

Alright. Hey, everybody. Welcome to Valley Creek. Come on, whatever campus you're at, let's just celebrate those changed lives one more time together. We are so proud of you. We are so grateful for how God is moving. And if you ever wondered if there was hope for you, the answer is yes. And so wherever you are and whatever is going on in your life, I am so glad that you are here with us today.

And I want you to remember those baptisms in your mind as we go through our time together because we are just about done with the series we've been in, called Follow the Cloud. And for the past few weeks, we've been taking a look at the story of the Israelites. After hundreds of years of Egyptian slavery, God sees their misery, he hears their cry, he's concerned of their suffering, so he comes and he sets them free. And then he teaches them how to live free. And he gives them a pillar of cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night to lead them one next step at a time from Egypt to the Promised Land. And he takes them to the Promised Land and leads them into a land full of giants, fortified cities and battles to show them what they are capable of.

And it is a physical picture of a spiritual reality. It is our story. And the same journey that the Israelites were on is the same journey that we're on. You see, God is inviting us one next step at a time to receive his grace, experience his presence and release his kingdom.

This is the three circles, the simple little analogy we use around here really to define the gospel. When I know who I am, I know who God is and I know what I'm created to do. When I live as a beloved son, I will run to the Father and I will spend my life releasing his kingdom. When I know I'm forgiven, I'll never be afraid of God and I will spend my life living free.

But the opposite is also true. If I resist his grace, I'll avoid his presence and I'll spend my life doing my own thing. If I don't know who I am, I have no idea who he is and I have no idea what I'm created to do. If I believe I'm a spiritual orphan, I'll be afraid of God and I'll spend my life trying to become significant. If my life is full of shame and guilt and condemnation, I will always avoid God and I will spend my life trying to build my own kingdom.

You see, we are drawn by grace, not driven by expectations. And we talked about circle one. We said circle one, everything starts there. It's the most important circle. No one ever graduates from the school of identity. That grace forgives our sins, changes our identity and empowers us to live free. And as I receive his grace, I move into the space of experiencing his presence. Circle two is the great privilege of your life. That you are fully known, fully loved, with no fear of rejection. That you can be as close to God as you want to be. That you literally carry his presence on this earth.

And as I experience his presence, it moves me into circle three, and circle three is where it gets real interesting. See, circle three is the great empowerment of your life. It's the why you're here, why you're alive, why you were created, what you are empowered to do. And circle three

gets real interesting because our behaviors reveal our beliefs. The actual behaviors of your life reveal what you actually believe. You can say what you want all day long about who you are and who God is, but your behaviors actually tell us what you really believe.

So we've been saying all throughout the series that identity determines behavior. Who you are determines what you do. Come on. One more time. Help me out. Dogs bark. Cats meow. Good. Cows moo. Sinners sin. Righteous people live righteously. Beloved sons and daughters spend their life releasing their Father's kingdom. And so if mission, releasing God's kingdom, a life of purpose is not a part of my life, then it's telling me that I don't actually believe this is true. That instead of being drawn by grace, I'm driven by expectations and I'm going against the current of grace. And this is how a lot of us live our lives, backwards. We try harder, behave better, do more so that God will accept us so that one day we can be forgiven and become significant.

And so we try to swim upstream. Try harder, behave better, do more. I'm going to get it right. I'm going to say the right thing. I'm going to do the right thing. I'm going to make God be proud of me. And we're swimming upstream and it's exhausting. Like I grew up on the Niagara River. You can swim as hard as you want and you will not make any headway upstream. You might be able to hold your place for a little while but eventually the flow is so strong that you give up and it just sweeps you away. And that's what we try to do and then eventually "voo", it sweeps us all the way back to circle one and God says, "Now, now I got you back where I want you to be because my grace is sufficient for you and my power is made perfect in your weakness."

In other words, God says, "Stop with the external behavior modification and let me give you some internal transformation. Let's start with grace because my grace can change your Enneagram number, your personality profile, the addiction, the struggle, the brokenness, the pain." His grace can change any and everything in your life. The kingdom starts inside-out. Circle one, then two, then three, which is why Jesus says, "I am the vine, you are the branches. If a man remains in me," circle one, grace, "and I in him," circle two, presence, "he will bear much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

In other words, if I receive his grace, I'll experience his presence and naturally and effortlessly, the fruit of the kingdom will start showing up in my life. You were created to release God's kingdom. It's your purpose. It's your why. It's why you were created. And if we want to understand what we were created to do, you got to go all the way back to the Garden of Eden because when Adam sinned, he not only wrecked our identity and broke our relationship with God, we lost sight of our purpose.

