

Come on, there's always more. There's always more of God's goodness to be experienced. There's always more hope to be felt. There's always more revelation to be uncovered, the mysteries of kingdom. There's always more. So we believe that by faith. Today, we want to experience that more that comes with the presence of Jesus. We've been in a series called The Heart of a King. And over the last seven weeks, seven weeks, we learned what it looks like to live with the heart of a king. And one of the things that we learned is that the heart of a king is a heart that desires and seeks the presence of God. It seeks the presence of God above all things. Why? Because the presence of God is the thing that changes things. But more than just changing things, it changes us.

It actually transforms our heart. So today, we're going to talk about and experience the very presence of God. You see, today is less about a message, it's more about a moment. Today is less about trying to learn new things, it's about experiencing the very presence of God, the one that He wants, the presence that wants to dwell in here among us in our hearts in the place where we are worshipping. And so I want you to take a look at this graphic above me for just a second. You see, the presence of God can be experienced in really three critical factors when they're added together. And those things are worship, gratitude and prayer. When we worship, when we express gratitude and when we pray, it builds a place for the presence of God to be experienced, a throne if you will that He come and He takes a seat among us, in a room where we're at, in your heart. He comes and sits. The very presence of God resides where we are at. And so today, we want to experience all three of those things. That's why it's going to be a little bit different.

I want to invite you throughout our time to come and maybe repeat after me or pray out loud or think through different elements. And we'll explain those as we go. But I'd just encourage you, open up your heart because there's always more. Because there's more of his presence to be experienced today. It's going to be a really sweet time all together as one church. The first leg of the stool is this. It's worship. It's what we were just doing. And worship is just giving our attention and our affection up to God, to place Him where He deserves to be placed, rightfully seated, enthroned above our feelings, above our circumstances, above the things in our life that we can see, believing and worshipping the God that sometimes we can't see. We raise Him above all of those things. And so turning the attention and the affection of our hearts to Jesus, that's why worship is so important. You see, at Valley Creek, we have a value. We are passionate about the presence of God. And so the way that we worship, the way that we express worship is part of how we show that we're passionate about the presence of God.

Psalm 22:3 says, "Yet You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel." So God is actually enthroned. He's seated on our praises. So when we worship, we're not just singing a song, we're not just trying to get all the right words, we're not even really maybe just trying to sing on tune. Some of you are all like, that's good because I don't. That's exactly right. You're worshipping God, you're raising Him up, you're valuing Him, you're assigning worth to who He is. That's why worship is the very first part of how we experience the presence of God. And

that's why we worship like we do at Valley Creek. By the way, it's not only singing songs, but when we gather together, it's a tangible way that we can worship God together as a church. The second leg of the stool is gratitude. Gratitude is just simply acknowledging that God is my source and my provider. I did not get here by myself. Gratitude is a posture of humility, it's saying thank you for who God is and what He's done in my life.

So I'm going to invite you to do what Psalm 100:4 says. Let me read this to you. "Enter His gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise: give thanks to Him and praise His name for the Lord is good and His love endures forever. His faithfulness continues through all generations." The Lord is good. And His love endures forever. And His faithfulness continues through all generations. That's how we feel when we come in with gratitude. What I want to speak to you is God has been good to you and His faithfulness is continuing to generations of your family. Even as you experience this week, I want you to really have a gratitude well up in your heart as you think about all that He has given, all that He is.

And so there's three things that we're going to express gratitude in today. And this is important. Remember, gratitude isn't gratitude until it's actually expressed, that is spoken out or written down or conveyed to someone. Until then, it's just a nice thought.

And so we want to actually express gratitude in three specific ways. Check out the screen here. We're going to express gratitude in provision and thanking God for how He's provided in Denton family. And then also we're going to express gratitude in that for Valley Creek. So starting off with provision. What I want you to do right now is begin to express gratitude to God for all that He's provided for you this year. Maybe even just say, thank you Jesus for providing for me. Thank you Jesus for all the ways that you've taken care of me, that you currently take care of me. And maybe you don't even know what to say. You could just say, thank you God for what you've given me. Thank you God for what you've given me. Begin to express that gratitude for provision, for His oversight of you, for looking out for you in your life. He's provided you air to breath, and food to eat, and a place to lay your head. Thank you God for every good that comes down from you, my Father in heaven. It's a good and perfect gift. Thank you for what you've given to me. Come on, continue to think about how He's provided for you. Let gratitude well up in your heart. How's God provided for you this year? How has He looked out for you? How has he taken care of you and your family? Even in a hard year, we can look to His provision with gratitude in our hearts. Thank you God that you provide for us. Second one is we have gratitude for family. Now, this is especially an important one to express after Thursday because there's -- there could be some tensions, you know. If you're a hardcore game player like my family is, you got to express some gratitude for the family that you have. So what we're going to do right now is we're actually going to do that with the people that we came in with. So wherever you're watching this from, whoever you're with, go ahead and think about what you say thank you to them for. And maybe even just say this, I'm thankful for you. It might be as simple as that. In fact, you can begin to do that right now. And as you do, as you look at them in the eye, and you begin to thank them and just say, I'm thankful for you or

