

Alright. Hey, everybody! Welcome to Valley Creek. So glad you're here with us. Wherever you are, whatever's going on in your life, we believe Jesus is here. Jesus is real. Jesus is good. And may today be a day you have an encounter and an experience with the love of God that forever changes you. You see, we're in a collection of talks on movement, mission, and maturity, and we're just taking some time to talk about our desire to move with Jesus, be on mission with Jesus, mature in Jesus. And what we've been saying is that we can't make God move, but we can prepare for when He does. That we can't make God come, but boy, we can cry out to Him and say, "Come, Lord Jesus, come. We are preparing for revival, and we want to see You move." And so, we've started this collection of talks by spending a lot of time talking about movement because movement is a really big and really important word. It's really important to who we are as a people. Why? Because God is a God of movement. God is a God who moves. And He has made us in His image and His likeness to be a people of movement, to be a people who move. In fact, in Genesis 1, when God makes everything, it says, "So God created every living thing that moves, and God saw that it was good." God created every living thing that moves, which means movement is the evidence of life. He created every living thing that moves. The difference between something that's alive and something that is dead is one simple word: movement. Movement. Movement is the responsibility, the evidence of, and the only way to experience the fullness of life. If you've been given life, you have a responsibility to move. If you've been given life, the evidence that you have that life is found in movement, and the only way to experience the fullness of the life that God offers you is by living a life of movement. God created living things to move and said it was good. So, when we're not moving, it is not good, because we're created to move, and it's the evidence of the very life that we have. Movement is not this chaotic busyness. It is not this hurrying, scurrying about everywhere. No. Here's how I would define it for you: movement is Spirit-empowered, submitted, and surrendered activity for the good of others and the glory of God. You're like, "That's wordy and chunky." You're right, it is – but it captures it. Movement is Spirit-empowered. It's initiated by the Spirit, submitted and surrendered. I come under the lordship of Jesus. Activity: I use my life for now the good of others and the glory of God. God has given you a will, time, energy, and resources, and He has invited you to move, to move with Him, to put your faith in action, to offer your life as a living sacrifice, which is actually your worship unto the Lord. Movement is the evidence of life, and if I'm not moving, there's no evidence that I'm even alive, which is why we want to be a movement of hope for the city and beyond, because when we move as a people, there's an evidence that we're actually alive in Jesus' name. We have a responsibility to move. It's the evidence of the life that we have, and if we want to experience the fullness of that which God offers us, it only comes through a life of movement. In fact, even think about how we talk about our faith. We say things like this: we're on a spiritual journey. We walk with God. We stay in step with the Spirit. We follow Jesus. We are disciples, which means one who follows someone else and becomes like them. All the words we even use to define our faith involve a life of movement, because that is the evidence of actually experiencing life. And this is not only true physically, it's true spiritually. In fact, when Jesus comes, the first thing He says to the disciples, the first thing He'll really say to you, is, "Come, follow me, and I will make you." We follow; He makes. And His ability to make is

