

“A Whole New Way of Life”  
September 19, 2021 | Pastor Alan Platt

Hey everybody, welcome to Valley Creek. I am so glad you are here with us today. And today, we're going to press pause on The Ancient Future series that we've been in. We're going to pick it up again next week. But today, we have a special guest speaker, Pastor Alan Platt. You see, Alan is the leader of Doxa Deo, a global church out of South Africa that is all about transforming the city. And Doxa Deo has probably shaped and molded and influenced our church more than any other church. You see, Alan has been such a great friend to me and to our church. He's a voice of wisdom, he's a voice of counsel, he is a voice of inspiration and every time he comes he inspires us and he reminds us of who we are and what we're doing and he points us towards Jesus as we continue to be a movement of hope for the city and beyond. So wherever you are, will you open up your hearts? Will you open up your minds? And will you give a big Valley Creek welcome to Pastor Alan Platt?

Well, hello to you Valley Creek. I -- man, they have trained you well. It's such a delight for me to be here, to be back here. It's been a while and what I so appreciate about this church is the hairstyles of your pastors, I fit right in. I'm always so thrilled to be here. You know, Valley Creek plays a vital role in our lives as Doxa Deo and the City Changes Movement. Over many, many years you have partnered with us and we have the privilege of investing in leaders in 22 nations all over the world.

And every time we go there, you're going with us because you have partnered with us so thank you, but a delight to share the word with you today. And I'm just always so impressed with the conversations that I have with your pastors, with your team and just sensing the faithfulness to the mission and the commitment to raise Jesus Christ as lord over people's lives, over this region and every region where you are engaged in. And so today I want to share with you a few thoughts knowing that, you know, we've come through a crazy season and we recognize that God is with us and God is in our future and that we are on mission with Jesus Christ.

Jesus, you know, looks at his disciples just before he's about to die. He's just about to go to the cross, lay down his life and he prays for them. But he's not just praying for them. When that prayer is documented, we see how Jesus says, I'm not just praying for them, but I'm praying for all those that are far off that will believe in their message. So in essence, Jesus was including us in that prayer. And when Jesus prays for them, he prays this prayer, it's called the high priestly prayer, it's documented in John 17 and Jesus prays and really asks the Father three things. He says, Father that they may be in us, and then he says that they may be one.

But the third thing that Jesus prays for is documented here in John 17 verse 15 to 18. And we're going to read this scripture together. He says, "I do not pray," -- remember, he's not just praying for the disciples, he's also praying for you. And this is what he prays for you, "I do not pray that you take them out of the world, but that you should keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them by your truth, your word is truth." And then he says, "As you have sent me," -- as, in the same way that you have sent me, "into the world, I also have sent them into the world."

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Now, what fascinates me about this prayer is that Jesus knows that his disciples are about to enter into a time of incredible challenge. I mean after the crucifixion, the confusion, the uncertainty, the knowledge that everything that they thought would happen the way that they were thinking that Jesus would become the one that would come and rule and reign in Israel, and now he's dead. Can you imagine just what's going through the minds of the disciples in this season of confusion? And Jesus is praying for them. And when he prays for them, he's praying, Father, don't let them lose sight of mission.

You know, when Jesus is raised from the dead, he reveals himself to the disciples. Now, they've just gone through this crazy season. I mean it's been something that none of them can totally wrap their minds around. And Jesus reveals himself to them and his first words to them is, "Peace." Shalom, wholeness. And then he shows them his hands and his side. He introduces them to redemption. He introduces them to this truth that they can understand he's paid a price for their lives. And the very next thing he says to them, you can imagine they're expecting him to say, you know what, I really feel for you guys, sorry about the time that you've gone through, sympathizing with them. But he does not. Immediately, he says, "As the father has sent me I'm sending you."

I'm here to tell you that in this time of confusion and uncertainty and crazy in our world, the one thing we as Christ followers must not lose is the understanding that we are on mission with Jesus Christ. Now, you know, when I first read this portion of Scripture, it confused me because I always thought the idea of Christianity was to get people out of the world. I thought that was the idea and now Jesus is praying, "I do not pray that you take them out of the world." You see, I grew up with this knowledge that I am not of the world. As a matter of fact, that was my favorite scripture. I am not of this world. But then I discovered that that text is within a bigger context.

"You that are not of the world" because Jesus actually prays that here, they are not of the world, as I am not of the world. But you that are not of the world, your mission is to engage your world. When I struggled with this I thought Jesus, why did you pray this? And then one day, I got a revelation. And I got this revelation when I was trying to set my dog free from fleas. And so I share with liberty today the parable of the fleas. My dog had fleas and I decided I was going to, you know, comb through the hair of the dog and catch every flea that I can and so set my dog free from fleas. I was busy doing this and while I was attempting to do this -- I don't know if you've ever tried it, it's a very difficult exercise.

