

Well, hey everybody, welcome to the Valley Creek Young Adult Gathering. My name is Colleen Stickl and I serve on staff here at Valley Creek and I am so excited to get to share with you tonight. I just love what God is doing in this community. I don't know if you can see it or not, but you guys are growing and so I want to celebrate you, like you are leaning into your faith, you're praying over each other, you're listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit, and so my encouragement for tonight would be to keep leaning in because you are the church, so engage the conversation. If the Holy Spirit is moving in you, you can say amen. You know what I'm talking about? If I ask you a question, you can actually respond. In fact, I want you to respond. Why? Because Valley Creek Young Adult Gathering is a space that's not about receiving information, it's about transformation. Pastor Chris said it earlier, this is not a time to get a bunch of information, it's a time for transformation and that requires your participation. I didn't intend to rhyme there, but it kind of does rhyme, all right? It's not about information, it's about transformation, it requires your participation, so engage with your whole heart.

Amen? Amen? Good practice. All right. So, see, many of you know that we have been in an incredible series called Learn from Me, Life in the Kingdom. Awesome. And we've said that Jesus came to show us what it looks like to live life in the kingdom and as we learn from him, we can actually live to walk that out. And what I want you to catch is that means that life in the kingdom is not for just like a future season. It's not for when you finish school or when you get that job or if you get married. Life in the kingdom is for today. Like Tuesday night, whatever season you're in, whatever job you have right now, life in the kingdom is for now. So, Jesus says, "Learn from me, lift up your eyes and I will give you a vision for the life I have for you." And so, our prayer, this whole series, is that you guys would be able to lift your eyes up. You're like, "What does that mean?" It means to not just have this perspective. I think so many times in life, we just look at what's directly in front of us, what we can see with our own eyes, but Jesus invites us to lift our eyes up, to look to him, to see the kingdom life that's available, like to have a vision for our life.

And we keep coming back to Matthew 11:28. This has been kind of our anchor verse. It says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I'm gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your soul." See, everybody say, "Learn from me." I'll say it again. Learn from me. So, there's this exchange that's happening here. It's like we take our worry, our stress, our limited perspective, and we trade that for his thoughts, for his ways, for his perspective. And in that process, he gives us a vision for our life. And I love that it tells us this is a very restful place to be. Like life in the kingdom is a life of rest and it's the life that we all long to live. And many of you are here and you're like, "Of course I learned from Jesus, right? Like I'm a disciple, so I follow him, but I'm not sure if I'm actually living life in the kingdom." Well, to help you out, this is what life in the kingdom actually looks like.

It kind of looks like this, like life in the kingdom is where we have things like joy in every circumstance, hope in the midst of despair. It's where we connect with God. It's where we have

freedom from the world. Does this sound familiar? These are some of the things we've been talking about here at the young adult gathering. And this is the picture of the life that you were actually created to live. And so, if you look at any of these images tonight and you think, "I never experienced that," or, "It is very rare for me to experience that," then what I would say to you is just that God has more for you. God has more kingdom for life for you. And so tonight I am excited because we get to talk about one of my favorite parts of kingdom life and it is wisdom. Wisdom for life. See, you were created to have wisdom for life. Everybody say, "Wisdom." All right. Awesome. So, before we talk about wisdom and getting wisdom for life, I think the first question we have to ask if you're taking notes here is what is wisdom? So, like, I'm really asking, like when I say what is wisdom, you would say?

Okay, let's try this again. Everybody is going to say, "What comes to mind when they hear the word wisdom? Wisdom is?" Okay. I heard a bunch of things. I heard a couple of things I'm about to say. I think when we hear the word wisdom, we think of things like intelligence, how smart someone is, what kind of education they have, what kind of credentials they may have. Like if I have a certain degree, I'll be wise. Or if I have just the right advice to give to someone, the right words to say at the right time. Or maybe it's the person on social media who claims to have all the answers on all the things. They must be wise, right? The person who has all the followers, they have to be wise, right? Because so many people follow them. Isn't Google wisdom, right? Isn't that where we look to for wisdom? Or how about phrases like this? Follow your feelings. Only listen to your heart. Do what's best for you. It's the wisdom of the world. And it's what we're most familiar with. See, I think we're so worldly in our thinking that we actually lower our understanding of what wisdom even is.

