

Alright. Hey, everybody. Welcome to Valley Creek. Come on, whatever campus you're at today, Denton, Flower Mound, Gainesville, Lewisville, The Venue or online somewhere in the world, come on, let's welcome each other together.

Come on, one church, multiple locations or multiple campuses, thousands of locations. And on this weekend, as our campus pastors have rotated around to different campuses, I just want to -- I just want you to hear me say how proud I am of them. They are men of integrity, men of character, they love Jesus, they love you and they lead us so well. And I am so glad that you are here with us today because we're in this series called The Ancient Future: Practicing the Way of Jesus. And what we're doing is we're taking a look back at how the followers of Jesus who have gone before us have lived. But we're talking about what does it really mean to be a disciple, to follow Jesus, to become like him, that there is an ancient wisdom, an ancient word, an ancient way that is the way forward through this modern world?

And Tuesday night, we had our Tuesday Night Prayer live recording. Now, so many of you came and were a part of that and we had been preparing for months getting things ready, seeking God, getting ready for this expectation of this encounter of meeting with Him. We had eight of our original songs that we wanted to record with faith and prayer and this experience with God. And so we had been preparing for months. We got everything ready. The room was full, we got in, we started meeting with God together, praying and worshiping. And we got about one minute into the third song and the entire power went out to the entire building. Just like that, everything went dark. You want to talk about a disorienting interruption. It was disorienting and it certainly was an interruption.

You see, what we didn't know at the time was a car hit a power pole and knocked down power to the whole area, took out power to the entire building. Everything went down. And yet about 10 seconds of uncomfortability in the dark and all of a sudden everyone started just pulling out their phones, turning their flashlights on and just kept worshiping, just kept singing, just kept praying, just kept seeking God. And over the next few minutes, eventually the power was turned back on and we were able to keep going and the rest of that night and since then I've been sitting there and thinking about this and wrestling through it and trying to just come to this understanding with the Lord that the disorienting interruptions are actually divine invitations. And that night there was a disorienting interruption, but really it was a divine invitation. It was like God was trying to get our attention. He was inviting us to seek Him, to turn our hearts to him, to kind of wake up, to get off of this way of the world and to just get out of our apathy and are just kind of going through the motions and all the different stuff.

It was like God said, here's an interruption, but it's really an invitation to help try to capture your heart and your spirit. And I think that is prophetic for what this season is all about. See, this season and this entire series is about this disorienting interruption that's really a divine invitation. And so my question for you is where is there a disorienting interruption in your life? Maybe that's actually just a divine invitation from God to get your attention so you get off of

the road of this world. I mean come on proverbs tells us that there is a way that seems right to a man but in the end it leads to death. There are so many ways that seem right to us, that seem good, that are comfortable and convenient and make sense and are normal and everybody else is doing it, but in the end it leads to death.

And so God in His goodness and His grace will sometimes allow a disorienting interruption on the road of this world that's really a divine invitation to help us recalibrate, seek Him, turn our hearts, repent and kind of say, okay Lord, I'm ready to start following you again. That's what this entire series is about. In fact, I didn't even want to say any of that about the Tuesday night recording, but really it's like about as prophetic as prophetic gets like, God's saying like, hey, boom, flare in the sky, remember me? I think that's what some of us need to hear in the season. Boom. Hey, remember me. I know some of you you're getting tired of this verse, you're like, why do we have to talk about it every week? "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."

The reason we keep talking about it every week is because a crossroad is a disorienting interruption. You're going along in a way and then you hit a crossroads and God interrupts your life to give you an invitation to life. In this series in the season and you hear it in my voice and you sense it in my body posture, there's a weight, there's a burden to the sense of like it's time to wake up to get off of the road of this world that's comfortable, convenient, that's wide and broad, but it leads to death and destruction and take God's invitation to go down the ancient path, the narrow road, the good way and walk in it so you'll find rest for your souls. And so we've got to see what's happening and stop complaining about corona and the world and politics and all things. Maybe those were just the grace of God in our lives to interrupt so we could be invited.