always greater than our willingness to follow. But the first thing He does when He interrupts and disrupts your life is invite you to a life of movement, of movement. He makes things that are in motion. He doesn't say, "Sit here, and I'll make you." He says, "Follow me, move, and I will make you," because He only makes things that are in motion. And so, every one of us, when Jesus extends us this invitation, have to decide whether or not Jesus is worth following. We have to decide whether or not Jesus knows what is good and true and right, whether or not Jesus actually knows what He's talking about and can help us discover the life that we long for. And you have to decide whether or not Jesus knows what is good, and true, and right, because Jesus is either right about everything, or He's wrong about everything. He's not mostly right, and usually good, and sometimes true. He's either right about it all or He's not right about any of it, because He can't be right about salvation and wrong about how to have a healthy soul. And He can't be right about eternal life but wrong about what your next step is. And so, He says, "Consider your ways and count the cost." He invites us to consider the way that we're living and to count the cost of what it would actually be like to stay on that path or to change and go His way. And so, He comes to us and He says, "Enter through the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Jesus says there is a small gate and a narrow road that He invites us to come down, and the only way to get through that gate is to leave everything else behind. It's a small gate, which means I have to bow. I have to surrender. I have to submit and surrender my entire life to the lordship of Jesus to come through. It demands everything from me up front, but as I move forward, it becomes an ever-widening life. Jesus demands everything up front, but He offers you everything down the road. But the world's way, the world's way is a wide road, a broad gate. It says, "Come one, come all," demands nothing from you at front, but it will steal everything from you down that road. Because as we follow Jesus, it gets wider and wider. As we walk on the road, it gets narrower and narrower and darker and darker, and eventually we stumble, and eventually we get to this point where we become completely stuck. It demands nothing up front, but it will steal everything from you down the road. So, Jesus says, "Consider your ways. Count the cost. How are you actually living your life?" You see, one day when Jesus was around a crowd, He turned and He looked at them, and He said, "If anyone comes to me, moves, and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and his children, his brothers and his sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." In other words, Jesus says, "If you want to follow me, you want to be my disciple, you're going to have to move. You're going to have to pick up your cross, deny yourself. You're going to have to give up your pride, your rights, your convenience, your comfort, your control. And if you're really going to come to me, you're going to have to hate everything else in your life." Now, we read this, and it feels very paradoxical to us, doesn't it? Like, "Wait, Jesus is telling me to hate my people?" Well, let's just think about Jesus for a second. He's the God of love. He says, "The greatest commandment is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength. Love your neighbor as yourself." He says, "As the Father has loved me, so now you must love one another." He is the God of love. So, what is He saying here? He's trying to help us understand that we can have no other priorities in life

except Jesus and only Jesus, that He must be our one thing, our main thing, our only thing, our everything. Because the truth is, you have nothing to offer the people in your life until you first make Jesus your one thing. In fact, I am hating the people in my life when I don't choose Jesus, because I have nothing to offer the people in my life until I first receive the love of God for myself. Because I love because He first loved me. So, if I actually want to love them, I have to turn from them towards Him. He fills me up with love, and now I actually have something to offer them. Costs me everything up front, offers me everything down the road. And He goes on to say, "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, 'This fellow began to build and was not able to finish.' Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Will he not first sit down and consider whether he is able with 10,000 men to oppose the one coming against him with 20,000? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple." Jesus says, "To follow me, you have to give it all up, and you have to move and come with me." But what He's saying here is you have to first consider your ways and count the cost. You have to consider the way you're living your life and count the cost. In other words, if I want to follow Jesus, I have to sit down and consider what it's going to cost me to actually follow Him. And He gives this example; He says, "Who of you is going to build a tower if you haven't first sat down and figured out, 'Can I actually complete it?' And who of you is going to go to war if you haven't first sat down and thought and figured out, 'Can I actually win this war?'" And the problem is, is we never consider our ways or count the cost, and we start following Jesus, and we get about halfway down the road and we decide it's too much. So, we have these lives of half-built towers and battle scars all over the place. Because I never considered my way or counted the cost, I actually don't get there. But what I think Jesus is actually trying to show us here is I think it's inverted. I think He's actually trying to help us ask the question: Have I considered the way I'm currently living my life? Have I counted the cost? And can I actually get the life that I long for the way I'm currently living? Can I get the marriage I want the way I'm currently living my life? Can I find the joy and the peace that I long for the way that I'm currently living my life? Can I find the success and the prosperity and the freedom and the security and the eternal realities and all of the good things that I long for in my life? Can I actually get those the way that I'm currently living my life? And the answer is often no. And so, we have these lives of half-built towers and battle scars because we can't build that which we long for nor win the battle doing it the world's way. But if we'll go Jesus' way, He'll build the tower and He'll win the war for us.

Have you counted the cost? Have you considered your way? Can you get the life you long for the way that you're living? In fact, this is why at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' message on kingdom life following Him, He says, "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice, acts, moves, responds to them, is a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who

hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice, doesn't act, doesn't move, is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." Jesus says that if we hear what He says and we don't move, we don't respond, we don't follow, we don't put our faith in action, we're like a foolish man who builds his house upon the sand. And I think if we're honest, we spend a lot of our time in life being sandcastle kings. We build these great, elaborate sandcastles, and we get into all the details and all the nuances. We build these elaborate sandcastles of ego, and reputation, and looks, and finances, and materialism, and stuff, and control, and comfort, and convenience, and we rule and reign over these empires of sand, thinking we've really done something. But the moment we turn around, the moment we take a breath, the moment we look the other way, a giant wave comes in, washes it out. A storm comes, crashes it. The rains fall, wash it all out again. And so, we have to start over and do it again and again and again and again. When all the while, Jesus offers us to be servants of the rock. Instead of kings of sand, you can be a servant of the rock. And if I'm a servant of the rock, I don't have to build my life because He will build it for me. And even when I turn around and even when I'm not paying attention, it doesn't matter if a wave comes or a storm shows up or the rain begins to blow, it will not fall because He's the one that has built it and He is the one that is holding it together. Are you a sandcastle king or are you a servant of the rock? What's the difference? Whether or not you move, whether or not you follow, whether or not you live your life taking next steps with Him. This is why Jesus 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 souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." He says, "Come to me. Come, you follow, I'll make, but I only make things that are in motion. Are you weary and burdened? Are you worn out? Are you exhausted? Are you beat down? Come, take my yoke upon you and you'll find rest for your souls." You know what that means? That means come, move with me. What we think is that when we're weary and burdened, we think rest means sitting down in passive apathy. What He is saying is rest for your souls is not found in busyness and chaotic activity, and it is not found in passive apathy. It is found in moving with me. You don't yoke two animals together and put them in the barn to sit down. You yoke two animals together so they can move with one another, and the stronger one carries the load. So, He says, "If you want a life that's easy and light, don't choose passive apathy or chaotic busyness. Choose me. And if you'll move with me, I'll take all your weariness and your burdens, and I will give you a life that is easy and light." See, moving with Jesus actually energizes you. It's like a car. Do you know a car is meant to be used? When a car sits in a garage for a long period of time and isn't used, it actually deteriorates, falls apart, and you turn the key and it doesn't start. Why? Because when a car is running, the alternator charges the battery. It's like, this is what I was created for, and while I'm doing what I was created for, I can recharge myself. God made every living thing to move and said it was good. So, when we move, we're actually recharging the very life within us through the goodness and the grace of God. But when I choose passive apathy, I become even more exhausted than chaotic busyness. That's why when you get worn out, people swing. They get so busy, so chaotic, and then they swing to passive apathy, "I'm going to do nothing." That's actually more exhausting than that

because you weren't created to be passively apathetic. You were created to move with Him, and this is what He invites you towards. This is why the first thing He says is, "Come, follow me." Movement. The last thing He says to His disciples: "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations." It starts with movement. It ends with movement. First thing in the garden, God walks with them in the cool of the day, says, "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, move." Last thing in Revelation – God dwells with His people, and we will rule and reign. Movement, rule and reign with Him forever. Think of all the language that Scripture declares over the lives of the people of God. Things like: be fruitful, multiply, increase, advance, build, subdue, raise up, heal, set free, deliver, increase, make disciples, go, advance, gather. They're all words of movement. They're all words of activity, and not busy, chaotic activity, Spirit-empowered, submitted, and surrendered activity for the good of others and the glory of God. Even when He says, "Go and make disciples," you know what He's saying? Go and make movers. A disciple is a follower, a mover, and teach them to obey. Go make movers who move and can identify that this is what life was for and what I am created to do.

Jesus leads us in small steps, not giant leaps. Next steps aren't expectations to fulfill; they're discoveries to be made. And the next step is simply obeying God and doing whatever He asks you to do whenever He asks you to do it. It's faith in action, and faith without works is dead. Why? Because every living thing moves. Are you moving? Are you taking the responsibility for the life that's been given to you? Is there evidence that there actually is life inside of you? And if you long for the fullness of the life that Jesus offers you, it's not by busy chaoticness nor passive apathy, it's moving with Jesus one step at a time. In fact, first-century Christians were called followers of the Way. I wish that's what we were called. Christian means I go to church sometimes and I'm going to heaven when I die. That's what American Christianity is. They were called followers of the Way. That means the way they lived their life was so evident that people could see the movement of their life and knew what they believed. Why? Because they moved with Jesus, towards Jesus, and like Jesus. Can I ask you, does the way you live your life show other people who you are and what you believe? Is there movement that's the evidence that you're alive in Jesus, not just physically, but spiritually? He's brought me back to life. In fact, I love this; "For in Him we live and move and exist." You know how you move from existing to living? You move. God created every living thing that moves and said it was very good. He created you. And if you want to move from existing to living, you got to actually move. Move. Let's try it one more time for everybody in the back. Move. I mean, just think of the Israelites when God's leading them to take the Promised Land, "Little by little, I will drive them out before you until you have increased enough to take possession of the land." God leads us in small steps, not giant leaps. And little by little we increase and grow, so we become the kind of people that can actually possess and steward that which God has already given to us. The problem for a lot of us is we never take the steps in front of us. So, we never increase and grow to become the kind of people that He can entrust that which He has already given to us into our lives. You say, "What do I mean by that?" I mean, well, a student who's learning to drive has to increase in their ability to drive through driving to become the kind of person that someone can entrust with the keys to the car. The problem is, we don't little by little move with

