are a family on mission. A family on mission. We are not orphans doing our own thing. We are not individuals doing whatever we want. We are a family on mission. This is important to God, and therefore, it is important to us. If I asked you what you believed the church was, how would you answer that question? If I just said to you, "Hey, tell me what you think the church is?" How would you answer? Some of you might say, "Well, that's religion." Maybe you'd say, "It's an organization or an institution." Maybe you'd say, "The church is a building, or a weekend gathering or a service." Some of you would say, "The church is hypocritical and irrelevant." Some of you would say, "It's a voting bloc."

Some of you would say, "It's a checkbox to get on my spiritual journey, so I have an alleviated conscience with God." How would you answer that question? The problem for most of us is we have these previous experiences that determine our current expectations. What we do is we often bring our theology down to what we've experienced instead of raising our experiences up to our theology. If you want to know what the Bible says the church is, it's really a family on mission. I remember years ago on my summer study break, sitting on a dock, and just praying for our church, and asking God, saying, "God, what do you want us to do? Where do you want us to go? What do you want us to focus on?" Just praying for you praying for us. I so clearly remember hearing the Lord say to me, "I want you to build a family." It caught me. It's like, "I don't know; build a family?" I started asking about it, we started talking about it and I felt the

Lord said back to me again, "I want you to build a family, because My church is a family on mission. That's what I'm doing, building a family for Myself."

I started thinking about that. What does it mean to build a family? Well, you've got to be committed in one place for a long time. You've got to create an environment of faith, hope, and love. You've got to teach people how to live as beloved sons and daughters. You've got to raise up the next generation. The more I thought about it and studied and looked at scripture, the more I realized the entire Bible is a story of God building a family for Himself. Catch this, go all the way back to creation. When God creates everything, He creates Adam the first man, and look at what it says, "Adam, the Son of God." Right from the very beginning, God wanted a family. When He scraped the dust together and made Adam's body and breathed into him. When Adam opened up his eyes, he looked into the face of a Father. He looked into the eyes of love. The first touch he felt was from a Father. The first words he heard were from his Father. The first experience he had with his Father, fully known and fully loved with no fear of rejection. It started with family.

Then you go on to the Israelites, and after 400 years of Egyptian slavery, God shows up. This is what the Lord says, "Israel is my firstborn son, and I told you Pharaoh, 'Let my son go so that he may worship Me.'" God doesn't want slaves, he wants sons and daughters. That's why the Bible calls them the children of Israel. Family. He wanted to be a Father to them and pick them up and carry them all the way through life, the way a father carries a son. He doesn't want slaves, He wants sons and daughters. Then, we go to Jesus, and Jesus comes, "The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God." Jesus shows up and He shows up to show us what it means to be fully human and fully alive. What does it mean to be human and to be alive?

It means you're a son, or a daughter, and you have a good father, and you're a part of a family. Jesus shows us that we have nothing to earn or achieve or prove. He showed us what it was like to live completely dependent upon a good Father who loved him. Jesus didn't have to get in the world what He already had in the Father, and He's come to give us that same gift. Then, you go on to the first century church, "I am writing you these instructions so that you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of truth." There it is right there. The church is God's household. How are we to conduct ourselves? As a family on mission. This is why the whole New Testament, when you read, everything is brother and sister, brother and sister, brother and sister. Why? Because it's a family. God's household. They had a new identity, a new reality, they had been adopted into a new family, and they wouldn't have given up the people of God for anything, because it was family.

Then, one day Jesus is going to come back, and he's going to restore all things. In Revelation 21, "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To him who is thirsty, I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. He who overcomes will inherit all

this, and I will be his God, and he will be my son." From beginning to end, from Genesis 1 and 2 to Revelation 21 and 22, the story of the Bible is the story of God building a family for Himself. If it's important to God, it's got to be important to us. Come on, out of all the ways that God wants to be known, He wants to be known as a Father. He would rather be known as a Father than creator, almighty, all knowing, all powerful, everlasting, the rock.

Why? "I will be a father to you, and you will be My sons and daughters." He wants to be known as a father. And out of all the ways that Jesus could be known - creator, sustainer, redeemer, Lord, King, He wants to be known as Son of Man and Son of God. Family is the very character and nature of God, and therefore, it must become important to us. You with me on this so far? You see, one of the most important verses in the entire Bible is when Jesus gets baptized, and it says, "And suddenly, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'" Jesus is 30-years-old, He hasn't done any miracles yet. He's living 30 years, hiding out as a hidden carpenter. Here in this moment, when He's baptized, He comes up out of the water and the Father speaks and says, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased."

