

Hey, everybody. I just wanted to take a quick second to say what a great weekend we had last weekend as we wrapped up our Missional Move: Create the Future series. It was such a powerful, special, and sacred moment as we watched hundreds of people line up to bring their gifts to Jesus. I just want to tell you how grateful I am for you, how proud I am of you, and how inspired I am as we, as a church, are moving forward together in Jesus' name. And I know for so many of you, last week was such a big step of faith. You were a little bit nervous. You were a little bit overwhelmed. There was a sense of trepidation. There was this awe, this wonder, this reverence, but you did it. And you took a next step so that somebody else can take theirs. And I celebrate you, I applaud you, and I can't wait to see how God continues to move in your life and in our church through our responding in faith. And if for some reason you weren't here last weekend or you didn't get a chance to respond or you still were wrestling with your decision, let me encourage you. You can still respond this week. I don't want you to miss what God is doing in us in this season. And so, if you want to make a commitment, you can put your commitment card in the offering box or scan the QR code and do that digitally. I don't want you to miss what God is doing because we have such a great journey ahead of us. And so, all I wanted to do was just acknowledge you and your faith and how big of a deal last weekend was.

And in the next few weeks, I will get up here, and I will share with you the results and where we're at and how we see this journey unfolding as we move forward. But for now, we just wanted to stop to take a big breath and rest because that Missional Move series was urgent, it was weighty, there was a gravity towards it. And so, as we step into this spring break season, we just wanted to take a weekend for a selah, a little word that just means pause, breath, rest, interlude, and just take a big breath in, rest and enjoy the presence of God and turn our attention and our affection to Jesus. Jesus, thank You for what You're doing. Thank You that we get to be a part of it. And today, we choose to rest in You.

Can we sing that out and we declare the blood of Jesus over our life and our families and our church? Do you ever just start to realize, like, it's always because of Jesus? It's always by Him, by what He's done, by His blood, by His life, by who He is, His sacrifice for us, and His resurrection life in us. It's always by His blood. It's always by You, Jesus. Every time. I'm going to invite you to go ahead and take your seats. I want to welcome you again to Valley Creek. Man, we had quite the weekend last weekend. As we experienced the commitment weekend for Missional Move: Create the Future, for the rest of my life, I will never forget the visual of literally people lining up front to back in the worship center to bring their sacrifice and lay it at the feet of Jesus. And it was incredible, and it was moving, and I'm really super proud of our church. And so, if you did not have a chance to be here, if you still want to make a Missional Move commitment, that's available to you. These cards will be available on your way out, or you can actually go online and use the digital copy if you want to join us because you're not going to want to miss a chance to be part of this. Because it's going to be five years of watching the Lord move across our church family. He is creating a brand-new future in Jesus'

"Selah"

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name through the Valley Creek family. And today, I'm excited to let you know that we're going to switch things up a little bit.

You see, we've been in this amazing series, and it's amazing teaching and amazing content, and it has been a lot, which is why today we want to experience Selah. Selah. You see, where does that word come from? Well, it means a breath, a break, a pause. In the Psalms, Selah is mentioned about 70 times. That's about one time every two chapters. And the reason that we do that, or the reason we need to experience a break, a breath, a pause, an interlude, is because we can't just keep going over, over, over, same, same, same, same, go, go, go, go, go, go. Why? Because the music of life is found in the spaces. The music of the life that Jesus has called us to is found in the breath and in taking a second to reflect and to pause. You see, if the worship team was playing the same note over and over and over all the way through with no pauses, with no breaks, just all the way through with no chorus change to bridge, all those things, it would just sound like one continuous note, one continuous sound. And a lot of times, our lives work that way. And we just go, go, go, go, go, go, go, and we never actually slow down to experience a real rest. Selah. So, I'm going to lead you through a few different things as we go today, and we're going to experience the rest of God, the peace of God.

And the first thing I want to invite you to is to have five minutes to just hear from the Holy Spirit. Five minutes to settle yourself, to let God speak to you, and I believe He's going to. And even as I was down there, I wanted to specifically say this. Somebody in the next five minutes is going to hear the voice of the Lord in their life for the very first time. And in Jesus' name, may that be. So, five minutes to settle, take a breath, and let the Spirit speak to you.

So, I don't know what the Lord spoke, but I know this. I know it was loving. I know it was good because God is loving, and God is just so good. So, may His voice always just speak to your heart in a deep way. May His voice truly be, yeah, may it be a light in what sometimes seems like the darkness of our lives. We've been memorizing Scripture together as a leadership team, as a staff team, and as leaders here at Valley Creek. And so, I just want to kind of start off this portion of Selah by reading over you the passage that we're memorizing in Spring '25. All of our leaders are going to have it done by April 1st. They are working hard on it right now. It is 1 John 4, verses 7-21. I encourage you, maybe even just close your eyes and open your hands on your lap like this as a sign of receiving the Word of God. He wants to speak to us through His Word. He wants to tell us of His love.

"Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God, and everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. This is how God showed His love among us. He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love. Not that we loved God, but He loved us, and He sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is made complete in us. This is how we know that we live in Him and

He in us. He has given us of His Spirit, and we've seen and testified that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so, we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God and God in them, and this is how love is made complete among us, so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment. In this world, we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love, but perfect love drives out fear because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears has not been made perfect in love. We love because He first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar, for whoever does not love their brother and sister whom they have seen cannot love God whom they have not seen. And He has given us this command, anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister." Thank you, Jesus, for Your Word.

See, there's a lot of love in that passage, and one of my favorite parts of it is that the gospel is so clear throughout that passage in 1 John. The gospel, the good news of what Jesus has come to do for us. That He came to restore our identity, to reconcile our relationship, to redeem our purpose. And so, I just want to point some of it out to you over the next few minutes. The first one is at the very beginning, the very first verse, it says, "Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. And everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God." This is an identity verse. First of all, it says, "Dear friends, in Jesus, we're not enemies of God, we're friends. We're no longer servants, He calls us friends. And we've been born of God." You see, when you're born into this world, you're born as an orphan of this world. But as you find Jesus, and as He finds you, and as you receive His grace, you're born of God. You're reborn. Everything changes. You're no longer even close to the version of who you used to be. You're a brand-new thing, with a brand-new identity, with a brand-new name. You're born into the family of God. So, we have a confidence in being born in the family of God because we have confidence in the love of Jesus. His love is in us. It comes from God. It comes directly from Him into our life, and it changes us. And when we receive His grace, everything changes. We get a brand-new identity.

The second verse, verse 16, I want to show you. It says, "We know and rely on the love that God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them." So, we know and rely on that love. This is a relationship verse. We can experience His presence and experience that love at any point of any day. We can know it, not just know it, know it, and we can rely on it. We can trust in it. When I think of the word rely, I think of the story of the Apostle John as he leaned back into Jesus on the night of the Last Supper. He had a reliance on the love of Jesus. He was quite restful. He was quite Selah in his arms. He had a peace in relying on who Jesus was and what He declared over him. And notice that it says, "Has for us." Do we include you? Okay. So, it's for you. We'll often say, "For God so loved the world." We know that verse. Man, for God so loved you, me, the love He has for us. It's not just all of them, it's us. And we experience that love through relationships. We choose today to know and rely on the love that God has for us. Third verse, verse 19, real simple. "We love because He first loved us." This is a purpose verse. This is us releasing the kingdom, releasing the love of the Father

to the world around us. We can only do that because He first loved us, but that really is our purpose, to love like He loved. And here's the thing. I can only really release what I have received. I can only give what I've been given from the Father. I can only love if I know that I've first been loved by the Father. So, what we see throughout this 1 John 4 passage is what we see all through Scripture, that we have an identity and a relationship and a purpose that's supposed to answer life's three most difficult questions. Who am I? Who is God? And why am I here? Who am I? Who is God? Why am I here? And when you read a passage like this, you start to understand the answer. You are the beloved son or daughter in whom He's well pleased.

And then, you answer the question to who is God? He's the one that loves you. And why are you here? To share that love. To put it another way, when you're beloved, you'll allow yourself to be loved, and you'll be loved by the world around you. This is the love that the Father has for us. How wide, how long, how high, how deep is the love that the Father has lavished upon us that we should be called the children of God, and that is what we are. So, in Jesus' name, may you know and rely on the love that God has for you. And may I do the same. All right. For the next few minutes, I just want to build your faith by sharing some stories of what God is doing because He's doing incredible things at Valley Creek Church. Incredible.

First stories I want to share with you. I just want to share with you some of the stories from Missional Move: Create the Future. They've been excellent. They've been beautiful. The first one that really struck my heart was a story about students getting involved in giving to Missional Move: Create the Future. I love this. I guess the student had pieced together that even though they weren't able to give a lot of money, that they were probably going to be able to give enough money to buy a chair in a future campus. And then, they realized, "Oh, I might be buying the chair that somebody's going to sit on someday and meet Jesus for the first time and start to follow Him as Lord." Yes. Yes. Because every bit of it matters. I mean, students are doing things like getting jobs just so they will have the money to contribute to Missional Move: Create the Future. It's phenomenal. I heard a great story of a man here who's a friend of mine. I just love this so much. He talked to his circle. He says, "I'm 75 years old right now, and I've been asking the Lord that I would get it to 80 years old so that I could be here to see what God's going to do over the next five years." That's incredible. That's like the stories like Simeon and Anna in the gospels that are like, "I just want to be able to see Jesus. I want to be like around to see Him." Can you imagine that? My prayer is that I could live five more years so that I could actually see how God's going to move among our church in the next five years. Phenomenal. Beautiful.

