

Well, hey, everyone. Welcome to our July Young Adult Gathering. Oh, my goodness. It's such an honor for me to be here. You see, I've heard so much about this amazing culture. This environment, this climate that you've created, and now to witness it firsthand, oh my goodness. This is amazing. So, thank you for having me here. By the way, whoever raised the age requirement so I could get in the door, thank you for that. Way to go. I realized I could be your great-grandfather, probably. But hey, here's the way I see it. There may be snow on the roof, but there's still fire in the furnace. You know what I mean? Come on. So, let's jump into our topic for tonight. We're in the middle of a series called, Learn From Me: Life in the Kingdom. And we've been focusing on what it means to be fully alive in the kingdom. What it means to live uncommon lives in an uncommon way. Yes. And here's the simple invitation from Jesus. He says, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." What I want you to catch is there's only one condition for a restful soul. Do you see it? It's the willingness to learn from Jesus. It's the willingness to just submit yourself, sit at His feet, and let His fresh revelation just wash over you. Based on what I've heard, I believe the answer is resoundingly yes, that you've been learning from Jesus. You see, Jesus is all in as our teacher. He's put all the chips in the middle of the table. He wants to be our teacher. The question is, do we want to learn? Well, you guys have been learning over the past several months. You've learned what it's like to be free from the world. What it's like to connect with God. What it's like to be spirit-filled, self-controlled individuals. And last month, Pastor Justin brought a great message on joy in every circumstance. And I hope you have gone and seen Inside Out 2. Because any day in which Joy conquers Anxiety, that's a good day. Amen? So, Jesus has been a great teacher for us. But whether you've been here for the past couple of months or this is your very first time, I've got good news for you. Jesus still wants to teach us more. So, there's more for us to learn, right? So, let me pray for us, and then we'll jump in. Father, thank You. Thank You for Your relentless desire to teach us wherever we are in our journey that You want to teach us. You want to meet us where we are. So, tonight, Father, our prayer is that we would come hungry. We would come humble ourselves before You and let You teach us afresh so that we can have souls that are at rest. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

So, the concept that I get to share with you tonight is what it means to find purpose in the mundane. You see, it's being who God has called us to be in the everyday trenches of life. It's leaning into the mission of God. Not just on that one hour on Sunday in which we gather and worship, but it's being a part of that mission on the 167 other hours in the week. That's what Jesus has for us tonight. Now, I don't know about you, but when I first heard that phrase, I felt like it was a little bit of a contradiction. A little bit of an oxymoron. You know what an oxymoron is? It's two words that seem to be plugged together, but they're in conflict with each other. You know? Things like advanced beginner, or minor crisis, or affordable housing. I mean, think about it. It feels like there is attention. What comes to mind when you hear the word purpose? You think of words like destiny. Destiny, goals, aspirations. These are lofty words, right? These are mountains to scale. These are rivers to cross. This is the passion of our heart to find purpose in the world. Those are lofty words. But then, you hear the word mundane. Or let me say it like

this, mundane. Or what? They're routine. They're tedious. They're boring. If purpose is a lofty word, this is a lowly word. Would you agree? And oftentimes we feel like what we do in the mundane is meaningless. So, what does Jesus want to teach us about finding purpose in the mundane? How was He able to live out his calling in the everyday, routine, tedious, unspectacular moments of life? That's the question we want to answer tonight. Are you with me? But before we do that, I want to give you an assignment. Can I do that? So, in the seat back pocket in front of you is a note card. Or it's on the floor of the first row. Grab a pen. Grab that card, and this is what I want you to do. Put on your thinking caps. What I want you to do is write down everything that you've done that's mundane in the last three days. Go ahead, start writing. Everything you've done. I don't care how commonplace, how routine, how unspectacular it is. Nothing is too insignificant. So, I'm going to give you two minutes. Ready, go. Write it down. And there may be a prize attached to this. It might be, "I studied." You might have worked out. You might have ordered pizza. You might have called your parents. No, wait a minute. That would be too spectacular. You might have paid bills. You might have taken the trash out. If you did it, write it down. Somebody's getting hand-crank over here writing so fast. This is good. This is where we cue the Jeopardy music. Do, do, do, do. Okay, keep writing. Come on. There are more things that you did. Did you study for a test? Did you have lunch with a friend? Whatever it is, write it down. Okay. You got a good list?