I mean, the first thing that God says to humanity when they were created is their purpose. It says, "God blessed them." You're blessed when you know your why. And said to them, "Be

fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it using all its vast resources in the service of God and man." This is one of the most important verses in the Bible because it tells you why you're alive. To be fruitful. To live a life of productive beauty. Bringing things to their fullest of potential. To multiply. To reproduce the life of God in you and to the world around you. To fill the earth or your area of influence with the knowledge of the glory of the goodness of God. To subdue things. To bring order to chaos, and hope to despair, and peace to storms. And then to use your resources to accomplish God's purpose in the lives of men.

God made Adam and Eve in his image and his likeness and he puts them in the Garden of Eden, a picture of the kingdom of God. And he commissioned them to rule and reign with him. And what he decided to do in his wisdom, that as Adam and Eve increased and advanced, they would take the Garden of Eden and eventually they would spread the kingdom to the four corners of the earth. All around the globe that they would defeat Satan who rebelled against God and was thrown down to earth, a created being. He decided in his wisdom he would defeat the rebellious one through man made in his image, in his likeness, who would choose to worship, choose to obey and choose to walk with God.

And what you and I have to understand is that work is good. Oh, this is going to hurt some of you. See, before Adam and Eve sinned, God created them and said, "Work the garden. Tend it. Steward it." Work was good. It was a gift of God. It was part of our purpose. It was part of our commission. But when we sinned, we broke it and Satan has come in and he so tried to distort it. And so this whole thought process we have now of the great resignation -- I just want to own my own time, I want the path of least resistance in personal happiness, I want to do the least amount of work possible and make the most amount of money possible, I want to get other people to serve me.

Okay. Do you understand that's demonic? I told you it was going to hurt. Satan wants to convince you that work is bad because he knows what you were created to do. And so when Jesus says to Peter, he says, "Get behind me, Satan. You do not have in mind the things of God but the things of man," what he is saying is worldly thinking is agreement with darkness. So when I think like the world about work, I'm actually in agreement with the kingdom of darkness.

In fact, Paul says, "If Jesus wasn't raised from the dead, we should be pitied more than all peoples on the earth." And if he wasn't raised from the dead, then we should spend our lives eating, drinking and being merry for tomorrow we die. And a whole lot of us spend our lives like Jesus didn't rise again from the grave. We want to eat, drink and be merry, thinking that tomorrow we die. The only problem is that Jesus did rise, again, from the grave. So we're not supposed to eat, drink and be merry, have the great resignation be a part of our life. "I just want to control my own time."

I've got a mission and a purpose from God. And it's this. The problem is it's been distorted and instead of being fruitful, we're barren. And we consume and we take life. Instead of multiplying, we divide everyone from everything. Instead of filling the earth with the knowledge of the glory of the goodness of God, we fill our lives with the things of this world. Instead of subduing things, we bring chaos to stuff. And instead of using our resources for the good of others and accomplishing God's purpose in their life, we use God and man to get a bunch of resources for ourselves.

And so as we've been going through this whole series, it brings us to circle three, and this is where God wants to open our minds back up. You see, even though Adam and Eve sinned, God never gave up on the purpose of humanity. Let me walk you through these verses really fast because what you'll see is that in every major juncture in the Bible, God re-declares your purpose over your life.

Look at this. After Adam and Eve fell then God cleared the earth, right, with the flood with Noah. God blessed Noah and his sons and said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth." There it is again, their purpose. That didn't work out so well and so then God made a covenant with Abraham. He said, "I will make you into a great nation. I will bless you, I will make your name great and you will be a blessing and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." We were created to be blessed by God and to release his blessings into the world around us.

Then you get to the Israelites. And as they go in to take the Promised Land, "Little by little, I will drive them out before you until you have increased enough to take the possession of the land." God says, "I want you to go and demonstrate and declare what my kingdom looks like in this land. Little by little, as you increase and advance, you will take it."

