

All right. Hey, everybody. Welcome to Valley Creek. We are so glad you're here with us today. Whether this is your first time with us, maybe you haven't been in a while, maybe you've left and recently come back, maybe you're here every single week, it really doesn't matter. We are so glad that you are here with us today. We are a movement of hope for the city and beyond. A group of people on a journey with Jesus. We want to become like Jesus. We want to enjoy Jesus. We want to do the things that Jesus did. And we're discovering who we are and who God is and what we were created to do and learning to act as if it were so. And all fall, we've been in a collection of talks on movement, mission, and maturity. We haven't really done a sermon series this fall. It's been more of a collection of talks. It hasn't really built upon itself. It's just been these things that we just believe are really important to the heart of God for our church in this season. And so, we're believing that there's an impartation. We're believing that there's an awakening. We're believing that, as we've talked through these things, there's a lifting of our head and a hunger and thirst in our soul. And we've wrestled through movement and we've wrestled through mission. And so, we're kind of coming to the end of this collection of talks as we enter in to the next few weeks just wrestling through the topic of maturity. Maturity. What is it? And what does it look like? And how do we pursue it? And so, Holy Spirit, oh, we invite you in. For these next few weeks, would you just come and speak to us? Would you come and stir our soul? Would you open our hearts? Would you open our minds? Would you open our lives? And would you do that which we cannot do, shape and mold and form us into the image and likeness of Jesus?

You see, the first thing Jesus says to the disciples, the first thing He says to you and me is, "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Right from the very invitation that Jesus reaches out to the disciples, "Come, follow me, and I'll make you fishers of men." In other words, He invites them to a life of movement and mission. Right out of the gate, "Come, follow me." It's a life of movement. This is not subjective, figurative, flowery language. No, it's an invitation to move, to be with Jesus, to go where Jesus goes and do what He does and stay where Jesus stays. "Come on this life of movement and fish for men. Live this life of mission. Because if you're going to follow me, you're going to go where I'm going, and I'm going into the lives of lost, lonely, and broken people." So, right from the beginning, Jesus is very clear that He is inviting the disciples, He's inviting us to a life of movement and mission. And we discover that Jesus only makes things in motion and He only makes things that are missional. He only makes things that are motion. "Follow me, and I will make you –" He doesn't say, "Sit here and I'll make you follow." Like the clay has to get on the potter's wheel and start moving so He can mold it and shape it. He makes things in motion and He only makes things that are missional. "I'll make you fishers of men." God doesn't make anything that's arbitrary or trivial or purposeless. No, He makes things that are beautiful and glorious and purposeful. And what we discover from this initial invitation when there is this new creation, this new life inside of you, you've met and discovered Jesus, that movement is the evidence of life and mission is the evidence of movement. I've come to new life in Jesus, the evidence of that as I start moving and the evidence of movement as I start going on mission with Him. So, life leads to movement and movement leads to mission. And when I move on mission with Jesus, He starts to make me

mature. Maturity is the evidence of a life that is moving on mission with Jesus. Right from the very beginning of the invitation, when Jesus calls you, He invites you to movement, mission, and maturity. "I will make you. I will make you. I will make you what you are not. I will make you who you are created to be. I will make you into my image and likeness. I will make you so you can grow into the fullness of your potential so you can actually become a fully alive human being in relationship with God. The very beginning of the invitation that Jesus extends to you is an invitation to maturity. I mean, just think about Peter and John. When Jesus invites them to come and follow Him, they're a disaster. Peter is obnoxious. He's abrasive. He's insecure. And yet in three short years of moving on mission with Jesus, He makes him into a totally different person, a man who is secure and confident and kind and compassionate. John was angry and arrogant. And yet in three short years of moving on mission with Jesus, He made him into the apostle of love. And when we move on mission with Jesus, in a very short time, He makes us into who we were created to be.

