

Alright. Hey everybody, welcome to Valley Creek. If you haven't already, go ahead and stand up on your feet today. My name is Jason. I am the campus pastor here at the Flower Mound Campus. And I'm so glad that we're together today. We are the church and we've gathered as the church. And so it's going to be a really great day to spend time together and worship and hearing the word and reflecting on the goodness of God. And if this is your first time with us, I just want to say welcome. We're really glad that you're here with us at Valley Creek. Hope is here, everyone is welcome and Jesus changes everything. So we're glad to have you with us today as we have been in eight weeks of a series called Follow the Cloud, for the last eight weeks, which is like crazy, so long. It's been so good as we've been talking about Follow the Cloud, which is the Old Testament picture of how the Israelites followed God's presence when they went from Egypt towards the Promised Land, following an ever-present, a personal cloud by day, a pillar of fire by night. And the whole story of Follow the Cloud is really our story, it's our story.

And because the cloud isn't just in front of us, it's Jesus within us. And he leads us one next step at a time into more and more freedom, a life of following him. So we've been processing that together. Well, today we're not just going to talk about follow the cloud, we're actually going to experience Follow the Cloud. We're not just going to talk about something we've been showing you called the three circles, the image of who we are and who God is and what we've been created to do, our identity, our religion, purpose. We're not just going to talk about it, we're going to have an experience with it. The service is going to be a little bit different. I'm going to lead you through different elements of it, but I want to really encourage you, lean in. Like the whole time, just lean into it. Just expect the goodness of God. Did you know that God is really good at being good? So expect his goodness to join us to be a part of what's happening today. We're going to move all the way through the circles and kind of have a moment with each one starting with circle one.

See, circle one is all about receiving his grace, a new identity in Jesus. When we receive his grace, everything changes. Grace, the undeserved favor of God pouring all over our life. Grace, it's not only the forgiveness of sins, but it also changes our identity and it empowers us to live differently. Grace, everything starts and ends with the grace of God, with a new identity in Him. You see, without Jesus, we are born as orphans in this world, without a home, without a name, without a future. But with Jesus, we're no longer called orphans, we are now called sons, we are now called daughters. And not just sons and daughters, beloved sons, beloved daughters in whom the Father is well pleased. When you receive His grace, your identity literally changes. You are no longer just a sinner saved by grace. The way to say that is I was a sinner, now I've been saved by grace. I used to be part of the orphanage of this world, now I've been adopted into God's family. I used to have this thing where I couldn't get out of a prison of sin, now I've been placed in a position of righteousness.

So when you receive His grace, everything changes and you start to think differently and it leads you forward into the other circles. So right now, we just choose to receive His grace.

We're going to experience it together as we get started maybe and say God, thank you for your grace. God, thank you for your grace pouring over my life. God, thank you for your grace, it's for me. I receive it fresh today. When you woke up and you took your first breath today, that was grace. When you came into this room surrounded by the other people of God, that's the presence of God. That's his grace pouring over you, an ocean of grace washing over your life. Come on, choose to receive His grace even as we begin to worship together.

Come on, maybe even just say, thank you Jesus. Thank you Jesus. You are our high king. You are the one that comes near to us, that comes close, that draws near to your people. Thank you Jesus. Thank you Jesus. May your name be praised forever and ever and ever in our life, in our church, in our area, that we always give you the praise. Alright, go ahead and find your seats for a moment because the next step of what we want to do is we want to receive communion, so as our ushers come forward and begin to distribute it. Communion is the very best way that we could think of to experiencing -- to experience receiving His grace because communion is tangible grace. It is literally the essence of the grace of God in our life. And so communion for anybody that's placed their faith in Jesus, if that's you, you're welcome to take here at Valley Creek. And as we begin to take communion, as we begin to pass it out, I want you to understand communion is actually -- it's a reminder of the story of the Israelites because if you've ever wondered why a communion cracker is flat, it's because when the Israelites had to leave Egypt they had to make bread without yeast.

They actually had to make flat bread. They had to make a bread that didn't have yeast because, A, they didn't have enough time to make bread with yeast, they literally had to go because they finally got the clearance from Pharaoh to go. And during the Passover meal, before they left Egypt, they prepared a lamb and they prepared their flat bread. That is, they prepared to partake of a lamb like a prophetic picture of Jesus, the spotless lamb of God, and the flat bread the bread that was made without yeast reminding us that Jesus is the bread of life, that whenever we take him in, whenever we partake of communion we're taking in fresh grace, fresh life of Jesus in our life. And so the story of the Israelites, a story of the Passover of God passing over and saving all of their firstborn and then setting them free on a journey to begin to follow the cloud, it's a reminder to us that we now can live free.