Or how about when they're in Babylonian captivity, in exile. When you think God would just say to them, "I know it's so hard," he says, "No. Seek the peace and the prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into the exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper." In other words, it doesn't matter how bad your situation or your circumstances, your purpose doesn't stop. And as you release the kingdom around you, you experience it for yourself.

Or how about when Jesus says, "Come and follow me and I will make you fishers of men." Interesting that Jesus doesn't invite us to a ticket to heaven, he invites us to be a part of the mission of God. Or how about what we did today. "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," as Jesus is ascending to heaven after his resurrection. Or how about when the Holy Spirit is about to be poured out, "You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you and you will be my witnesses. You'll tell about who I am and what I have done in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth."

At every major juncture, God re-declares you were created to release his kingdom. To walk with wisdom. To have character and integrity. To be full of compassion and kindness. To give his love to a hurting, broken world. Are you with me on this? You see, the question we have to ask ourselves is this -- what is the kingdom then? Some of you, you hear I use this word all the time, "kingdom, kingdom, kingdom". You're like, "What is the kingdom?" Is the kingdom the church? Is the kingdom a place? Is it a realm? What is the kingdom?

Well, the kingdom is a multifaceted, multidimensional, multigenerational physical and spiritual reality. You're like, "I have no idea what that means." So let me simplify it down for you in this. The kingdom is simply the rule and reign of God. It's where things are in submission and surrender to the lordship of Jesus. It's where they're in agreement and alignment with God's heart. In fact, Jesus says, "Your kingdom come, your will be done." So wherever God's will is done, that's where his kingdom has come.

So God's kingdom starts in his heart and it extends to wherever his will is done, wherever his rule and reign is. And Jesus tells us that as followers of Jesus, the kingdom of God is within you. So the kingdom starts where the Father is and it goes all the way to you. And wherever you are, that's where the kingdom is. In fact, maybe the best analogy I can give you is think about your phone for a second. Like what is the Verizon network? If you had to explain that to me, how would you explain that to me? You'd be like, "I ain't got no idea. I can't see it. I can't necessarily taste it. I can't touch it. I can't describe it but I know it. I know wherever I am, if I turn on my phone, there's the Verizon network. And I can access all the information and all the data and all the resources and it can actually come out of my phone and influence the environment that I'm in." That's the kingdom.

Wherever you are, that's where the kingdom is. And you have the authority and the ability to access all of the wisdom, all of the resources, all of the hope, all of the power of the kingdom of heaven and it releases around you to influence the very environment that you're in. It's the rule and reign of God being released out of your life into the environment around you. So here's the question for you. Are you a part of the mission of God in any way?

Like in any way, are you a part of the mission of God? Do you give, serve, lead, make disciples, pray, invite, create culture? Like are you releasing his kingdom or are you building yours? See, I think if we're honest for a lot of us, here's our life goes. Me, work, family, school, somewhere in here, Jesus, and mission isn't even on the table. What Jesus asks us to have -- Jesus and then release his kingdom into any and every other area of our lives.

Come on, are you releasing his kingdom or are you building yours? And if you're not releasing his kingdom, why? Track it backwards. It's what I've been trying to tell you this whole series. This is where it gets really interesting. If you're not releasing his kingdom, I already know why for you. It's because you're not experiencing his presence and you're not receiving his grace.

Because the forgiveness of Jesus leads me to be a part of the mission of God. So if there's no mission of God in my life, I probably feel distant from God and I'm probably not allowing his forgiveness and his grace to flow into my life.

So you can just track it backwards. Like if your money is all about you, well, then you probably don't believe that God is a provider and you probably believe you're a spiritual orphan. You need to take care of yourself. If your time is all about you, you probably don't believe that God is for you and you need to use your time to take care of you because you got to become significant in some way. If you don't serve other people, it's because you don't believe that Jesus has served you. If there's no passion in your life for the things of God, then you don't believe that Jesus is actually passionate about you. Are you catching me on this?

If you live your life people-pleasing, it's because you don't believe that God already loves you just as you are, and you're insecure. And so you're trying to please people because you're trying to become the king of your own kingdom. You're trying to gain and draw glory unto yourself. If there's no mission in your life, track it back. Just ask yourself the question, why? Because all throughout the Bible, people who truly receive his grace and experience his presence, they can't help but release the kingdom of God out of their life. This is why this one, you can play the church, religion game, say whatever you want all day long, it's when you get to right here, your behaviors reveal what you actually believe. And that's a great thing.

