

"Right Now"
May 17, 2020 | Pastor Jason Hillier

Welcome everybody to our online service today. We are so glad that you are with us. From wherever you're watching from, can we just take a second and welcome each other together? Come on, let's go ahead and clap for each other right now. So glad to be together today. And I bet you're wondering like why have we been doing that? Why have we been clapping in to start our times together? Well, it's because you're not alone. We're not alone. We are in this together. We really are better together. And we're so glad that we get a chance to be together today.

I want you to know that right now, there are thousands of people that are watching along with you. Right now, there's hundreds of leaders and serve team members that have been praying for you. And right now, Jesus is with you. You see, he's with us right now. Today is a great day to be together.

So I just want to kind of start off with this question. What have you been doing right now? Like how's life? How's it been going? What have you been working on? Do you have your honey dew list completed? Have you checked off all those boxes? Are you starting to maybe feel a little bit antsy in this season? Have you learned to become an amazing first grade teacher which I think nobody knows how to be an amazing first grade math teacher? Like what have you been doing right now?

And maybe a little bit more difficult of a question to answer, what has God been doing right now? Like in your mind, in your heard, in your home, what has God been doing in this season? You know, I think questions like that are simple and yet sometimes they're really difficult to answer. Because for a lot of us, we spend our time and our mind living in the past or maybe looking forward to the future. But it's hard to discern what's happening right now, right during this season.

I have an eight-year-old daughter. My youngest is named Naomi. And she loves to have fun. In fact, she loves to have so much fun that if she had a tea bird, she would have fun, fun, fun all the way until I took it away. Like she loves that fun. And so in the morning time, she'll get up almost every morning in this season, and she'll star the day by just saying, "Mommy, what are we going to do today?"

Now, of course, my wife looks at her and she has basically the same look at her face almost every time that question gets answered. And she responds back with a, "Well, basically the exact same thing that we did yesterday, which was the exact same thing that we did the day before that, and then the day before that," and so on and so forth. So the conversation will continue. And then they'll begin to start to negotiate homework versus screen time. But I got to thinking about that question. What are we going to do today? I think it's actually a really, really important question that we should be asking our Father heaven.

Father, what are we going to do today? What's happening right now? Like what's happening in my life? Who do you want me to connect with? What adventure are we going to go on? What are we going to do today? I think there's an opportunity for all of us to take a moment in this season and begin to ask God what He's doing right now.

I want to take a look at Isaiah 43, a passage you may be familiar with. Check this out, it says, "Forget the former things; do not dwell in the past. See, I'm doing a new thing. Now, it springs up; do you not perceive it?" That might be a passage that you're familiar with. But I want to look at it with a little bit of different eyes, with fresh eyes today as we think about this season.

Check out verse 18, it says, "Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past." I think if we were honest with ourselves, there's a lot of us that have been dwelling on the past. And I think there's probably two different kinds of people that are watching right now. There's a kind of people that are excited to get back to the past as they've ever been.

Like to open sporting events, and open season, and open restaurants, and everything available. And then I think there's another entire group of people who are kind of terrified about going back to the past. They don't want to be stressed out. They don't want to miss family dinner times. They don't want to have the overly busy schedule that they used to have. And while both of those things are real, I think both of those ways of thinking about the past are actually missing an opportunity.

You see, this season isn't about returning back to what was, it's about going to a whole another level of the abundant life that Jesus offers. So what's he's saying is he's saying, don't dwell on the past. Forget about those former things. So if your past was bad and stressful, man, look to Jesus for hope and joy. If your past was awesome, I'm talking like tableside guacamole and chips in case, so awesome. And I do love some tableside guac.

If it was great, it's not just about going back there, it's about going to a whole new thing, the new thing that Jesus wants to do right now. And maybe that's not you. Maybe you're not going to the past. You're like, hey, I'm a futurist, I'm looking forward to what's going to happen, coming up. Well, it's not even about going there either. In fact, check out verse 19. It says, "See, I'm doing a new thing. Now, it springs up; do you not perceive it?"

It's really not about the past or the future. It's about the new thing that Jesus is doing right now. When I read this verse earlier this week, it struck me, I was like, imagine what it is to take out the exclamation point right there and to read it all the way through. I am doing a new thing now. Right now, in this moment. In this season there is a new thing that Jesus wants to do in our lives.