In fact, check out what the apostle Paul says later in his life. Don't panic. Just let me read it. Close your eyes if you must. But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him. Not that I have already obtained all of this or have arrived, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do, forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. And all of us who are, say it with me, [mature] should take such a view of things. He says, "This is a definition of maturity." The saying, "I consider everything else in this life nonsense. I want to know Christ and I want to become like Him. And I press on, so I forget what's behind. I let go of the things of this world and my opinions and my bitterness and my offenses and my pride and my right. I don't care about any of that or all of that because I want to press on to become like Jesus, to know Him, to experience Him, to walk with Him." And what I love about the apostle Paul is when we first discover him, he's the chief of sinners. But when he moved on mission with Jesus, he became the chief apostle. He was a harsh, prideful, angry, violent man. But when he moved on mission with Jesus, Jesus made him into a man who lived under an open heaven with a love for all of humanity, who knew God and wanted more of God. You see, what I want you to understand is when God creates something, He calls it unto maturity. Whatever God creates, He calls to maturity. God often makes things in seed form and then speaks to them and calls them to their fullest potential, to maturity. Think of an acorn. God makes an acorn and says to it in the garden, "Be fruitful and multiply." Makes it in its seed form and declares, calls it unto maturity. What has to happen to that acorn? It has to fall to the ground. It has to die to itself. It has to be buried and go into darkness and hiddenness. And then, it begins to grow roots. And it goes down deep and draws nutrients unto itself. And then, it begins to grow up. And then, it gets wider and stronger, and it begins

to crown out. And it has to withstand storms and drought and pests and fires. But eventually, it becomes mature and starts bearing fruit, not for itself, but for others to enjoy. Think of a salmon fry, a little baby salmon. God creates it in its seed form and says, "Be fruitful and multiply." And that little salmon swims around the ocean. And it starts to feed and it grows and it gets bigger and it gets stronger until eventually it swims upstream. And it goes against the current. It goes against the tide. It goes against everything that's coming against it. It goes over obstacles and barriers and everything that wants to stop it. And it gets as far as it can possibly go. And it lays eggs, reproduces the next generation and dies unto itself. Or how about a lamb? God creates a little baby lamb and says, "Be fruitful and multiply." And as that thing begins to grow, what does it do? It grows and learns the voice of its shepherd and follows its shepherd and stays in the flock and reproduces life and offers its wool to others.

See, everything God creates, He calls it unto maturity. And that's the same with humanity. He makes us in His image and His likeness, and then He calls us unto maturity to become like Jesus. In fact, if you go to the garden, this is what it says, the first thing God says to man. "And God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth, subdue it using all its vast resources in the service of God and man, and have dominion over the earth.'" We use this verse a lot in the context of mission because it's a very missional verse. But it's also a calling to maturity. God has blessed humanity, the favor and the grace of God upon us to do what? To be fruitful and multiply. Be fruitful, live a life of productive beauty and multiply. Reproduce the life of God in you and to the world around you, and fill the earth or your area with the knowledge of the glory of the goodness of God, and subdue things. Bring order to chaos and hope to despair, and then use your resources to accomplish God's purposes in the lives of men, and have dominion. "Have the highest influence, and rule and reign with me over the earth." That is not just missional, that is a calling to maturity. Why? Because immature things can't be fruitful and multiply, can they? Adolescents aren't fruitful, nor do they multiply. It takes maturity to be fruitful and multiply. It takes maturity to be big enough to actually fill your space with the knowledge of the glory of the goodness of God. It takes maturity to actually subdue things and not bring chaos to them. It takes maturity to actually use your resources to accomplish God's purposes in the lives of men instead of hoarding them for yourself. It takes maturity to actually be entrusted, to have dominion over anyone or anything. So, we are called unto maturity from the very moment God makes us. Called to maturity. And you know this is true, maturity is in your heart. That's why we actually pursue it in life. This is why every kid always wants to dress like their mom or their dad. Because maturity is inside them. This is why every student really kind of wants nothing to do with authority because they want the freedoms of adulthood. Students, do we not? This is why every adult dreams about retiring. Because all we want to do is mature to this point where we have enough where we can just do ourselves. Maturity and the desire and the calling for it is within us. The only problem is, is we pursue counterfeit maturity. We spend our lives pursuing the world's definition of maturity. Fame, fortune, accomplishments, success, finances, awards, achievements, owning our own time, a certain look, a certain body type, a certain reality. The world has a very clear definition of maturity, and we pursue this counterfeit maturity with everything we got. Why?