Some of you these last couple of years as I've been telling you things like this, it's like, if you're not part of the mission of God, you don't release the kingdom in any way, great, just say that. And it just messes with some of you. Like, just flat out be like, "I got no interest in the mission of God. Yup, I'm trying to build my own kingdom." That is a great step of faith. You're like, "What? Who is this guy? What is he talking about?" Because you're being honest, and honesty is the beginning of breakthrough. The worst thing is to deceive ourselves and others by being like, "Oh, yeah, I'm part of the mission of God. The kingdom is flowing out of my life every way," when you're trying to be the king of your own kingdom. Come on. Are you with me on this?

Think of the Israelites. This was their problem. God brings them to the Promised Land. He says, "Go in and take it." Promised Land, land flowing of milk and honey. And they look in there and there are some giants and some walls and some battles, and here's the problem. They couldn't go take the land because they didn't believe that God was with them and they thought they were grasshoppers, literally what it says. But they weren't grasshoppers. They were beloved sons. And of course God was with them, but their behavior proved they didn't believe it.

So for 40 years, God led them around the desert and every next step he had them take was designed to increase their belief in who they were, who God was, and what they were created

to do. And 40 years later, they finally had enough faith to say, "We're children of God and God is with us and those giants do not stand a chance against us."

So God will lead you to face giants to show you the power that's at work within you. He'll lead you into battles to show you that you are victorious. He'll lead you into possibilities to show you he is the God of breakthrough. And what I love about this is the gospel frees me from me. It frees me from having to be my own king building my own kingdom. It frees me from me. Because hear me, if you're building your own kingdom and it's about you, just be clear again about what you're doing. You have literally set up a kingdom in rebellion against God's kingdom. So just catch the fight that you're picking. I would encourage you to go fight the giants more than try to exalt yourself over God because he says he will lift up those who humble themselves but he will humble those who exalt themselves.

And for those of you that are living a mission-centric life, like you are on mission, you are releasing the kingdom, can I just encourage you? Stop comparing your life to the people of this world. Listen, I've been on mission since I've been in my early 20s. It's my whole life. My whole life is mission and releasing his kingdom. I have never, since I've been in my early 20s, been able to compare my life to my peers because it's not a relevant comparison. I can't compare how they spend their money, and how they use their time, and how they do their relationships, and how they do their work, and how they raise their children, and what they buy and where they go and what they do. Why? Because they're living the worldly life and I'm on mission. And those two things have no comparison. There's no connectivity.

You've got to stop comparing kingdom calling and worldly living. All you're doing is discouraging yourself. Come on. Think of Jesus. Jesus was the suffering servant and he never once compared his hardships to Herod's luxurious living. Think of the Israelites. All they want to ever do is go back to Egypt. God's like, "I got a mission for you. I got a calling for you. Let's go." And they're like, "Can we go back? We want to go back to Egypt. There was free food there." Literally what it says, free food. They're like, "There was a free buffet." Like do you realize you were a slave and that was slaves' food, but you want to go back? Okay.

Like at some point, we got to wake up and realize you can temporarily satisfy your flesh by building your own kingdom, but you will only be able to satisfy your soul when you start releasing his. So at some juncture in our life, we got to wake up and stop -- like I just, I'm seeing so many people right now. Oh, it's so hard. I don't know and everybody else in the world -- this Jesus thing and this all -- just stop. They're not relevant comparison points. Everyone in the Bible who was on mission had some hardship in their life, but they also had rest in their soul because they were living a life of purpose. There's no rest in your soul without kingdom purpose. Are you with me on this?

Now, think about Moses for a second. God comes to Moses and says, "I've seen the misery of my people. I've heard them crying out and I'm concerned of their sufferings so now go, I'm

sending you." God says, "Moses, I've seen all the brokenness, all the pain of the people and I have handpicked you to go set them free. You are my answer to their prayers." And Moses responds by saying, "Whoa, whoa, whoa, who am I, God? I can't do it." And God responds by saying, "I will be with you." He didn't respond by saying, "Oh, Moses, of course you can do it. You're so amazing. You're the greatest person I've ever created in all of history." He says, "No, Moses, you can go do it because I will be with you."

