

Alright. Hey, everybody. Welcome to Valley Creek. Wherever you're joining us from, we're so glad to be together today. Thanks for being here. Thanks to be a part of what God is doing in our church family right now. I want to welcome you and just let you know my name is Jason. I get to serve as the campus pastor at the Flower Mound Campus. And if this is your first time with us, man, we're so glad to have you with us today. I want to draw your attention to the seat back in front of you or up to the screen here to just tell you there's a QR code you can use your phone to check out our website, to learn a little bit more about Valley Creek Church and who we are and just really find out how to get connected here. So we're so glad to be together today. I just want to declare over each one of us that hope is here, everyone is welcome, Jesus changes everything and I'm believing that today he's going to change everything for you and your family. So it's good to be together.

When you came in, you got one of these cards. But before you pull that out, I want to encourage you to check out our new Christmas EP, our Christmas album of all original Valley Creek songs, came out on Friday. It is good. I do not usually listen to Christmas music before thanksgiving. I made an exception. And so I want to encourage you, check it out. It is beautiful. It is the songs of this house, and you can fill your house with all of the amazing things that God is speaking over our church family this Christmas. So go ahead and pull out this card, real quick. You got this card when you came in. Check that out for a second. Here's what's going on, we have the thanksgiving groceries that are in full effect right now at the Next Step Center. So every single year, we get a chance to serve over a thousand families in our community. Not just some groceries, over a week's worth of groceries. That's a lot of groceries. And so here's what this is. This is a list that lets you know what groceries you can pick up at the store and take over to the Valley Creek Next Step Center over in Louisville and make a plan and a time to grab a can or a carload, it doesn't even matter, like just join in and be part of this a movement of hope for the city and beyond.

You see, this is actually what a movement of hope looks like, doing the things that God has asked us to do, blessing the people that surround us and that we live with. And so this is a great way to share that with your family. It actually started yesterday. It's going all through this week. Check out the website for details. Okay. Well, we have been in the longest series in the history of Valley Creek Church, 10 weeks in the Ancient Future. We've been learning how to follow the way of Jesus. It's been good, it's been challenging, it's been deep and so I just want to start and say this, aren't you so thankful to be part of a church that values the word of God? I'm so thankful to have the word of God spoken over me and over my family every single weekend. There was a lot of word of God spoken, which we counted. This 10 weeks had a 191 Bible verses in it. A hundred and ninety-one, that's a lot of the word of God.

And as you hear that, it changes you. As you receive it, it transforms you. And so that is what happened as we listen to this amazing series. I also just want to tell you straight up, I'm thankful to be led by Pastor John. I'm thankful to be led by a pastor who prays for us, who dreams for us, who really wants to speak to us, like speak to our hearts, like call out the best in

us. And so Hebrews 13 just says, man, "Remember your leaders who spoke the word of God to you. Consider their way of life and imitate their faith." I want to imitate that kind of faith. Pastor John, every single weekend, he's not focused on the news cycles. He's not focused on what's wrong with the world. He's focused on the hope of Jesus and he brings that hope and he speaks it over our lives. I'm really thankful for just what he did during the series and how he leads me, how he leads this church. So I just wanted to say that because we want to do everything we do with a spirit of gratitude at Valley Creek. So that's just a great way to let gratitude start the day.

Alright, here's what we're going to do. So 10 weeks in to this ancient future series, what we want to do is we want to look at a quick recap, a 10-week recap in the next five minutes and then I'll be back to help us respond. Here we go.

We are starting a new series called the Ancient Future: Practicing the Way of Jesus. "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient past, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls." He says, hey, you're at a crossroads and there's only two paths in front of you. One of those paths is the modern way of this world. It is the way of comfort and convenience and pleasure. This is the path of least resistance and personal happiness. And it is really easy to get on and it is really hard to get off. But in the end it leads to destruction.

