

All right. Hey everybody, welcome to Valley Creek. We're so glad that you are here with us today. Wherever you are, whatever's going on in your life, we're so glad that you're here. I'll let you go ahead and grab your seat for a moment. I love that we love two minutes of kindness and that it takes almost two minutes to get back and get sorted. That's a great thing. Hey, so I want to start our message a little bit different today, and I want to start by apologizing to you. You see, last week in one of our services and one of our messages, I had a spirit of frustration in the midst of the message because I felt like there was an indifference. And a resistance to the Word of God. And I responded with a spirit of frustration, which is wrong. It's a paradox, it's hypocrisy, and it flat out is ineffective.

It's kindness that leads to repentance, which means frustration leads to resistance. And this is a sacred platform, and the Word of God is sacred, and this gathering is sacred, and I never want to take that for granted. And I know most of you sitting here right now, you have absolutely no idea what I am talking about, and it's totally okay. But I know what I'm talking about, and I know what was in here in the midst of it, and it was wrong. And so, I'm sorry for having a spirit of frustration and speaking out of the flesh. Will you please forgive me for that? Because that is not who I am, nor what I want to do. Anything done in the flesh doesn't lead to life.

I want to become a person of love, and I believe that you're here because you want to be a person of love. See, my personal life vision is to become a person of love who dwells deeply in God's kingdom with Him who tends His garden with passion, and excellence, and creativity. And just like you, I'm on my own spiritual formation journey. Spiritual formation, the process of being formed into the image of Jesus to become a person of love. It's a process. It doesn't happen overnight of being formed. We don't form ourselves. It's the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, the people of God, spiritual practices, trials, and time that actually form and shape us into the image of Jesus, who is the standard and the source to become a person of love. Until we ultimately become this person who has goodwill towards God and the world around them. And I believe that's who we are as a people. I believe that is what is happening in your life and in my life. And we say all the time that God wants to do something in you as He does something through you.

Well, last week when I got up here to try to allow God to do something through me, really, He did something in me. And we've been talking about how Jesus says, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." It was last week, in my moving and in my attempts to mission, that really God made me, and formed, and shaped, and rubbed the rough spots in my life. It really bothered me all week, and so I confess and I repent. And it doesn't matter if you understand or get it or not, I need to do that. And so, I'm grateful for the grace that you extend to me to work out my own salvation with fear and trembling. I never want us to take any of this for granted. I want us to understand the sacredness, and the holiness and the fear of God, and the open heaven, and the calling for so much more. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit in me.

Search me, O God, and know my anxious thoughts, and test me to see what offensive ways are in me, and lead me in the way of everlasting life. May we continue to become a people of love. I want to become a person of love. So, thank you for your graciousness in the midst of my own journey of becoming more like Jesus. And we've been in a collection of talks this fall on movement, mission, and maturity, talking about moving with Jesus, being on mission with Jesus, and maturing in Jesus. The last few weeks we've spent a bunch of time talking about mission; the privilege, the opportunity, and the responsibility. And it is so weighty and so important, and I'm just trusting that somehow God is working it in our soul. And I've been telling you these Gospel stories and then trying to put ourselves in it to just really understand the heart of mission. And so, I just want to tell you one more.

You see, one day Jesus came to the town of Jericho, and when He got there, a word began to spread, and a large crowd began to form, Jesus was in town. I mean, this is Jesus; the guy who says things nobody's ever heard before, does things nobody has ever seen before. He's healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons, speaking to the deep things in their soul. And so, everybody comes to see Jesus. And there's this man in town that hears that Jesus is there, and his name is Zacchaeus. He's a chief tax collector. He spent his life working for the Roman government, ripping off his own Jewish people, and in the process, he has made himself wealthy. And so, he is treated as the least of these; the outcasts, the misfits. He's completely rejected and left alone by his people. They hate him. And he has spent his entire life gaining the world, but in the process, he's lost his soul.

See, he has everything the world has to offer, but he's empty, and he's hollow, and he has no joy, and no peace, and no purpose, and no hope, and no love. And he hears that Jesus is in town, and he's looking for something, but he doesn't even really know what he's looking for. So, he decides he's going to go check it out. And when he gets there, there's a large crowd. And the Bible says he's short in stature, so he can't see over the crowd. But he sees a fig tree, and so he climbs up in this fig tree to see over the crowd, to see Jesus. And when Jesus comes walking by, it says, "When Jesus reached the spot." Exact words; "When Jesus reached the spot." He stopped, and a hush fell over the crowd. And he looked right up in the tree, made eye contact with Zacchaeus. Even though they had never met before, he called him by name; "Zacchaeus, come down, for I must stay at your house today."