See, God picks you knowing you're the answer to setting someone else free. And he puts you in a position that is perfectly designed to expose your insecurities so that he can set you free in the process. Mission and the life of the kingdom flowing through us is not really about what God's doing through you, it is so much more about what God is doing in you. And as you release the kingdom into the world around you, what's happening is it's actually healing and freeing you in the process.

So God's picked you to free other people. This is why I love our church. We've said this for years. We're a whole lot more like Home Depot than we are Burger King. Burger King is "Have it your way", Home Depot is "You can do it, we can help". Okay, we are not Burger King. I don't really care if you want two pickles and extra onion and no mustard. We don't care about your way, we care about God's way. We're like Home Depot, "You can do it, we can help."

You can do it. We believe in you. We believe that God has called you and we can help. And so this is a training center designed to lift you up and rise you up and send you out. In fact, look what Jesus says. "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing and he will do even greater things than these." What did Jesus do? He went around destroying the works of the devil, healing people, setting people free, bringing life to brokenness. And he has sent you to do those same things.

We have such a low view of who we are. Our whole goal is to avoid sin. Our whole goal is to build up a retirement account. Our whole goal is to get enough people under me so that I don't have to work anymore and can be just fed money all day long and spend it however I want. That is just a really low way of living when the Holy Spirit is in you, and the kingdom is in you, and you're the head and not the tail, and you have the mind of Christ and he has given you the wisdom of God and all authority has been given under Jesus and he's transferred it unto you. Like we got to wake up and realize we are hope carriers in Jesus' name.

Come on. Some of you, you got to wake up to this reality. And here's the deal. Maybe you're still like, "No, ain't doing it much for me." Track it back. If mission doesn't ignite your heart, it's because you're not experiencing his presence or receiving his grace. Just track it back. That's the coolest part about the three circles is any behavior, struggle, emotion, feeling, reality, just track it back. Just ask God and be like, "Why right now am I just like wanting to get out of here and get to lunch?" Again, just ask God that. Like right now, stop listening to me, some of

you, and just ask God that for the rest of our time together because we're not done yet. So you could just ask him that and track it back.

It's because somewhere there's a relational disconnect with you and God, and somewhere you don't believe you are worthy of the grace that he wants to give you. So you resist it. But in Jesus' name, we believe we are hope carriers, disciples of Jesus living on mission to change our world. And if you've been here, you've seen this little diagram. We believe the kingdom of God is a movement of hope. That the rule and reign of God is not just supposed to be in the church, it's supposed to be in all the areas of life that we go every single day.

And God wants to, through the church, the people, release his kingdom into all these spaces. Jesus tells us that we are empowered to destroy the works of the devil. This is where they need to be destroyed. He says, "Go make disciples of all nations." This is the word *ethnos*, people group. Don't think North Korea and Iran. Think the areas of life, the people groups where people gather in spaces.

The Bible says you're salt, light and leaven. Salt, you are sent to bring flavor to a tasteless world, light to their darkness, and leaven, a little bit of yeast in every single area will make the whole thing rise. So God has sent you into these areas because he wants to release his kingdom through your life into these spaces. Here's a super honest question for you. In this last season as you go into these areas, are you going there with a faith to release his kingdom, or are you grumbling and complaining and whining and totally checked out? It's a really sobering question if you'll actually ask it to yourself.

Because God has put you in these places because it's his heart and his design to answer the world's problems through you. Are you with me on this? I don't totally buy that answer, which says you have a circle two problem and a circle one problem. You're like, "You already said that." I know, and you're not catching it.

And here's the deal. We were created to release God's kingdom in three areas -- our family, then his church, and then the world. The kingdom is always inside-out. It starts in our family, then it goes to his church and then it goes to the world. So see if you can just catch these with me for a second. This is what God says to the Israelites. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children, talk about them when you sit at home, and when you walk along the road, and when you lie down, and when you get up. He says, "You are responsible to demonstrate and declare the kingdom of God in your own home."

Now catch me for a second. We love to be witnesses to the ends of the world, we're just not so sure we want to be witnesses in our own home. We get all worked up about conflicts on the other side of the world, about the justice issues out there, about education and government

and politics and all those. We get so worked up about all that stuff. Well, God is asking us to just release the kingdom at home.

