

All right. Hey everybody, welcome to Valley Creek. Come on, whatever your campus that you're at, let's just go ahead and welcome each other together for a moment. We are so glad you are here with us today. And we are in a big series called Follow the Cloud. We're talking about timeless principles in a fresh way. And really, follow the cloud is really the heart of who we are as a church. It's how we live our lives, it's how we lead this church, it's how we got from where we were to where we are, it's how we'll get from where we are to where we're going. And so we're just kind of talking about the big concepts of what we really believe as a people.

And we started the first week by just defining like what is follow the cloud. We said it's simply a physical picture of a spiritual truth that after 400 years of Egyptian slavery, God shows up to set His people free. And of all the ways He could choose to lead them, He does it through this big personal and present cloud. And He speaks to them and says, just follow me one next step at a time because I've not only set you free, I'm going to teach you how to live free. And we have this belief that wherever God is leading us is better than where we've been. And then we talked about taking next steps. And we said that God leads us in small steps, not in giant leaps. The next steps aren't expectations to fulfill, they're discoveries to be made. And next steps free us from the greatest bondage of all which is ourselves. Little by little, one next step at a time.

And then we talked about hearing God's voice. And we said the question is not is God speaking. The question is not even really, are you listening. The question is, do you value His voice. And what we've really been doing in this series is we're just kind of telling the stories of who we are as a family. See, we are a family on mission. We are not individuals who gather together to consume. We are not individuals looking for entertainment. No, no, no. We are a family on mission. And when you're a family, you need to know the family stories and you need to know the origin of where things come from. And so in a sense, that's what we've been doing in this series. Why? Because that's really the heartbeat of God He always wants that to be. In fact, He says to the Israelites, "Only be careful and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them."

God says to the Israelites, He says, hey don't forget. He says, don't be arrogant and don't lose sight of what I have done. Don't allow it to slip from your heart and teach it to your children and to their children after them. And so what they did is they took the stories of who God was and what He had done. And for generation after generation, they would gather around a fire, they would sit in a tent, they would gather around a meal, as they were walking down the road, and they would say let me tell you who God is and what He has done for us. All the way to Jesus and the Apostle Paul, they're literally talking about the Passover, the story of following the cloud, the Exodus. Why? Because it was such an important chapter of their family story that they kept telling it over and over and over again. And the same is true for us. See, you have a responsibility to give that which you have received.

And the question is not, do you know all this stuff. The question is not even, can you teach all this stuff. The question is, are you teaching this stuff. Are you passing it on to the generation and the generation after them? Because let's be honest, it's about every two years now that the generation changes. With technology and things that are moving, the world around us, things are changing so fast that we have to keep telling these things. What used to be a 20, 40-year generation is really now a two-year generation. Freely you have received, freely give." In the kingdom of God, you know you've received something if you can give it away. Are you with me on this? You see, years ago when our church started really growing and we started reaching a lot of people, we started moving forward, people started asking this question. They started saying like, what kind of church is Valley Creek? Like what kind of church is this?

What kind of church are you going to be? Who are you? And so we didn't really have a good answer for that at the time. And so we wrestled, and we prayed, and we sought God. We're like, God, what kind of church are we supposed to be? And we had this really simple answer that we felt like from the Lord. We just felt like we were going to be a Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled, life-giving church. Jesus-focused, we want to focus more on what Jesus has done for us than what we have to do for him. Spirit-filled, we want to walk in the character and in the power of Jesus. And life-giving, we want to receive and release the life of God wherever we go. Jesus is the narrow gate that leads to an ever widening life. And the reason our logo is green is because green is the color of life. And so that's who we are. And as we started walking that out, we had this deep sense of discontent. We would look at these churches around us, not necessarily in the city, but just churches at large and we would look at them and we would see some churches that just had this revelation of grace.

Like they knew Jesus, they knew the power of his grace, they knew what it could do in their lives. But they didn't necessarily worship or get involved in the city and develop leaders. And then we would see these churches that, man, they knew how to worship and meet with God. God's presence was thick among them, they knew God, they walked with God. But they didn't really develop leaders and sometimes they didn't really grasp grace. And then we would see these other churches and, man, they knew how to develop leaders. They knew how to develop people, reach people, get involved in the city and make a difference but they didn't necessarily have a grasp of grace and they often weren't really interested in worshiping. And so we had this deep discontent because somewhere in our soul we knew we had this longing for the grace of God. We knew we had this longing to be this worshiping church that walked with God and we knew we had this deep desire to develop leaders to release God's kingdom in the city.

