

Spirit of the living God, come and move in us, move in this place, transform, change, do what You want to do, God. We look to You. We behold You. We want to meet with You. So, let me just invite – go ahead and take your seats. And welcome to Valley Creek. It is good together today. My name is Jason. I get to serve as the Campus Pastor here. If this is your first time with us, man, you came on a great day. Valley Creek is a Jesus-focused, Spirit-filled, and life-giving church. We are a movement of hope for the city and beyond. And God and His kingdom are a movement of hope for all of creation. And today, we get to see a little bit of that in action as we get to celebrate baptisms. Last week, we announced that we were going to have some baptisms this weekend. So, that is seven days ago we said, "You know what, we're moving forward by faith. We believe that God is on the move, that there's a Spirit churning and working." We said, "We're going to have some baptisms." So, seven days ago, we announced baptisms for this weekend, and this weekend, over 100 people are going to step into the waters of baptism, which is incredible. Got about 30 or so of those in this service. So, let me just talk to you about that movement, that life, the gospel. The gospel, what is it? Man, it's the good news that the kingdom is available through the person and the work of Jesus. The kingdom is available. It's at hand. It's in front of us. And we have a simple picture that we just describe the gospel with, called the Three Circles. And we just say that you receive the grace of Jesus, and everything changes. Grace – this undeserved favor, this supernatural empowerment of Jesus. When I receive that, I get a brand-new identity. I'm not like I once was. I'm a brand-new thing. And then I can experience His presence all the time, everywhere, anywhere that I'm at. I can always live in the presence of Jesus. I can have access to the Father through His presence and relationship. And then, after that, I can release His kingdom, live out my kingdom purpose. What is that? Man, to do the things we were always supposed to do. To be the people of God. Living in the light of God. Releasing the love of God. The radiance of Jesus. Going on mission with God. So, part of what you see here is this is the fruit of mission. This is the fruit of people who say, "I'm going out, and then it's not just about me, it's also about them." See, here's what Jesus says at the end of Matthew. He says, "Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." He doesn't say, "Now wait." He says, "Now go." You got to go. Because the message is super clear. The mission is super urgent. We got to go. There are people that are lost and hurting and broken. And they have no idea that God just loves them and has a whole new life for them. And so, we got to go. We got to radiate the love of Jesus, because we got to go. We got to tell people how good He's been to us, because we got to go. We got to go and love on people, because they're lost and hurt. We got to go. We can't sit around. We can't stop. We can't wait. We got to go. There's a mission. There's a mission we've been called to. And so, for many of you today, as you celebrate these steps into the waters of baptism, this is the fruit of the mission you've been going on, you went, and you invited, and you loved, and you prayed for, and you encouraged, and people are stepping forward by faith, and they are becoming disciples. Disciples, ones that become like the one they follow. When they follow Jesus, they're becoming more like Jesus, which is why in the waters of baptism, we just say, "Is Jesus Lord,

and will you follow?" Yes, Jesus is Lord, and I will follow. And then they say, "I baptize you now in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and the love of the Father, and the grace of the Son, the power of the Holy Spirit." And what's happening here today is not a religious ceremony. It's not just symbolism. It actually means that I'm following Jesus. It's this picture of the fact that I'm dying to my old self, and I'm rising again in new life. I'm not who I once was. And so, if anyone is in Christ, they're a new creation. The old is gone, the new is here. And so, the reason that we baptize the way we do is because the old is gone, dead and buried, like Jesus was dead and buried, and risen to new life. The new is here. This isn't just a day where people are becoming good people. "Oh man, I'm becoming a good person, living a better life." This is a day where dead things are coming to life, where the old is being made new, where things are being put into alignment as people step into kingdom destiny. And so, we are celebrating each and every life that's going to be changed from this point, already changed by saying, "Yes, Jesus is Lord," going into the waters of baptism, and going to be changed from this moment onward as they live a life of fellowship, discipleship, as they move forward by faith, as they go, they themselves go on mission, like Jesus went on mission. That's what's happening today. So, here's how we do it at Valley Creek. People that are walking into the waters of baptism, they are going to be cheered for, they are going to be celebrated. We celebrate each and every one because all of heaven celebrates when even one person turns back to God. All of heaven celebrates when even one person says, "I'm in, I follow, I'm going." So, let me invite you to go ahead and stand back up with me. Those that are getting baptized can begin to move into their spaces. Let me just explain this piece. We worship over them because God in heaven sings over us. We literally worship in this space. We give God the glory by worshiping during the baptisms, creating this atmosphere full of faith, hope, and love, cheering on each person that's getting baptized because it's a really, really big deal. This is an early step on this entire journey of next steps of following Jesus. This is an early moment of a series of moments that are meant to create more movement in people's lives.