God. So, we never become the kind of person that He can entrust that which already belongs to us in Jesus' name to us. So, we never get the power and the authority and the revelation and the wisdom and the true riches and the things in the heavenly realms that all belong to us. All the things we were created for, the deep realities of the glory of God that are yours in Christ. Many of us never access or get them because we don't take the little steps in front of us to become the kind of people that can steward that which God longs to give us well. So, our next steps lead to next encounters. Next steps lead to next revelation. Next steps lead to expanding your boundary lines. Next steps lead to God being able to entrust you with that which already belongs to you in Jesus' name. So, if we want the fullness of life that's available, we actually have to move. Move. But if you don't want it, you don't have to. It's totally up to you. See, do you remember the story of the blind man? One day Jesus is walking along and there's a blind man on the side of the road. And when he realizes it's Jesus, when he hears it's Jesus, he starts crying out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." And the disciples are like, "Shh, quiet, be quiet. We're doing things, important things." And Jesus stops, and He turns around, and He points to the man, and He says, "Call him." Disciples get up on your feet. He's calling you. They help him up. Jesus walks over to the man, and He says, "What is it that you want me to do for you?" I would think it's pretty obvious, but Jesus will always ask you what you really want. He's always trying to help you consider your ways and count the costs and look deep within here at what it is that you are actually trying to get. And can you really build the tower and win the war the way you're currently living? "What is it that you want me to do for you?" "I want to see," says the man. Jesus says, "Okay." And He heals him. And the man opens his eyes, and it says, "Your faith has made you whole. Go in peace." In that moment, Bartimaeus could see again. And from that time on, he followed Jesus. Here's what I want you to see. He's blind, and so he's sidelined from life. He's blind, which means he's not able to move. His blindness has prevented him from moving, which is the evidence of life, which is what living things are created to do. He's sidelined by this brokenness in his life. So, when Jesus encounters him, He gives him back sight. And the point of giving him sight was so that once again, this man could move with God, for God, towards God, like God. And so, in that moment, from that time on, he followed Jesus. And what I'm trying to show you is that moments are meant to lead to movement. He had a moment with Jesus that restored his sight, and he could have very easily turned around and gone back home. No, he had a moment with Jesus, and that moment led to movement. Moments with Jesus are meant to lead us to movement with Jesus. The problem is, we have moments that don't become movement, and then we end up with this false sense of maturity. We have a moment with God, moment with God at camp, moment with God five years ago, moment in a worship service, moment in a song, moment in a devotional. We cry out to God for what we want. He gives us that which we want. We have a moment with God, but that moment doesn't become movement. We actually turn around and go right back to the life that we were living before whatever was going on happened. And because it doesn't become movement, we now have a false sense of maturity because we say, "Oh, I've done the Jesus thing. Oh yeah, I met Him on the road. Oh yeah, I remember what that was like. Oh yeah, I did camp 20 years ago when I was a kid. I know what

that's all like." So, we have a form of godliness but no power. We claim to know God, but by our actions, deny Him.