We now can live with the fullness of Jesus in our life. Communion is tangible grace. Every time you take of it, every time you hold in your hands, you're being reminded of who Jesus is and what Jesus did. Can I just tell you, Jesus is everything and he did everything? He did everything that had to be done to bring us back to the Father, everything that needed to happen to make a way for us to be brought in to the family of God. So go ahead and take the bread right now. As you do, be reminded of that flat bread, that Passover time, be reminded of the last night that Jesus had with his disciples when he took the bread and looked at them and said, this is the bread that looks like my body, it's going to be like my body, my body will be broken so that you'll be made whole.

I am the bread of life. Whenever you take of me, you will experience life, fresh grace in your life. And so as we take this together, may we remember Jesus and his fresh grace. Let's take the bread together. The same way, Jesus took the cup and he said, this cup is a as a brand new deal between God and mankind. It's a cup of a new covenant, a new promise and so no longer will the relationship be based on what you can do, what you've achieved, what kind of commands you can keep, now it will be based on everything that I've done.

On the fact that I'm not only the one that got you out of Egypt, I'm the one that's with you right now and I'm the one that's going to bring you to the Promised Land. I'm not just the one that created you, I'm the one that set in a game plan to figure out how to restore all of humanity and I'm actually the one that saw it to completion. So every single time we take the cup, we remember his blood spilled for us. We remember a brand new promise based on what he has done, his finished work. And we take it and remembering him today. Let's take the cup together. So Jesus, thanks for fresh grace during communion and every moment of our life. We choose even now to remember who you are and what you did. We don't want to skip past it, we don't want to fly by it.

We receive it fresh today. Thank you Jesus for what you did. Thank you Jesus for your sacrifice and your fresh life for us today, amen. So as you keep passing through circle one through identity, you move on to circle two. Circle two is all about relationship. Circle two is where we experience the presence of God. Circle two is where we draw close. You were always meant to be fully known and fully loved. You were always meant to see God not as a distant God but as a loving Father. You were always meant to be somebody who was who was going to worship in spirit and truth, to draw near to God knowing He draws near to you. Did you know that you can be as close to God as anybody who's ever lived in the history of the earth? Why? Because you have the Holy Spirit inside of you. So God is not far off somewhere, He's close, He's near, He draws close to you.

And so even as we worship on the weekends, it's part of why we do what we do. We don't just come to church to learn more information, we come to church so we can be transformed, have a transformation through the power of a Spirit as the people of God. You're now by the spirit of God, under the lordship of Jesus sent to bring hope to the world. And so what we do on the weekends is we experience His presence together and something powerful and amazing happens when that happens. So I want to invite you to stand back up because over the next few songs, I would just want to -- we just choose to experience his presence right now, His fresh spirit being poured over each one of us, His fresh life in this place, this atmosphere full of faith. Come on, let's experience His presence together right now.

Come on, the Bible says, where two or more gathered in the name of Jesus, he is there with them. So what we're singing is it's not just like empty words, empty lyrics, it's a real invitation that Jesus really does accept. So if you're here today and you want to experience the presence of God maybe even for the first time, maybe for the hundredth time, but you want to

experience being with him for a moment in a new and fresh way, I want to invite you to make these lyrics more than just lyrics, but make it a prayer, an anthem of your heart to invite Jesus to be here with you, not just in the room but to meet with you. Say, come rest your presence here.

So come on, we've made the space, we've made the invitation. He's here right now in this moment. So before we move on to like anything else, any other song, any other encouragement, let's not miss this moment to just be still and as simple as it sounds just enjoy being with God. So would you take a second, maybe even close your eyes, take a deep breath, relax, let go of any other thought that may be in your mind and just enjoy being in the presence of your good Father.

Come on give a shout out to praise the Lord. Jesus, thank you. God, you're all we want. You're what we declare. You're what we long for. You're what we lean into. You're what we worship for, why we're here. Listen, even as we're singing that I had this thought, I know there's somebody that sang those words right now, they're like, yeah, but that's not actually true for me. Like I want a lot of different things. He is not actually the only one that I want. I know, but how about this? What if you could just say, but I want to want you.