And so we wrestled and wrestled and we couldn't find a model or a strategy or a structure that fit like we felt like what God is putting in our heart. And so one day we were in a meeting and we just wrote up on the whiteboard, grace, worship and leaders. And we sat there and we kept looking at it and analyzing it and trying to figure out what to do. And then we kind of drew a circle around each one of them. And then we kind of thought, well, what if we just put all three of them together. And the next thing you knew we put these three circles on the

board, grace, worship, leaders. And we started wrestling with the words and the vocabulary and what it could mean and what it could do and then all of a sudden one of our leaders walked up and pointed right into the center where the heart goes and says, that's the Father's heart, that God's heart for us is to receive his grace, experience His presence and release His kingdom.

And it was like a mind-blowing moment because this is the gospel. This is the fullness of what God wants to do. This is the Father's heart for your life and for my life that He wants to restore our identity, reconcile our relationship, redeem our purpose. And this is so simple and yet so profound. We so over complicate the gospel and we so under realize what Jesus has really done for us. And this has changed everything about who we are as a church. And it is so important for you to know this and to know where it came from because we're a family on mission. And as this started to change our lives and as this started to change our church, what I loved is that we found this in the story of the Exodus. You see, when God set the Israelites free, what we often think about is the physical journey. We think about crossing the Red Sea and wandering in the desert and the wilderness and fighting giants and gathering manna and all the physical stuff.

And while all that was a part of the process, freedom of the heart was the outcome. That all these physical steps were about leading to emotional, relational and spiritual freedom. That next steps weren't about where they would go or what they would do, it was about who they would become. In fact, before God even sets the Israelites free, look at -- I know this is a lot of words, stay with me. Look at what God says to the Israelites before He sets them free, "I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment. I will take you as my own people, and I will be your God. Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you to the land I swore with uplifted hand to give to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession. I am the LORD."

See if you can catch it. "I will free you from being slaves," identity. "I will take you as my own people and I will be your God," relationship. And, "I will bring you into the land and give it to you as a possession and your purpose will be to steward it and bring the kingdom," purpose. So before God even sets them free, He tells them very clearly what He is going to do for them. Do you notice all the I wills? I will. I will. I will. For I am the Lord. In other words, I am going to do all of this. Now, come with me on the journey and watch what I can do for you. You see, the three circles are all over. They're in every one of our buildings, they're in everything that we do. But most importantly they're in our heart.

So let me walk you through. This is what the three circles is. Are you ready? Come on, all the campuses, are you ready? So many of you, this is the first time you have really ever heard this. That's where it came from. Now, let me walk you through it. Here's how it starts. It all starts by

receiving His grace. Everything begins and ends with the grace of Jesus. Grace is undeserved favor and supernatural empowerment. Grace not only forgives you, it transforms your identity. "For you have been saved by grace, through faith. This is not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not by work so that no man can boast." You've been saved. The word *sozo* literally means to save, heal, make whole, set free and delivered. You have been saved by grace which means you didn't earn it, you didn't deserve it, you didn't achieve it, you didn't perform for it, you simply received it. You see, there's three words that you got to know. Judgment, mercy and grace.

Judgment is when you get what you do deserve. Mercy is when you don't get what you deserve. And grace is when you get what you didn't deserve. And on the cross Jesus was judged on our behalf so that you and I could receive mercy and grace. In Jesus, you are completely free and fully forgiven. He has forgiven your wickedness and remembers your sins no more. As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, there is no condemnation. You are now a new creation. The old is gone, the new has come. Which means God not only has canceled your debt, He's actually credited your account. You see, grace is so much more than forgiveness, it actually makes you a new person. It actually restores your identity.

This is one of the most foundational verses of the gospel in the Bible, "For just as through the disobedience of one man, Adam, in the garden, his failure, the many were made sinners. Identity statement. "So also through the obedience of the one man, Jesus, the many will be made righteous." Identity statement. So see if you can catch this. When Adam sinned, he ruined our identity. When you and I are born, we are literally born as sinners in a prison of sin. And we aren't sinners because we sin, we sin because we're sinners. We aren't sinners because we sin, we sin because we're sinners. Why? Identity determines behavior. Who you are determines what you do. And you were born in a prison of sin. The only thing you could do was sin. It was your nature, it was your identity, Adam wrecked it, Adam ruined it and there was nothing you could do to get out of it.