We celebrate each one of them. So, do not grow weary in celebrating them. One all the way to 30, or however many are in the service, just every single one, we cheer for them because that's somebody's somebody. That's somebody that somebody prayed for. That's somebody that somebody went on a mission for. That's somebody that somebody wants to see step into the goodness of the kingdom, and they are in Jesus' name. So, we choose by faith to celebrate each one. Listen, God is moving and people are responding. The kingdom is forcefully advancing. God is good. And this is the fruit of the movement and the mission. So, come on, let's worship, let's celebrate in the name of Jesus.

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Oh, man, it's good to follow Jesus. And it's good to know that He really is, He's God. He alone is God. Nothing else is, no one else is, nothing else in my life. It's Him. He's the only one. So, let me go and invite you to have a seat. And let me take a moment to just say that, man, we know it's a back-to-school season, it's the start of the fall semester. And it can be a lot, and it's a lot of starts, it's a lot of changes, it's a lot of engagement that we have to jump into. And we

just know that sometimes we need a little bit of space to just breathe, some space to just be, and some space to just recognize what Psalms says is just to, "Be still, and know that I am God. I'll be exalted among the nations, I'll be exalted in the earth." There is a goodness of God that's only experienced in the stillness of God. There's a hope that we find when we just take a second and breathe, and be. And so, in the midst of all the celebration that we're doing today, we just wanted to give you five minutes to just be still, and know that He is God. Five minutes to settle, to let the busyness of life settle, and to just spend some moments in His presence. So, Jesus, right now we just choose to be still. Take a few minutes to know that you are God.

So, Jesus, we just know that even in the stillness, You've been working in us and speaking to us. May we know You more. May we actually have moments like that where we take time to just know that You are God. Thank You for just peace. Thank You for Your presence.

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Once again, just welcome to Valley Creek. I'm so glad that we've gotten to spend this time today. There's so much that we're celebrating and so much of God's goodness that's just in the atmosphere. And we are indeed a church that is in motion and in movement. And there is a lot happening and God's doing a lot in and among us. And so, I just want to remind you of all that's kind of in front of us for the next steps that could be taken in the month of September. We've got everything from Valley Creek 101, which is happening today at 12:45. All the way through Transformation Tuesdays, to Movement Nights, to Young Adult Gatherings. All kinds of next steps that you're invited to take. And I can't necessarily tell you about all of them that's happening in the church. But I can show you this, which is just a way to stay connected to us. You can text VCC to 55888. That's the best way to stay in the know of all that God is doing. And I really want to encourage you, if you don't already follow us on social media, consider doing that, because it's just good. Our social media stuff is just good. And instead of like, doom scrolling, you can replace that with some hope scrolling. Or as I like to say, some "nope" scrolling to "hope" scrolling. There you go. So, follow us on social media because God has so much He's doing in and through our church. And there's life in that. And it's sweet. And sometimes I'll get a chance to... it'll be a long day. I'll be like, all that that's happening among the next generation or in worship in our church, that's just good. Like, thank You, Jesus, for that. So, keep following us. Keep tracking with us.

And we've been in a series not series called A Collection of Talks on movement, and mission, and maturity over these past five weeks. And it has been profound. And God has been speaking to us. And so, whether you made all of them or whether you're just here maybe for the first time today, I just want to kind of remind us of what God has been speaking as we started this fall semester. There is so much movement. There's so much He's been teaching us. And really, we just started week one of the fall semester by saying this, "We have a great church. And we do have a great church. And I'm so thankful for it." And we just said it's a gift to have a community where you're known and loved and valued. And so, we really sensed that