And as I was trying to do this, a friend of mine arrived and he asked me what I was doing. So I explained my project to him and he looked at me and he said, Alan, why don't you just go buy a flea collar at the store? I thought, well, there's an idea I never thought about. So I went to the store and I bought the flea collar and I put it around the neck of the dog and within three days all the fleas are gone. Now, I'm amazed. I'm intrigued. I'm trying to figure out how does this

system work. I mean how did the fleas at the tail end know there is now a flea collar around the neck of the dog and it's time for them to get off? I mean how did they know it was a flea collar, right? I'm trying to figure this out so I go back to my friend. I said, explain to me how does this work. He says, Alan, it's pretty simple. He says, you know, on this flea collar there is a powder and as the dog moves the hair brushes against the collar and the powder is released. It sits on the skin of the dog and it's assimilated through the skin.

And then it builds up an immunity within the dog. And in the bloodstream as the blood now circulates through the dog, when the flea at the tail end bites the dog, the flea dies and the dog lives. And I said, hallelujah, I now understand John 17. Because this is what Jesus was praying, right? Father, I don't pray that you take them out of the flee nest of this world. Put them right in between the fleas. New translation, okay? But do something to them, sanctify them in your truth. The truth so find opportunity in their lives that it will so empower them that when they enter into the world they will not be affected by the world, but they will affect their world.

Whoa. You know, the moment I discovered this reality and I recognized this is what Jesus was speaking about sanctify them in your truth, I recognize that truth has a capacity to empower a human life. You see, truth was not just designed to get us into heaven. Truth was designed to empower us for life. And so now we discover this truth that affects our lives so deeply that when we enter into the world, we are not infatuated or intimidated by the world.

But we enter into this world representing a whole new way of life. We are the kingdom agents. We are those carriers of hope to a world, right? And so we enter into this this world knowing that truth has arrested our lives. So the question bodes, what is this truth? What is this truth that can so set a human being apart, that can ignite your life in such a way that you actually recognize that you are a carrier of something that can affect your world, that you are now this hope carrier? Well, this truth is in essence what Jesus wants his disciples to see. He shows them his hands and he shows them his side.

He wants us to understand our inclusion in redemption. As a matter of fact, the biggest truth that any human being can ever discover is your inclusion in Christ. The concept in Christ is the most important concept in the whole of the Bible. And once you discover who you are in Christ -- you see, we used to be in Adam. Our whole identity was defined within Adam's failure. And we became people that started to live an inferior life, but Christ came to address this reference in Adam so that we could be translated, so that something can happen in our lives that we could move from this inferior life to a life now no longer defined by Adam.

You see, when Jesus came and brought redemption, he did not just come to restore us to Adam's level before the fall. The Bible says much more, much more, much more. What is this much more? Jesus Christ now becomes the defining reference of who you really are. He becomes the definition of your life. For us to deeply understand this, we have to understand

the three dimensions of redemption in terms of being in Christ. The first thing that happened in our lives we find in Romans 6 verse 5 to 6 that says, “That we died with Christ.”

We died with Christ. This is so important to understand. And if we read this Scripture, it says, “For if we have been united together in the likeness of his death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection, knowing this, you’re convinced of this that our old man,” this is not your dad, okay? That was a dead joke, right? Okay. “That your old man was crucified with him,” what does he mean when he says your old man was crucified with him? It’s Adam, the old reference of your life was crucified with him so that what can happen? So that this authority that governed over your life called sin, listen to this, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin.

Oh wow. You know, you became a sinner not because you sinned, you became a sinner because you were in the bloodline of Adam. That’s what caused you to live an inferior life. Sin had a legal right over your life. But Jesus died and when Jesus died, and this is so important to understand, that when Jesus died on the cross we don’t look at the cross just in a sentimental, historical way. We don’t just see Jesus dying on the cross. We see ourselves included in that moment. The Bible says that when Jesus died, you died with him.

So that you can be translated into a new life. You see, this body of sin, this old sin nature has been effectively dealt with and you have become a new creature in Christ. In the church, we are not just busy with behavioral modification, we’re not just trying to do sin management, we’re not just trying to make you a better person, we are introducing you to who you truly are. I come from South Africa and of course we have lions. And I recently was on a trip with a bunch of leaders that we have these retreats for church leaders and the leaders of our city, go away once a year and we just spend some time together where we share life and pray for our city and share what God is putting on our hearts for the city.