Because God created you and called you unto maturity. So, it's within you to pursue maturity. The only problem is, is we pursue it in the wrong way. I mean, just think about sex. You realize, be fruitful and multiply. That's a calling, sexuality unto maturity. So, when I pursue sex, how I want, when I want, where I want, it's counterfeit maturity. Huh. Why? Because sex is between one man and one woman in the context of marriage. And sex is worship, intimacy, and reproducing, being fruitful and multiply, raising up a generation that I will lay down my life for. It's counterfeit maturity. How about control and judgment? Control and judgment is counterfeit maturity. We want to control things and we want to judge people and correct them and tell them where they're wrong. You realize that's just counterfeit maturity. We're called to subdue things and have dominion over them, which means to lay down our life for them and bring order to chaos and influence in a way that lifts up, not tears down. So, a life of control and judgment is just counterfeit maturity. Or how about resources? We spend all our lives trying to get all these resources unto ourselves as if, if I can gain all of this, then I will be mature. But that's counterfeit maturity because God says, resources are used to accomplish His purposes in the lives of men. You are called unto maturity. The problem is, is we often pursue it in the wrong ways. And the moment you decide to become a disciple of Jesus, you give up the right to stay immature. This is what I'm trying to tell you today. The moment you decide to be a disciple of Jesus, you've evaluated the options of this life and you've decided, "He knows what is good and true and right, and I'm going to follow Him. I have now officially given up the right to immaturity. I've given up the option of immaturity. I've given up the freedom of immaturity."

To be a disciple is to accept Jesus's call to a life of maturity. It's to accept His invitation to make us into who we were called and created to be. Look at these verses. "For we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son." We love that first verse. We claim it all the time, and it's great. And yes, God is working in all things, but to what? To conform you to the likeness of His Son. Your destiny is not going somewhere or doing something, it's being shaped and molded into the image and likeness of Jesus. God is working. He's making you mature if you will move on mission with Him. Go to the next one. "Therefore, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and act according to His good purpose." God is working in you to help you work out your salvation with fear and trembling. You say, "What does that mean?" It means to work out the fact that you're actually saved and start living a life worthy of your calling, that you really are a new creation, and the old is gone and the new has come. "So, work out what that looks like with me so you can become who I've created and called you to be." Go to the next one. "I say, live by the spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and his desires." You're called to live a fruitful life. Fruit is not born by the immature. Fruit is only born by the mature. You're called to crucify your flesh, your sinful nature, your passions and your desires that you may allow the spirit of the living God to flow from the inside of you to the outside of you that you might become mature, living the kind

of life that glorifies God and blesses others. Right from the moment Jesus calls you, He invites you to a life of maturity, which means if I accept the call to be a disciple, I give up the right to remain immature. Put to death what belongs to your earthly nature. Live a life worthy of your calling. Take off the old self and put on the new self. Get rid of everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. I mean, to accept Jesus is to accept a calling unto maturity. Whether you're the crowd or the disciples, He says, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and the gospel will save it." If we're going to come to Jesus, we have to deny ourself and pick up a cross. What does that mean? It means you have to die to your immaturity. That's what that means. You have to die to your pride and your right and your opinions and your bitterness and your victimization and your entitlements and all the things that you think should be the way that you want them to be. It means to follow Jesus is to deny your immaturity and your childish ways and die to yourself that He may give you true life. In other words, submit and surrender to the lordship of Jesus, saying, "Your kingdom come and your will be done. Not my kingdom come and my will be done. You are, Lord. So, make me who you've created and called me to be." Jesus is the definition, the standard and the source of a life of maturity.