Jesus started his ministry from acceptance. He started his ministry from approval. He already knew that He was significant. He had nothing to achieve, nothing to prove, nothing to earn. He didn't need to get in the world what He already had in the Father. He showed us that this is what it means to be fully human and fully alive; that there was a freedom and a victory we could walk in when we understood that we are His beloved sons and daughters in whom He is well pleased. Well, if you've put your faith in Jesus, you're now included in Christ and everything that's true of Jesus is now true of you. This is why it says, "As he is, so we are." In other words, because Jesus is righteous, so are you. Because Jesus is holy, so are you. Because Jesus is loved, so are you. Because Jesus is the Father's beloved Son, so are you. You are the father's beloved son or daughter in whom He is well pleased, before you do anything right, and even after you do everything wrong.

You have nothing to achieve, earn, or prove. You have everything to receive, discover, and explore. You don't have to live your life for approval, for acceptance, and for significance. You already have it. When Jesus hung on the cross, and He said, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" In that moment, the Father became a distant God to Jesus so He could forever be a loving Father to you. You don't have to spend your life trying to get the world to say what the Father already has - that you are loved, and He is well pleased with you. Maybe you've never heard that. Maybe you've forgotten. Can I just tell you, right now, wherever you are, whatever you're struggling with, whatever brokenness and sin and pain is in your life, in this very moment, you are the Father's beloved son or daughter in whom he is well pleased.

That changes everything. I mean, look at this. Jesus so desperately wanted you to be a part of a family, "So now Jesus and the ones he makes holy..." You "...Have the same father. That is why Jesus is not ashamed to call them his brothers and sisters." Jesus so wanted you to be a

part of His family. He's not ashamed of you. He laid down His life so you could come and be a part of the family. Or how about this, Jesus said, the resurrected Jesus, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to my Father, go instead to My brothers and tell them I am returning to my Father and your Father." Catch it. The Father sees you the same way he sees Jesus. He loves you at the same level He loves Jesus. It's not like He loves Jesus here and me over here.

No. "My father and your father," the same way the Father treats Jesus is how He treats and sees you. Or how about this one that says, "God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure." It was God's idea to adopt you and bring you back into the family and nothing pleases Him more than to see His lost children come home. You want to talk about family on mission - God, the Father; God, the Son; God, the Holy Spirit - family came to seek and save that which was lost - mission, family on mission. That's who He is, and that's who we now are. You with me on this? You see, when you're born into this world, you start as a spiritual orphan.

Maybe you've never thought about this way before. Maybe you've never taken the time to wrestle through this. But you're born as a spiritual orphan. You're dead in your sins. You're an enemy with God. You're hostile towards Him. You're on your own. You're independent, doing your own thing hoarding, hiding, hating; that's the extent of who you are. But Jesus has come to rescue you and bring you into His family. See, we all start here as spiritual orphans. We see God as a master. We live with fear. We take care of ourselves. We feel lonely. We're independent. We spend our lives achieving, performing, trying to become, we have this poverty mindset. There's never enough and we're skeptical of everyone and everything, especially authority. But Jesus has come so that we might be beloved sons and daughters, and see God as a Father, have freedom, take care of others, live wanted and accepted, live completely dependent upon His goodness and His grace, receive and rest, have an abundance mindset, and fully trust.

My question for you is, which one of these lists more accurately depicts your life? Don't look at the top title for a second because we'll be like, "Oh, I'm this one." Look at these. Which one more accurately reflects your life? See, when Jesus says we need to be born again, we get a little confused about that. This is what he's talking about. This is how you're born as a spiritual orphan, dead in your sins, lost in the carnage of this world. But we're born again as a son or a daughter into God's family with a new nature, a new identity, as a new creation. We have to learn how to move from this list to this list. And however you see yourself is how you'll see us. If you see yourself as a spiritual orphan, then just be real honest about it. You see the rest of us in this room or on the other side of the screen right now, as strangers, as nuisances, as frustrations, or irritants.