What if we have actually missed it? What if what feels like a shelter in place every day blends together, nothing is happening, what are we going to do today? The same thing that we did yesterday? Is actually one of the most exciting seasons of transformation and revelation and insight that Jesus ever wants to give any of us, it's a right now kind of season. What if God is doing a new thing right now inside of you and inside of me? How do we begin to perceive it? It's springing up on the inside.

When I thought about that it springs up, it made me think of the story of the woman at the well talking with Jesus in John chapter 4, it's a similar kind of conversation. In John 4, this woman at the well is talking to Jesus when he's gone to get a drink. And as she begins to have the conversation with him, it becomes really clear that she's not just physically thirsty, she's spiritually thirsty. She's dry on the inside.

And then I got to thinking, I wonder if a lot of us are experiencing dryness in this season, not just because of a virus, but because we're missing the new thing, the springing up that Jesus wants to do on the inside of us. Look at what Jesus says to her in John chapter 4. He says, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life." Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?

I think we don't. I think we miss it a lot of times because we fail to see that Jesus is working right here, right now in our life. Even that woman in the story, she missed the fact that she was talking to the messiah face to face. She kept having this conversation with Jesus, like oh yeah, someday we're going to have a messiah and it used to be that our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but she failed to see that Jesus was right in front of her, right then, right now.

When she finally figured it out, she left her water jar and she walked and she ran into the new thing that Jesus was doing in heart, in her mind, in her life. So I don't want to miss what Jesus is doing while I'm waiting for things to change later. I don't want to miss what Jesus is doing now while I'm hoping the things do or don't return back to normal. I don't want to miss what Jesus is doing right now because it's not about going back to how it was or springing forward to something different in the future, it's about experiencing the new thing now that he's doing in each one of us. And I don't want you to miss it either.

So what I want to do today is I want to ask the question, what does God want to do right now in this moment, in this season? And how do we tap into it? How do we begin to experience the new thing that he's doing now? So what I'm going to do is give us three practical ways you can experience what God is doing right now.

Father, what are we going to do today? And begin to experience that in your own life? Here we go. Three practical ways you can experience what God is doing right now. And listen, we're probably never going to have this season again. It's really unlikely that it's ever going to

look like this again. This is a point in time opportunity to experience the now that Jesus wants to do in our life. Here we go.

The first thing you could do to experience what Jesus is doing right now is just ask him. Just go ahead and ask him, it's amazing how we want to ask everybody else, except for God, what's actually going on. Like we'll go to the news, we'll go to our friends, we'll check on a social media feed. But what if we just ask him? God, what are you doing right now in my relationships? How are you working in mind, in my heart, in my thoughts? What new thing are you doing in my life right now? We can just ask Him.

James 4 says it like this, it says, "You don't have what you want because you don't ask for it." That's about the simplest way to describe what's going on. It's saying that we miss so many daily and relational opportunities in our life because we just don't ask God what's happening right then. God, how do you want me to connect with my wife in this season? God, how do you want me to reach to my son who's having difficulties right now? God, what new friendships do you want me to invest into right now? Just ask Him.

Jesus said, "Ask and it will be given; seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you." But notice that he didn't say, ask later, seek tomorrow, knock when the shelter in place eases up. He says, right now. Ask me right now. I have amazing things that I want to reveal to you. There's a fascinating passage in Jeremiah 33.

And I think it reflects a lot of what's happening in our life right now. And it talks about why it's so important to ask God what He's doing in any given season. Check this out in Jeremiah 33, it says, "While Jeremiah was still confined in the courtyard of the guard," that sounds all too familiar, "the word of the Lord came to him a second time. Call to me and I will answer and I will show you great and unsearchable things you do not know." Wow.

So when a season where Jeremiah had to wait, he couldn't go back to what he want in the past, he couldn't go forward to the future, he was in the waiting season, he was in a now season. When he was confined in the courtyard of the palace, God says, call to me, ask me, and I'm going to show you great and unsearchable things you do not yet know. As I was thinking about this verse, I believe that there's somebody who's listening right now who's been waiting on a dream that's been in your heart for years.