Moments are meant to lead to movement. We have an entire Christian industry that's built on giving people moments that don't lead to movement. We chase moments. We despise movement. At some point, we have to wake up to be like, the point of the moment was to give me movement. Think of all the people that Jesus healed, the sick, the lame, the deaf, the blind, the mute, the lepers. What were all those? They were all sicknesses of the body that prevented people from moving. So, all of the physical healings that He brings were meant to set them free from being sidelined in life so they could actually live. Those moments were meant to lead to movement, and that movement brings forth maturity. The same is true today in the spiritual. God comes, and He heals your eyes and your ears and your heart and your soul, not so you can go back to your life, but so that you can now move freely in this life and actually live in Jesus' name. Movement is how a moment becomes a lifetime. The problem is we have all these moments that never become movement, and then we are convinced we're mature, but we're not. We're not, because maturity is following Jesus regardless of what it costs. If Bartimaeus wouldn't have started following Jesus from that moment, he would have had a half-built tower and a whole bunch of battle scars. That's why it's important for you to answer, "What is it that you really want?" Jesus gave him what he wanted, his sight, so He could give him what he needed, the ability to follow Jesus. And when I talk about movement, I know so many of you, you sit in this room, and if you're living a busy life, movement is like, "Get it away, get it out, get it out." Okay, but movement and busyness are two totally different things. Movement is moving with Jesus, towards Jesus, and like Jesus. Busyness is moving with the world, toward the world, and like the world. Movement is living a lifestyle of next steps that serve Jesus. Busyness is living a life of chaotic activity that serves the world. Movement is using my will, my time, my energy, and resources for the good of others and the glory of God. Busyness is using my will, my time, my energy, and my resources for my good and my glory. Movement frees, busyness enslaves. And so, people that are busy, the moment that I use the word "movement," it feels like more bondage to you. Oh my gosh, I can't get, I'm already so, I can't even breathe, back to school's been so overwhelming. That's busyness, man. That's busyness. People that are moving want nothing to do with busyness. When you start laying on all the activities and travel sports and all the things on top, they're like, "No thank you, I'm free. I live a different way. I don't actually want to do that." Isn't it interesting that after 400 years of Egyptian slavery, 400 years of building bricks for Pharaoh, the busyness of building bricks for Pharaoh, God sets the people free and invites them to move. And every time He invites them to move, all they want to do is go back to Egypt and be busy at building bricks. We would rather be busy building bricks than moving into the unknown by faith. This is the invitation. This is why movement matters. And this is why so many of us are alive, but there's no evidence of life. So many of us are alive, and we have these half-built towers and these battle scars because we can't win the war and we can't build that thing. And so, Jesus says, "Then stop being a sandcastle king and come and be a servant of the Rock, and come and actually practice and move and follow and take a next step with me." This is what I'm praying for us. This is why we're a movement of

hope for the city and beyond. Listen, you should never want to be a part of a church that isn't moving, because movement is the evidence of life. We look for churches that are passively apathetic. "Oh, just don't make me move." That's like saying that this church isn't alive, and I'm looking for a dead church to encourage my deadness. I'm looking for a dead church to let me stay in my deadness. I'm looking for a blind church that will let me just stay blind and sit on the road. And if we all sit here together, then none of us has to feel bad. "You in?" "I'm in." "You good?" "Are we good?" We have an unstated agreement to that reality. I reject that reality. I do not agree with you on that reality, because movement is the responsibility of, the evidence of, and the only way to find the fullness of life. And God says it's very good. So, then I have to go back and say, "Does Jesus know what is good and true and right? Because He either is right about it all or He's right about none. And if He's not right about my next step, then He's probably not right about my eternal destiny. So, I should probably go look somewhere else. I don't know. Allah, Buddha, materialism, new ageism, I mean, pick one. Go find one who actually knows what is good and true and right." Because He can't be right about some and wrong about others. That makes Him wrong, not right. These are things worth wrestling with in your own soul. And so, my hope is that we keep accelerating and moving forward as a people. And so, if you've seen in the atrium at any of your campuses, there's this really cool thing that we have put up on the walls. And you might have seen it and you might have wondered, "What is that? And are they ever going to say anything about it?" Well, I'm going to tell you what it is right now. And so, what I want you to do is I just want you to listen in and lean into this for a second, because I believe this is going to be something that is going to help us live a lifestyle of next steps and move forward as a people. Check this out.