Honestly, you see us as competition for a limited set of affection, resources, and opportunity. But if you see yourself as a beloved son or daughter, then you see the other people around

here as family on mission, adopted with the same father. The problem is, is a lot of us will say, "No, no, yeah. I'm a beloved son or daughter, totally." Then, we do this thing, like, "I'm a beloved son or daughter, and it's me and God. Me and God is great. I'm a beloved son and daughter. I don't need you. I don't want you. In fact, I don't need to know you. I'm good. I got me and God." Okay. Can I just break it to a lot of you? You are not an only child. Seriously! We've taught this for years, and here's the problem.

I think so many of us grabbed a hold of this. "Yep, I'm a beloved son." "I'm a beloved daughter." We stitch it on a pillow. We hang it on a frame. We write it on a card, "me and God," and it's great. Okay. Just understand, you're not an only child. If He's adopted you, He's brought you into a family. If you really believe you're a beloved son and daughter, then you will see us as beloved brothers and sisters. However you view us, truthfully, reveals how you view yourself. I know we don't like this, so stay with me in it for a second. Think of the story of the prodigal son. The older brother, the son leaves and trashes everything and the older brother, it was him and God, or him and his father, if you will. "Me and my dad, we're good, I'm great." When the younger son comes back home, "I want nothing to do with that guy."

The father goes out to him and says, "My son, you're always with me, and everything I have is yours; but when this brother of yours comes home, we must celebrate, so come inside and love him." You see, a spiritual orphan masquerading as a beloved son or daughter will say, "Me and God are good. Me and the Father are good, but I don't need you." Just understand the arrogance of that. That's like saying, you're the only person God gave grace to, that you're the only person that God died for, that you're the only person that God values and cares for. Now, no, He's adopting a family. What does the father want more than anything else? Is for you to come inside and celebrate your brother, who, yes, hurt you. But I want you to forgive him the same way I've forgiven you. Beloved sons and daughters don't leave the family when they're offended. They don't leave when they don't get what they want. They don't take their toys and pout when it gets hard. No, no, that's what spiritual orphans do.

It is so important for us not to declare this truth, but then walk around and live as if it's an orphanage. The church of Jesus, at large, lives like spiritual orphans with a bunch of cool words attached to it. It creates a lot of damage, and confusion, and disorientation to people who are orphans and are in the orphanage of the world and they get brought in. They're supposed to be brought into a family and they're like, "This is actually worse than out there, because you use all these words, but you still live like this." If it's just you and God, it's 30-fold revelation. It is true; you are a beloved son or daughter. But if that's where it stops, if you understand the analogy, 30-fold revelation, 60-fold is, "I'm a beloved son, and therefore, you're now our beloved brothers and sisters."

See, one of the most dangerous things in life is an empowered orphan. It's an orphan mindset, orphan spirit, with power, authority, resources, influence of voice because they will use all of that for their good and their glory. One of the most powerful things in life is an empowered

beloved son or daughter. Because they will use everything they have for the good of others and the glory of God. In fact, if you can catch this, the people that have hurt you the most in your life, were empowered orphans, a boss, a parent, a teacher, a coach, a friend, a spiritual leader with a sense of power and authority, but they had an orphan spirit so they used what they had for their good and their glory and it hurt you in the process. The people that have blessed you the most in your life, were empowered beloved sons and daughters. Because they used all of what they had for your good and for His glory.

We can't declare this, but live like this is what I'm trying to tell you. You with me on this? Come on! "For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear. You're no longer an orphan. You receive the Spirit of sonship, by Him we cry, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit testifies with our spirit that we are," not I am, "We are God's children." Just so we're clear, this verse in the original language does not say "I am God's child." The original Greek, it's "we are God's children," not, "I am His child." Ha-ha! It's not me and Jesus. Jesus is a Son, who died, to bring brothers and sisters to be a part of the family, with the Father.

Just like parents have to teach their children not to be selfish and live for the family, we have to learn how to live as beloved sons and daughters with beloved brothers and sisters, and that's a journey of the heart. If you've been here with, any length of time, with us, you've heard us say these three analogies that we used to define the church - Harbor of Hope, Training Center for Life, and Family on Mission. Harbor of Hope - we say ships at harbor are safe. But that's not what ships are built for. But every ship needs a harbor. It needs to come in and unload its junk and get fuel and get refreshed and get a crew and then go back out into the world. As it sails on the ocean, it gets tossed by the storm and the seas, and it runs out of fuel, and garbage builds up on the ship. It needs to come back to a harbor and unload the garbage, and get fresh fuel, and get a new crew, and get a new mission and go back out. That's a great picture of church. We come in broken and beat up by life. We unload the garbage of our heart. We get refreshed, we get refilled, we get encouraged, and we go back out into life and we come back and forth.