But then Jesus came. And Jesus came and he rescued you from this prison of sin and he now has put you in a position of righteousness because by faith you have received his grace. You now are the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. You are not righteous because you live righteously, you live righteously because you now are righteous. Why? Because identity determines behavior. And just like there was nothing good you could do to get out of the prison of sin, there is now nothing bad you can do to get out of the position of righteousness. You couldn't change your identity from there to here and you now can't change your identity from here to there. Why? Because I've now been included in Christ. As he is, so I am, which means everything that's true of Jesus is now true of you. Because he is righteous, so am I. Because he is loved, so am I. Because he is free, so am I.

Come on, when Jesus was baptized and he went under the water and came up and the Father spoke from heaven, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased," do you realize that is now true of 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. We are more than sinners saved by grace, we are beloved sons and daughters. That one truth will change your life. Come on, have you ever gone to God when you've messed up for forgiveness? Have you ever experienced deep internal transformation? Have you ever been empowered to do something you didn't think you could actually do? That's receiving His grace.

You are wanted, you are loved, you are set free, you are set apart, you are holy, you are righteous, you are accepted and you are significant in Jesus' name. And as I start to receive his grace and he changes my identity, I can't help but experience his presence or get into relationship with God. Come on, the barrier between us and God is sin. But the moment Jesus has come into my life and I receive his grace, sin no longer defines me, it's no longer my nature. So the barrier between me and God has now been removed once and for all. That's why the Bible says, "Therefore, boldly approach the throne of grace in your time of need that you may find mercy." Like you can run right to God. When Jesus was on the cross and he died, it says, "The curtain of the temple was torn in two." There was no more distance or barrier between us and God. God doesn't live in a temple made by human hands, He lives in here.

And He wants to fill you to the fullness of the measure of God. You weren't meant to serve a distant God, you were meant to walk with a loving Father. You are fully known, fully loved with no fear of rejection and just like my son can come right to me, you can go right to the father and you can be as close to God as you want to be. In fact, this is why God says, "'I will be a father to you and you will be my sons and daughters,' says the Lord." What God wants more than anything else is to have a relationship with you so He paid the way, he made the way so you and I could come running. I mean, do you remember at the end of Jesus' life when John, a grown man with an anger problem, is leaning back on Jesus' chest? That's a picture of experiencing his presence.

Have you ever been in worship and just came undone with emotion? Have you ever heard the Holy Spirit whisper to you? Have you ever just felt the peace of God come over you in the midst of chaos? Have you ever been alone and just felt like God came to be with you? That's experiencing his presence. He is good. He is loving. He is kind. He is compassionate. He is faithful. He is true. He is light. And he is life itself. And as I start to receive his grace and experience his presence, I can't help but now start to release his kingdom. He's restored my identity. He's reconciled my relationship with him. And now he redeems my purpose. See, you and I were created to rule and reign with God. We were commissioned on mission with God to bring his kingdom to this earth. That's why Jesus prays, he says, "Pray, 'Your kingdom come, your will be done.'"

You and I, we've been given the keys of the kingdom of heaven. We have the authority to reach into heaven and bring the realities of heaven to the brokenness of this world. The kingdom within you is meant to become the kingdom around you, just bringing the rule and reign of God wherever you go. In fact, Genesis 1:28, another one of the most foundational verses in the Bible. This is the purpose of humanity. "God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it using all its vast resources in the service of God and men.'" God has blessed you and He's told you what your purpose is. It's to be fruitful. To live a life of productive beauty, bringing things in your care to the fullness of their potential, to multiply, to reproduce the life of God in you and the world around you, to fill the earth or your area of influence like your home, school, work with the knowledge of the glory of the goodness of God. Subdue it, bring order to chaos, bring peace to despair, bring hope to darkness.

And then use your resources to accomplish God's purposes in the lives of men. Come on, if sin management is the goal of our life, we are in danger of living a drastically inferior life to the life that God created for us. You're a hope carrier. And when you know what your purpose is, you don't have to do the rebellious or apathetic teen years, you don't have to do the wandering 20s, you don't have to do the disillusioned 30s. Is this hitting home yet? You don't have to do the midlife crisis 40s and 50s. Maybe that's where it hits home. You don't have to do the regretful 60s or the purposeless 70s and 80s. Why? Because I'm a servant leader as long as I'm on this Earth and I've been empowered by God to bring his kingdom into the world around me.