You've actually been waiting for God to reveal it to you, and you don't know how He's going to do it. I think what He's saying is, ask me right now. I have a way to reveal that dream to you. The thing you've been hoping for about that job, that relationship, that thing, ask me. I'm going to show you great and unsearchable things you do not yet know about. So I encourage you, lean in and ask Him what He's doing right now. You see, the dream may be later, but the way to make that dream a reality may come to your mind and your heart right now. So ask Him. Great unsearchable things you do not yet know. So what if you just ask Him all kinds of

things. He wants to reveal the new thing that He's doing right now if we'll just ask. So that's the first thing.

So the second thing then is this. The second way to experience what God is doing right now in your life is just write it down. Just write it down.

Can I just tell you? I am horrible at doing that. So I have so many friends that have these like libraries of journals and they're all like meticulous, and they've been writing everyday their entire life. And so they use those journals to turn them into blogs. And they use the blogs to turn it into like New York Times Best Sellers. And then there's me. And I'm not very good at writing things down. But I encourage you, if that's like you, take a moment to write down what God has been doing, even if that's in a note in your phone or on your social media account or just in a text to a friend.

Because when you write down what God has been doing, when you sense it and then you begin to write it down, you value His voice in your life. You value the voice of God and you write it down and you begin to discover more of what He's doing and showing you. I mean can you imagine, what if Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and John wouldn't have written down what Jesus was doing? Like the answer is we'd have no gospels, we'd have no first four books of the New Testament. Like they wrote down those moments that Jesus had.

They wrote down what he was doing in that time. And they saw him at work and then they wrote it down. And now we can read about it and it encourages our heart. In fact, check this out in John chapter 20, it says, "The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book, but these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name." That's so good. What he's saying here is that the disciples wrote down the right now real time things that Jesus did and because of that, it helps us continue to believe and have life by the power of his name.

Now, I'm not saying you're writing scripture, but I am saying that you can write down these real time revelations that God is giving you. Remember revelation, something that was covered has been uncovered.

Reveal-ation, something you didn't know about before, he's starting to show you in a new way. When you write that down, it's going to help you continue to believe and you will experience life by the power of his name. That's awesome. I want to believe more. I want to believe more that he's doing amazing things in my life. I want to write it down so I can experience life by the power of his name. And I want you to experience that also.

So what's he been doing in this season? How's he been moving? Come on, write that down. Begin to think about all the ways that he's moved in your life. How's he provided for you? How

has this church family encouraged you? How were those sweet moments with your family been for you? Like write those things down because someday you're going to want to be able to reflect on this right now season and it's going to give you everything you need for the next season. In fact, check out this verse in Habakkuk 2:2.

Habakkuk, that's a great name. Where do you think that name is 2020 baby names list? That's an excellent name. Write this. Here it goes, Habakkuk 2:2, "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that he may run who reads it." So what it's saying here is when you write down what God is doing, it's going to help you sprint into the next season, run into the next thing that Jesus wants to do in your life. Write it down. Why? So you can run with it. Write it down. Why? So His faithfulness today gives you the faith you need for tomorrow. Write it down. Why? Because someday when this is all over and you move into what is either a new normal or the same kind of normal, whatever the season looks like, you'll be so thankful that you took hold of what God revealed to you in this season so you could take it into the next season, that when you read it you can run with it. Write it down. Value the voice of God in your life and begin to see how that encourages your heart going forward.

So there you go, two things so far. Two ways you can perceive what God is doing right now in this season. Ask Him and write it down. And here is the third one. The third one is just express gratitude. Look at Psalm 118. It says, "This is the day the Lord has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it." This is the day the Lord has made, we will rejoice and be glad in it. Maybe even say that first line with me again. This is the day the Lord has made. Yeah, it is. This one right now, like this is the one we got. This is the day that we have. And we can express gratitude to God for today, for how He's moving, for what He's done, for His goodness in our life.

In fact, using the last one we just talked about write it down, what if you wrote down three things that you're thankful to God for? Come on, what are you thankful to God for in this season? Like I'm so thankful that the weather has been beautiful so that we can take walks outside in His creation. Like I'm so thankful for things to slow down a little bit for some family time, for some memories to be made. I'm so thankful that -- I'm kind of a person that has like a fear of missing out, but basically there's nothing to miss out on, so I have no more fear there.

But what about you? What do you want to express gratitude for in this season? You can write it down. You can speak it out. You can express gratitude to God. Because remember, gratitude is only gratitude once it's expressed. Until then, it's just a nice thought. Like it's not actually gratitude until it's spoken out loud or it's written down. And so that's a great way to vertically connect with God, thanking Him for who He is and what He's done.