But, at some point in time, you realize there's more than a Harbor of Hope and you moved to this place called Training Center for Life. You start to see this not only as a place where you get hope, but a training center that helps you practice your faith, that equips you and trains you and challenges you and calls you up and helps you realize you're capable of so much more than you realize. The Bible says that God has given you church leaders in your life to equip or prepare you for works of service. In other words, it literally means to repair or mend an old-time fishing net that had holes in it. If you threw it out, and it had holes in it you'd pull it in and all the fish would swim out. When it gets mended and repaired, it goes out. Now, it's capable of so much more. That is a Training Center for Life. We're trying to train you to live a kingdom life. But if you're here for a while, and you catch that, then you realize there's more than that, and you say, Family on Mission.

You see God as a Father and yourself as a beloved son and daughter and us as beloved brothers and sisters. You not only love to come for the worship and the Word, you love to come to just be together. In fact, we don't even have to do anything. If you're family on mission, you're just glad to be together. But you can't be family on mission until you first see this as a Training Center for Life, and you can't be a Training Center for Life until you first acknowledged that this is a Harbor of Hope. It's an order that you have to go through. Here's my question - which of these is where you are - Harbor of Hope, Training Center for Life, or Family on Mission? Let me help you. Harbor of Hope - this is a person you really like what we do here. You actually enjoy the music, you enjoy the message, you come in, and you really want to be refreshed, and be encouraged, and be built back up. You get beat up by life, so you look forward to being refreshed and being encouraged. But if you're really honest, it's mostly just about you.

You don't really think anything else of the rest of us, so you'll often come late. When service is over, you'll just leave without talking to anybody else. It's not a priority to be here all the time. You come when you feel like you've run out of fuel and you need to be refreshed. Then, there's the Training Center for Life - these are the people that it's also really primarily about them. They sit and they take notes and they like the message and they want to actually grow. They want to take the next steps, but their next steps are to better their life. It's like, "I want to be a better mom or dad or worker or student. I really want Jesus to be formed in me so my life out there will be better and less chaotic." Then you get the Family on Mission. If you're Family on Mission, you show up to work the docks and clean the gym. If it's Family on Mission, you're here to work the docks and clean the gym. Why? Because we're a family who lays down his life for one another.

Where are you? If you're a Harbor of Hope, can I tell you, I'm so glad you're here. Let this place keep being hope for you. But what would it look like to move to Training Center for Life? If you come in this is a training center to help you grow, I'm so glad you're here, genuinely. But what would it look for this place to become Family on Mission? If you're Family on Mission, I've got to talk to you for a second. We can't place Family on Mission expectations on people who are here for a Training Center or for a Harbor of Hope. We've got to be okay with people coming in, in the harbor, getting hope and sailing out and maybe never seeing them again. We have to be really okay with people coming in and being trained for a season and growing in their faith, but then going out into the world and going and doing their own thing. We have to not apply these expectations on these people. This is why we get hurt, and disappointed, and frustrated; because family is messy and hard.

God, the Father, knows what it's like to be rejected, and Jesus, the Son, knows what it's like to be betrayed, and the Holy Spirit knows what it's to be ghosted. That was unintentional; we'll go with it though. Lost all of you. Really serious heart moment, we lost all of us. Yet, Jesus says, "I go to prepare a place for you in My Father's house; there are many rooms." In other words, there always has to be room for more. We can never allow yesterday's hurt to keep us from the

family that God has positioned us and placed us in today. If you think about this, when your memories of people who used to be in your life are greater than the dreams you have with the people who are currently in your life, you're not living on family on mission.

When the memories of the people who used to be in my life, we used to be in a small group together, we used to be these 50 of us. I used to be in this church and 20 years ago, I had the best Bible study in my life. That's all great. Those are memories. But when those are greater than the dreams of the people who are currently in your life, you're not living on family on mission. You're missing God's heart, which is always moving forward, advancing into the future together. You have to ask yourself the question, "How do I live in family on mission?" Well, here's the -- how did you get into the family? You got into the family because Jesus died. How do you live in the family? You have to die. You get in because Jesus died for you. You live among it, when you choose to die to yourself. This is why Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross," die, "and follow me."