But I want you to hear is that none of those things that I just said are definitions of kingdom wisdom, of heavenly wisdom. And I just want you to know what wisdom is so you're not pursuing the wrong thing. Because oftentimes we get wisdom confused. And so, what we actually spend our time searching for, you know why I'm holding this thing up? Because we spend so much time searching for wisdom of the world. Like I literally think we are led more by the worldly wisdom of influencers than by the heavenly wisdom of God. We're more led by the worldly wisdom of influencers than by the heavenly wisdom of God. Like think for a minute about the account or the person that you follow the most or enjoy following. If I asked you what they thought about any given topic, you would probably have an answer really quick, right? You'd probably know what they would say. But if I asked you what God's thoughts are on any given topic, what he would say, many of you would be unsure. You would struggle. See, I want you to know that wisdom does not come from podcasts, from TikTok, from Instagram, from Google searches, from self-help books, from friends and what they think.

All wisdom comes from God. And it's so important to catch this as we start tonight because inferior thinking leads to inferior living. And God has so much more. He offers us wisdom. Let's say it again. Wisdom. See, if you're taking notes, here's a working definition of wisdom. Wisdom is simply heavenly perspective in earthly circumstances. Wisdom is heavenly

perspective in earthly circumstances. In other words, wisdom is thinking the very thoughts of God. So, when you have wisdom, you actually have God's heart on any situation. Can you imagine that? Can you imagine what it would be like? Think of whatever thing you're trying to work through or decide or you're stressed out about. What if you had God's heart on any situation? Well, that's what he offers you. And not only that, wisdom applies God's truth to life. So, wisdom is an invitation to a better life. In fact, here's how the Bible describes wisdom in James 3:17.

It says, "But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. That's what wisdom is. And walking in wisdom is the life that you were created for. You guys with me? Walking in wisdom is the life that you were actually created to live. But most of us, we actually live like the world. We think like the world. We seek wisdom from the world. What do I mean by that? Like we let the world who we follow, what we look at, define what's right, wrong, what's good, what's bad. And we try so hard to be normal and do everything exactly the way the world does it to follow the wisdom of the world. But you see what's normal in the world, the wisdom of the world leads to brokenness, death and destruction. But Jesus calls you to live a life of faith, of hope and of love.

See 1 Corinthians 3:18 says, "Do not deceive yourselves. If any of you think you are wise by the standards of this age, you should become fools so that you may become wise. For the wisdom of the world is foolishness in God's sight." And so maybe this will encourage some of you tonight who feel different than the people around you. Like whether you're at work or at school or in your family and people around you see the way that you live and they think it's foolish. I want you to know you're not alone. You've actually been set apart and given heavenly wisdom as a follower of Jesus. You were born to live differently because you're a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. You're a foreigner or a stranger to this world, which means you're called to an entirely different way of life. What life? A life of wisdom. That's a different way. I can tell some of you are not so excited about this. So, I'm going to hit on some scriptures really quickly to tell you what I mean. Colossians 2:20 says, "You don't belong to the world.

If this is true, then why do you try to fit into the world? Why do you try to follow the wisdom of the world all the time? What everybody else says, when everybody else does, when God has called you to stand out and walk in heavenly wisdom." Or how about Romans 12:2? It says, "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed. Be different." In other words, think differently. Think differently about how you're living your life, because I'm offering you a better way, the way of wisdom. Or how about the Sermon on the Mount, when Jesus teaches people what life in the kingdom looks like? Are any of you guys familiar with that? Does that sound familiar? Learn from Me, Life in the Kingdom. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus is literally sitting as a teacher and he's saying to them, "You have heard it said, but I say to you." Okay, some of you know it. He says, "You have heard it said, but I say to you." So, wisdom of the world, heavenly wisdom.

Like you have heard it said, the voice of the world, the voice of the enemy, sometimes our own voice. But I say to you, that's wisdom. That's heavenly wisdom. That's actually Jesus. It's his voice in your life. And so, here's the question I would ask you when it comes to wisdom. Is your life different than the people around you? Would the people around you say that you live differently and walk in wisdom? I can tell some of you are like, "I don't know. I'm not sure I want to be different. I'm not sure I like this." Because sometimes, if I'm just being honest, we're not always inspired by wisdom. Like if we were talking about peace tonight, every person in this room would be leaned in because they're like, "I am so anxious and so stressed out. So, talking about kingdom, I need peace." Or if we were talking about joy, we would all be so locked in because we're like, "Life is kind of meh, I'm depressed, I'm down. What am I doing? I need joy." But wisdom, I think a lot of us think like, "I'm doing pretty good in life."