And so last week, we talked about prayer. And we talked about how prayer is really a part of the narrow road, it's the way we walk this ancient path, that if Jesus prayed and he's what the ancient path looked like, then then to pray is what it means to be to be fully human, to be fully alive. And the reason we struggle with prayer is because somewhere along the way we've made this conscious decision or subconscious even that prayer doesn't work. In a moment of desperation or of great need, in a moment of desire or want, we prayed, we didn't get what we wanted, when we wanted, how we wanted, so we've made this conclusion in our mind that prayer doesn't work. That's why we tend to avoid it. But it's not that prayer doesn't work, it's just that we don't understand it. And you will always misjudge that which you don't understand. Prayer is not about getting things from God, it's about connecting to God. The whole point of prayer is not getting what you want, when you want, how you want, it's about connecting to God.

It's about enjoying Him and knowing Him and being known. It's about sharing our heart and our burden and our desires and our pain and our confusions and our questions with Him and

then receiving back His wisdom and his love and his grace and his goodness. It's through prayer that his ways become our ways and his thoughts become our thoughts and his paths become our paths. And as I begin to enjoy God I start to feel empowered by God. As I have intimacy with God I start to carry this authority from God. And that's when prayer picks up this power with it. In fact, I love this verse, it says, "The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." You're like, oh well, that's good for a righteous man but that ain't me. If you put your faith in Jesus then you now are -- huh.

So if I believe in Jesus, it means I've been made right with God, once and for all, end of story, it is finished because of what Jesus has done. And so if the prayer of a righteous man, it means the prayer of someone who believes in Jesus is powerful and effective, then if I believe in Jesus my prayers are powerful and effective. They're effective to connect with God, to enjoy Him, to have this intimacy and this relationship with him, but they're also powerful. They have the authority to bring God's kingdom to this earth. And this is why those who have gone before us, they prayed, they devoted themselves to prayer. All throughout Scriptures, you will see that the people who have gone before us, they were always praying. Go all the way back to the Garden of Eden, God walked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day. All the way back to before sin, you know what they lived a lifestyle of? Prayer. Because it's the narrow road, it's the ancient path, it's the good way. So when did it become normal and acceptable to not pray as a follower of Jesus?

When did that just become like okay? Because really it's the way of life. And maybe my favorite verse from last week is -- I just think this verse is so powerful when Jesus says, "If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you." Now, this is where a lot of us get stuck. Ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you. You're like, see, right there, I've asked, I've sought, I've knocked and I didn't get. Okay. But before you bring your beliefs down to your experiences, let's just take Jesus and his word here for a second. Like ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you. Just think about the authority here. Think about the empowerment. Think about the gravity that Jesus is literally saying, I have commissioned you to rule and reign with me on this earth.

I have empowered you to bring my kingdom to the lost lonely and broken realities around you. And when you give someone authority, you give them authority to bless, to protect, to serve, to create, to lead, to initiate. And so the world is literally waiting for us to rise up and take the authority that God has given to us for them. But before we have the authority and the empowerment, we have to first enjoy. If. This is an if-then statement. We just go to the then. Ask whatever you wish. I want a million dollars. Didn't work. Prayer doesn't work. No. If you remain in me, if you enjoy me, if we have a relationship, if you're connected, if you are walking on the narrow road, the ancient path, the good way with me then ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you.

Because now you have this intimacy that leads to an authority. Because now it's not about you getting what you want, now it's about you using that authority to bless others. Because authority is never given to you for you, it's always given to you to bless and protect and serve and uplift those around you. Okay? So some of you are like this is what we talked about last week, it is. I'm just giving you a quick recap. If you've missed it, you can go and watch the whole thing on YouTube because here's what we're going to do today, today we're actually going to practice the way of Jesus. Now, some of you are like, what does that mean? It means we're going to practice the way of Jesus because that's the tagline of this whole series. And we've been saying it every week and sometimes we get so used to coming to church to listen and to learn forgetting that we're supposed to practice.