Maybe even think about that this week. Three things that you're thankful for about this season right now.

Now, I got another one for you. There's another challenge. And this is another gratitude challenge. That's more of a vertical challenge, like thanking God for what He's been doing. This is one's more of a horizontal challenge. So here's my horizontal challenge for you. What if you took time this week to write an old school thank you card to someone? So like writing to them -- I'm talking like an Anne of Green Gables, like put a stamp on it, put an address, like thank you card.

Because it's amazing what that can do to center your heart in this right now moment and encourage the person that you can write it to. In fact, I got to see a response from somebody this week who'd received a card from another Valley Creeker. This person is a first responder. And so here's what they said regarding a card that they got in the mail this week. They said, "I was tired and I was worn out from patient care this week. Your card gave me the boost that I needed."

You could express gratitude to somebody in an old school kind of card, written -- you know, handwritten card. And I think what that would do is it would help center your heart in the right now and would help encourage them in the season ahead. So who is that in your life that you're thankful for? Like who raised you? Who has invested into you? Who has prayed for you? Who spoke in life into you? It's that person, when they come to your mind, come on, write them a card. Express gratitude because it's good for you and it's good for them.

And part of what that's going to do is it's going to teleport you back to right now. It's really hard for your mind to be stuck in the past or pushing forward into the future when you express gratitude. So I'd encourage everybody, write a card this week and bring yourself back into this moment. You always hear people say, oh, I want to live in this moment. I want to live in the moment. Well, expressing gratitude is part of how you live in the moment.

I think that's part of why Jesus -- why he was always expressing gratitude out in public and out in the open. You'd hear him say things like, "Father, I thank you that you've hidden these things from the wise and you've revealed them to little children." Or say like, "Father, I thank you that you always hear me." And he was saying those things out loud to encourage other people, but I believe he was also saying those things to encourage his own heart and bring him back into the presence of his Father.

See, Jesus was a master at living in the moment. Jesus was a master at being in the presence of his Father. And the presence of God is really only ever experienced in the present. That's why he can do a new thing in your life right now. That's where the spirit can move. That's where the spirit can join you there. So I encourage everybody. You have really three great encouraging ways for you to experience the right now things that Jesus is doing.

Ask him. Write it down. And then express gratitude. I think those are excellent ways for all of us to come back into this right now moment. So let me just kind of ask you the same question I

did when we got started. What has God been doing and what have you been doing? Like how's life? How is this season? Have you taken a time to actually consider it? Have you taken moments to ask God and then write down what you sense that He's saying and then express gratitude to Him for everything that he has done in your life.

Back to Isaiah 43, see we got to forget the former things. You can't dwell on the past because God is doing a new thing now. It springs up; do you not perceive it? Church, may we always perceive the right now thing that Jesus is doing in each of our lives.

Will you bow your head and will you close your eyes and pray with me? So Jesus right now we just invite you into right now. Into our season, into our life, into our situation. And we believe by faith that you are doing new amazing, unsearchable things that we do not yet know, and we want to perceive those. We want to just be so in tune with how you're moving in our relationships and in our heart and in our day-to-day that we don't miss a thing. We don't miss one thing that's happening right now as we're waiting for things to change as we're thinking about the ways the things were. We don't want to just go there. We want to be here. So for each one of us, Lord, will you show us the new thing now? Will you show us how to live in the moment?

Can we be people that will just go and ask you quickly how you're moving and value your voice by writing it down, and then begin express the gratitude that's so in our hearts for who you are and what you have done? You are so good to us. You're so good to me. You're so good to each one of us. And we are so thankful for these moments to experience your goodness. That we never take it for granted. We want to perceive it with our whole heart. We love you Jesus, in your name, amen.

Well, thanks so much for being with us today. We're so glad that we got this opportunity to be together. If you want to give, you can go ahead and do that. It's online here at valleycreek.org. Giving is just a response to the goodness of God in your life. And so you can give online. And just after we finish, there's going to be actually a few questions on the screen that we would love to invite you to pause and then begin to answer.

See, answering questions and just thinking about the way God is speaking is a great way to experience the right now thing that He's doing. So we want to invite you to do that right after we finish. But we're so glad that we had this time together. We look forward to seeing you back here on our online campus next week. Blessings to you.