Zacchaeus scurries down the tree, comes to Jesus, welcomes him into his home, and throws a meal and a party for Jesus. And the crowd begins to grumble and murmur and judge and criticize, Jesus is hanging out with Zacchaeus, a sinner. And while they criticize and attack him inside the house, Zacchaeus stands up, and he says, "Look, Lord, here and now I give half of everything I have to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay him back four times the amount." A smile comes over Jesus' face, and he says, "Today salvation has come to this house, for the Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost." And I tell you that story because that is a profound missional story of what God does in our life. See, Jesus comes to town, and Jesus is always in town. And word begins to spread, and word

always begins to spread. And like Zacchaeus, we're on the other side of the town, and we often feel like we're the least of these; the outcast, the misfit.

We know what it's like to be rejected and unwanted by the people in our lives. And like Zacchaeus, we've spent our lives trying to gain the world, but in the process, we've lost our soul. In fact, it's like the more of the world we gain, the more of our self we lose. And we know something's missing. We're empty, we're hollow. There's no joy, there's no hope, there's no peace, there's no purpose. But we hear about this guy named Jesus, and so we want to go check it out. And we come to a crowd just like this, and we're trying to see over, because we just want to catch a glimpse of Jesus. And so, we climb up a fig tree just like Zacchaeus. And this is incredibly prophetic, that it's a fig tree. Do you know what fig leaves represent in the Bible? Fig leaves in the Bible represent self-righteousness, self-righteousness, trying to make ourselves right before God, others, and ourselves. You go all the way back to the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve sinned and rebelled against God, their eyes were opened.

They realized they were naked. They were ashamed, they were afraid, and so the first thing they did was make coverings of fig leaves for themselves; the first act of self-righteousness. Trying to cover up my failures, my flaw, my fear, my shame. Trying to perform, earn, achieve, become, succeed. Trying to take care of my past to secure my future. And we take on this self-righteous reality; doing, striving, earning, behaving, accomplishing. And we try to climb the tree of self-righteousness to exalt ourselves, to elevate ourselves, to lift ourselves up above the people around us, to cover up the fear of not being enough, of not having enough, of not doing enough; to make ourselves right before God, before others, and ourselves. And that is an exhausting way to live. And while we're in our tree of self-righteousness, Jesus comes walking along, and he gets to the spot.

Those words are just filled with divine destiny, with prophetic destiny. Jesus enters your life and gets to the spot, and he looks right up, and he looks you in the eyes in the midst of everybody else, and it's like everything stands still. And he calls your name and says, "Come down. Come down." "Hey, Zacchaeus, come down from the tree of self-righteousness and come to the foot of the tree of grace. Zacchaeus, come down from the tree of self-righteousness, where you've tried to do it on your own, and come humble yourself at the tree of grace, the foot of the cross." The cross is the tree of grace. It is the tree of the Lord, our righteousness. It is the tree of a righteousness that is now available not by works, but by faith. It is the tree where God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God.

We don't have to climb the tree of self-righteousness because Jesus climbed the tree of the Lord, our righteousness, once and for all. And while He was on that tree, He said, "I thirst," so you could be satisfied. He said, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He was forsaken so you'll never have to be. He says, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." All of your sins, all of your past, all of your failures have been paid in full. And He

declared, "It is finished." Not "Go work on it," because everything that ever has been or ever will be required from you has been paid in full. Come down from your tree of self-righteousness. Humble yourself at the foot of the tree of grace. That's what He's saying to Zacchaeus, and that's what He says to you and me. And He says, "Because I want to stay at your house today." Isn't it interesting that when you read the Gospels, you never see that Jesus had a home? He didn't live in a house made of brick and mortar. Why?

Because Jesus doesn't want to live in a house made of brick and mortar. He wants to live in a house made of heart and soul. He doesn't want to live in a house made by man's hands. He wants to live in the human spirit, redeemed and restored by Jesus himself. So, he says, "I want to come to your house. Will you invite me in?" And Zacchaeus quickly invites Jesus in, brings him into his house. And when we invite Jesus into our house, like Zacchaeus, not everybody's going to get it. They're going to criticize, they're going to persecute, they're going to judge, and they're going to say, "Jesus is hanging out with that sinner." The only interesting thing is, the moment that Jesus came down... Zacchaeus came down from the tree of self-righteousness and came to the foot of the cross, the Lord, our righteousness. He's no longer a sinner; he is now the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. And then Zacchaeus stands up and, all on his own, says, "Look, Lord, here and now I give half of everything I have to the poor. And if I've cheated anybody out of anything, I'll pay him back four times the amount." Here's the question; who told him to do that? Who told him to become missional?

Who told him to get involved in other people's lives? Who told him to use his resources to accomplish God's purposes in the lives of other people? No one. Because no one has to tell you to be missional when grace comes into your home. When grace comes into your home, mission flows out of your life. The grace of God releases the mission of God out of your life. When grace flows into your life, it ignites a missional fire in your soul that will never go out. No one had to challenge, inspire, motivate, rally, or put together a little program and initiative for Zacchaeus to become missional. Why? Because when grace comes into your home, mission begins to flow out of your life. So, that's what Jesus says, "Today salvation has come to this house." You know how Jesus knew it? Because he could see. He could see the missional response of Zacchaeus. His life mission is the response to God's grace in your life.