He says, but then there's an ancient path, a good way, a narrow road with a small gate. And this path whispers out to you, come, and you will find rest for your souls. Come lose your life and you will find it. Come be a servant and you'll be great. Come die that you might live. And this is the path of greatest resistance and personal holiness. And this path is really hard to get on and it's really easy to get off. But this is the path of life. It's two roads. We create a third road, there's no third road. There's the modern road of this world, there's the ancient path of Jesus. There is not a I'm a lukewarm Christian road. It doesn't exist.

We think it does and we trick ourselves as if it does to make ourselves feel good about ourselves. There is no middle road. There's an ancient path, there's a modern road. You stand at a crossroad. In fact, every decision in life is crossroad to choose to continue down the ancient path or to choose to continue down the modern road of this world. Whichever one you're on and at any point in time you get the freedom to change. And so daily, it's about inviting God into my life to say, God, today show me your ways and teach me your paths. The ancient path is the way of faith. Faith is being sure of what you hope for, certain of what you do not see. Faith is living from the invisible towards the visible. Faith is anchored in the character and the nature of God.

Faith is being more focused on the superior realities of the kingdom than the inferior realities of this world. Faith is willing to follow and trust God for the results. Faith is the belief in the goodness of God in the midst of our circumstances, in spite of our circumstances. The ancient

path is a path of hope. Hope is the confident expectation of the goodness of God. Hope is the joyful anticipation of the goodness of God. Hope is the belief that God's kingdom has come and more of it is coming. Hope is the belief that God is good and that God is good to me. Prayer is the way of the ancient path. Prayer is about talking to God, and giving him our desires, and our pains, and our burdens, and our concerns and our worries.

And then God gives us his burdens, and his passions, and his desires and his life. It's in prayer where his ways become our ways, his thoughts become our thoughts, his passions become our passions and his life becomes our life. Prayer is primarily about enjoying God. See, radical generosity is the ancient path. You see, what Jesus is telling us is that money is supposed to be a tool and God is supposed to be our treasure. That we're supposed to use money as a tool to seek after God, our treasure, and use it for the good of others and the glory of God. The problem is for a lot of us is we see money as our treasure and God is our tool. And the only way to break free from the love of money is to live a life of radical generosity and choose to seek after God with everything that you've got. And one of the ways of Jesus on this ancient path is a lifestyle of passionate mission. You see the church doesn't have a mission, the mission has a church.

God didn't create a church and then say, what should I do with them? I know, let's make them busy with a mission. He had a mission and so he birthed the church to walk out that mission. You see, this entire series could be summarized in this. This is a series of lordship. It's a series of obedience. It's a series of whom and what are you going to trust and whom or what are you going to choose because literally every one of these two paths, it's a choice and you make a decision of your life and only you get to choose for you, which way you want to go and what becomes normal and acceptable, what becomes the way that you live your life.

Yes. So I'm so thankful for what God has spoken. I'm so thankful for what He did. And so here's what we're going to do next. We're going to have some people standing up to just pass out a response card. You see, this week we don't need another message, we don't need more just Biblical insight and information, we need to respond to what God has said. Jesus actually is really clear, he says that you're going to want to actually respond to what you've heard, you want to respond to the revelation that's been spoken so that you don't gain this hardening of your heart, you don't gain this kind of hard place inside of you that just hears it and then never actually does anything with it. The Book of James says, "Don't just be hearers of the word and so deceive yourselves. Actually be doers." Do something with it. So that's what we're going to do. See, one of the things at Valley Creek we really, really value is we value taking next steps.

We really value responding to what God has spoken. So in just a moment, you're going to get a card and that card is going to walk through a series of questions. Now, we're going to go one at a time, we're going to take some time. We're not going to rush through it, and actually hear what the Spirit's saying and let him speak to us and then respond by faith to our next step.