thank you for dot, dot, dot, you're going to experience some of that gratitude well up for your family.

Maybe you're here by yourself, my encouragement to you is maybe you have a spiritual family member that's in here. Maybe it's somebody that you can pull out your phone and you can grab your phone and you could begin to text and just say how thankful you are for them. But go ahead and begin to do that right now. Look at the family you came with and say, I'm thankful for you. I'm thankful for dot, dot, dot.

Like I said, you can grab your phone and you can text family members who aren't here. That's a great way to express gratitude for family. Text spiritual family that you may have, the family of God.

This week online on social media Valley Creek, we had something called The Gratitude Experience. We got to do as a family on Thanksgiving Day. It was powerful. So I really encourage you to just express that gratitude. Say those words that you've wanted to say. If there's somebody else you want to say it to, you can grab your phone, you can text them if they're not with you today. Thank you God for our families. Thank you God that you placed the lonely in families. Thank you God that you surrounded us with people who love and care for us. And even if we've struggled in family in the past, we know that we have a spiritual family we can count on.

And that really leads us to our next one, which is just gratitude for Valley Creek. Is there anybody here who is thankful for Valley Creek Church?

Man, I'm so thankful. Maybe begin to express out loud just gratitude for Valley Creek, for the family of Valley Creek. Thank you God for Valley Creek Church. Specific things you're thankful for. Thank you God for unity. Thank you God for a Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled church. Thank you God for godly relationships inside of Valley Creek Church. Thank you God for leadership at Valley Creek Church, that leads us so well during hard seasons. Thank you God that we're a missional church. We're not just here for ourselves, we're here for the world. Thank you God for hope that hope rises inside of us because we are part of a movement of hope for the city and beyond. Thank you God for Valley Creek. Thank you for Valley Creek, Jesus.

Maybe then just whisper that. Thank you for Valley Creek. Man, I'm so thankful for Valley Creek Church. Thank you that it's the church that I always hoped would exist but didn't know if it did. Thank you for Valley Creek. Thank you for the impact that it's had on my own family, my own life. Thank you Jesus for our church family that surrounds us, that guides us, that protects us. Thank you Jesus for your church. And listen, I know, man, it's been a hard year for so many of us. Maybe some of those things I just tried to prompt you are just so difficult to say.

Here's one that I really want us to just say together because even in the midst to this year, God has been so good. And so in just a moment, I want you to say, thank you God for being good to me this year. Thank you God for being good to me this year. On the count of three. One, two, three. Thank you God for being good to me this year.

Come on, say it again. Thank you God for being good to me this year. One more time, thank you God for being good to me this year. Yes, He is. God is so good. He is so good. So maybe even right now, you feel the presence of God coming in and changing, moving, healing inside of you. Let's just even take a moment and just -- what's the Lord want to say to you right now?

What does He want to speak to you right now? Maybe just ask Him, God, what do you want to say to me? One word from God changes everything. See, God is here and here's more of Him to come. God is with you and there's more of Him to be experienced. One word from God changes everything. That's why the third leg of the stool is to pray. It's to have a two-way conversation between you and the Father. That's a two-way conversation between two people that love each other, you and God.

And it's a two-way conversation because you don't just pray it out, you also listen back to what He wants to say. Acts 4:31 says, "After they prayed, the place where they were praying was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. That is prayer changes things. It shakes things. It fills you up with the very presence of God. And I think there's some stuff that God wants to break off and shake in Jesus' name, even today in your life. So I want to invite you to pray through these three areas with me. We're going to pray through these together, just one at a time. And the first one is just a willingness to follow Jesus. I think is just something that is just so difficult sometimes. It's so basic but it's so hard to get to and just say, Lord, I want to have a willingness to follow you. Maybe even say that out loud right now. I want to have a willingness to follow you. I want to have a willingness to follow you Jesus, follow wherever you would go, wherever you want to lead me, whatever you want to do. I want to go.