But I want to -- I want a place in my life where you actually are the only thing that is that one thing I seek and this I ask, seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and everything else is added to you as well. You're what I want. I want to declare it out as a word, a prophetic word over my life, a declaration of what I really want to be, who I want to be. See, we're journeying forward and so we'll begin to understand our identity and our relationship, that is our restored identity and our reconciled relationship. We move forward to circle three. That is our redeemed purpose, to release God's kingdom. It's in circle three that the question why am I here is answered. The question of like, what's the point? What's the purpose? What are we doing here? And the answer is we're working with our good Father to release His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

The kingdom, the king's domain, the place where the things of the kingdom rule and reign, where his life is, where the spirit is, where things come into alignment with King Jesus. We're always meant to release his kingdom. It's the restoration of Genesis 1, be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, subdue it using the vast resources for the service of God and man. That is for the good of others and the glory of God. That is why we're here. That is the point. And so today, we're going to have a chance to release that kingdom, to live in a little bit of our purpose. Here's what we're going to do. We're going to pray over each other. Some of you are like, I got to run out of this room as fast as I can. We're going to pray over each other because the prayers of a righteous person are powerful and effective. So if you have Jesus, you are righteous, identity, and your prayers are powerful, effective, release his kingdom. We learned during this series that so many of us want to do things out here in the world, social justice issues, stopping wars, declaring all stuff across the world is a problem.

How about we just take some authority over our friends and our family and the people we're sitting with in this room and release the kingdom into them by praying the goodness of God into their life? So here's what you're going to do, look around you and look around who you're going to pray for. Maybe somebody you're sitting by, maybe family you came with, maybe somebody you don't know. You can say, hi, my name is Jason, how can I pray for you? I just want to pray for you right now. If you don't feel comfortable, you don't have to. You can you can pray quietly, you can sit down and pray for somebody in your life. But I really encourage you, the prayers of righteous people, powerful, effective. Somebody right now is going to get prayed for and they're going to get healed. I'm just talking it out. There's going to be somebody that you're going to pray for, something's going to break through in their mind, body or soul. So come on, begin to pray for them right now. Maybe you could just start by praying the goodness of God into them, just saying, I just pray that you receive the goodness of God, you live in His goodness. Pray the peace of God that would surpass understanding in their life.

Whisper in their ears, put a hand on their shoulder, man, I just pray that you experience hope, that the God of all hope would fill you with His peace. If you see somebody there that hasn't been prayed for, man, go and pray for them. Look around you. Is there anybody needs to be prayed for? Is there anybody who just wants to pray with somebody? Look for that person. Call it out. If you're sitting there and you don't know what to pray or who to pray for, just think of someone that God brings to mind and just start praying blessings over them, blessings, blessing over their life God, blessings in their life. I had a really strong sense that as you're being prayed for today, you are literally healing mind, body, soul, that's why I just said that.

So there's going to be physical healings you may be praying for they don't even know about right now, they're going to be healed in Jesus' name. There's going to be thoughts that they've had that have been broken down for years, they're going to be healed in Jesus' name. There's going to be a hurt in their soul that needs to be bound up by you praying over them, like coming to church and actually having somebody touch them, pray for them, declare the goodness of God over them, it's being healed in Jesus' name. When the disciples came to Jesus and they're like, we don't know how to pray, teach us how to pray, this is how you pray, "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." That's all you're doing. You're calling the things that are not as though they are. You're pulling down the realities of heaven into the atmosphere. You're working with your good Father to release His kingdom to the lives of those around you.

I encourage you, keep on praying, don't stop. We're going to keep on worshiping, you can just keep on praying. We're going to keep on declaring the goodness of God, you can keep on declaring the goodness of God over the person you came with, over the persons you're sitting by. Come on, release your Father's kingdom. It's what you're made to do. It's why

you're here. It's our purpose. It's what we're made to do. Thank you Jesus for your kingdom that never ends.

Come on, when you sing that you come into alignment with your redeemed purpose. When you sing that, you step into new levels of freedom and life, you release more of the kingdom of heaven that is at hand now, that's closer than we even realize. So come on, right now let's just sing that again, but let's sing it from a place of understanding. Man, this is what you were made for, to declare this truth.

Sometimes we've got to take some kingdom authority over areas of our life. Have you ever noticed how much when God's trying to get your attention, the world's trying to draw it away? And how when we're declaring things like, yours is the kingdom and the glory, the power forever, amen, our screens go out and we got like no words on the screen? Or when you're walking to the building, something happens, as an accident that kind of creates a scare -- you know, it makes your heart feel scared like what's going on, what's happening and your blood pressure starts to rise and suddenly, instead of your eyes being focused here, we're focused on all the things that are inside of us, the churning, the melting, the anxiety, the depression, the disappointment, that what's going to happen?

I'm just telling you the people that release the kingdom take kingdom authority over their life and over the lives of those around them. So we take some kingdom authority over our church today and we declare that Jesus, yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, amen. We declare that you are king, Jesus. And wherever you're leading us is better than where we've been. And so we step into the realities of being a person actually releases the kingdom, that calls down heavenly realities into earthly circumstances. We push out the fear, we push out the anxiety, we push out the confusion.