So as those cards are being passed out, I'm going to kind of walk through it one piece at a time, one question at a time. And even before I do that, I just want to take a second and even settle my own heart and just say, Spirit, will you speak to us? God, will you reveal yourself to what and how we should respond? Will you do what only you can do and move through our minds and through our obedience and start to reveal the very next step we should take? We believe by faith that your word is a lamp to our feet, it's a light to our path and so now we want to actually take some steps on that path.

Speak to us now, Lord, for your servants are listening. So as you take a look at that card, as you grab a pen, as you grab your journal, we're going to get a chance to reflect and really here is the first question and it's really the most important question. Straight up, have I accepted Jesus as my Lord and Savior? Yes, not yet, or I'm ready today. It's the first question. It's kind of a yes or no with one possible exception and that is you're actually ready to step into following Jesus today. As we prayed for today, as we prayed for this time with the Valley Creek family, we just wanted to declare over somebody in this place today is the day of salvation.

Now is the time. You've heard it, you've been in the atmosphere with it, you've experienced it, you've sensed it and you had this feeling of like asking, seeking, knocking. Like Jesus, he's knocking on the door of your heart, of your life. So Valley Creek, we just say, if you confess with your mouth and you believe in your heart that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, you will be saved. That's Romans 10:9-10. And so we believe by faith that it is as easy as saying, Jesus, I'm just done doing life my way, I want to go your way. Like today, I'm in. I'm going to start walking down the ancient path. If that's true for you, today is going to be a good day. Here's the next one. Which way is my life moving? Am I truly going the way of the world or I'm walking the ancient path of Jesus? You are not turning this card in, this is for you.

It's a chance to just be honest. There's no religious pretense here. There's no play in church. This is just straight up honesty. Like, does the totality of my life reflect more of following Jesus or just the way of the world? And actually either answer is okay because it helps you start to know where you're at so you can start moving forward. Sometimes you just need to point your feet in the direction you want your heart to go. And so maybe even that answer is just as honest as being like, yeah, I just -- I go the way of the world. Alright, that's an honest answer. It's a good way to start. Now we keep moving forward by faith. The next one is just this, what's your desire? Which way do you want to be moving?

Like the guy that looked at Jesus and says, I want to believe, Lord. Help me in my unbelief. Like I have a desire to actually start to move towards Jesus, with Jesus, following Jesus down his ancient path. Same thing, it's amazing what an ounce of just willingness, humility and desire will do when it comes to the kingdom, which way do you want to be moving? This next one's a little bit more open. It has to do with asking what the Holy Spirit has been saying, what he's been speaking to you, what has Jesus been whispering over the season? You might be thinking, like how do I write that down? What am I listening for? Well. John 8 says that,

"Those that are Jesus's can hear his voice and so we're just believing that God is always speaking.

The question is not whether he's speaking to you, the question is whether we're tuned in listening. Like think old tiny radio where you had to really just dial it in and listen for that signal, the same is true when the Spirit speaks to us. So what has Jesus been saying to me? Grab a pen, take a moment, write it down. Maybe he wants to speak to you about that relationship tension in your life. Maybe you've been trying to figure out what's next on the career side, on the job side and you're asking for wisdom on how to think about your job. Maybe he's just revealing an area of unbelief or disobedience. Once again, that's good. Write it down. It gives you a starting point, it gives you a place to begin.

For some of you, he's been trying to speak your identity. He's been trying to remind you that in Jesus you're the beloved son, the beloved daughter in whom he's well pleased. He wants to remind you you're not what the world says about you or what the world declares over you, you're what he declares over you, what he says about you. He wants to speak identity to you today. He wants to speak all kinds of amazing things. The question is, if we have ears to hear what has Jesus been saying to me.

The next one goes a little deeper. Where is Jesus inviting me to submit to his Lordship? Jesus looks at the crowd and says, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and not do what I say?" That's a profound question. Sometimes these answers come to you in the form of that tension, that war that wages in your heart. I don't want to do it, but I know I should do it, but I don't want to do it, but I know I should do it. That's two kingdoms colliding. And it's right then and there in the collision, in the wrestle, in the moments that he wants to invite you to take another step in lordship. Grab a pen, grab your card, write something down. Where is he inviting you to submit to him is Lord?