Have you ever used your spiritual gift to build up someone else? Have you ever encouraged someone who is down? Have you ever stopped a bad conversation and instead released life into its midst? Have you ever brought order to chaos? That's what releasing his kingdom looks like. Come on, you were created to lead, to love, to serve, to bless, to honor, to create, to dream, to design, to prophesy, to preach. You are a hope carrier in Jesus' name. And where those three circles cross, it's the Father's heart. Jesus says, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father but by me." In other words, Jesus is the way but the Father is the destination. So your Promised Land is not a place, it's a discovery of who you are, who God is and what you are created to do. And He leads you there one next step at a time. Now, you still with me on this?

Now, this is how it all works together. As I receive His grace, I'll experience His presence and I'll release His kingdom. When I know who I am, I'll know who He is and I know what I'm created to do. When my identity is restored, I'll have a reconciled relationship and a redeemed purpose. When I know I'm a beloved son or daughter, I will run to my Father and I will spend my life building His kingdom. When I know I am forgiven, I will never be afraid of God and I will live a life of incredible purpose. But the opposite is also true if I resist His grace, I'll avoid His presence and I'll spend my life building my own kingdom. If I don't know who He is or if I don't know who I am, I won't know who He is and I won't know what I'm created to do. If I don't have a restored identity, I won't have a reconciled relationship and I won't have a

redeemed purpose. If I believe I'm a spiritual orphan, I'll be afraid of God and so I'll spend my life trying to earn His approval.

If I live with shame and guilt, I will be afraid of God and I will try to do my own thing my own way. But here's the real problem. A lot of us start in circle three and we go backwards. We do to try to become, not realizing that in Jesus we already are so we're free to live. We start here and we try really hard, we behave better, we do more so that God will one day accept us so we can pay for the brokenness of our past. I try to perform, to achieve, to earn because I want God to accept me because eventually I want to become significant somewhere in my life. This is why we're so focused on how we look, what we do, where we go, how we perform because we want God to accept us and we want to become someone, not realizing that in Jesus we already are.

This is drawn by grace. This is driven by expectations. And this is an exhausting way to live. This is religion going against the current of grace. And it's how so many of us live our lives. I mean if you think about what God does, God tries to change what we believe, we try to change how people behave. God tries to change what we believe about who we are, who He is and what we were created to do, we just try to change how people behave. We want to conform them and make them on the outward act the way we want them to act. But that doesn't work. I mean if we spend more time talking about what we have to do than what Jesus has done then something is wrong because he said it is finished, not go work on it.

Just making sure you're still with me. I know it's a lot of teaching today but there's no other way to do this, right? Identity determines behavior. Who you are determines what you do. So if you've been around and you know this, help me out here at every campus, ready? Fish swim, birds --

Fly.

Cows --

Moo.

Dogs --

Bark.

Cats --

Meow.

Annoy. It's always annoy no matter what. No matter what we're teaching, how we're -- it's always annoy. Sinners –

Sin.

Righteous people --

Live righteous.

Beloved sons and daughters live free in their Father's kingdom. Identity determines behavior. And this is where you have to go back to the Israelites. Yes God had set them free but they still fought like slaves. They had been set free, but they weren't living free.

They still thought of themselves as slaves. They saw God as a task master. And they had spent their life making bricks for Pharaoh, so that's all they thought they had. So every step of the journey was not about getting somewhere or doing something, it was about freeing them. It was about exposing and revealing the brokenness in their own hearts so God could heal it and restore it. It's why we watch and as they sit there and they grumble and they grumble and they grumble, it's because they don't believe that they are who God says they are. It's why we watch as they build the golden calf to worship an idol, it's because they don't really believe that they have a relationship with God. It's why we watch as they refuse to go in and take the Promised Land because they don't feel like they're empowered to actually go and defeat giants. So every situation of every day, every circumstance was an invitation for them to learn to live free. That's why every day God invited them to go gather manna because it was a daily invitation to just go receive fresh grace for today.