The wisdom of the world seems to be working fine for me like finances, check, health, check, relationships. I think I have what I need." And so, the next question I would ask you then is, do you value heavenly wisdom? Do you value heavenly wisdom? Here's another way to say it. If you could have a million dollars or wisdom, which would you pick? Your answer to that question tells you the current level of wisdom in which you operate. Your answer to that question tells you the current level of wisdom in which you operate. Let me say it another way. If I told you right now that there is a million dollars hidden somewhere on this campus, and whoever finds it can actually have it, what would you guys do? Okay, let's be honest. Half of you will already be out of here by now trying to find it because it's a million dollars. And yet the Bible tells us that wisdom is precious.

The Bible tells us that if you get wisdom, you find everything. Proverbs 8:10 says, "Choose my instruction instead of silver, knowledge rather than choice gold, for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her." So, wisdom is more precious than rubies. This means we're supposed to search for wisdom the same way we would a treasure. And so why don't we seek wisdom like that? See, there is a cost to pursuing heavenly wisdom, but there's a higher cost to living by worldly wisdom. There's a cost of pursuing heavenly wisdom, but there's a higher cost to live by worldly wisdom. See, wisdom is the fullness of life in the kingdom, and the normal Christian life is one that regularly seeks the wisdom of God. In fact, Proverbs said, "Blessed is the man who finds wisdom." It tells us that wisdom is supreme, that you are created to walk in wisdom, but you can't walk in wisdom unless you're aware that you need it.

You will never choose to walk in wisdom if you don't see it as valuable, but wisdom is valuable and wisdom is the life and breath of God. And so, the question we have to ask is, how do we get wisdom? Some of you are like, "I've been waiting for this moment. How do we do it? How do we get wisdom?" Well, in the book of James, James gives us some really great instruction on what it looks like to live set apart or what it looks like to walk in wisdom. And James is Jesus's brother, and James is very direct. Like his style of writing, it gets right to the point

because he's assuming that you've already had an encounter with the grace of Jesus. So, he's teaching you how to now walk in wisdom, how to live in that grace. And so, he says it really practical. He says it like it is. He says, "You're different." James literally says, "Life is hard. God is good. And so, in the midst of the challenges you're facing, you should be flowing in wisdom." The normal Christian life desires the wisdom of God.

So, ask for it. Ask for wisdom. Check this verse out. James 1:5 says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you." Okay. So, we ask for wisdom. Okay. So, what does that look like? It looks like asking. Okay. So, everybody say, "Ask for wisdom." Okay. Like, "Lord, would you give me wisdom on how to manage my time? Lord, would you give me wisdom on how to steward this money? Lord, would you give me wisdom on how to navigate this difficult relationship or this conversation that's coming up?" See, Matthew 7:7 says, "Ask, and it will be given to you." You know it. Say it with me, "Seek and you will find, knock and the door will be open." Another verse John 15:7 says, "If you remain in me and my words in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." So, have you ever asked God for wisdom?

Really simple question. Have you ever asked God for wisdom? And if not, how do you navigate your life without wisdom? Because I would submit to you. If you're not regularly asking God for wisdom on all of the things, then there's more of the kingdom for you to experience. Then you're simply living an inferior life. See in 1 Kings, God comes to Solomon and he says, "What do you want?" And Solomon could ask for literally anything. And you know what he asks for? You know what he says? He says, "Give me wisdom." He asks for wisdom. So, you have to desire it. God won't give you what you don't want. And when we're asking for wisdom, this is really cool. If you can catch this, we're actually asking for Jesus. 1 Corinthians 1:24, look it up later. It says that Jesus is wisdom. So, when we're asking for wisdom, we're asking for Jesus and he shows us his life and his wisdom and the truth. So, we ask for wisdom and he promises to give it to us generally... generously, excuse me.

Like God is so good. He's so gracious. And in his kindness and in his love, he freely gives us wisdom. And I want to highlight something here for you. When he says, ask for wisdom, it's wisdom in the big things and wisdom in the little things, or how I would say it is, there are no little things. Like he cares about every detail of your life. And he wants you to be a person that freely flows in wisdom at all times. So, ask him for wisdom. Like, don't just ask for wisdom. I know we all do this. Like, let's not just ask for wisdom about, "Should I be in this relationship with this person or not?" What if we also ask them, "If I'm in that relationship about how to honor that person and be wise and have healthy boundaries and pursue God together." It's not just asking for wisdom, like, "Should I rent this apartment or that one? Or should I buy a house?" It's also asking God for wisdom of, like, "Once I rent that apartment, God, would you teach me how to live a kingdom life and steward my finances in that apartment or house?"