In fact, this is why Jesus says, "A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher." Jesus is the definition of maturity. If I choose to accept being a disciple, what is a disciple? A learner, student, follower, one who becomes like the one they follow. So, to be a disciple is to say, "I'm going to become like the one I follow. And if he is the one that I have decided to follow to be my teacher, he says that as I follow him, I will become like him. I will become mature the way that he is mature." And He reminds us that we will always become like our teacher. You will always become like your teacher. Your life right now looks exactly like your teacher's life. Have you chosen the right teacher? I can identify with Jesus, but if the world is my teacher, my life will look like the world. I can believe in Jesus, but if social media is my teacher, my life will look like social media. I can claim Jesus, but if my life looks like the world around me, the people around me, then the people around me have become my teacher. And that's why I've become like them. Have you chosen the right teacher? Because that is who you will become. In fact, I love this next verse that says, "Become like a mature person, growing until we become like Christ." This is not a suggestion, it's not a good idea, and it's not an option for someone who claims Christ. Right? When you read this, do you read that as like a, "Hey, if you have time, if you feel like it, it would be a great idea, but I know you're busy." If Jesus is my teacher and I'm His disciple, then I'm called to become mature like Him, which is the journey of spiritual formation. That's all it means, the process of being formed into the image of Jesus to become a person of love. Spiritual formation is a process. It doesn't happen one time overnight of being formed. I don't form myself. I follow, He makes. He makes. Everybody say, He makes. I don't make myself, He makes, but I have to do my part and put the lump of clay on the wheel so He can make me. He shapes and forms me into the image of Jesus. I become like Him and ultimately becoming a person of love. See, everyone has undergone a spiritual formation process. Everyone has been formed spiritually, from Hitler to

Mother Teresa. The only question is, what kind of spiritual formation have you experienced? How has your spirit been formed? What kind of person have you become? And do you like who you are? Does it look like Jesus or does it look like something else? And I get it, some of you are sitting here and you're thinking, "Bro, you're telling me my life is supposed to look like Jesus? Like, that's Him. Like, He's God, bro. Like, He's God. You've been telling me He's God, so how is my life going to look like God?" Well, yes, Jesus is fully God, but he's also fully man. Remember, He poured himself out. He took on humanity, moved into our neighborhood with grace and truth, and He did everything on this earth as a man in right relationship with God filled with the Holy Spirit. He came to not only show us who God was, but He came to show us what mature humanity looked like. He came to show us what was normal for the people of God to look like, act like, talk like, live like, think like. This is why in Acts Chapter 10, it says, "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth." Whenever it says Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus the Son of Man, it's reminding you of His humanity, how God anointed Jesus the man with the Holy Spirit and power, and how He went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil because God was with Him. In other words, Jesus did everything He did as a man in right relationship with God, filled with the Spirit of God. In Jesus, you are a man or woman in right relationship with God. God made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for you so that in Him you might become the righteousness of God. So, you already have a right relationship with God. The only question is, is how much of the Spirit are you willing to surrender to? How much of my life is submitted to the Lordship of Jesus will determine how mature I actually become. So, here's the question for you. Ready? Are you growing?