It was why when he didn't give them water in an easy way in the desert. He was testing them to see, will you still trust that I am good and that I will take care of you? It's why he brings them into the Promised Land and invites them to go fight giants because He wants to show them that they are capable of so much more than they realize. And so now the question is you, what situation or circumstance or pain or struggle or issue are you in in your life right now? What is the invitation that God's extending to you? And that thing, that season, that situation, that decision, that challenge, that choice, whatever it is, is He inviting you to receive His grace, experience, his presence, or release his kingdom? What's he trying to expose and unearth? Maybe you're going in the wrong direction and He's trying to show you that so you can move with the current of grace.

You see, everything in your life you can just track it back. Every behavior, every brokenness, every struggle, literally you can start here and just track it back like a student who is constantly changing who they are and struggling with their own integrity and character to fit in. What's the real problem? They don't know who they are in Jesus. How about the business person that's striving, struggling, earning, performing all the time? What's the real problem? The real



problem is they don't realize that in Jesus they are already as significant as they will ever be. What about the single who's looking for love in all the wrong places? Well, the real problem is that they don't believe they are loved by God, they're trying to find love everywhere else. What about the person who's constantly gossiping about others? Well, what gossip is it's judgment of another person and the reason I'm judging you is because I really believe God is judging me.

What about the person who refuses to forgive and let go of that offense, the real problem is, track it back, they don't really believe that God has forgiven them. Are you catching me on this? What about the person living in apathy? They really don't know that God is for them and that God has empowered them to be the beloved son or daughter with authority to release his kingdom. Like all you have to do is start asking yourself questions and tracking it back. Like the person who does something wrong and gets challenged by it, if I react to the challenge, it's because I think God is mad at me and I don't really believe I'm forgiven. But if I repent, it's because I know God loves me and I know this sin does not define me. So you can literally track everything back. So my question for you is this, why do you do what you do? This is the real question. If you want to know like what this whole message was about, it's just to this right now. Why do you do what you do? Why do you act the way you act?

Why do you talk the way you talk? Why do you think the way you think? Why do you behave the way you behave? Like ask yourself those questions because those are revealing to you what you actually believe about who you are, who God is, what you were created to do. See, this is the gospel. The gospel is not just for salvation, it's for all of life. And this is a simple way to just illustrate that it's not about getting to heaven one day. No, no, no. It's about learning to live free today. Like this is super relevant to your work dysfunction. This is super relevant to your marriage problems. This is super relevant to the anxiety that you can't get free from. Why? Because you just have to stop here at the behavior point and ask yourself, why am I doing this? Why do I act like this? Why do I feel like this? And then ask yourself the question, do I really experience His presence and am I receiving His grace? And you'd be amazed at how it all starts to come to life.

Come on, look at this. I love this, it says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes." The gospel is good news. It's not a good idea, it's not a good suggestion, it's not a good theory, it's good news. What is news? News is something that has already happened. It's taken place, it's over, it's done. So good news is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It's done. There's no question whether or not it happened and it now changes everything. The good news is that Jesus died, was buried, rose again from the grave to restore my identity, reconcile my relationship with God and redeem my purpose. And this now changes everything. It's why it says, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to those of us who are being saved, it is the power of God."

The gospel might be foolishness to the person sitting next to you right now, but to those of us being saved, it's the power of God that changes us from the inside out. Come on, are you with me on this? And this is the entire Bible. If you go through it and you just start looking, you'd be amazed. Track with me on this. The prodigal son, right? He comes home, what happens? The Father says to him, 'My son has come home,' identity. Runs and gives him a hug, presence. And gives him a robe, a ring of, sandals, restores his purpose. Peter in Luke 5 when Jesus comes to call him, tells him to throw out his net so full of fish, that's grace. Kindness leads us to repentance. And then what happens? Peter is afraid, hits his knees, he's aware of his sin. Jesus says, "Don't be afraid. We're now together. And from now on, you'll no longer catch fish, you'll fish for men." How about Ezekiel 36, "I'll remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you and I will move you. I will empower you to keep my commands, decrees and laws."

How about Second Corinthians 5, "If anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. The old is gone, the new has come. He has reconciled us unto himself and given us the message of reconciliation that we are now Christ's ambassadors. How about Jesus? When he calls up his apostles, he designates them apostles, identity statements, that they might be with him. This is Mark 3, that he might send them out to preach the kingdom, heal the sick and raise the dead. How about Genesis 1:26, when God says, "Let us make man in our image," identity. Likeness, relationship, presence and let them rule, purpose. It's all over the Bible. It's all over the Bible. Everywhere you look, it's the order. He gives us grace, He draws us into presence and He empowers us with purpose and we just keep going and we just keep going, little by little momentum starts to build and every time you keep moving, every next step you take, you go deeper and deeper into the Father's heart. You start to live free.