Which is why Jesus ends with that famous verse in that story; for the Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost. Seek passionately, pursue, save, set free, heal, make whole, deliver that which was lost. What does it mean to be lost? Does it mean you're a terrible person on your way to hell? No, it means you're lost. You're in the darkness. You don't know where you are, where you came from, where you're going. You don't know what is good, true, or right, or how to navigate. But you know what else it means to be lost? It means to be purposeless, to be useless, to have a meaningless life. Think of your car keys. When you lose your car keys, they're purposeless, are they not? They're in the dark. They're lost. They cannot accomplish their purpose. They have no meaning. They have no usefulness to you because they're lost. Their purpose is to start the car so you can get where you're going. But

when they're lost, they're purposeless. But when you find them, the purpose is reinstated to now start your car and get where you're going.

When we're found, our meaning, our purpose, and our usefulness get restored to us. And that is to live in the glory of God, ruling and reigning with him. When grace flows in, mission flows out. When he seeks and saves us, we become restored to our purpose, and now we seek and save others who are lost. You with me on this? You see, this is so important to understand, that our motivation for mission is not to keep people out of hell. Our motivation for the mission of God cannot be to keep people out of hell. That's what we think, "They're lost, they're going to hell, we got to keep people from going to hell." Yes, that's true. But that can't be your motivation because consequence is never an effective motivation, is it? Fear is not a motivator ever in the kingdom of God. You will never have an effective vision in your life if your vision is what you don't want to see happen.

That's not vision. Vision is not what I don't want to see happen. No, vision is what I want to see happen, what can be, what must be in the midst of what is. So, our motivator isn't, "I don't want to see them go to hell." No, our motivator is, they're lost, I want to see them found so they can live a purposeful, meaningful, useful, glorious life, the way that Jesus has created and called them to be. You say, "That's semantics." It's not semantics. It's heart posture. This is why the Church of America doesn't stay motivated on mission long, because we make it all about people just going to hell, as if the goal is so they don't go to hell. No, the goal is so they would be found and restored to the glory of God. And even one beyond that, I want to see people be found so that we can prepare a glorious bride for Jesus's return, a bride that is worthy of who he is and what he has done. Do you see how this stacks? It's mindset. Grace flows in, mission flows out.

That's why it says grace teaches us to say no to ungodliness and worldly passions, and live upright or self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in this present age, here and now. Jesus, who gave himself for us, to redeem us from all wickedness and purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good. When grace flows in, you start to live a godly life in the here and now, eager to do what is good. Grace releases mission in your life. Mission is the outflow of grace. So, if there's no mission, I probably just haven't invited grace to my home yet. Because when grace comes into my home, like Zacchaeus, I'll say, "Look, Lord, look, Lord, no longer just man, one of teacher. Look, Lord, here and now I give half of everything I have. Why? Because grace has come to my home. Mission flows out of my life." He who has been forgiven much, loves much.

Freely you have received, freely give. We can't help but speak about what we have seen and heard. We love because he first loved us. This is why these verses we've been using in John show us this, this is how we know what love is, that Jesus Christ laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. There it is, grace releases mission. If anyone has material possessions, sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? If the love of God is in you, you will have compassion and love to use what you

have for the good of others. Grace releases mission. Dear children, you used to be orphans, you're now beloved sons and daughters. So, let us not love with words, a bunch of talk, wishing people well. We wish you well, let go, take care of yourself, no, but with actions and in truth, because grace has flown in, and it now ignites a missional fire that leads to an action that I can't help. We love because he first loved us. There it is again, grace leads to mission.

His love releases love. And if anyone says, I love God, yet hates his brother, he is a liar. He deceives himself, because it's impossible to love God if you don't love others. Why? Because grace releases mission in your life. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. It's impossible to say you follow Jesus but don't get involved in people's lives. It's impossible to say you're moving with Jesus but not live on mission with Jesus. Why? Because grace releases mission. Mission is the response to grace. It's all over scripture. This is why Zacchaeus, right? You can literally see it. Mission is using all of my life to help people discover and experience the availability of the kingdom of God through the person and work of Jesus. Once you have discovered and experienced the availability of the kingdom, when grace comes to your home, you can't help but now use all of your life to help other people experience that as well. This is all over scripture.