One of the greatest things about Jesus as Lord is when he gets to be Lord, I don't have to be. When he leads the way, I don't have to try to figure it out all the time. When he sets the course, I don't have to try to determine the steps and the direction of my life. His yoke is easy, his burden is light, following him is the absolute greatest thing. So where are you invited to submit to him as Lord? The next one is, where do I need to confess and repent? If you have any kind of church background, usually these words create terror in the heart. Can I just tell you these are good, they're not bad.

Confess just means to agree with what God says. And so some of the most important confessions you could make are actually confessions of who he declares you to be in Jesus Christ. Confess means to agree with what God has said. And so I need to agree with God regarding what He said and His lordship and how sin is not best for my life and how I can walk forward into freedom. Confession it's a good thing, not a bad thing. So what do you need to confess? He already knows it anyways, might as well write it down. And then as a great next

step from there, just to confess our sins to one another, that we may be healed. There's healing and breakthrough when we bring it out of the darkness and into the light. What is that thing?

To repent means to take God's higher view to change the way I think, which will then change the way that I act to change the way that I believe which will change the way that I behave, to repent, to go back, to think differently. Where do I need to repent? I bet you, there's something during this series where you're like, that's it, I haven't believed that my whole life. I've never believed, I've never walked that way. There you go. Lord, help us bring it out of the darkness and into the light. Help us agree with you and what you say and what you declare over us.

The next one is just simply, where do I need to receive fresh grace? Grace, the unmerited, the undeserved favor of God pouring all over your life. Grace, all that Jesus is and all that he offers, moving on your behalf, literally like a waterfall pouring over you, fresh grace pouring over you today. Where do you need to receive it? Is it in your parenting? Is it in that situation you just cannot break through on? Is it in these mind loops, these things that keep replaying over and over and over that you just can't get out of your head. You need his grace to help you break free. Where do you need to receive fresh grace today?

For the grace of God, Jesus has appeared and it's teaching us to say no to ungodliness and worldly things, and helping us to live an upright and godly life in this present age. Grace, pouring all over your life, pouring all over all of us today. Where do you need to receive fresh grace? Take a moment, write it down. If you don't know what to write, you could even just write, Jesus, I need your grace. The next one is what verse do I need to hold on to from this series? If you have your journal, this is a great time to break that out and start to look back on one of the 191 verses that came out during this series.

What verse do you want to hold on to? What verse do you want to grab a hold of in life? Maybe it's something like in Hebrews 11 where it just says that faith is the assurance of what we hope for, being certain of what we cannot see. Romans 4:18, that Abraham against all hope, in hope believed God. Matthew 11, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." What verse should you hang on to? Some great ways to keep that in your heart and your mind, refrigerator, mirror of a bathroom, a note as you're driving your car.

Sometimes for certain verses when I try to memorize them or put them in my heart, I'll try to read them multiple days in a row so I'll get them in my spirit and just try to remember what God has spoken. Man, it's valuable. Every word that Jesus speaks is spirit and it's life. So even now his word wants to bring you life. He wants to speak to you through Scripture. One more to encourage you on the word. If you were sitting in front of somebody really prominent and listening to what they had to say, you would for sure write down and take as many notes as you could.

So take that with the word of God. Every single time the word is spoken over your life, receive it by faith, grab that journal, start to dot -- you know, start to mark it in your phone, wherever you can pick up on that and honor the word of God in your life. It's worth it. Next question. What is my next step? If you've been around Valley Creek for any length of time, you've heard us ask this quite often. The journey of Jesus one next step at a time. Any believer should be able to answer questions like where is Jesus inviting me to submit to his lordship right now? What is my next step? Maybe you haven't asked in a while. Ask him now. Lord, reveal to me my next step. We learned during the series that you stand at crossroads throughout your life and at each one you have one next step to take.