Whatever the question is, Jesus, the answer is yes, I want to have the willingness in my heart to do whatever you ask me to do. Just a willingness to follow. And maybe that's a stretch. Maybe just say, I want to have a desire to have the willingness to follow. Like it can even have that, Jesus, will you give me the desire to follow you? Maybe pray that out loud right now. Jesus, will you give me the desire to follow you? I want to follow you wherever you lead. Give me that desire. Give me the willingness to actually take those steps.

Second thing I want to pray for right now is the desire of your heart. And this one is deep waters because I think this is hard. This is hard for a lot of us, after a lot of disappointments, after a lot of unmet expectations, sometimes it's hard to pray out for the desire of your heart. The scriptures say, "Delight yourself in the Lord and He will give you the desires of your heart."

So what about you? What's your heart desire? Begin to pray and ask the Lord for that right now because God is a good God that gives good gifts to His children. And so just ask Him, Lord, this is the desire of my heart. Maybe it's for that reconciled relationship. What's the desire of your heart? You can just whisper it to Him right now. Maybe it's that dream that you've been trying to hold on to, if you feel that dream has died. What if you placed that in front of Him? God, I would love this -- I would love this to happen. Just ask Him. But since there's so many who's listening to this right now, you haven't been reconciled with your own son or daughter for a long time, God is a God of reconciliation. Why don't you ask Him for that desire? Ask him for that desire of your heart. Somebody else, you're waiting for breakthrough in your body, in your physical self, why don't you ask God for breakthrough and healing right now?

The desire of your heart, what's the desire? It's time to dream again. It's time to think in terms of abundance in life in Jesus' name. It's time to have desires that come from the Lord that are actually God-given, and to see those come to pass. We believe that by faith today. What's the desire of your heart? Delight yourself in the Lord who give the desires of your heart. The third thing I want to pray through is for our city. So wherever you're watching this from, whatever city you're in, we want to start declaring in Jesus' name, breakthrough for our city, to pray the very kingdom of God down into the city that we live in. I want to invite you actually to raise your voice, wherever you're at right now, begin to pray for our city. Come on, interceding, contend for our city. Begin to pray Jesus into our city. We pray things like we pray that marriages will be restored.

We pray that addictions would cease. We pray for wisdom of heaven for governmental officials in our city. We pray for those that are far from God to draw near to God, the lost, the lonely and the broken. Come on, pray for our city. Pray out. And as you do, believe that God is working in the very place that you live, the very place that you are. Jesus, we believe that by faith. The Bible says, "Seek the peace and the prosperity of the city in which you live, for when it has peace you also will have peace." When it has prosperity, you also will have prosperity. That's what Jesus wants to give us. That's what he wants us to experience among our cities. Contend for your city. Your prayers are powerful and effective in Jesus' name. Pray out for your city. We pray for all of our cities, Jesus. We pray that you would truly inhabit the praises of your people right now in the very places that we live. And that the Spirit of God would move in those places.

That the very Spirit of God would transform our families, and our hearts, and our minds, and the places where we're at. We pray for our cities. So that's worship, that's gratitude, that's prayer. What we've just done is we built a place to enthrone Jesus. The question is, are you aware of his presence? See, Jesus is with us, there's more of him to come and he's moving on our behalf. His presence changes things. He makes a way where there seems like there is no way. Thank you Jesus for your presence.

Come on, that's Jesus. He's a way maker. He changes things and his presence, his presence changes things. But more than, it changes us. So that's what we did today. We worshipped, we expressed gratitude, we prayed, we built a place for the very presence of Jesus to be experienced.

And here's the amazing part. It doesn't just have to be when we gather together like this on a Sunday. You can do this each and every single day. You can invite the presence of God into your own life. In fact, after service, we're going to place that slide back up on the screen. I invite you, take a picture of that and just be reminded for how you enthrone the presence of God in your everyday. He wants to join you every moment, every day. He's here and there's more of Him to come. Thanks for joining in with us today. And listen, I'm believing by faith that some of the stuff that you spoke out, that some of the things you prayed out or some of the obedience you showed just by speaking or engaging it, that you will see breakthrough in Jesus' name. I'm going to speak that over each and every person that's part of our time today. It's been fun to be together truly as one church all morning long. I want to let you know if you want to give, giving is just a response to the goodness of God. You can do that on the box as you go or online at valleycreek.org.

But as you go today, go knowing that God is good, that Jesus has forgiven you, that you are loved and that everything is possible. May you go this week as a hope carrier. See you next week.