We bring in love, we bring in peace, we bring in clarity into our lives and the lives of those around us in your name Jesus, amen. Amen. Alright. Alright, go ahead and have a seat because it all comes to this point right now. Go ahead and have a seat. This is where we're going to bring it all together. And grab a pen, grab a journal, grab your notes and your phone, get ready to write some things down. There's a great verse in the Bible, it says, "Write it down, make it plain on tablets so a herald may run with it." Write it down, make it plain so that you can run forward boldly into the next season that Jesus is leading you into. There are three questions that everybody who follows Jesus should be able to answer on any given season of their life. First question is this, what has the Holy Spirit been saying to you? Over the course of these eight weeks the Holy Spirit's been speaking a lot.

God's been speaking, the question is are we listening. What's He been speaking to you? What's he been saying? Have you asked Him? Maybe even right now, Holy Spirit, what are you speaking to me? One word from God can change everything. One conversation with God can change your life. We want God to speak to us in like a banner flying behind an airplane or

like a megaphone and He wants to whisper so that we're forced to lean in closer. Listen, what's He whispering right now?

The second question and I invite you to write down the answer to, is where is Jesus inviting you to submit to his lordship? Where is Jesus inviting you to submit to his lordship? Lordship is really simple. When Jesus is lord, I'm not. When Jesus is lord, I don't have to be. So that means he determines the path of my life, my next steps that I'm supposed to take, where is he inviting me to submit to lordship? Usually, this question can be answered for whatever the biggest churning is in your heart. The oh, should I do it, I don't want to do it. Do I do it? I should do it -- the back and forth. Wherever that is is probably the place that is an invitation to follow in obedience to make Jesus lord in that area. All three of these questions are great repentance questions because they force us to literally change the way we think, think differently.

Like if we'll repent, if we'll change the way we think, it will absolutely affect how we live. It'll absolutely affect what happens next in our life. So where is Jesus inviting you to submit in lordship? Maybe it's in finances, maybe it's in that relational tension, maybe it's in confusion in your mind where you're like I want to go my way, but he said, no, go my way, go my way. That's the second question. The third one is really simple. What's your next step? But sometimes really hard to take. What's the next step he's inviting you to take? Next steps are discoveries to be made, discovering more of who I am and who God is and what I've been created to do. Next steps are the journey. It's what God -- is a word -- his word is a lamp into our feet, a light to our path.

Because if you had like this whole spotlight, you'd be taking next leaps, not like next steps and you're running as fast as you could to get to the end of it. The end is not the point, the journey is the destination. Then one next step at a time, following the next thing that God asked me to do, a little lamp on the ground. There? Okay, there. Yeah. How about over here? Just that journey, that one next step at a time, it's amazing how much your life will change if you'll start to think about it in terms of little steps, not giant leaps, sentences, not paragraphs, one next step at a time. So what is it? What's the invitation for the season that God's been speaking to you? What does He want to say? Write it down. So God, we even write these down and we genuine in our heart want to lean into them, we genuinely want to follow where you're leading us, God. Will you help us? Will you give us a heart to follow? Will you give us a softness in our spirit? Will you give us a willingness to go wherever you lead us to?

Because where else we're going to go? Like following you is the best there is. You're the best that there is. So you continue to change us, Jesus. Change our hearts, change our minds, change our thoughts. We lean into you today, in your name.

Alright. So this is the end of this series, for the Follow the Cloud series. This is not the end of the journey of following the cloud. This is absolutely just the beginning of taking next steps to

discover more of our identity and our relationship and our purpose and more of the love of the Father in our life. This is just the beginning. So we want to resource you with that journey. I really want to encourage you, if you've never actually read Follow the Cloud, I'd encourage you to get that book. We talked about like ten percent of what's in there. This is the story of our church family and this is the story of what God's done here, what He's spoken to us, and it is a great word for us to take into our lives. We also want to give you a poster today out in the atrium. There's going to be these white posters. You can fill these in with your own thoughts, man, what God's spoken to you about who you are and who He is and what you're created to do. I walked into my daughter's bedroom this week. I saw it filled out. I about lost it. I was like melting. And she filled it out and she taped it to her wall and she's walking her journey. She's on her journey of discovery. She's finding out more of the goodness of God in her life. And so I just want to encourage you to grab those posters as many as you want to take with you, you're welcome to do that. If you want to give, giving is just a response to the goodness of God. God's so good. And so I just want to encourage you, you can do that boxes as you go or online at [valleycreek.org](http://valleycreek.org).

If you need prayer for anything, we want to pray for you before you leave. Every single weekend, we want to create an encounter and sometimes just straight up praying with people is part of that encounter as the church, as the people of God. And as you go this week, go knowing God is good, Jesus has forgiven you, you are loved and everything is possible. May you go this week as a hope carrier. Blessings.