So what's your gospel story? It's all over the Bible, all over the Bible. What's yours? I don't know you, but I would bet it would be something like this. The grace of God showed up in your life and it came to find you and it was kindness that led you to repentance and you started to discover that you were forgiven and free. And because of that, your heart longed to be with this God who loved you and so you moved towards Him. And as this relationship with Him began to build, you moved into your life and you started to realize why you were here, what you were created for, not just to be selfish or do your own thing or go your own way, no, everything started to change. What's your gospel story? And maybe a better question for so many of us here today is what's your most recent gospel story?

Because it's not just salvation 20 years ago, yeah, yeah, yeah, I met Jesus. Great. Really glad you did. What's the gospel story for today? What's the gospel story for today? When was the last time in the midst of your performing, earning, achieving, trying harder, doing better, struggling, being worried about the way you look, your shame, your guilt, your performance that you just stopped, said God, I need to receive your grace? When was the last time in the midst of your idolatry, rebellion, religion, loneliness you just stopped and said God, I need to experience your presence? When was the last time in the midst of your apathy, your

selfishness, your busyness, your boredom you stop to say God, I want to release your kingdom into this situation right now? See, there's a really big difference between being set free and living free.

And we've reduced the gospel down to just setting us free. If the gospel was just setting us free, then the cloud would have never appeared. God would have just freed them, brought them out of Egypt, crossed the Red Sea and said, peace. The whole point of the cloud was to help them take one next step at a time to discover who they are, who God is, what they were created to do little by little. That is the journey. And what's amazing to me if you go all the way back to that passage we started with Exodus 6, when God tells them what they are about to do through Moses, what He is about to do. Moses reported this to the Israelites but they did not listen because of their discouragement and cruel bondage. In other words, God told them the gospel and what he wanted to do in their life, but they didn't believe it because of the hardship of the world around them.

Can I just ask you? What do your behaviors reveal about what you really believe? Because like the Israelites, it's really easy to say, we've been set free by a good God, but still live like slaves, still see Him as a taskmaster and still spend our lives making bricks for the king of the kingdom of darkness when all the while, He just wants to set you free. God is good. Jesus has forgiven. You are loved and everything is possible. Next steps are not expectations to fulfill, they're discoveries to be made. And we don't take next steps to do something for God, we take next steps to discover everything He has already done for us.

And if you don't take them, He's not mad at you, He's not going to get you, He's not going to take it out on you, He's going to come back around with kindness to lead you to repentance. He's going to give you even more grace to draw you unto himself because this is the way of Jesus. This is the way of religion. You don't have to go against the current of grace anymore. You don't have to try harder, behave better, do more, perform, to earn a relationship with God to pay for your sin or become significant. In Jesus, you already are significant and the Father already loves you and you have already been empowered to do great things with Him.

The Father's heart is for you to live free, so he sent Jesus to change everything. So you close your eyes with me. Come on, I know that's a lot of teaching today, but what does the Holy Spirit want to say to you? In this moment right now, what is God declaring over your life? What is He whispering and drawing you towards? Maybe today is your day of salvation. If you've never put your faith in Jesus, it's just simply -- it's as simple as just saying, Jesus, I receive your forgiveness. I believe the good news that you came, you died, you were buried, you rose again and now you offer me new life. I receive it in Jesus' name.

Maybe for so many of us we just wake up realizing seeing this and realizing, man, I'm going against the current of grace. Maybe that's why my life is so hard right now because I'm trying to earn it, I'm trying to achieve it, I'm trying to perform for it, I'm trying to make God love me

when He already does. I'm trying to become someone when I already am. I'm trying to find a purpose when I've already got one. The great invitation from God is not to just be set free, it's to learn to live free by allowing Jesus to restore our identity, reconcile our relationship and redeem our purpose.

This is the way of Jesus one next step at a time, little by little and then one day you wake up and you realize how different you are, how far you've come, how good God is and how much purpose you have. Jesus, thank you for the gospel. Father, thank you that it's about what you do, not what we have to do. Make it so in our hearts, make it so in our church and make it so in this city, in your name we pray, amen.