I mean, do you remember Isaiah the prophet? He speaks for God, he's a godly man, and one day he's taken to the throne room of heaven. And it says he sees God on his throne, the train of his robe filling the temple, all the elders and the angels and the created beings just declaring together in unison, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come." And immediately Isaiah, who is this good man, hits the ground and says, "Woe is me, for I'm a man of unclean lips, and I come from a people of unclean lips." In other words, he's cut to the heart. He's convicted over the sin in his own life. And an angel gets a burning coal from the altar, brings it, and touches his lips, and says, "See, this has taken away your guilt," grace. And then God speaks and says, "Who will go for us? Whom shall we send?" In other words, there's a missional invitation, and all on his own, Isaiah steps forward, "Here I am, Lord, send me."

God kind of smiles, says, "You don't even know what the assignment is yet." "I don't care. " "But I'm going to send you to a people who will see but never respond, and hear but never do anything with it, and have a heart that will always be resistant." "I don't care, here I am, send me." Why? Because grace releases mission. The unceasing flow of grace ignites an unending missional fire in your soul. You know you're receiving God's grace when there is a missional flow out of your life. It is the outflow and the evidence of the supernatural, unstoppable, uncontainable grace of God overtaking your life. I mean, do you remember the disciples? They walk in with Jesus. This is Matthew 16. So, they've been with him a while. And Jesus looks at them, he says, "Hey, guys, who do the people say that I am? All these crowds and all these events and all the places we go, like, what's the murmurings? Who do people say that I am?"

They say, "Well, some say like John the Baptist. Others say you're like Elijah or one of the prophets. In other words, people are saying you're a good guy, you're a prophet, you're a religious teacher." He says, "Okay, what about you? Here's what I want to know, what about you? Yes, who do you say that I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are now Peter, and on this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Here's what I want you to see." He says, "Who do you say that I am?" And it's the first time they declare he is the Christ, the Son of the living God. And in that moment, he says, "Great, your identity is now changed because you've received grace."

"You're no longer Simon, son of Jonah, you are now Peter. And I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it, and I'll give you the keys of the kingdom. Can you see it?" Grace flows in, and mission is the immediate thing that Jesus talks about. Grace flows in, and mission is what he talks about. They have a changed identity, and he now says, "I will build my church." Notice what Jesus doesn't say when they declare him Christ, he doesn't say, "That's awesome, Peter, your sins are forgiven and you're going to go to heaven when you die." We've figured it out. Notice he doesn't say, "Oh, Peter, this is so good. Now that you know this, it's just you and me on this personal journey, just the two of us, that's it." No. He doesn't say, "Peter, this is awesome, go back to your fishing business, I'll show up once a year at Christmas time and just make sure all is well." No, he says, "I will build my church," first time Jesus uses the word church. What is the church? It is the assembled missional people of God.

That's what the church is. Church is not a place you go. It is a people you belong to. This is not an event you attend. This is a mission that you are on. And Jesus takes authority and possession to say, "I'm going to build my missional people, people of God, united by the Spirit of God, under the lordship of Jesus, sent to change the world." And the gates of hell won't prevail against them. Why? Because the grace of God is so flowing through them that the missional fire of God is going to flow out of them, and it will burn up anything that gets in their way. And we now have authority to have the keys of the kingdom to bind and loose and bring the realities of heaven to this world. And so, what I want you to understand is, however you see Jesus will determine your heart towards the mission of God. If you have a high view of Jesus, you're going to be super missionally involved. You have a low view of Jesus; mission won't be a part of your life. Like, if Jesus is a good man, if he's a good teacher, if he's a religious guy, if he's one of many things, then you'll volunteer and you'll do some good deeds and you'll be a good humanitarian.

But it's not until Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, that everything that mission will begin to flow out of your life, until he changes your identity and reminds you that you're not a part of an event, or a building, or an organization but a missional people. See, it's not so much

that the church has a mission, but that the mission has a church. And of all the things Jesus could have said when they declared him the Christ, it's fascinating that he brings it to mission. It's just like mission, grace, mission, grace, mission, grace, mission. Why? Because the grace of God in you was the mission of God that is now changing you to live on mission with others. And you will never have the faith to steward the keys of the kingdom, to bring the realities of heaven to this world, until you declare him Christ, the Son of the living God. So, can I ask you a question, who do you say that he is? Because that determines your heart for mission.

Maybe a better question to ask is, how engaged are you in the mission of God? That shows you who you really say that he is. Because if he is a good man, one of many things, if he's an afterthought, then mission means, I'll volunteer, maybe do some good humanitarian work. When he is Christ, when he is everything, when he is Lord, and he's come to my home and rearranged my life, I've now been given the keys to the kingdom of heaven, and I don't totally know how to use them, but by golly, I'm going to figure it out. I mean, he says, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. For the Son of Man came to seek and save that which was lost." What I just want you to understand is, your passion to seek the lost will never be greater than your passion to seek him. And it's not until I find him that I will care about finding the lost. Because he wanted to find me, not to keep me out of the fires of hell. What Jesus says is, "Come follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