Here's one for you. Somebody came to Valley Creek for the first time last weekend. Actually, lots of people came to Valley Creek for the first time last weekend. This is what they said to a staffer before the service. "I asked God that I just want to see people who are actually bought into where they are." That's what their prayer was. Like, yeah. Yeah, welcome to Valley Creek. Like, I'm pretty sure that God answered that prayer. And the staffer talked to them after the fact. They specifically said, "I'm coming back. This is the kind of family I want to be a part of."

In Jesus' name. Yes. Here's one for you. A few weeks ago, our Valley Creek Leadership Academy, soon to be called Valley Creek College, came back from Uganda and Rwanda and Africa, had an amazing two-week mission trip where they got to minister in the schools to a whole bunch of amazing kids there and prophesy and call out life and all the things and teach them about Jesus. Tell them the good news of the gospel. Identity, relationship, purpose, the good news of the gospel. They primarily did it through the phrases "God is good. Jesus has forgiven me. I am loved. Everything is possible." You might recognize that. Something we believe here at Valley Creek. And over their two weeks of talking with these schoolchildren there, saw 3,300 people raise their hand and say, "I want to follow Jesus and be a disciple." 3,300. Because they had so much access to the villages, to the schools, to the students that are there. That's incredible. But even more incredible than that is like they took their character there. They saw God move in power. They took their character there, and God responded to it in kind. That's beautiful. Men's night was incredible. We're seeing men have breakthrough leading their families, confessing, stepping into it, apologizing where they haven't been leading at home. So proud of the tons of Valley Creek men that are stepping into a new season of leading their homes and their hearts and their families. That's beautiful. And then, I got to see something that was, "Forget about it." A few weeks ago, it was incredible. Student leadership. Okay. Student leadership, 6th through 12th grade. If you even could understand what's happening among our students, you would be up here, and you'd be telling the story. I got to be part of a night that was called Open Heaven for our high schoolers. Open Heaven. And the idea of the night was just to like, let the Holy Spirit do what the Holy Spirit wanted to do.

And part of what we did is we learned to prophesy. What does that mean? Hear from God, speak to people. What does that mean? Hear the heart of God and speak it out to the other students and the other people around us. And in that time of prophecy, they were calling the things that are not as though they are in one another. So, I opened up the session. I wanted them to kind of come up and just see if they had a word for one another. And wouldn't you know it, about 30 students later coming to the front on a microphone, saying things to each other. We had this moment where God spoke into what I would say, He didn't just speak into like their destinies in this lifetime, He spoke into their destinies for all time, like for forever. And so, I got to hear things like a ninth grader to another ninth grader, "The Lord wants you to live with a whole heart. He's declaring to you. You've only given Him half. You need to give Him the other half." And then, the same one that prophesied it, her brother comes up and looks at her and says, "The Lord wants you to know you have piercing eyes of compassion. Those eyes will be used to touch the people. During the next mission trip you're going to go on this summer, expect that you're going to see things in the spiritual realm." Yeah? Yeah. And then, I found out that one of the students that was there was so moved by it, he's like, "I don't want it to be like an open heaven like once. I want it to be all the time." And so, he went to his pod, to his table during the next meeting. And he prophesied over every guy at the table with a word from the Lord that he felt like the Lord wanted to speak to them. And that's incredible. And that's just

one portion of what's happening across student leadership and across next gen. So, listen, hope is on the move in our church, in the next generation, in our hearts. Let's go.

So, what kind of story could you tell the goodness of God right now? What's He doing in your life? You see, last year, the entire year we trained in godliness. Check out this verse here. It's out of a... yep, 1 Timothy 4. "Train yourself to be God." And as we walk through this training, and as we see the Lord moving, and as we become more people of love, we're becoming more like Jesus, we're going to have way more stories to tell. Like, that's just the beginning of the ones that I just told you. But when you think of this verse and where we were in 2024, train yourself to be godly. How's your training going? Because this verse doesn't say, "Try to be godly." It says train. Don't think about being godly, actually do it. Like, step into it. And the reason I want to bring this one up is because we are actually walking through a springtime practice plan. So, I want to have just a quick checkup with you on how that's going. For those that were here in January, there was an encouragement to create a practice plan that included basically one primary practice. Think of a spiritual practice, like reading Scripture, meditating, praying, silence and solitude. All the different ways that we can train to be godly. And we were going to pick one of those, and we're going to carry it out from January through May. And for those that were not here or do not know what I'm talking about, it's all good. This does not apply to you because it's all from last year, but we're trying to carry it forward into 2025. If you were not here and you're like, "I don't know what a practice plan is." Great. Here's an invitation for you. Join us for the Valley Creek reading plan. The one chapter a day that we read all as a Valley Creek family, you can find it all online. It's incredible. We're in the Old Testament. It's in Exodus. It's going really well right now. And so, join us for that. You can jump in immediately right now with us, in the book of Exodus and on into the rest of the Old Testament. For everybody else, I'm going to give you just about two minutes to just take a second and just reflect. How's my practice plan going? Do I need to get back on that horse? Do I need to increase my intensity? Do I need to decrease my intensity? Meaning, it's not matching. It's not working. And I've missed an opportunity. Does the Lord want to remind me that this is how I actually become more like Jesus, a person of love becoming more and more like Him? Just listen for just about the next two minutes or so, and let the Lord speak to you on your practice plan and what your next steps are.