And so we went to one of these reserves, these big game reserves where the animals roam freely. And early one morning we were all on the safari vehicle and going out for a game drive hoping that we would find animals. It was not long, we found a whole pride of lions. And this was so beautiful, it’s early in the morning, everything’s quiet, the lions are lazy just laying out there. And so we stop about 20 yards from them with this safari vehicle and we’re just watching them. And the next moment one of the dominant male lions decides he’s coming to inspect this vehicle. Now, I don’t know who designs those vehicles, but I was sitting right on the edge and this particular vehicle did not have doors.

And this lion is coming straight for us. So the ranger says to us, guys, don’t be concerned. The lion thinks this is just one big thing that has just arrived. He doesn’t know it’s a bunch of individuals, so just, you know, stay quiet. Don’t stand up because then you break the lion and then it’s over. Don’t do that. And so I’m sitting there saying, there’s no way I’m going to stand. I also am praying, Lord, I trust this ranger knows what he’s talking about. Because as this lion

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comes closer, the guy behind me has got a camera and he's taking photos. He's so excited because the lion's coming up and so he -- this camera is making a click, click, click sound. So in the quiet of the morning, you hear this click, click, clicking sound. Now, the lion is intrigued about this clicking sound. Now, it's coming straight for me and I'm thinking to myself, Lord, if I don't die today, I'm going to murder someone today.

My grace abound. But this lion comes up. And the next moment I look down and I look into the eyes of this lion. It's about three yards away. Now, I don't know if you've had the privilege of looking into the eyes of a lion three yards away and there's nothing in between. You suddenly become aware of authority. This beast is unintimidated. There is -- there's nothing that scares this lion. I mean I was thinking to myself, if he really thinks this is one big thing that has just arrived, how come it's not intimidated? You know why? It's a lion. And a lion in his habitat, in his environment, he's not intimidated.

But you take that same lion to a circus. Something happens to that animal because it comes into the arena and there's an anxiety. It starts running around and starts doing tricks because there's a man with a whip and as the whip is cracking the lion is starting to do all kinds of tricks to the applause of the people. But we know that lion has not internalized that behavior because I guarantee you the lion doesn't go back to its cage and practice the tricks. Why? Because there's no whip. You see, the issue about behavior is the whip. And so many times in Christian circles, we have reduced this glorious message to take Scripture as a whip to try and adjust people's behavior. May I say to you today, let's never go there, let's introduce people to who they truly are and introduce them to this spacious environment called Jesus Christ.

For in him do we live and move and have our be. And when you discover who you are it repositions how you live. That's why if we're talking about being on mission, talking about getting into the world representing a whole new reference in the world, it starts with you discovering who you are. You see, there has to be a truth in your life to truly be able to affect your world. You have to understand who you are, but you see, the Bible says we didn't just die with Christ, we were raised with Christ. Oh wow.

We are part of the resurrection. That's interesting when you study Scripture. There's only one reference in the Old Testament that refers to the resurrection and it's written in plural. We are raised with him. You see, Jesus wasn't raised alone. We were raised into newness of life. Listen to what Romans 6 verse 4 says, "Therefore, we were buried with him through baptism into death." Oh, I so rejoice hearing about people being baptized because baptism is that public declaration, I have been set free of the old reference in Adam and I'm raised up into a new identity in Christ. That's the proclamation. Now, listen to what he says, "that just as, " just as, just as. Just as in the Greek means just as.

Alright, second dead joke. "Just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Oh, we have been called to a whole

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new reference of life. Why? Because we were included in that reference. You see, we are included. Inclusion is an incredibly important dimension of understanding for our faith. We were included in the moment when Jesus died.

He was buried, he was raised. But you have to see yourself being raised with Christ into newness of life. You know, this whole idea of association and inclusion, when I came to the US a few years ago, I really didn't understand your sport. You played weird kind of sports because we grew up with cricket and rugby and here I'm watching football and I'm not understanding it because, you know, you play your football with helmets on but you ride your motorcycles without them. And I'm like somehow figuring it out and -- but then I started watching the fans and it's amazing what happens to a fan when their team wins, isn't it? Suddenly they have an attitude. Suddenly they, you know, like we won. You say, what do you mean we won? You did nothing, man.

They said, no, hey, when my team wins I win. You see, it's the power of association, it's the power of inclusion. That documented victory suddenly has a bearing on my life. The way that I feel, the way that I think, the way that I speak, the way that I walk is all affected because I now know my team has won. It has been documented, folks, 2 000 years ago, there was a victory that was documented and you are included in that reference.

Because he won you win. His triumph is your triumph. You see, this is the truth. This is the truth that you need to know because this truth empowers you to engage your world. But not only were we raised with Christ, the Bible also says that we are seated with Christ in heavenly places.