Right? It's not just asking for wisdom. Like, "Should I take this job?" That's a big deal. That's great. Ask for wisdom. But it's also asking for wisdom on, "How do I walk out my purpose with joy and with integrity in this job?" Are you guys catching it? God wants to give you wisdom for life and so ask him. Learn from Jesus and you will have wisdom for life. That's what wisdom is. And the word of God literally tells us we just have to ask him for it. Some of you are like, "Sweet, that's it." So, we just ask. We can go home now. That's all we have to do. I would tell you yes, but wait, there is so much more because we can ask for wisdom, but then how do we keep walking in wisdom? Another way of saying it is how do we become a wise person? Like there is a difference between asking for wisdom and being wise. See, wisdom is not something you get. It's someone you become.

Wise is an identity. And because of Jesus, wise is who you now are. So, if you're here and if you're in Jesus, you are wise because of Jesus. So, I want to share three quick practices we can put into our life that just position us to be a wise person. These are simple things that we can take responsibility for. And I'm going to get really practical because like, of course, we all want to be wise. So, we just ask for wisdom. That's great. But what does it look like to be a wise person who makes intentional choices to walk in wisdom, to flow in wisdom? Well, I would say that becoming wise happens through the word of God, the people of God, and the spirit of God. The word of God, the people of God, and the spirit of God. So, the first one is just the word of God. Everybody say, "Word of God." Okay, to walk in wisdom, you have to consume God's word. 2 Timothy 3:14 says it like this. "But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

Like what if we actually referenced our Bible for wisdom as much as we referenced our phone? Could you even imagine like if when you needed wisdom before you looked up any person or Googled it or anything, you first asked the Holy Spirit and you looked at the word of God and read his word, his life? See, the word of God is how you extract wisdom. In fact, Psalm 119 says, "I've hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." The word sin in the Bible means to just miss the mark. Another way of saying it is to miss the way. Sometimes when we think about sin, we think of doing these evil, horrible, bad things. No, sin literally means to end up in the ditch, like to miss the way or the destiny that God has in store for you. And so, he says here, "If you hide your word in my heart, you'll walk in my ways because you'll have the wisdom to establish guardrails in your life." So, like, let me just say, if you're here tonight and the Holy Spirit is stirring anything in you of like, "I want to become a wise person. I want to walk in wisdom," read Proverbs.

I don't have time to get into it, but Proverbs is an amazing book. That's literally a book of wisdom. So read Proverbs, the word of God. It will change your life. And the second thing is this, the people of God. Everybody say, "People of God." If you build godly relationships with other people in this room, God will give you wisdom through their life. Do you believe that?

Walk with people who are wise. And so, to pursue wisdom means you actually are inviting wise people in your life. You'll never become wise if you don't hang around wise people. You might know this one in Proverbs 13:20. It says, "He who walks with the wise becomes wise for a companion of fools suffers harm." Is the person next to you wise? Turn and take a look at them. You don't have to say it out loud, but I just want you to know that if you hang out with wise people, you will learn to walk in wisdom. If you hang out with fools, you will end up on a path of death and destruction because that's where the world leads.

And that road is very wide. Are you guys with me on that? So, like here, it is wisdom to not spend time with people who are dividers, who cause a discord, who have to be right all the time. So, like, if you want to have wisdom in your life, you've got to take an honest look at the relationships around you and who you are choosing to invest your time in. And if you're like, "Well, does this mean I can't spend time with anyone unless they're like the most wise person ever? Like what about reaching people? What about being on mission?" Okay. You can be with people to serve them and not be influenced by them. There is a difference between the two. And so, draw a line in your relationships, like choose to set healthy boundaries because what happens is people will always pull you down to the level of their living, the definition of their wisdom. Does that make sense? They will pull you down to their level of living the definition of wisdom.