We are a movement of hope for the city and beyond. A bunch of individuals who have come together and decided to follow Jesus. See, we're disciples of Jesus. We're learners, students, followers, becoming like the One that we follow. And we have considered our ways. We've counted the cost. And we've decided that Jesus is worth following, that He knows what is good and what is true and what is right, that He invites us through the narrow gate onto the small road that leads to an ever-widening life. And He invites us to follow Him one simple next step at a time. See, Jesus says, "Come, follow me, and I will make you." We follow, and He makes. And we don't follow Him in giant leaps. We follow Him in small, simple steps. What I love about Jesus is that He leads us one next step at a time. And next steps aren't expectations to fulfill. They're discoveries to be made. And what I love is that there is this simple reality to this life with Jesus: that we just follow where He leads, that we move when He calls. And sometimes we're not sure what those next steps look like. And sometimes we can get so overwhelmed about what's next that we're not sure how to respond. But as we've studied Scripture, we've discovered that there are 10 foundational steps, 10 basic steps, 10 core steps, that every disciple of Jesus, that every person who is following Jesus, at some point will take. And these are the 10 steps that we hope every person at Valley Creek will take at some point on their journey with Him. You see, the first is simply salvation; choosing to declare that Jesus is Lord and they will follow, entering into the kingdom of heaven, deciding that Jesus is worth submitting and surrendering my life to. And then there's baptism; choosing to identify with the



death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, declaring that you are a new creation and allowing the world to know that you follow Him. And then there's worship; gathering together with the people of God to worship God, to make it a priority to gather in His presence. And when we gather in church, we come together and we meet with God, and we hear His Word, and we minister to one another. And then there's circles: getting together with other people who are following Jesus, because no one follows Jesus alone. A circle is simply three or more people who get together to discuss the weekend message, engage the Scriptures, and pray with one another to experience transformation on their journey with Jesus. And then there's this thing called the reading plan. At all times, we have a reading plan here at Valley Creek, a strategic way of engaging the Scriptures. We want to be people who fill our mind with the Word of God and renew our mind, and allow the living, active Word of God to transform us from the inside out as we hear His voice. And then there's the step of joining a serve team and using our gifts and our passions and our talents for something so much bigger than ourselves, allowing God to do something in me as He does something through me, building and strengthening the body of Christ, denying myself, picking up my cross, and following Him. And then there's the step of generosity, where we choose to give, where we choose to use our resources and tithe, give back to God what belongs to Him, our first and best 10%, where we start to see money as a tool and God as the treasure, instead of money as the treasure and God as a tool. And then we start inviting people. Why? Because we're on mission to help other people come and see who Jesus is. And then we can become a leader, because we believe everyone was created to be a leader in the kingdom of God. We believe in the redemptive potential of humanity, and while not every person is qualified for every leadership role, every person was called and created to be a leader and at some point, take responsibility of a garden. And then there's the next step of a practice plan, spiritual practices, where we do the things that Jesus did so that we can do the things that Jesus did. 10 foundational steps, 10 core steps, 10 basic steps that we hope everyone at Valley Creek at some point in time will take. And this is a movement board. This is a declaration and a demonstration of who we are as a people and what we do together. And this is simply a marker. And our hope is that every person, as they begin taking these 10 foundational next steps, will be able to take their step and mark their move as a way of seeing progress in their own life, as a way of demonstrating that their faith is alive and active, as a way of inspiring the rest of our church to show us that we are a movement of hope for the city and beyond. And our hope and our prayer is that these boards become communal experiences, that circles come together when someone has taken a step and watch somebody mark their move, and they cheer and they celebrate them on, that serve teams will come together to these boards and celebrate as someone takes the next step with their journey with Jesus, that pods will come and experience this together, that families and friends will come and celebrate next steps with one another. And what this does is it shows you that there is a next step to take, and it gives you a vision, and it reminds you faith without action is dead. It can be so easy to sit in church week after week, month after month, year after year, and not move on our journey with Jesus, and convince ourselves and deceive ourselves that we're moving forward when we're not. And what I love about these boards is it's a simple little action step to show you the progress of your life and a vision for how you can keep moving forward even