He doesn't say, "Follow me so you don't go to hell." Isn't that fascinating? We've like overdone that in the American church. Read Jesus. It's like, "Come follow me, you'll be a fisherman. I will restore you to your original glorious purpose." That's what it means to be found. You're no longer lost. You now have purpose. When you seek me, you'll find me, and then you'll spend your life seeking and saving the lost, because that's what I did for you. See, a Jesus-focused church will be a life-giving church. A Jesus-focused person will be a life-giving person. But it is impossible to be a life-giving person or church until you first are a Jesus-focused, life-giving person or church. So, we can say we're Jesus-focused. We can say we're a worshiping church. We can say we're passionate about the presence of God until we're blue in the face. You know the evidence of it? Mission. How missional are we? That will tell you whether or not you want it. Like, "Oh yeah, we're a worshiping church." Are we? It's not singing songs and having events. It's our heart for the lost. Why?

Because when grace flows in, mission flows out. So, if we're really seeking him and finding him, then we're very engaged in seeking and saving the lost. This is why it says, for Christ's love compels us. See, this isn't duty or obligation, or try harder, or behave better. This is the natural response to the grace of God in my life. Because if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone, the new is here. Grace has flown in. Mission flows out, all this from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has now given us the ministry of reconciliation. Grace flows in, mission is the evidence that it flowed, flowed in and is now flowing out, that God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting people's sins against them. Climb down from the tree of self-righteousness and come to the tree of grace. And he



has committed to us, the church, the gathered and sent people of God, the message of reconciliation. We are therefore his ambassadors, his representers.

God is making his appeal to this world through us. When grace flows in, mission flows out. Your missional fire is directly connected to your receiving of the grace of God. And when grace comes to your home, like Zacchaeus, no one has to tell you to get missional. His love compels you. There's no duty. There's no obligation. There's no shaking the leaves. There's no, "We're going to put a sign up in the atrium, everybody sign up for a serve." No, you don't have to do any of that. "Look, Lord, here and now, I give half of everything I have because of what you have done for me. I don't even know why I spend my life gathering this stuff. In fact, now I see it as a resource to serve and bless other people." Changes everything. And so, if you are here and you would say, "Yes, grace has come to my house and there's a missional fire in my heart," then there's no duty, obligation, there's no convincing, there's no rallying. But sometimes we need some handles. So, very quickly, I want to give you some handles on how we actually live mission on a daily life.

But this is for people that would say, grace has come to my house. I'm not trying to convince you, inspire you, mobilize you, rally you. I'm trying to say, you've said grace has come to my house. I've come down the tree of self-righteousness. I've come to the tree of grace. There's a missional fire in my soul. Give me some handles on what I can do daily in my life. If that's not you, you can just listen to it. But if that is you, here's practically how you can do this. Ready? We're going to go through this fast. First thing is this, just live a life worthy of your calling. If you say grace has come to your house, then live like grace has come to your house. Live like grace has changed you and empowered you and set you free. Live a different life from the world around you. Have joy and peace and hope and love, and do things with enthusiasm and excellence and passion. Like Jesus said, we're told in scriptures to live such good lives among the world that though they accuse you of different things, they will see your good deeds and glorify God. Your life should look so radically different than everyone else around you.

And if it looks like everyone else around you, then you're kind of missing the whole point. You should be able to say, "Follow me as I follow Jesus." Why? Because your life is the message. Not what you say, what you do. That's the message. Here's a great question. Would you want your life? Would you want your life? If not, why do you think inviting other people to the life you're living would be inspiring to them? It's got to look and be different, not by effort, but by grace. Oh, I want my life because I'm coming down from the tree of self-righteousness and coming to the foot of the tree of grace. I would love to invite you to this as well. And that grace is changing me from the inside out. Oh, I'm not perfect, but I'm on my way. Live a life worthy of your calling. Second thing, just invite. Invite. You are Jesus's outreach strategy. His outreach strategy is not these buildings or these websites. No, no, it's people. He touches you knowing you're the key to touching them. So, just invite. You say, "To what?"

To church. To our gathering. To your circle. To your serve team. To your home. To a cup of coffee. To a conversation about Jesus. 95% of the people sitting here were invited by someone else. That's how it works. So, invite. And here's what you need to break out of your American church thinking is, "We're inviting people to religion. We're inviting people to church, which is a building and an event at a specific service time." No, you're not. You're inviting people into the people of God, seeking God into an open heaven environment where surely God is in this place and they knew it not. Change your mind. Repent over what you think you're inviting them to. I'm not inviting you to a religious hour service. You're like, "It's not an hour anyways." I know. I know. It's close. You're inviting people to an encounter with the living God.