Are you changing? Are you maturing? Does your life look more mature today than it did three years ago? Are you more loving today than you were three years ago? Are you more forgiving today than you were three years ago? Are you more free today than three years ago? Are you more generous than three years ago? Do you serve more than you did three years ago? Do you have more personal holiness in your life than three years ago? Do you trust God more? Do you have a bigger faith? Is there a greater sense of the fear of the Lord in your life than there was three years ago? Do you have more joy and peace and patience and kindness? Are the fruits of the Spirit more evident in your life today than they were three years ago? If not, why? And if not, why are you okay with that? Are you okay with that? Why are we okay with that? If you had a child and that baby never physically grew, you would panic. You would panic. You'd be like, "This is a baby, and the baby is supposed to grow and become mature in body. They're supposed to get healthy and strong." You would go to every doctor, every clinic. You'd take every medicine. You'd find every nontraditional healthcare option. I mean, you would do everything you could do to help your child physically grow and mature. And yet, for some reason, we're totally acceptable having immature souls for the entirety of our life. We're totally okay having an immature heart for 50 years. We're totally okay having an immature mind. It's like as long as our body is mature, and I can be fruitful and multiply, who cares what my heart looks like or what my soul looks like or what my spirit looks like? But shouldn't we care? You're like, "Oh, I've been in church for 20 years." Great. Do you have 20 years of maturity or one year of maturity 20 times? It's like, yeah, you've been in church for 20 years. That means

nothing. Just so you know, that means nothing. The Pharisees were in church. That means nothing. They went to synagogue. You can have one year of maturity and just do it over and over and over and over and over again. It'd be like being a physical baby for the entirety of your life. And for some reason, in the American church, we think that's normal. We actually think that's maturity. This is the great irony. We think good American church, consumer Christianity, where I consume what's convenient for me is the definition of maturity. Why? Because we're better than the world and we show up sometimes. And then, we look at somebody who's actually mature and judge them and think they're weird. "Why do they do that? What's wrong with them?" "Oh, they're so much holier than them." Are they? Or maybe they're just actually living in the kingdom, becoming mature and becoming like Jesus. Can you imagine a bunch of immature oak trees looking at an oak of righteousness? They have no acorns and they look at this dude and he's just got acorns everywhere. And they're like, "What are all those weird things growing out of his life? That's gross. Deal with that." Can you imagine a bunch of salmon just swimming around in the ocean, just getting obese on all that they're consuming and seeing the one salmon that swims upstream to die so that the next generation might live? And be like, "What's wrong with that dude?" Can you imagine a bunch of baby lambs who are falling off cliffs, getting snatched by wolves, looking at the mature sheep being like, "Why are they always by the shepherd and huddled it up in a flock and offering their wool to others? I'm cold already, why am I giving?" It's like the Peter Pan syndrome. We never want to grow up. We never want to grow up. So, we play the game, we do the thing. We come, we go. We go, we come. Our life looks the same as it did three years ago, which looks the same five years, which looks the same 10 years, which looks the same 20 years. Some highs, some lows, some moments of tear. "Oh, God's good." Some moments of epic crisis. "I lost my marriage. I had a tragedy. I lost my job." But as a whole, if we're honest, we were born again, but we still look like a baby. And if it was our physical body, we'd panic. But when it's our soul, we're just like, "Eh." And we think that is the definition of sagehood and sainthood. Jesus says, "No." His life is the definition of sagehood and sainthood. And it's available for everyone who decides to be His disciple, for everyone. It's not elite, it's not impossible. It's the normal Christian life. It's the normal human life to actually look like Jesus. My job is to move on mission, His job is to make. So, if nothing is being made, either He's a bad maker or I'm not moving on mission. There's only two options there. "Come, follow me, and I'll make you fishers of men." If I never mature, either He's not good at making, I would just say His track record may prove otherwise. Or maybe I'm not actually moving on mission, which means submitted and surrendered to the lordship of Jesus.

I mean, look at this verse in Hebrews. "We have much to say about this, but it's hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone else to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food. Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food, meat, is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore, let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance

from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God." That's a lot. It says we have a lot more to say, but we can't because you're unwilling to learn.