And so, choose to pursue and invest in godly relationships. And then the last one is just the spirit of God. Everybody say, "spirit of God." Ephesians 1:17 says, "I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. The Holy Spirit gives wisdom and revelation. The fullness of the spirit is wisdom. So even think about that, when you're asking to be filled with the spirit, you're literally asking to be filled with wisdom. If you're in worship and you just open your hands say, "Holy spirit, fill me up." You're saying, "Wisdom, I invite you into my life in this moment." See, wisdom isn't learned. Wisdom is received. Wisdom is spiritually released and received. And I love how this verse says, "Keep asking, asking, ongoing." Not, "I asked one time, I wasn't sure what God said and I've never asked again."

No, keep asking. And so let me just close with this. When you think of these three things, let's say them together. The word of God, the people of God, and the spirit of God. Let's try that again. The word of God, the people of God, and the spirit of God. There's actually a common denominator in all of them. What do you guys think it is? Nope. Keep going. I'm going to make you think really deeply tonight. Throw out some ideas. What do you think is a common denominator in all three of these? Keep coming. Keep coming. The common denominator is relationship. Oh yeah. Holy Spirit's given us wisdom because wisdom flows through relationship, relationship with the word of God, relationship with the people of God, relationship with the Holy spirit. And so, you can't say you want wisdom, but never engage the word of God. Never pursue godly relationships. Never choose to walk with the spirit.

And so, if the invitation to wisdom is an invitation to relationship, what you need to understand is that relationships take time. Right? We know this. So, all of this requires us to slow down, to slow down. Like a life of wisdom literally requires us to slow down so we can engage the word of God, the people of God, and the spirit of God. It requires us to slow down. Wisdom isn't rushed. That's why we say we walk in wisdom. It's a journey with Jesus. So slow down. You don't have to sprint in wisdom. It's a one next step at a time kind of thing. If it feels rushed, then wait, pause and slow down. Listen to this. Most poor decisions you make in life are made in a rush. Most poor decisions you make in a life are made in a rush. Thank you. That is true, right? So slow down. Wisdom is relational.

Like when you're making a decision, you don't have to be rushed. You can actually slow down and pause and invite the word of God in, invite the people of God in your life in and invite the spirit of God. And I tell you, as you slow down and consider all that God has made, you will discover wisdom. I guess everywhere. Proverbs 6 tells us the world was made out of wisdom. Like God actually designed and created things through the lens of wisdom, which means everything around you carries the message of wisdom, if you're willing to slow down and look for it. See, God wants to give you wisdom for your life and wisdom is valuable. So, ask for wisdom. And as you do, you will grow as a person of wisdom through the word of God, the people of God and the spirit of God. And so maybe you're here tonight and you're like, "I have made so many bad decisions in my life and I am not pursuing the wisdom of God.

Like I am a 100% pursuing the wisdom of the world." It's okay. Today I would just say to you, now is the time to receive the wisdom of God. Like today is the day to receive the wisdom of God for your life. And here's the deal. You were created to rule and reign with God. Like that's what wisdom is partially for is ruling and reigning with God. We think of wisdom as just for big decisions. Like if I'm in crisis, "Okay, crisis mode, I need wisdom. I need wisdom." Okay. That's real. That's great. But it's so much more. See wisdom destroys the works of the devil and it releases the kingdom of God. That's why I want you to catch this tonight because that's what you were created for. That is life in the kingdom. Like in this room right now, if you look around, we have hope carriers that were sent on mission in every area of life. Like people in this room that are called to healthcare and business, and entertainment, and media, and technology, and family. You were created and called to carry the wisdom of God to those spaces.

Wisdom literally equips you to rule and reign in life. And when you walk in wisdom, people see such favor on your life because it's changed how you actually live. So, learn for me, life in the kingdom. See the disciples had wisdom because they learned from Jesus. And so, Jesus says, "Just follow me. I am wisdom and walk in wisdom." Jesus is wisdom. And so, if you get Jesus, you get wisdom. And so, what I want to do is I just want to close by praying over you tonight, that we would all be people that walk in wisdom. So go ahead and bow your heads. And Lord, I just thank you for every person in this room that you have created them to walk in wisdom. And I just pray right now that you would give each person a fresh revelation of the wisdom you offer them. God, you are wisdom. So may they receive more of you. And would you give them

discernment wherever they are to know the difference between the wisdom of the world and your wisdom, God.

I just ask that you would help all of us to slow down, to be aware of your presence so that we can be people that have relationship with the word of God, with the people of God and with the spirit of God. Thank you, Jesus, that you are wisdom and that because of you, we can walk in wisdom. In your name we pray. Amen.