God was preparing us for something. He was preparing us for a season of revival. We called the church to a fast. And so, many of you stepped into that for the first time. You fasted for the very first time. And you had breakthrough, which is awesome. And then in week two, we talked about having this divine discontentment. We said sometimes there's just like, a discontentment inside of us. And many times we think it's a discontentment towards what is happening. When in reality, it's actually a discontentment towards who we need. It's not really what we need in life or what we want in life. It's who we need in life. His name is Jesus. And He's always drawing our hearts towards Himself. That's the purpose of discontentment inside of our soul. In week three, we talked about the gospel. The good news, which was on full display today. The availability of the kingdom of God through the person and the work of Jesus. The gospel. We asked the question, has the gospel taken a hold of you? And have you taken a hold of it? Meaning, is this just a word that you're familiar with? Or is it a life you're living? Is the gospel something that is a word you hear when you come to church? Or is it the reality of the availability of Jesus in your life? Because you follow Him. He is Lord. And you are actually saved and being saved. The gospel. It's a movement of hope for all of creation. And movements are meant to disrupt. So, one of the things I want to recognize, even on a day like today. The clapping and the people and the baptisms. And we're recapping. Even now, you might feel a bit of a disruption in your soul. That's Jesus. That's Jesus. And He's calling you. And He's speaking to you. And He's saying, "Come to me. Come to me. Come to me." And so, that's what the gospel does. It is for all of us. In week four, we started with just a question, which I loved. We started with this question: Do you want to have fun with God? Do you want church to be fun? For this to be a fun experience? We started with that question. That's a great question. That's part of why days like today look like today. Because we want to have fun. We want to celebrate all that God is doing. And so, we have fun with God when we actually walk with Him. Follow Him. Move with Him. Take next steps with Him. You see, next steps are meant to lead us to next encounters with God. Next steps are meant to help us move forward on our journey. So, whenever I hit a wall. Whenever I feel like I'm walking through a valley. Next steps with Jesus are how I continue on. Next steps where I go through the narrow gate that leads me to an ever-widening life. Where I surrender, I get down, I get low, I surrender and submit to Jesus. And it leads me onwards to a giant life in Him. Next steps are meant to lead us to brand new encounters with Jesus. So, the thing I want to encourage you to do is keep on walking, keep on moving, just keep swimming. Keep on moving forward with Jesus. Don't stop. Don't stop. Because movement is where life is found. And then that led into that final week, which is just this, we're reminded that everything that is alive, everything that is living is meant to move, move. So, is there anybody who's alive in here today? Is there anybody who exists? Okay. So, we're meant to move forward by faith. Because movement really is a proof of being alive. In Jesus, we live, and we move, and we exist. And moments like today are meant to lead us to ongoing movement, in Jesus's name. Which is why we were so excited to introduce something called the movement board. And I just say this: in Jesus' name, we are moving. And in Jesus's name, we're going to take back this like love for next steps for moving in the kingdom. And the movement board is part of how we're doing that. So, you might have noticed this today. There were some people putting in some of the markers into that board. And they were just noting

the steps that they're taking. And these are really 10 foundational steps that we hope everybody takes. So, today you probably saw some people with a marker like this. And they were placing that into the movement board for things like, "I got baptized today." For things like, "I joined a circle this semester." For things like, "I started reading the reading plan. Or I'm on a serve team, I invited somebody to come. There it is. I'm leading. I'm stepping into a practice plan this fall. Or maybe just this like, I just said yes to Jesus." Side note, I just heard a story just now. Eight days ago, somebody who was baptized today said yes to Jesus for the first time. They came to church on Sunday. They heard that next week we were having baptisms. And they stepped into the waters right now, in this service. That's incredible. So, guess what? That person should take a marker and they should click, place that into the movement board. Because we want this to be a communal experience, where we experience it together. And by the way, you don't have to place it in only just the place where the word is. You can put it anywhere on that board. It represents that step that you're taking. We want all of us to walk through these 10 foundational steps and so much more. Because there's steps like forgiveness, and steps like, I don't know, I confessed to somebody for the first time, or steps like I stepped further into Scripture in some way. Those are steps. Those are movement. But these are for the 10 foundational steps we want everybody to take. And so, our encouragement to you is grab somebody, say, "Okay, I've taken this step. This is the one I want to mark." And then actually do that. Have that moment. Grab your circle. Grab your pod. Grab your team. Enjoy that together. Celebrate the movement and the moment that you have. This is a take your step, mark your move, in-the-movement-board kind of moment. So, this is pretty exciting. We had a lot of people cheering for that today. For those of you that think, "Well, I've done all those steps. I've done all 10." Here's what I want to say to you, awesome. Now, it's time to bring somebody else to the movement board. Now, it's time to bring somebody with you and cheer them on to their next steps. And oh, by the way, it's not really that you've taken these steps. It's that you're taking these steps. Why do I say that? Well, because you're going to continue to engage scriptures. You're going to continue to do practice plans. You're going to continue to invite others. You're going to continue to live as a generous person, be more servant hearted. You're moving forward by faith. So, even if you think, "Oh, I've done all those things in my life at some point." Great. Bring somebody along with you. Help them step further and farther into the kingdom. Not only can we take more steps in all these areas. But we're taking them as a people, as a church. It's not just us by ourselves. It's us stepping forward by faith. So, those aren't the only steps. There's a lot more that can be taken. But if that's you, if that's you and you've taken one fairly recently. We would love to invite you. Go out to the info tower right out in the atrium. Grab this marker. Take some friends with you. Let them cheer you on and pray for you in that step. And then by faith believe. This is like a stone. Like a standing stone that they used to do in the Old Testament saying, "This is it. This is one moment. And there's so many more to come. This is one bit of movement. And there's so much more movement to step into." So, excited for all of you that have taken that next step. Everybody who was being baptized today. They put their marker in the movement board, which is so fun. They marked their move.