Now we want to play a game that we call, Match the Masters Mundane. Come on, get excited. Okay. What I'm going to do is give you a Scripture from the Bible, from one of the Gospels. Something that Jesus did in the routine commonplace aspects of His life. Now, when we think of Jesus, we think all He did was just preach and heal and cast out demons. And He did all of those things. But He did some routine things too. Right? And this is what I want to do is share a Scripture with you of these mundane things. And if you match from your list to what's up here, there may be a prize involved. Are you with me? The first one is this. "Isn't this the carpenter?" Now, the context here is Jesus has been preaching and teaching throughout Galilee, and He happens to go back to his hometown of Nazareth. He teaches in the synagogue, and everyone who listens to Him is amazed because He's so outstanding. And yet there's this clatter in the background of, you could almost hear the tone. "Isn't that Mary's boy who works with wood?" In other words, how in the world can He teach such amazing things when He's a carpenter? So, if you wrote down on your list anything having to do with your job, your occupation, what you do most days, then raise your hand. Come on, you're a winner. You're a winner. You're a winner. All right. You guys get the game. Next. "Then, people brought little children to Jesus for Him to place His hands on them and pray for them." Here is Jesus, the sustainer of the universe, holding snotty-nosed little kids. Come on. So, if you wrote down anything having to do with children, if you live with them, if you take care of them, or if you just like to play like one, raise your hand. I see that hand. Come on. Way to go. All right. Next, I love this one. Are you ready? "Suddenly a furious storm came up on the lake so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping." Right? I mean, this was a frog-strangling storm and yet He was in the halls sound asleep. So, if you said anything about sleeping or taking a nap, hey, you're a winner. You're a winner. One more. There you go. You look like you could use a nap. All right. Last, but

not least, this final one. This is Jesus meeting up with His disciples about a week after His resurrection. Think about it. He's in His glorified state. He just finished conquering the devil and death. And what do we find Him doing? Look at this. "When they landed, they saw fire burning coals there with fish on it and some bread. And Jesus said, 'Come and have breakfast.'" Jesus is cooking fish and chips on a beach a week after His resurrection. So, if you said anything having to do with food prep, let me see those hands. Way back in the back. Way back in the back. Do we have to do the CPR? I'm sorry. Okay. You guys were great. Give yourself a big hand for playing Match the Masters Mundane.

The whole point is that Jesus lived out His purpose in and through His mundane. For Him, it was not an oxymoron. It was not a contradiction. It was part of who He was because Jesus was very clear on what His purpose was. He knew He came to bring heaven to earth. He knew he came to set captives free. He knew He came to empty Himself so that others could be filled up. Yes? But Jesus was equally clear that His purpose had no boundaries or no limits. You see, He lived out His purpose every day, every way in the trenches of life. But unfortunately, team, we've got some stinking thinking. We've got this thinking that says, "Oh, yeah, what I do for God, that's sacred. That's spiritual." But everything else, it's secular. Right? Can I just tell you, that's a lie from the pit of hell. See, God cares about everything that we do. Everything we do matters to God. Can I say that again? Everything we do matters to God. There's no secular. There's no sacred. It's all sacred. Take a look at this verse. This is a great verse finding purpose in the mundane. I love this. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." If you spent any time here at Valley Creek, you know that we love to talk about the good news of Jesus, right? We love to talk about the Gospel and we frame it in terms of three circles. It's about identity, relationship, and purpose. You see, when you know who you are and you know whose you are, that's when you're empowered to release the kingdom, to live out your purpose in the world. Right? And what I love about this verse is all three elements are there. Let's start with identity. For we are, say we are. That's an identity statement. We are God's workmanship. You will never live out your purpose if you don't know who you are. I saw a T-shirt here recently that said, "I am as confused as a chameleon in a bag of Skittles." And that's the way most of us live, isn't it? We try to act and please whoever is in our sphere of influence. Whoever we're trying to impress. But we've got to stop living down to the world's expectations and start living up to who God says we are. We are His workmanship. The Word in the original is a beautiful, artistic, creative Word. It's a consummate, artistic treasure. That's who you are. You are God's handiwork. You are God's masterpiece. God doesn't make any junk. You agree? You are exquisitely designed for your unique, one-of-a-kind purpose. So, let's start living like it.

Next, he talks about relationship. Do you see that? Created in Christ Jesus. Our lives, the Scriptures say, are now hidden in Jesus. That means we were made to have a close, intimate relationship with Jesus. He wants to partner with us so He can show us how to bring hope to the people all around us. And finally, we see purpose, which God prepared beforehand. Those good works so that we would walk in them. Now, we see the phrase "good works" and we go,

"Oh, my goodness, there it is. God's going to make me hustle and work hard to please Him or He's going to be disappointed with me." No, no, no, no. There's nothing to prove here. You see, look at that last phrase. You don't work at your good works. You walk in them. It's like I've got a pair of old Crocs and when I put my feet into them, it just feels right. You probably have Oofos or something. I don't know. But you know what I'm talking about. When you know who you are and whose you are, your purpose effortlessly follows you wherever you go.