Wow, seated with Christ in heavenly places. Listen to what Ephesians 2 verse 46 says, “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive with Christ.” Together with Christ. Now, focus on this word together. You were included. We share in his triumph the Bible says. We are repositioned. We are seated in heavenly places. He made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved and raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Oh my goodness. Folks, when the Bible says we are seated in heavenly places, it doesn't mean that we're a bunch of space cadets, you know, kind of, hey, cool man, cool, I'm sitting with Jesus. No, this is a place of authority. This is a place of influence. This is a place where you carry the fullness of kingdom life within you and now you start to represent this new way of living knowing that you've died to the old inferior, you were raised to newness in Christ and now you are positioned to be able to represent kingdom life. Wow. So God did everything that is needed for us to be able to engage our world.

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Let's go to Ephesians 1 verse 22 to 23. Listen to this. It says, "At the center of all this, Christ rules of the church." The church you see is not peripheral to the world, the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body in which he speaks and acts. Aren't you excited to be part of a church in which Christ speaks and acts? You are -- you're a blessed community because this is what happens is that you sense the word of the Lord, you sense God speak, you sense Him work in your lives. But you see, it does not stop there. Many times we stop there as the church.

And I know Valley Creek church does not do that. But here is the next critical component by which He fills everything with His presence. Listen to this. God wants to fill everything. Now, this is what's very important. Everything means everything. If you have an everything box and you have to pack everything into the everything box and you've packed most things into the everything box, but a few things did not fit into the everything box, it was not the everything box. Either everything fits into the box or it was not the everything box. When we say everything we mean everything, every square inch of the cosmos belongs to the lordship of Jesus Christ.

And the way we fill every square inch with His presence is when we by the church enter into those spaces with His presence. Now, when we think about presence there are three things that might be helpful to understand this concept of presence. It's the fathering, the faithful and the fruitful presence. Now, let me start by saying to the ladies you are included in this fathering concept. If I can be the bride of Christ, you can be a father, alright? It's just so that the three F's could work. What do we mean by fathering? We mean that wherever you go -- and remember there are three key environments in which you represent kingdom life.

It's in your home, it's in your workplace and it's in your community. And wherever you go, you enter with presence, the very presence of Christ. First of all, it's a fathering presence. What does that mean? It's where you become burdened to in every one of those environments see the kingdom of God come, the grace of God, the peace of God the, fullness of Christ's redemption becoming reality in my house, at my work, in my community. But it's also a faithful presence. A faithful presence is different in the sense that it doesn't mean you go and do stuff, it means you be the presence.

You represent the aroma of Christ, you represent the principles of the kingdom, you manifest them. This is what you've been taught in the last few weeks or for many, many years. But specifically, I listen to the last two sermons about the ancient paths. This is we represent another way of life. We are not like the world, we are different, we are the incarnational people who enter into our world to manifest forgiveness, and love, and grace and God's goodness wherever we might go. You see, this is how Jesus sent his disciples. He says, "I'm sending you as lambs amongst wolves." Wow. If I was a disciple, I would have raised my hand, say, Jesus, can't we rather go as wolves amongst lambs? We're just going to have more control.

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Jesus says, no, I’m teaching you the power of the opposite spirit. When you feel you are weak, you’re actually strong because you’re representing another kingdom so where there’s greed, go with generosity; where there’s hatred, go with forgiveness; where there’s bitterness, go with forgiveness. Go and enter your world in a different way. And then the fruitful presence. The fruitful presence is really about us doing good. I thank God for this church. I mean, you are serving on so many levels and if you have not yet engaged in any of the activities that are presented to you, I want to encourage you to do that because that’s the training ground, that’s where you in community will be trained and equipped to give and live beyond yourself and to be generous and to function within that space of kingdom life.

It’s the training environment. Get engaged because we are here to be on mission. No matter what happens in our life, no matter how confused we are about everything that’s happening around us, that will not deter us, we are on mission. And listen to this scripture as I end, in Proverbs 11:11, says so beautifully, “The good influence of godly citizens causes a city to prosper.” This region will prosper because of Valley Creek Church, because of every one of the campuses whether it be Flower Mound or Denton or Louisville or wherever you are, you are there to make a difference in this world. We are on mission. As he was sent so you are sent. You are commissioned to go and make a difference.

Let’s pray together. Father, we thank you. We thank you that we can be part of the greatest and most glorious agenda on this planet, the mission of Christ, making a difference in our world. We so desire to represent your kingdom well. And so today, Lord, I pray for every individual. I pray for every person that has heard this word, I just speak over them the commissioning of Christ, the sending, a recognition that there is calling on their lives, that there’s purpose on their lives, that they are to be the representative of Christ in their homes, in their work and in their community, wherever they are. We thank you. And so Lord, we pray, may your glory be seen in this world. May the knowledge of the glory of the Lord fill the earth as the waters cover the sea because your people are on mission.

We thank you. We pray this in your name Lord Jesus, amen. Amen.