One that follows the ancient path or one that follows the way of the world. And so the lord is always inviting us to next steps because he's always using next steps to remind us of who we are in him and to journey on this thing called the adventure of life, the adventure of living in his kingdom and following one next step at a time. What's your next step? If you have no clue on this one, you know what's a great thing to do? Grab somebody who's a godly counsel that you trust in your life and ask them, hey, what do you sense my next step is? And then open your heart to receive in that conversation how you should walk that out. That is a great, great way to do it. Come on, what's my next step? With courage, write it down.

Last one. Last one. Last one, best one because it puts feet to the fire a little bit. Who can I ask me to hold me accountable to take it? Who can I ask to hold me accountable to take it? This is the time where you have to say, yeah, when I actually go and do that then I actually have to do it. When I have that conversation, then I have to actually like step forward with somebody in godly relationship on this journey with Jesus. The path of following the Lord is never meant to be walked alone. You can't do it. Ecclesiastes says, "Two are better than one. They have a good return for their labor. If one falls down, somebody is there to help pick them up. Pity the person that has no one to walk the path with." Pity the person has no one to help them when they fall down to step forward by faith.

Come on, who can you ask to hold you accountable to actually walk the ancient path? How amazing would that be if this week you took your card and you just processed it with somebody. You're like, can we just talk about this? Because Pastor Jason, he like made me fill the whole thing out. So I might as well, just might as well just talk to somebody about it. Man, it takes boldness. It takes courage that we have the courage to step into relationships. May we have the courage to step into accountability to take those next steps. So we finish where we started, "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls."

Jesus, I declare by faith that we would be a church that would truly stand at every crossroad that you put in front of us and just ask you, what are we supposed to do next, Jesus? Where are we supposed to go? Who have you called us to be? I don't want to follow the way of the world, I want to follow your ways. God, I declare over each one of us that our entire life would

be a life of following and saying where's the good way, what's the way forward? Because I certainly can't find it out there. I'm looking for it through the lens of the kingdom, through the lens of my savior by following Jesus. So would you show us? Would you give us the rest that only comes from you, that only comes from following you Jesus?

Not from going my own way, not for trying to figure it out on my own, from following you. Right now, if you're hearing this, if you're hearing this and you're like, I want that, I want rest, I want peace, I want a good way in my life, then can we just take a moment and say it's really possible that you have never said yes to Jesus in your life? You've never actually asked him to be Lord? Jesus is really clear, he says, I am the way, the truth and the life. If anyone -- if anyone would believe in me, if anyone would come after me, then that is where you will find salvation. There's only one way, there's only one truth, there's only one life, it's Jesus. So maybe even right now if you cannot remember a time, the first time you said yes to Jesus and actually went through -- like through the narrow door that leads to a wide life, through the narrow door that leads you to the ancient path of Jesus, if you cannot remember that time in your life it's really possible it hasn't happened.

Today is the day of salvation. In fact, if that's you, maybe we could just take a moment. You could just say to yourself something like this, Jesus, I'm tired of trying to live my own life and go my own way. I know that my identity is caught up in the world, and in my brokenness and in my sin. And so right now, I choose to say yes to you to make you lord. I believe that you are lord. I'm going to follow you. And I just believe that your life is going to become my life. Jesus, be my lord. I'm tired of doing it on my own. I receive your life. I receive what you did in your death, burial and resurrection. And I choose to follow you.

If you say anything even close to that, if you speak that out on the inside right now in that moment, it says, "All of heaven rejoices," because what just happened is somebody moved from death to life, from spiritual orphanhood to being a beloved son or daughter. That's the move, that's the change, that's the day, that's the moment. If so, then congratulations, today's your birthday. And so we invite you to celebrate your birthday with the rest of the Valley Creek family. Lord, thank you for what you're doing among us today. Thank you for a chance to respond, to walk your good way. We're so glad to experience it together. We love you Jesus. In your name, amen. Amen. Alright.