If you're going to live in family on mission, let me just be super clear with you, and super free you from this. You have to die to yourself. It's not about your pride, and your rights, and your preferences, and your expectations, and what we should do and what we shouldn't do, and why this person did this and why that thing is like that. No, no; Jesus says, "I need you to deny yourself, die to yourself, and follow me. Be a disciple. Be a disciple - a learner, a student, a follower; become like the one you're following." What is Jesus most like? A Son, living in a family, with a father, and brothers and sisters. It is impossible to say you're a disciple of Jesus if you're not moving forward in the concept of family on mission. Because He's a Son, who laid down His life for His brothers and sisters, and invites us to do the same.

Come on, what else is going to shape you more into the image and likeness of Jesus than family? Oh my gosh! What we have to remember is selfishness tears families down, selflessness builds families up. If we're serious about God's kingdom coming, "Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them." Family, mission, the kingdom flows through the family. If we're serious about seeing God's kingdom come, then we have to position ourselves where God says it flows. That says beloved sons and daughters in relationship with beloved brothers and sisters submitted and surrendered to the Father, who releases it. You with me on this? Okay, stay with me because here's the question that you have to ask is, "What does family look like?"

Family on mission, great; okay, but what does family look like? We get all confused because we have previous experiences in our own life. But let me tell you, your family is not a picture of what family looks like, and your dad is not a picture of what the Father looks like. The Trinity is a picture of what family looks like. The Father is a picture of what the Father looks like. Or Jesus, if you will, who came to show us what the Father is like. When we say, what does family look like? Well, family is not whose DNA you carry. It's not whose blood is in your veins. It's not whose last name you have in your life. It's not who's given you an inheritance. It's not even who



you live with. In fact, you have more in common with a believer on the other side of this room or screen that you've never met, than your closest, unbelieving biological family member.

You actually have more in common with a person in this room that believes in Jesus that you've never met, than your closest, unbelieving biological family member. You say, "Are you serious right now?" Think about it. You've been adopted into a new family. You're a part of the kingdom of God. You're no longer a part of the orphanage of this world. You're a new creation in Christ; that person who you love and should, is still dead in their sins and trapped in the orphanage of this world. I don't say this to put down your biological family. No, no, God has placed you there and you have a responsibility to them. I say this to lift up the value of the spiritual family that God has also placed you in that you have a responsibility too. I want you to jot these down with me real quick. Let me just give you a couple of thoughts on what healthy family looks like. The first thing is just this - it's submitted to the Lordship of Jesus.

When I was preparing this, I originally didn't have this. Then, I thought, "Oh, my gosh, this has to be submitted to the Lordship of Jesus." Because if we're as a family, you can think of your biological family or spiritual family, if we are not submitted to the Lordship of Jesus, then we're just a bunch of orphans living together in an orphanage. But you say it's a mom, a dad, a son, a daughter, I understand. Spiritual orphans living together in a spiritual orphanage, because we're not submitted to the Lordship of Jesus, "But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." Definition of family. My family submitted and surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus, whatever he says, we do. Whatever He commands, we obey. Wherever He goes, we follow. This is family. In fact, Jesus, when He's teaching, and they come to Him and say, "Jesus, your biological mother and brothers are outside, your family is here, Jesus, trying to get you." Look at what He says, "Jesus replied, 'My mother and my brothers are all those who hear God's word and obey.'" Jesus redefines family in this one sentence.

Family is those who are submitted to the Lordship of Jesus. The second thing is, is families are engaged in loving relationship. Think about families. We don't do our own thing. We're not independent. We're not off on our own. We're in a loving relationship. We know and we're known. We serve and be served. We see and we are seen. We value and we are valued. Look at what the Bible says, "Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters." Just let the Bible define family for you. "Loving as brothers and sisters." It's this engaged, loving relationship. My question is, are you engaged in relationship with each other? The third thing is, is that they sacrificially serve one another. Think about any family, for it to function, everyone's got to serve, and you use your gifts. This person does the garbage. This person cooks the meals. This person does the dishes. This person generates resources. This person fixes things. This person knows the yard.