when you don't know how. Take your step, mark your move in Jesus' name, because when you move, we move. You see, it's not about the organization being a movement of hope for the city and beyond. No, it's about individuals moving, and when you move, we move. And every time you move, your life gets a little brighter, and the light of Jesus shines through you a little stronger, and you start showing other people the way. You start showing other people the path, and they start seeing the life of Christ within you. You start to radiate the hope of Jesus in the world around you. You see, these 10 steps aren't arbitrary, and we didn't just pick them out of a hat. No, this is the life that Jesus lived. Like, Jesus did all of these steps. Like, He is salvation in and of itself. He is the way, the truth, and the life. And Jesus was baptized, and the Father spoke from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And Jesus gathered with the people of God to worship the Father, and He started the first circle ever when He gathered 12 disciples and says, "Come on, guys, let's do life together," and He engaged the Scriptures. Not only did He engage it, He literally is the living Word, demonstrating the very Word of God and declaring it to the world around Him. And He is the greatest servant of all time, pouring Himself out, taking on humanity, going to the cross, washing our feet. He showed us what being a servant is like. He literally gave His entire life so that we might be saved. He has invited everyone to come and see the goodness and the glory of God. He's the greatest leader that has ever lived, and the practice plan, yeah, Jesus' lifestyle is the life that we're learning to live. We want to do the things that Jesus did so we can do the things that Jesus did. You see, we are a movement of hope for the city and beyond, disciples following Jesus one next step at a time. So, come on, Valley Creek. It's time to take your step and mark your move. And as we all, as individuals, start taking our steps, marking our move, inspiring one another, growing with God, we literally become a movement of hope for the city and beyond. We begin to glow and radiate the very glory of God. We let our light shine in Jesus' name. So, come on, take your step, mark your move, and watch what God will do.

So, can you see it? Simple marker, a simple next step, for the evidence of life, the goodness and the glory of God around us. We hope that every person in this church at some point will do all 10 of these, not because you have to. There's no duty, there's no obligation, there's an invitation from Jesus to experience life and life to the full. And this gives you a reference point of like, "Where am I on the journey and what next step can I take?" And you have to wrestle through these. "Have I been saved? And if so, have I been baptized?" And if you haven't been baptized, we're doing baptisms next weekend. If you've been cut to the heart, if you're called by God, if you want to move forward, stop listening to anything else I'm saying, scan the QR code in the seat in front of you right now, because we're going to do baptisms next weekend because that's what we do. We respond to the gospel. Are you in a circle? Not like, I was in a small group five years ago at my last church. Are you in a circle? Are you giving? Are you moving forward? I'm like, you can go through this and you can wrestle through it. Movement helps us move on mission and eventually become mature. And as we become mature, we can't help but be on mission to help other people move. Take your step, mark your move, and this should not bother you at all. It should inspire you. Listen to me. If someone said, "I want to be a great athlete," I should be able to ask them at any point in time, "Tell me the last practice

you just had and what you did." If someone told me that they wanted to be wealthy, I should be able to look at them and say, "Tell me about your last investment and the next investment that you're dreaming of." If someone says, "I want to be wise," I would say, "Awesome. Tell me what was the last book you read and the next book you're excited to read." If someone says, "I want to have a great marriage," I should be able to look at that husband and say, "When was the last time you took your wife out on a date?" And look at the wife and say, "When was the last time you initiated intimacy with your husband?" So, if we say, I want to be a disciple of Jesus, we should be able to look at each other and say, "Tell me what your last step was and what your next step is." Because it wouldn't offend us in any other area of life. We would think it's obvious. But for some reason, when we get to our spiritual journeys, just like, "I don't know. I don't know." Listen to me. You're one step away from a completely new life. You're three steps away from a completely new trajectory. And you're five steps away from a completely new destiny. Repentance is always one step away, but a trajectory takes three, one, two, three. Now I'm moving in a direction. And destiny takes five, four, five, because now I've completed, or created, a completely new reality with God. So, there are new things now available to me because little by little I'm growing. So now, He can entrust me with the things that already belong to me in Jesus' name. God is the great Potter. You are the clay, but He can't shape you until you're moving. He puts you on the wheel and He spins you and He forms you and He shapes you. And because we believe He knows what is good and true and right, we let Him do His work on us. And if you're here and you're like, "I don't want to do any of those," that's so okay. Here's what I would encourage you to do though; tell Him that. Don't tell us that. You don't need to tell me that. Don't tell the people around you that. Don't say, "I didn't like today's message." Tell Jesus. "Jesus, I feel like you're inviting me to take this specific step, but I don't want to. Or I don't think it's worth it. Or it's too uncomfortable or inconvenient." Tell Him that. And watch what He will do. Come on. Take your step, mark your move. Movement is the responsibility of life. It is the evidence of life. And it is the only way to experience the fullness of life.

So, Jesus, we want to be people who move by Your grace – not due to Your obligation, but with You and towards You and like You. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.