I mean think about it, imagine going to football every single day but -- learning about football, but never actually practicing football. Imagine going to band every single day and you learn about band and about music and about instruments but never picking up an instrument and actually practicing it. Imagine going to work every day and learning what you're supposed to be doing but never actually practicing your job. Or imagine learning about Spanish every single week, but then never actually practicing speaking Spanish. Kind of defeats the point, don't you think? Come on, this is why the Bible tells us, "Show me your ways, teach me your paths." Show me your ways, teach me your paths. At some point, we have to move beyond being shown and taught to practicing and taking, to practicing the way and taking the path.

See, what I love about our church is this is a harbor of hope for lost, lonely and broken people, but it's also a training center of life for those who have been found, those who have connected and those who are healthy. And so what I want to do today is I actually want to practice that which what we've been talking about. Now, before you get all stressed out and uncomfortable, don't worry, I'm not going to put the spotlight on you, I want to lead you through an experience so you can find the life that God offers you and start practicing the way of Jesus. See, I think sometimes we think church is where we have to perform and be perfect and get it right. Now, this is the place you just get to practice, where you get to learn it and try it and grow in it. And you can mess up and you can get it all wrong and ain't nobody's going to shame you, nobody's going to be mad at you, we're going to coach you, we're going to help you so you can practice the way of Jesus so you can start to excel in the ways of Jesus. Does that make sense?

See, I think if we're honest a lot of us right now where we are in this time in this place, there's a lot of weariness and burdens in people's lives. In fact, I love what Jesus says when he says, "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened." Anybody feel like that today? A little weary, a little wore out, a little burdened, a little broke down? "And I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble and hard and you will find rest for your souls." If you've been tracking, this is the same wording at the end of the Jeremiah 6 verse. You will find rest for your souls. If you're weary and burdened, no problem, let's get off the road of this world and let's walk down the ancient path, the narrow road, the

good way with Jesus and find rest for our souls. Okay. So here's what we're going to do. We're just going to pray together and I'm just going to lead you through it.

And just like the disciples, they didn't know how to pray and so they said, Jesus, teach us how to pray. You might be like, I don't know how to pray, I don't know how to do this, I'm starting to sweat, I'm starting to get stressed out. Don't worry about it. I want to lead you to actually practice the way of Jesus and meet with God. And so this is the disciples, they asked Jesus how to pray. This is what he tells them how to pray, it's what we talked about last week. Will you just start by faith, can we just read this out loud with me? Ready? Our father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. So wherever you are, will you just close your eyes with me?

You just kind of settle yourself down and let's take a moment to pray because prayer slows things down. So right now, can you just be aware that God is above you and below you? That He's to the left of you and the right of you? That He is in you and upon you? That He is in the very air that you breathe? God is not mad at you. He's not out to get you. He loves you and He longs to connect with you.

And so I'm just going to lead you through each of these pieces and I just want to invite you where you are, you just pray them to the Lord. Starts by saying our Father. Who you pray to is more important than how you pray. There's no special words. There's no formula. There's no religious baggage. Just can you just even acknowledge Him as Father? Position yourself as a beloved son or daughter. Acknowledge that He's a good dad, that He's your dad and that you're a part of his family.

This is just turning your attention and your affection to Him as a good dad. Our Father in heaven. He lives from heaven to earth, from the invisible to the visible, from the superior to the inferior. And so maybe just ask Him for His perspective. Dad, you have a great perspective on life. So I just ask you right now for your perspective in my family, in my life, in my world. Hallowed be your name. In other words, just tell God who He is.

Thank God for what He has done. Tell Him that He's good and He's gracious. Thank Him for who He is and how He has moved in your life. This is gratitude, worship, thanksgiving. Thank you that you are good, that you're good to me. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. This is inviting God's rule and reign into your life.

This is inviting His lordship, His leadership. This is about submitting and surrendering to Jesus. So maybe there's just parts of your life that you just see, God, I want your kingdom to come in my marriage. I want your will to be done in my home. I want your heavenly realities in these inferior, broken circumstances of my life. Just where do you want to invite the realities of

heaven and the lordship of Jesus into your life? Just by faith, ask Him. Then He says, give us today our daily bread.