I think there's so much more God wants to do in our church, but it requires a certain level of maturity for us to be able to receive that which He longs to say. And by this time, you ought to be teachers. By this time of your spiritual journey, you ought to be able to take that which God has done and said in and through you and share it with others. So, here's my question for you. By this time in your journey, you ought to be what? By this time, you ought to be what? I ought to be free of that sin. I ought to have a stronger faith than I do. I ought to trust God more than I actually do. I ought to look like Jesus and less like the world. That's who I ought. You're like, "I've been in church for 20 years." I know, 20 years of maturity, there would be some oughts. One year of maturity 20 times is by this time I should be different. And you need milk, not solid food.

What's the difference between milk and meat? Milk is food that's been digested by someone else. You can catch this. A mother eats meat, digests it, and then offers her child milk. So, milk is food that's been digested by others offered to you. Meat is when you take in the very things of God and digest them yourselves. And American Christianity lives on milk. We expect everyone else to digest the things of God and give them to me in a way that's entertaining, that's convenient, and that's comfortable. It's why when I put a big verse up on the monitor, we're all like, "Whoa!" It's like, "Dad, can you cut that piece smaller for us? Because I ain't getting that in there." But if you're eating more than milk throughout the week, when you see this, it doesn't overwhelm you. It actually excites you. Even if it's a piece that's bigger than you can take, you're looking forward to what's it going to reveal.

Why? Because I'm taking in the very things of God and they're changing me from the inside out. I'm not watching someone else's life be transformed and offering me their leftovers, if you will, their digestion. It's great, I'll offer you my digestion as long as you're here. But there's more for you than milk. The mature have trained themselves. You know what a mature person is? A mature person, you don't have to tell to get up. A mature person, you don't have to tell to engage in Scriptures. A mature person, you don't have to tell to cry out to the Lord. A mature person, you don't have to tell to gather with the people of God. A mature person, you don't have to tell to give. A mature person, you don't have to tell to serve. A mature person, you don't have to say, "Look to Jesus." No, we all need to be spurred on towards love and good deeds, and we all need to be equipped, but they don't have to constantly be reminded of the basic things because they're living them. And then, he says, "Go on to maturity." How? By repentance. Repentance. Repentance is how you mature. What is repentance? It's changing your mind and changing your direction.

It's turning away from something towards something else. And there is sin repentance and revelation repentance. Sin repentance is when I've missed the mark, I've sinned, I've rebelled against God and when it's brought to my attention, I change my mind, I change my heart, I'm

convicted, I have a godly sorrow and I turn and I go God's way instead of the world's way. It's David when he takes another man's wife, gets her pregnant, has him killed and he's confronted by God, and he hits his knees and he says, "Against the Lord, and only the Lord, have I sinned." And he hits his knees and he repents and he turns his mind and he turns his heart and he cries out to God. Here's my question for you. When was the last time you said, "Against the Lord, I have sinned?" I don't care if you get nothing else out of today. This question is when was the last time you said, "Against the Lord, I have sinned?"