Hear me. There would be a whole lot less conflicts out there if we would just release God's kingdom right here. We want to scream about injustice out there when God's given you the authority to bring justice in your own home. So are you releasing his kingdom to your spouse, your kids, your parents? The way you talk, the way you live, the way you act. Is the rule and reign of God in your home? What you watch, how you spend your time, what you guys do, because it starts there.

And as the kingdom starts coming in our own homes and in our own families, then it goes to the church. If you haven't liked this, you're going to really not like this. You have a responsibility to release his kingdom to us. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers. Some of you are like, "You made that verse up." No, it's right there. It's in the Bible. You know what that means? That means you have a responsibility to release God's kingdom right here.

So that whole attitude of "I come to church when I can, when I want, when it's convenient, when we got time, when we're not too tired and the kids aren't overwhelmed and they don't have too much homework" or that whole adage of "You know what, after COVID, watching online is great. I get everything I need." Can I just tell you that is the most selfish thought pattern you can have? Because church is not about you. This is not about what you can consume and entertaining you and you getting what you want. No, no. You have a responsibility to release the kingdom to the people sitting around you.

There are gifts of the spirit that need to flow through your life into us. There are words of wisdom God wants to release out of you into the people around you. There is encouragement and life and relationships and hope and resources that God wants to release through you into us. We got to change our -- we have such a bad view of church and we got to repent of it. We got to start honoring it for what it is, that this is a supernatural gathering of the people of God where Jesus rules and reigns and we are in submission and surrender to his will.

And the paradox is this. The people that are really a part of the online community, they take vacations to come here on a Sunday because they live in another state or country. And I don't say that to shame anyone that's watching online right now at home. I say that to say there's so much more God wants to do through your life into this family. And then, family, church, then we can live such good lives among the world that though they accuse us of doing wrong, they see your good deeds and glorify God. Then, then we do it in the world.

And so my question for you is this -- are you living in a different way that people can see the goodness of God? Another translation says "good work", through your good work. Like when you show up, are you doing it with your whole heart? Are you passionate? Are you executing

the details? And do you have a level of gratitude and humility? Can people see the kingdom of God in your life or not?

Because we are in a season of time where no one really cares what the church has to say, they want to see how the church lives. That they may see your good work and glorify God. You say, "What's good work?" It's any work that's done for the glory of God. Making a taco, raising a child, making a report, turning in your homework. Whole heart, passion, details, gratitude and humility. Do you have those in your life?

Because I've been pushing on our staff, I've been pushing on our leaders, I've been pushing on our serve teams, I've been pushing on the people I know are hope carriers and saying, "You cannot compromise these in this season." You must show up and execute the details because details glorify God, in Jesus' name. You can't not have passion because the world is apathetic. We have to have the opposite spirit. We can't do it with half our heart. Why? Because we were created to glorify God with all of our hearts. I am way more excited about this than you are.

So track it back. Circle two, circle one. Because it's true. And here's the good part. It keeps me from getting frustrated. I'll just be super honest with you. It gets really frustrating sometimes when I come up here and it's like "tchhkk", light a match, "plrrr", trying to burn, and then we're just kind of like, "Yeah, tacos, Tiktok," whatever. It's like, what's the real problem though? It's good. It's not that you don't care about mission, it's that there's a circle two problem in your life or a circle one problem in your life. This is the gospel. Jesus says, "Come follow me, I'll make you fishers of men." He didn't invite you to a ticket to heaven, he invited you to become part of the mission of God.

And it changes our thinking. See, we've been talking this whole series about following the cloud, right? Follow the cloud. Well, here's what's really cool. We've had a number of people come forward with a prophetic word in this season and say, "I feel like in this next season God is inviting us to follow the fire." Oh, we liked that, right? Pillar of cloud by day, pillar of fire by night, so maybe it's time to follow the fire. Fire by night. Think of the season that we're in. It is a dark season in the world. And God gave them fire. And when you had fire and you followed fire, you had to be a whole lot more intentional. Everything was a little slower, everything was a little harder, but man, it burned bright in the midst of the darkness around them and the world could clearly see it.