When a father doesn't work, and a mother doesn't love, and a student doesn't serve, it's a disaster. Ask any parent what their greatest frustration at home is, is that everyone is selfish. A family doesn't work if we don't serve each other. Well, do you understand? You've been given a

spiritual gift so you can help each other. God has given you gifts, not for you. That's what an orphan thinks. An orphan thinks, "This is my gift for me to bring me glory." No, no. A son says, "This is how God has gifted me, so I can build up and strengthen the family." If you withhold that, you're actually stealing from all of us; orphan spirit at work. In fact, look at what he says, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all the people," everyone, "But especially to those who belong to the family of believers." It's all over the Bible, guys.

The fourth thing is there's a sense of costly commitment to each other. Stay with me on this - costly commitment. If you're in family, here's how family goes - "I'm with you. I love you. No matter where you go, no matter what you do, no matter how bad you mess it up, I'm still going to be here." I want you to think of the difference between covenant and cohabitating. What's covenant? Covenant is God's design for marriage. A man and a woman make an agreement with God - "Till death do us part." The whole point is, "I'm not here for what I can get, I'm here for what I can give. No matter how bad it gets, no matter how much you frustrate me, I'm here." Now take cohabitating. Cohabitating is, "I'm in this for what I can get, not what I can give." It's actually the orphan spirit at work. Because we now live in a constant sense of insecurity with each other because we both know, we never say it out loud, but we both know that when something better comes along for you, you're out. When something better comes along for me, I'm out.

We position ourselves to live with the orphan spirit and a constant sense of insecurity, co-dependence, passive/aggressive, and control. Because if you know I will leave if you don't do what pleases me, then I have control over you to make you do what I want. Because if you don't, I might be out. We want intimacy without commitment, but that's not how it works. If that's you right now, can I encourage you - break the orphan spirit off your life in Jesus' name. Choose to say, "That's it, I'm in this thing. We're getting married, I want to make a covenant. I'm not in it for what I can get from you, I'm in it for what I can give to you." Or if you can't say that, great, move out and date each other, so you don't live in this constant perpetual sense of insecurity. Because you know, you know in here, when the right thing comes along, they're going to leave me. You say, "Why are you telling us all that?" Because that's how I think we view the church.

We don't see it as a covenant, we see it as cohabitating. What does Jesus, what does the Bible say we're now a part of? The New Covenant, a new agreement with God, till death do us part. We're now a part of a family that we're not supposed to leave. But we see it as cohabitation, and we just come for what we can get. "I'm here, so long as it's good for me. But the moment something better comes along, I'm out." That's the orphan spirit at work. It's like, we show up, and we already have made a choice. If that's how your heart is, you've already made a choice that when you come in here, you've already decided you're an orphan. If it's not good for you, you're out, so you come in and bang on the table. I want you to picture it - an orphan banging on the table saying, "Where's our bread? Where's our soup?" If you come to just consume, and to take, and to be served, can I just tell you, we will never meet your standards.

Why? Because the orphan spirit is never satisfied. It always demands more, demands more, demands more, demands more, until it says I'm going to go get it somewhere else. Then, it demands more, demands more, demands more, demands more, till I go get it somewhere else. When all the while Jesus says, "I have invited you to have a costly commitment with each other." "We know what real love is because Jesus gave up his life for us, so we also ought to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters." He gave up his life so we could become His brother and sister. We're now called to give up our lives for our brothers and sisters. Then, the last thing is this, a sense of destiny. A sense of purpose, if you will. Families have a sense of purpose. They have a vision, a mission, a sense of destiny, a focus, and because that's clear, all the decisions they make in life filter through that. Should we move here? Should we go there? Should we spend this money? Should we do this select sport? Should we do theater? Should we take this job? It all filters through purpose.

All throughout the Bible, every family analogy, God made Adam his son and put them in the garden to work it. The Israelites were set free as the children of God and they were called to go on and take the Promised Land. Jesus came as the Son of God, and He said, "I am here to do the work of the Father;" purpose. The New Testament Church, "Brothers and sisters, making disciples to the ends of the earth." You say, "So then what is our sense of purpose?" It's to be a movement of hope for a city and beyond. It's to reach the lost and make disciples and develop leaders and raise up the next generation. See, all the things that we talk about and lift up and point towards, they all come from values. What is the value of the next generation of this church? Why is it such a big deal to us? Because we're a family on mission. when you're a family, you live for the next generation, your ceiling becomes their floor, you want to lay down your lives so that they can thrive. In fact, I love what John says, "I have no greater joy than to hear my children walking in the truth."