Have you invited anybody this year? Have you invited anybody ever? Invite. Third thing, wear missional gear. Wear missional gear. You know what this is? We gave this shirt to everybody in our church in March. Why? Every once in a while, we do a pop-up shop and we just try to make good quality, good-looking gear available. Why? You think we're just sitting around thinking, "Let's make some shirts?" Why? These shirts are connection, conversation, and commissioning. When you wear this stuff, it's connection. You have no idea, in a church this large, in a city like this, when people wear this stuff, they find each other all the time. "Oh, we go to the same school. We're in the same class. Oh my gosh, we work in the same thing. We're on the same team. We live in the same neighborhood. I had no idea until I saw your shirt. Now we connect." Not only connection, but conversation, because when somebody sees this shirt five different times on five different people's bodies and then sees you at the coffee shop and you're wearing it, they finally say, "Bro, what's this thing?"

Now a missional conversation just opened up that would have never existed had we all not done it together. And it's a commissioning. When you wear this, you're reminded, I'm a representer of Jesus. I'm his ambassador. So, see point number one, when I wear it, I really should live a life worthy of my calling. This is why we will never make car stickers for you people. That is like super maturity. You know, we got to do some more series to get there. This matters. Listen to me. We wear things that we are proud of all the time, Nike, the Cowboys, our favorite university, Lululemon, whatever the thing is. We're like, "Bro, you should get this." Why then do we not want to wear this? Are you grateful for this?

Is this changing your life? Are you proud to be a part of this? Then why would you not want to missionally engage with all of us on this? I will build my church and the gates of hell will not. This is one of the simplest ways you open the reality of heaven with the keys of the kingdom, because this speaks even when you don't. So, I can walk in and out of Lowe's on a 30-minute trip, not say anything to anybody, but three people might see this, and that might be three seeds that I never see get watered or harvested, but someone else might. Do you have stuff like this? You buy sweatshirts and things anyways. Why not? When a pop-up shop comes, grab one, because it's a missional invitation. That again, if I'm Zacchaeus and Jesus has come to my house, I'm grate. Four thing, leverage social media. Social media, in so many ways, is

one of the darkest, most broken, evil things that there are. The ideas and images that get planted in people's minds are horrid, but we all live on it anyways.

So then, let's leverage it. Let's redeem it. Let your light shine. The darker it is, the brighter your light can shine. Jesus says, "No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl. No, they set it on its stand and let it shine to everyone in the house." So, leverage social media. Here's what that means. It means when you come for Christmas and Easter and you take your family picture, you don't post your family picture and say, "This is our family Christmas picture, this is our family Easter picture, don't we look good?" No, you say, "This is our family Easter picture at Valley Creek, where we're lifting up the name of Jesus, because He has changed our family's life. If you would like to know more, I would love to tell you about it." What do you think your family picture, that no one knows is even at a church or about Jesus is going to do? Post and say, "Loving this new Valley Creek worship song, it's really blessing me as I go for a walk or as my morning routine with the kids. Love what God's doing in the kids' ministry, teaching my kids that God is good, Jesus has forgiven me, that they are loved, and everything is possible.

Love how God's stirring up the next generation at our church. Or there, "Here's me at the movement board taking the next step." Or, "Man, my circle, here's my circle today, we were talking about this, it's changing our lives. If you're looking for some community, come and join us." Like, why would we not? Look at your social media stuff. Like, we promote things all the time that we're excited about, passionate about, proud of. We want everyone to know, "This restaurant was awesome or awful. We could go either way." You know, like, "You should get this car, you should go to this game, you should try out this new place." Like, we have no problem promoting things that we're passionate about. If we went on your feed, would we know you're a part of this church? Would we know you follow Jesus? If not, you need to rethink it. Why? Because like the mouth speaks out of the overflow of the heart, the fingers type out of the overflow of the heart. Why would you not want to put that out there?

In fact, if you'd say, "Hey, I don't want to wear the gear and I don't want to post on social media because I don't want to be associated with this, then hear me, find a church where you can. If you don't believe in what we're doing, if you're not grateful for this, if this isn't inspiring to you, if you don't see yourself as a part of this, this is not an event you attend, this is the people you belong to. And we're all at different places on the gradient, that's fine. But if you don't believe, like, "I believe in what we're doing and what we stand for, so I want to contribute by just being a part of it and putting it out there, then find a place that you can. Because you were created to be on mission with God. Your soul needs it as much as they need it. Leverage social media. Fifth thing; just share your story. Share your story, it's one of the easiest things you've got. Just share your story. "Here's who I was, here's who I am. My marriage was falling apart, Jesus saved it. This is what was going on with my kids, and then God stepped in and changed everything." It's like we have this sense of shame and embarrassment of our story. It's one of the greatest missional weapons you've got. The paralyzed man, when he's healed, runs out.

Jesus says, take your mat. He takes his mat because it's a story to tell, and people will be like, "Wait, weren't you the guy?" "Yes, I was. Let me tell you what happened and what He did." Just share your story with confidence. Sixth; initiate meaningful conversations. People are so lonely and so broken, and have no affection or attention, that if you just slowed down enough in your life to initiate, initiate is the key word here, meaningful conversations, you'd be amazed. Well, you say, "What does that mean?" It just literally means while you're checking out, just ask the person, "How's your day going?" Oh my gosh, you want to know their entire life story? Ask that question. And everyone behind you is going to get mad because you're not going fast enough. How's your life? Tell me about your family. What are you hoping to do when you graduate? What are you passionate about? What are you excited about in this season? What are you wrestling with?