In other words, just ask God for what you need. What kind of provision do you need in your life? By faith, ask Him. Because He's a good Father who wants his kingdom to come. Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven others. This is just confession and repentance. Where have you messed up? Where have you fallen short? Where have you made a mistake? Where are you carrying shame and guilt?

Just offer it to the Lord. God, I confess and repent this to you. Be specific because He wants to free you from that guilt, free you from that shame and offer you the cleansing grace of forgiveness and freedom. For those of you that think He couldn't forgive me, oh yes he can. And then where do you need to offer forgiveness to others? Where is there an offense or bitterness in your heart? The same grace that God has given to you right now, release it into their life. Lord, I forgive, say their name, for doing this. Be specific.

I cancel the debt and I credit their account in Jesus' name. And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from the evil one. In other words, where do you need victory in your life? You need victory in your mind, victory in your heart, victory in your body. Where do you need to invite the victory of Jesus into your life and where do you feel attacked? Where do you feel storms of darkness are against you? Ask Him to protect you from the kingdom of darkness, from the demonic realm that comes to steal, kill and destroy. But he has come to protect and bless and be with you.

Lord Jesus, we look to you for victory and protection. Come on, you're doing so good. You're doing so good. That's the Lord's Prayer. That's how Jesus tells us how to pray. But then last week we also talked about verses that the Bible tells us to use to pray. And so I want to invite you with me for these next few moments, stay in this posture. This is practicing. You're doing great. You can run farther than you think you can. You can speak more Spanish than you know. This is what the Bible says, "I urge then that first of all that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone for kings and all those in authority that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." Okay, he says pray for your leaders.

So what leader do you need to pray for? I would submit to you it's whichever one you're the most frustrated in right now. So if you're frustrated by politics, then maybe you need to pray for your president. If you're frustrated at work, then maybe you need to pray for your boss. If you're frustrated at home, then maybe you need to pray for your parents. Well, the Bible tells us to pray for our leaders. It says not my leader, all authority comes from God. And so if that person is in your life as an authority figure, God's put them there. This is the way of Jesus. So maybe you pray for the mayor, for the councilman, for the police officer, for your boss, for the coach, for the parent. I don't know. And you say, well, what do I pray? Pray that the lord would bless them, that He would be good to them.

Pray that He would fill their lives with godly people who would fill them with godly counsel. Pray that the Lord's face would shine upon them, that He would give them peace in their heart. That they would have supernatural insight and understanding on how to lead. Come on, this is by faith and it's the way of Jesus and it's how we experience peaceful quiet, godly and holy lives. And then Jesus tells us, "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." Who's someone right now that's an enemy in your life? Who do you feel like is against you?

A bully, a person online, someone at work, I don't know. But the way of Jesus is not to gossip and grumble about them, it's to pray for them. You say, what do I pray? You just pray that the Lord would bless them. Come on, who's that person? Pray that kindness would lead them to repentance. Pray that the Lord would be gracious and good to them. Sometimes we have to pray for those that are against us until we feel the Lord's compassion and love for them. This is the way of peace.

Then Jesus tells us that the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. So ask or pray to the Lord of the harvest therefore to send out workers into his harvest field. In other words, He says, pray for the church. So come on, can you pray for your church right now? Can you pray for our leaders, your campus pastors, our staff, that they'd be encouraged and strengthened, that the Holy Spirit will fill them up? Could you pray God's protection and blessing upon their lives? Could you pray for all of our serve team and leaders that lead this church every single week that the Lord would just continue to strengthen them and grow them and mature them?

Could you pray that the Lord would raise up the people around you right now, that they would get involved and get in the game? That the people would rise up to help us raise up the next generation and serve in the city and make disciples and lead worship and creativity and production and operations? The harvest is plentiful, there's so much kingdom opportunity, but the Lord says we need to ask Him for those around us to rise up. This is the way of Jesus. Come on, don't just show up to church, be a part of the church and ask God to move in your church. Because this is how you find rest for your soul. And then he says, seek the peace and the prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile.