And so, moments with God really are meant to lead to ongoing, long-term movement. And so, he's been speaking to us in all kinds of ways. And we've been inviting him in. And even if you're newer with us today. You can sense things in the spiritual atmosphere. You can sense that the Holy Spirit is here. And you might even have just taken the five minutes of quiet, where we were still for a second to know that he was God. And you might have experienced like, the best five minutes you have all year long. And that's because that's God's goodness. And He's trying to get your attention. And so, while we've been moving forward by faith and in this series, the Lord's been speaking to each one of us. And so, here's what we want to do, as a chance to ask, listen, and respond. I want to walk you through a series of three questions, and they're going to have something to do with the way that the Lord's been speaking in this kind of season of time. Even if you haven't been here, you can still go on the journey with us and just listen to what God is saying. You see, we can ask, listen, respond, because God is always speaking to us. And when we slow down enough to really listen, that's when He speaks to us. And He connects in our heart, and He actually tells us things we maybe don't recognize or don't know. And He leads us into a next step. And so, that's why asking, listening, and responding is something that is core in the heart of Valley Creek. So, go ahead and grab a pen. Grab a notebook. Grab something to take notes on. If you have some way to take notes or a message, take a message. Maybe your notes page in your phone if you need to. But my encouragement to you is; will you just lean into these three questions and ask, and then listen and responding. And today is a day of a lot of fast clapping and slow listening, so we're going to do some kind of slowing down and listening right now. Three questions. I'm going to give you about two minutes each to walk through them, to really be thoughtful, and hear what the Lord has to say. And let's just listen and respond to it. Here's the first question; what has the Holy Spirit been trying to say to you during this collection of talks so far? What's the Holy Spirit been speaking? What's He been trying to say? Take a moment. Listen for that and write it down. God's words to us are always kind, loving, encouraging. You should be hearing some of those things as He's talking to you. They're not condemning. They're not shaming. They're not, you know, "I'm disappointed with you." It's His goodness to you, always encouraging you to take a next step. So, here's the second question; what's the last tangible next step you took with Jesus? We use the word tangible because if it is hard to define it, it could be that we didn't take it. But it's worth reflecting on and saying, "When was the last time, and what was it, that I actually stepped forward by faith? I actually took that step with Jesus?" Take about two minutes and write that down. Okay. Here's our third and our final question, and it's just this; what's the next tangible step Jesus is inviting you to take? The next thing He's invited you to do. We ask, we listen, and then we actually respond to it. So, do you know it? Do you sense it? If so, it's worth writing that down and noting it, and telling someone, so you can actually step forward by faith. So, next two minutes, write down, what's that next step that He's inviting you to?

So, we're a movement of hope for the city and beyond. Movements run on steps of obedience, and every next step is designed to lead us to a next encounter with the goodness of God. So, this is not like a religious checklist. This isn't something like, "Oh, I feel bad, I have to do this.

These are opportunities. These are invitations. These are discoveries to be made for our life. And so, I'm so proud of each of you that's stepping forward by faith. Can you imagine what our church would be like if everybody in this room took a next step that they just wrote down right now? We would be a drastically different church by next week. And that's what we're talking about. That's a movement of hope for the city and beyond. And so, I believe by faith you're stepping into that. Let me invite you, everybody stand up with me. As we finish out, we want to just declare out some truths. We want to, by faith, make some declarations all together, okay? So, I'm going to give you kind of two slides here that I want all of us by faith to speak out, to build our faith, to encourage us, to remind us of who we really are.

So, say this with me: today, I am going to take my next step. I will ask, listen, and respond to the voice of God. I believe that wherever I am going is better than where I've been. I have nothing to achieve, or prove, or earn. I have everything to receive, discover, and explore. I am drawn by grace, not driven by expectations. I am confident that God is good, Jesus has forgiven me, I am loved, and everything is possible. With each step, I will discover who I am, who He is, and what I'm created to do. I know I'm not alone. I will follow Jesus. I will live free, in Jesus' name.