Listen, ask follow-up questions. Remember when you see them the next time, ask them about it again. You'd be amazed. That's just like Jesus. Read the Gospels, this is His mind. He asked great questions and remembered and followed up and engaged. You'd be shocked at what you would discover. Seventh thing is give. Give. Zacchaeus stands up, "Look, Lord, I give half of everything I have." We're like, "That's radical." Is it? No. What was radical is that out of the entire crowd, Jesus picked the greatest sinner in the bunch and said, "I want to go to your house. That's radical." So now, giving is easy for Zacchaeus. That's not radical. Do you give half of what you have? How about this, do you just tithe and give 10% of what God asks you to give? How about this, do you give anything? If not, why? When grace flows in, mission flows out. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

So, hear me, it's really hard to say you're living missionally when all your money goes to the world and yourself. It's almost impossible because your heart follows your treasure. I mean, Jesus becomes our treasure, and when he's our treasure, money is a tool. So, I now use my tool to serve the treasure. And what does he treasure? People. So now, I use my money, I give to the church and to people's lives. Because why? Because now I'm on mission. This is a tool to help me reach that treasure. Do you give? Do you give? For God so loved the world that he gave. So, you can give without love, but hear me, you can't love without giving. When grace flows in, mission flows out. And so, here would just be the question. Remember, this is only for people that have said, "Jesus has come to my house." Do you give? Do you give? Have you given to this church? Do you give regularly to the mission of God?

If not, ask God about it. Don't just be, "Here's my," just, "Holy Spirit, I feel like you're stirring something up in me and I don't like it that he even asked me that question, but I want to be free. And so, I'm going to ask you, what am I supposed to do with that which you've entrusted to me? Because I was Zacchaeus, and I think you've come to my home." Wrestle that with Jesus. Express gratitude. You change people's lives if you're just a grateful person. You follow up. Do you remember? Do you write a note of thank you to your coach, to your teacher, to your leader, to your friends, to your people? Do you just come with generous words and

actions? It's a posture of humility, and it's validating their identity as it's validating their image and likeness, that they were made like God. And there is this glory within them that is waiting to be released by the grace of Jesus. Be kind.

I know, shockingly hard, but it's kindness that leads to repentance. I think we're often so busy and so selfish that we're not kind, but it's kindness that changes people's lives. And then live as a hope carrier, a disciple of Jesus living on mission to change their world. I wanted to talk about all of this in this part of the collection of talks, we just haven't had time, but the kingdom of God is a movement of hope flowing through the church, not a building or an organization. The mobilized, missional people of God to every area of life, you're salt, light, and leaven, bringing taste to a flavorless world, light to pitch-black darkness. You're leaven. You make all things rise. God sent you into the areas of life to radiate hope. Hope leads. So, when you go into your family or to your school or to your business or wherever you go, you have a garden to tend. And if you tend that garden that reflects and radiates the kingdom of heaven, it will change people's lives, even if you don't say anything. That atmosphere that they enter into is missional, and they know something is different, because you don't tolerate those kinds of jokes, and you don't post those things on your page, and you don't hang out in those kinds of environments, and you correct someone when they're being divisive or whatever the thing is, but you're creating an atmosphere of heaven in that which God has given you authority over.

And because I couldn't get it in 10, I have a bonus for you, suffer well. You're like, "That's a bonus?" Suffer well. Always be ready to give an answer for the hope you have. Count it joy when you suffer trials of many kinds. If you will suffer well, you'd be amazed at how people will see the glory of God in your life. That's it. Super simple, daily, missional things, that if the grace of God has come to your home, how can these things not flow out of your life? We look at this as, so that's my point. If you're sitting here, you're like, "I've invited Jesus to my house," then this is not hard. Tell me what on this is hard. If Jesus is sitting at your dinner table with you, what is hard about that? You're no longer in the tree of self-righteousness. You don't have fig leaves to cover up. You're not naked and ashamed. You're not afraid anymore. You're not trying to take care of yourself. You don't need to exalt yourself above the crowd.

Jesus has handpicked you out, called you down, brought you to the foot of the cross of grace, the tree of grace, and is now sitting at your dinner table. Why is this hard? Or maybe, just maybe, he's not sitting at the dinner table. Because if this is hard, he might still be outside the house, not saying that we didn't see him or notice him in the crowd or cheer when he walked by. But has he come in? And you know what this does? This frees you from one of the greatest bondages of all, yourself. We live so anxious, and so depressed, and so afraid, and so critical, and so grumpy, and so grumbling. Why? Because we're so focused on ourselves. When you live missionally, you know what it does? It frees you from yourself. Because when you're doing this, you know what? You ain't got time to think about your own junk. Why? Because I'm sitting, praying, dreaming, thinking with God about, "How am I going to follow

back up with that person? And what kind of gratitude am I going to express? And how am I going to rearrange my life to give a little bit more?"