Now, some of you are still thinking, "Yeah, that's all good, but I'm not Jesus. And this whole purpose thing, frankly, it's brand new to me." So, where should I start? Well, let me give you three very simple suggestions. Can I do that? The first one is this. Start where you are, not where you want to go. Start where you are, not where you want to go. You see, we often think that our purpose must be grandiose to count. I've been around the block a few miles. I've seen several young generations like yours. And what I have observed among every young generation is that they have a disease. You've heard of FOMO, the fear of missing out? Well, this is FOBO, the fear of being ordinary. You see, we're afraid that we'll be an ordinary person in a non-glamorous job, living in a nondescript suburb, having nothing spectacular to boast about. Sort of like Jesus. Could we just kill the shaming and comparison around grandiose global activism? You know, we think if we don't solve world hunger, we're a nobody. Friends, I'm here to tell you, God will never use you to solve world hunger if you're not willing to serve your roommate. You got to just start where you are in the little things and let God grow you into more. So, what's He inviting you to do? To clean your apartment? To finish that project you started? To invite a friend to lunch? Whatever it is, the kingdom only flows through a surrendered will. So, just be obedient. Just start where you are. Secondly, realize you are the answer to setting others free. You are the answer to setting others free. After 430 years of oppression and slavery and bondage in Egypt, God saw fit to speak to His special servant, Moses. And Moses thought he was the least likely person to lead them out of bondage. But God spoke to Moses and said, "Moses, I have seen the misery of my people. I have heard their cries. I am concerned about their suffering. Now go. I am sending you." And Moses responded like most of us would respond. "Oh, You must have meant somebody else. You can't have meant me." Yes. And that's the message I want you to receive, to realize you're the answer to setting others free. But this is how it works. We get so focused on, "God, what do You want to do through me," that we forget He wants to start by doing something in you first. He wants to heal you. Remember Moses' response? "Oh, Father, I don't know how to speak. I'm so insecure." Well, God's going to expose your insecurity so He can heal them, and then you can go heal others. You see, you'll never break somebody else's chains unless you allow Jesus to break your chains first. So, realize you're the answer to setting others free.

And finally, my suggestion is look at your job as an offering to the Lord. As an offering to the Lord. You see, so many of us believe our jobs are just unnecessary evil. We think, "Oh, it's just a way I have to make money to pay the bills and it's a boring existence." But what if we saw our jobs, better yet, our work, through God's eyes? The Bible says, "Whatever you do, work it with all your heart as working for the Lord." Did you know your boss is not the man or woman at the

end of the hall? Your boss is Jesus. And Jesus wants to change your perspective on what you do. You see, a job is what you do to take care of yourself. Work is what you do to live out your creative purpose. A job is about your personal success. Working with God is about generational significance. Becoming a hope carrier to people in your sphere of influence. So, what would it look like if we saw our work differently? As an offering to the Lord. A number of years ago, I received a Father's Day card from my middle son. Grown son. And he said, he started off by confessing that he barely remembered anything from my early preaching days. No surprise there. But then, he thanked me for one message that just snuck into his memory bank. It was a message in which I was talking about bringing an offering to the Lord at work. And I said, "I cannot imagine from Joseph and Sons Carpenter Shop, Jesus putting out an inferior product. I can't imagine Jesus putting out a shoddy table." So, I close the message by saying, "For God's sake, let's make good tables." And my son closed by saying, "Thank you, dad, for showing me the value of making good tables." What I would like to do is invite the band to come back up. And I have to ask you a question. What's your offering to the Lord look like in the workplace? Are you mailing it in? Are you giving half-baked work product? Are you giving your very best in Jesus' name? You see, whether you're an accountant or a zookeeper, Jesus deserves your very best.

Before you is a table that a very gifted serve team member built for this occasion. I called him up several weeks ago and I said, "I need you to make me a table like Jesus would've made. I want it to be sturdy and solid and yet beautiful." I think he did a pretty good job, don't you? So, what I'd like to offer to you is a time of personal reflection as we hear the band sing over us. And the question I want you to ask yourself is, what kind of offering am I bringing to my Master, Jesus? Am I giving Him my very best? So, what I'd like you to do is take that card that you filled out and as an act of surrender, when you're ready, when your heart is so moved to just come and place it on this table. We're going to put it down on the floor for you to do that. And what I encourage you is, you invite Jesus into your mundane. Just say back to Him these words, "Lord, I offer You my every day in every way." Just come whenever you're ready. Let's respond together to God.