Well, the fire is not now above you, it's been within you through the spirit of the living God that's been deposited in your life. So it's time to arise and shine for the glory of the Lord has come upon you and you're light. You'll lead nations and kings to see the goodness and the glory of God. Those were all the verses you missed because we had to keep saying circle two and circle one.

Let me try to close this whole thing with this. As we receive his grace, we'll experience his presence and we'll release his kingdom. Identity leads me to relationship and relationship releases purposes. Order matters. Order matters. We live a life of restful movement. We rest in the finished work of Jesus. It is not about what we do, but it's what he has done. But we never stop moving forward with him. And as we keep going and we keep going, we get further and deeper into the Father's heart for us.

So my question for you is, is the gospel at work in your life? This is the gospel. Is it at work in your life? Is it changing you in any way? And here's how you know. Is your heart getting softer? That's how you know. Jesus says he will remove our heart of stone and give us a heart of flesh. And a hard spear was put into his soft heart so that your hard heart could once again be made soft. So is your heart getting softer? Are you becoming quicker to repent, quicker to apologize and forgive? Are you growing in maturity and character? Are you growing in the fruit of the spirit? Is sin starting to grieve you? Do you find yourself with this growing humility and brokenness and desperation for the goodness of God? Is your heart softening in any way?

That's how you know if the gospel is at work in your life. And if in this season you say, "No, my heart's actually getting harder and more bitter and more offended and more broken," then stop and go back to circle one. Do not pass go, do not collect \$200, go back to school of identity and say, "Jesus, my heart is hard. Would you please soften it? I need your forgiveness and I need your healing and I need your grace," and you'll be amazed at what he does.

See, we started this whole series by talking about Joshua and the next generation going in and taking the land. Joshua was the new leader after Moses and God told Joshua, "Joshua, everything, all the principles that got you from where you were to where you are are what you're going to need to get you from where you are to where I'm taking you." And it's time for a new generation of Valley Creekers to rise up and follow the cloud because all of these principles that I've been sharing with you for these last seven, eight weeks, that's how we got from where we were to where we are. They will be how we get from where we are to where we're going.

And it's time for you as a new generation, whether you've been here for 20 minutes or 20 years, to rise up and say, "This is how I want to live my life, and this is how we will be a church, and this is how I will walk the gospel out in my home, in this church and in the world."

So let me close the whole thing with this. One day Jesus goes to the Pool of Siloam, a place where lost, lonely and broken people hung out. And he goes to this guy who has been paralyzed for 38 years. Thirty-eight years he sat on a mat. Jesus sees his misery, he hears his cry and he is concerned of his suffering. So he came and he asked the guy one simple question -- do you want to get well? That's it. All the things Jesus could have said, all the questions he could have asked, all the conversation they could have -- do you want to get well?

And the man doesn't answer the question. He responds back by saying how hard it's been, and this is why I'm broken, and these are all the things that have happened to me, and these are the situations and the circumstances and da, da, da, da. And Jesus just stops him and says, "This is not what I asked you. I didn't ask you why and I didn't ask you how long. I just asked you, 'Do you want to get well?' Then pick up your mat and walk."

I believe in this series, God has come to you in your lostness, your loneliness and your brokenness. He sees your misery, he hears your cry and he is so concerned of your suffering that he's come. But he's only asking you this one simple question. Do you want to get well? And while we respond with how hard it is and the circumstances and the situation and the pain and why is it like this, "Oh, I'm not asking you that. Do you want to get well? Then take one next step with me because spiritual momentum begins with a single step." It begins with us turning the attention and the affection of our heart to Jesus as lord and saying, "I am desperate and broken without you, so come have your way in my life."

There is a big difference between being set free and living free. It is time for the church of Jesus to not just be set free, but to live free in Jesus' name. So come on, it's time to follow the fire and live free in Jesus' name.

So close your eyes with me real quick. Holy Spirit, I just ask that this week that you would begin to speak to us, that you would stir up some things in our hearts that we would leave with a sense of even tension in our own soul today knowing that there is a next step, an invitation, something you're inviting us towards. Thank you, Lord, that you have blessed us by showing us the purpose for which we have been created. May we not spend our lives trying to please our flesh, may we spend our lives having restful souls as we receive your grace, experience your presence and release your kingdom. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.