"And I'm going to go and share my story with this person on this day. And what can I actually post that I think will connect with my friends and draw them into the love of God?" I mean, do you see how this, like, frees you from yourself? You will almost never meet a super anxious, super depressed, super selfish, missional person. It's a paradox in terms. It's like not possible. I'm so on mission, I ain't got time for all that. But if I stop the mission, oh, I'd find it. I'd find it. And you might sit here, and you might be like, "Yeah, but that's a lot. I got to do that for everybody?" No, you don't have to do that for everybody. And no, you can't change the world, but you can change their world. Touch one person's life, and you just changed their world. My work was to plant the seed in your hearts. Apollos's work was to water it, but it was God, not we, who made the thing grow. Some plant, some water, it's God who makes it grow. You plant, you water, God makes it grow. It changes their life. And that enough. See, I think a lot of us today, if we're honest, in this whole collection of talks this fall, I think Jesus has come along, and he's got to the spot.

The spot. This moment of divine destiny, this moment of prophetic interruption. And you're in your tree of self-righteousness, and he sees you. Out of everybody. Out of everybody here. He's looking right at you. Right in the eyes. In the midst of your fear and failure and brokenness and pain and self-exaltation. And you're short in stature, short in spirit. So, I'm trying to climb up to become someone, to make myself right with God, right with others, right with myself. And you're up there, and out of everybody, he stops and sees you. He says, "Come down. Humble yourself. Come out of the tree of self-righteousness and come to the foot of the tree of grace. And then invite me to your house. Invite me to your house. Here I am. I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. Invite me to your house." The problem is, I think a lot of us like Jesus on the street a lot more than we like him in our house.

Because Jesus on the street is great. He's entertaining. He's inspiring. He feeds us bread and fish, and he does signs and wonders. It's actually kind of cool. But inherently, we know that if we invite Jesus into our house, things are going to have to change. He's going to rearrange some things inside. And I quite like the wealth that I've created by ripping everybody else off. And if I invite him in, I might be moved. He won't demand me. I might be moved to give my time, my energy, my money, my resources, my words, my actions. And I quite like my time, energy, money, resources, words, actions. But I like him more. And so, I want to use all of my life. Why? Because I was lost. I was like the missing car keys. I had no usefulness, no meaning, and no purpose.

But then Jesus came. He sought me, and he saved me. And he's restored me to this glorious purpose. And he is making me the kind of person that is a worthy bride for his return. And while I'm here, he has now sent me to seek and save them. This is living with eternity in mind,

not so they don't go to hell. No, so they can live a life of glorious purpose and become a person worthy of the return of Jesus, to become his bride, to dwell with him forever. When grace comes into your house, mission flows out of your life. If we are a church that says grace has come to this house, then mission must flow out of our lives. It must be the tip of the spear. It must be the passion point. It must be this insatiable fire. It must be razor-sharp where we serve, and give, and lead, and bless, and invite, and represent, and be an ambassador, and reconcile, and get over ourselves, and make it about the world, because it is, because that's who Jesus has made it about.

You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. Great. Now I can build my church, and those gates of hell won't prevail against you. Here are the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Go, bind and loose together with me, and watch what will happen if you just come out of the tree of self-righteousness and come to the foot of the cross, the tree of grace, in Jesus' name. So, close your eyes with me. Come on. What's the Holy Spirit want to say to you today? Oh, Jesus, I think you're knocking. I think you're calling. I think you've reached the spot, so many of our lives. May we hear? May we respond? May we literally even see ourselves climbing down? In fact, even if that's you today, as soon as service ends, come up and let someone pray with you as your act of humility, my act of humility, of climbing.

Remember, this is in front of the whole crowd. Everything stopped. Zacchaeus. Everyone heard it. Everyone saw it. He climbed down. If you want to climb down out of the tree of self-righteousness and come to the tree of grace, when we're done at every campus, just come forward and let somebody pray with you to receive the grace of God. But for the rest of us, may the grace of God ignite the fire of missional revival within us. May we walk with courage and boldness. May you be anointed for the task at hand. May you declare that he is the Christ, and then, therefore, you can be entrusted with the keys. May those things that are natural, may you, like Zacchaeus, say, "Look, Lord, here and now." He doesn't say, "Oh yeah, Lord, I'll get around to it." Want to know? Look, Lord, here and now, right now, in this moment, grace has moved in. Mission has been ignited. So, in Jesus' name, I just declare; may grace move into your life, your family, and this church, and may a mission be ignited in your family, in your life, and in this church. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.