He has no children! Yet, as an old man, he realizes, "No, no, my spiritual family is actually more real than whatever biological family I came from." Because why? We're part of a new destiny. We're a part of a new creation, and we're ultimately part of a new heaven and a new earth. Older people, we need next generations to raise up, mission, and next generation, 20-somethings and down, you need spiritual parents. Don't be so ignorant and arrogant to think you've got the world figured out. You need family, parents, in your life to help you. If you feel you got no parents, we got a bunch of parents here for you. If you feel you have no biological children, we have a whole room full of spiritual children just waiting for you.

Last two slides. When Jesus teaches us how to pray, "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name, Your Kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Do you see it? family, mission. Even Jesus is teaching us how to pray - family, mission. In other words, there is no mission if there is not first family. "Our Father," not my father, not your father; our Father. Because of Jesus, we are now part of a family that now has a mission. God only releases His kingdom through sons and daughters. He does not release his kingdom through spiritual

orphans. Family, mission. The reason you need both of those is because if you're a family and you have no mission, you're selfish. It's about you.

If you're not fighting giants and darkness out there, you are created to pioneer, so you will turn your family into giants and you will fight them. If your marriage or your family or the people you lived with is constantly in a sense of chaos and fighting, you probably have no mission. Because without mission, you'll become selfish, and mission without family is pointless. Because what is the mission? The mission is to go and get the orphans of this world and bring them home into a family. If you go into mission as a spiritual orphan with no family, you're literally taking them out of the orphanage of the world and bringing them into a religious orphanage, which is even worse. Because now you use all the divine words that we have, and you confuse people and make them think God is even worse than the devil.

Is this what your family looks like? Submitted to the Lordship of Jesus, engaged in loving relationships, sacrificially serving one another, a costly commitment to each other, and a sense of purpose and destiny. If not, this is God answering your prayer. For all the times you've prayed for your family, God's interrupting your life and saying there's more. Then, the question I want to ask you is, "Does your engagement with us look like this?" If not, that's okay. What's He inviting you to do? See, when you start to realize that family is messy, and frustrating, and disappointing, and hard, and broken, and yet is beautiful, and divine, and holy, and supernatural, it starts changing your perspective. The only question that you have to ask is, are you willing to give us the same grace that the Father has given you?

That's the ultimate definition between an orphan and a son. Am I willing to extend you the same grace that the Father gave me to adopt me into His family that He loved and brought Him great pleasure? If I give you grace, when you've offended me, frustrated me, hurt me, you didn't do what I wanted, then I literally just did what the Father did for me and that brings Him great pleasure. When you get the whole narrative of the Bible is God building a family for Himself, and you are a beloved son and daughter, you will start to see church, not as a gathering, not as a building, not as a religion, not as an organization, not as an institution, but as a family on mission.

Now, when that becomes the value of your heart, God's kingdom becomes the culture of your life. Our Father, your kingdom come in Jesus' name. Close your eyes with me. Come on. What's the Holy Spirit saying to you today? What's the Holy Spirit saying, whispering, moving in your heart, in your life. Come on, maybe today is your day of salvation. You're tired of being a spiritual orphan in this world and you just realize that Jesus came to die to bring you home. Maybe you're here and you're having an "a-ha" of how you think of yourself as a beloved son or daughter, but really, you live as a spiritual orphan. That's okay. Bring that to Jesus. Jesus, teach me.

Teach me to be a disciple, show me how to live as a son, as a daughter. Maybe for a lot of us, if we're honest, we just had a low view of church. Our biggest frustration of church is the people. Which is the only thing that Jesus died for. Maybe, just maybe, maturity is not more teaching. Maybe maturity is learning how to live in a family. Jesus, we want to do this a long time together, because that's how we become like You and that's what honors the Father. Holy Spirit, keep interrupting our lives, keep answering our prayers, and may we see You as the good Father that you are, and each other as the beloved brothers and sisters that they are.

Thank you Jesus for being the Son of God, and the Son of Man, so that we could come home. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.