So, do not grow weary of doing good, for at the proper time, you will reach and reap a harvest inside of you if you do not give up. Keep training in godliness. Keep becoming who Jesus says that you are. Think of it like this. You're always becoming on earth who He says you already are in heaven. You're always becoming on earth the person that Jesus has already declared you to be. So, we train, we grow, we become, we do the things that Jesus did. So, we really can do the things that Jesus did. Man, I just got a lot of faith that the Valley Creek family is moving forward in Jesus' name, in practices and missional moves and everything that God's called us to be.

So, to really finish out our time today, we want to take communion so our teams can begin to come forward. And the reason that we want to finish Selah with communion is because we don't do all the things that God has called us to do by striving, by trying, by working harder, by pushing more, by trying to get up the strength inside of our own selves to do it. We do it through the grace of Jesus, and communion is this constant reminder of the grace of Jesus. It's for everybody who has put their faith into Jesus. If that's you, you are welcome to take communion here at Valley Creek. And what I just want to say to you is that communion really is the loudest statement in the world that God is good. Jesus has forgiven me. I am loved, and everything is possible. And every time we take communion, it's reminding us that God is so good to us. We are so forgiven by Him. We are so loved, and that the future is wide open. Everything's possible. Why? Because communion represents the finished work of Jesus, receiving His grace when we didn't deserve it. While we were enemies of God, Jesus did all of that for us. All of what? Well, let's see. He came to earth. He lived the life we could never dream of, doing it fully submitted to the Spirit. He walked in obedience to the Father, knew He was a beloved Son, did miraculous things, declared freedom for prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, the year of the Lord's favor, and healed all those who were oppressed and under the power of the devil. He did it all. And He died. He paid the ultimate price for the sin we could never pay for ourselves, but He didn't stay dead. He rose again on the third day. And now, His life is available to become our life. That's what we remember when we take communion, the free gift of grace, the free goodness of Jesus poured over our life. And so, maybe just for the last few months, you've been feeling discouraged. Today, may you receive fresh encouragement by taking communion. Maybe you felt frustrated or ashamed, like you're just not measuring up. Today, may you live in the freedom and the life of Jesus. No more shame. Maybe you made a commitment to Missional Move: Create the Future last weekend, and you have no idea how you're going to either pay for it or what's going to happen next. Or maybe you had some kind of financial fallout this week, which by the way, that's very common when you're trying to fight a different kind of fight when it comes to finances. If that's you, may you receive the fresh confidence that God is your provider through communion today. Maybe you feel alone, and you're wondering why you're here. To you, I say that this is the family of God. And as you take communion today, may you feel a part of it. May you feel surrounded by the brothers and sisters who love you so much and are declaring so much good over your life. So, here's what I'm going to ask you to do. As you get the elements in your hands, I'm going to ask you to just hold those in your hands for a second. Stay seated as the worship team sings over you. And then, I'm going to come back and lead us through the rest of communion. Hey, you are literally holding the free and good grace of Jesus in your hands.

So, in the night He was betrayed, Jesus grabbed a piece of bread, and He broke it. And He told His disciples, "This is like my body. It's going to be broken for you. I'm going to be broken, and you will be made whole." Let's take it together. In the same way, He picked up a cup and He said, "This is going to be... This is nothing but the blood. This is going to be like my blood that's going to be shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. And every time you take it,

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may you take that free grace over your life." May you really remember Jesus has forgiven me. So, let's take it together.

Thank you, Jesus. And we get so much to celebrate today, and we have so much to rest in and rest upon. You, Jesus. You are our Selah. You are our breath, our rest, our pause. You are truly the space between the notes that makes the music of our life work. Like, that's You. So, thank You, Lord, for giving this time to just be in Your presence, to be together, to rest in Your name, and to remember Your finished work pouring all over our life. In Your name, Jesus. Amen. Amen. All right. Thanks guys. Thanks for being a part of all of it, for just enjoying our time together.