Pray to the Lord for it because if it prospers, you too will prosper. He says, pray for your city. Come on, just -- can you just pray for your city right now? Like wherever you are, can you pray God's kingdom would come, that His will would be done? Can you pray for supernatural intervention? Can you pray for the schools and the businesses and the city councils and the leaders? Can you pray the families would be reconciled, that shalom peace, comprehensive flourishing would be released over the city? Like take some authority over your city in Jesus' name and ask his kingdom to come. Because the world is waiting for us to stop praying for ourselves and start praying for them.

Come on, you're doing so good. You're meeting with God. You're talking to God and He hears you because the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective, so He's moving even in this moment and He's right here and He's with you. And some of you think I can't pray, you're doing it. It's happening. He's moving. He's responding. Come on, two more. This one, you're going to like. "Do not be anxious about anything but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your request to God and the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." Come on, where are you anxious?

Anxiety, stress, fear and depression are the ways of this world, but peace that surpasses understanding, rest for our souls, that's the ancient path. So where are you anxious? He doesn't say think about it, he says pray about it. So come on, what's that burden? Give it to the Lord. What's that thing you're stressed about? Give it to the Lord. Where is there that depression? Give it to the Lord. What are you worried about? Give it to the Lord. Stop thinking about it, start praying about it. Come on, Lord, I'm anxious about this. I'm anxious about my marriage. I'm anxious about my finances. I'm anxious to just sit and still and quiet right now. My soul is screaming out because I don't know how to sit peacefully and quiet for more than three seconds. Give it to the Lord. I'm anxious about that circumstance. I'm depressed about this situation.

One says by prayer and petition, not just once, not just flipping, keep saying, Lord, I give you my marriage. Lord, I give you my marriage. I'm anxious about it, I give you my marriage. Come on, I'm still anxious about it. Lord, I give it to you. Come on, keep giving it to Him. Keep giving it to Him, keep giving it to Him. Right now, contend for your own life. Fight for your own faith. Battle for your own soul. He tells us, He doesn't want us to be anxious, He wants to give us peace. That goes beyond anything we can even understand. May you receive that peace in Jesus' name. And then last one. "Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. And to him who knocks the door will be opened."

Come on, what do you want to just ask God for? What's the desire of your heart? What's that thing in your soul? What's that hope that you have? Ask, seek, knock. Ask Him to move. Seek Him so you can find Him. Knock so the realities of heaven will come in to your world. This is the way of Jesus. And this is a disorienting interruption that's just a divine invitation.

Because my guess that some of you came here today or joined online and you're expecting something totally different and practicing praying is a disorienting interruption in your life but it's actually a divine invitation of God saying, I need to slow everything down so I can get your attention, to get you off of the road of this world where we run and become weary and burdened and get your heart and your attention and your mind back on me, so that you will have rest in your soul.



Come on, what is the Holy Spirit saying to you right now? Speak Lord for we are listening. The Lord wants to say to some of you, I love you, I've missed you. I think He wants to say to some of you, don't miss this moment. This is my interruption leading to my invitation so that you can find life.

I love that it says, "After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly." So I just declare over you and me today that as we pray together, something was shaken, something in your mind was shaken, something in your heart was shaken, something in your life was shaken, something in your family was shaken, something in your home was shaken, something in your work was shaken, something in your school was shaken, something in our city was shaken, something in our church was shaken, something in our community was shaking. Come on, the kingdom has come. God's will will be done. Things need to be shaken up sometimes and we become filled with the Spirit of the living God and have a boldness to speak His word, to walk His ways, to take the ancient path and narrow road.

This is a harbor of hope, but it is a training center for life. We practice, we learn, we try and we grow. So today, we slowed it all the way down because we've been learning and we needed to try. And I believe you just grew. So Holy Spirit, thank you for the way that you're moving among us today. Thank you for the way of Jesus. Would you just keep leading us down the ancient path, the narrow road? I just declare that today was an interruption that is leading to a divine invitation. May we accept that what you offer us to and follow you by faith down the ancient path, the narrow road, the good way and may we find rest for our souls, in Jesus' name we pray, amen.