Because if you can't remember, it means you're walking in the ways of the world. It means you're not growing in maturity. It means you're doubling down on your pride and your arrogance and your flesh and your selfishness. For some reason, the people of God have such a hard time saying, "I have sinned against the Lord. Yeah, that gossip, that slander, that thing I watched, the drunkenness that I engaged in, that sexuality that's not of the Lord, the selfishness of holding on, that which God told me, I have sinned against the Lord." How do you expect to become mature if you never say that? That's sin repentance. And then, revelation repentance is when God shows you something you didn't know and you turn away from your unbelief or your ignorance and start actually walking it out. Like the core truths, most of you have come into this church and you never really knew that God was good. Jesus has forgiven you, that you are loved and everything is possible. That is revelation. Do you live like it? It's Peter and John when they get to the man with the beautiful gate and he's paralyzed and they heal him. You're like, "How did they do it?" Because they watch Jesus heal cripples. So, when they see a cripple, revelation repentance kicks in. "Jesus heals this. So, in the name of Jesus, get up and walk." That's revelation repentance. Does that make sense? We're called to maturity. We're called to maturity. And we have to decide whether or not we want it. We have to decide whether or not we want it. Some of you want me to define it. That's what I was going to do next, but I'm going to hold that. Because if you never have a vision for becoming like Jesus, it will never happen. You don't drift into maturity. You don't wake up one day and find yourself mature. You don't just stumble into maturity. No, it's something I realize is put inside of me. And God has called it out of me. So, there's actually a grace to do it. See, some of you, when you read this verse, an immature reading of this verse is to read it with the spirit of condemnation. Condemning yourself or condemning others. Some of you, everything I've just said, you're doing the self-condemnation. "Oh, I'm so bad, and I'm no good, and I should be ought so much more than I am." That's a really immature way to read this. Another really immature way to read this would be like, "Oh, I hope so-and-so is listening to this right now because I've been telling them for years to get there. I mean, they are the same person as they were before. You know what? In fact, I'm about to send this one to about nine people." That's a really immature way to read this. Do you know the mature way to read this? "Jesus, where do I need to repent so I can continue to become more like you?" That's how a mature person reads this. There may be sin conviction and there may be revelation conviction, but it's not condemning and it's not woe is me. That's the darkness trap. No, "Jesus, where do I need to repent that I might become mature in you?" See, there's this key little phrase in John Chapter 2. When Jesus turns water into wine, do you remember this story? There's this key little verse,

this key little phrase that really I think captures the heart of maturity. His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." You want to know what maturity looks like? Be a servant and just do whatever He tells you, and He'll make you into who He's created and called you to be. So, what's that story? Jesus is at a wedding feast. He hasn't started doing any miracles yet. They run out of wine. His mother says to Him, they've run out of wine. He says, "Woman, what does that have to do with me?" And she looks at the servants and says, "Whatever He tells you, just do it." And Jesus tells the servants, He says, "Okay, see those stone washing jars over here? Go fill them up with water." They fill them up with water. He says, "Now go and dip it out and go serve it." And as they dip it out and they go serve it, it turns into wine. And when the master of the banquet tastes the wine, he's blown away because it's the best wine he's ever tasted in his life. And he finds the bridegroom and he says, "Most people serve the best wine first. And after people have had a lot to drink, they serve the leftover stuff." He says, "You have saved the best for last." All because servants were willing to do whatever He told them. When you will be a servant and do whatever He tells you, the best of your life has yet to come. Why? Because the richest, deepest, best tasting parts of you have yet to be experienced because those are the parts of you that are still getting shaped and molded into the image and likeness of Jesus. In fact, think about it. How do you make wine? There has to first be grapes, fruit.

So, there has to be some movement and mission in your life. There has to be some level of fruit for God to work with. And then, He takes those grapes and He crushes them and He smashes them. And then, He sifts out, purifies out all the debris and then adds some yeast so the yeast can start doing its work. And then, you let it sit there for a really long time. Then it becomes the best you've ever had. So, when I have a little bit of fruit in my life and I surrender it to the Lord, He will crush me. You say, "Well." He will crush your pride and your arrogance and your rights and your bitterness and your unforgiveness and your victimhood and your entitlements and all these. He will crush those things and then He will sift out all the debris, all the things of the world, all the things that do not look like Him, all the ungodly beliefs that you didn't even know were there. And then, He'll add some yeast of the kingdom, yeast of the kingdom that'll start working in your life. The yeast of the spirit of God, the yeast of the people of God, the yeast of the word of God, the yeast of the grace of God. And whether you're awake or you're asleep, you don't even know how it works, but it's working on the inside out and it's changing you. And then, through a process of time of waiting, your life becomes mature and becomes the best version of your life, whether you're 15 or 85. The best wine of your life has yet to be served because there's more of Jesus to experience. And it all starts by just putting Christ as Lord of your heart. Go to the next verse. "In your heart set apart Christ as Lord." It's impossible to become mature if Jesus isn't Lord. Why? Because I've decided I'm a disciple and He's my teacher. I follow, He makes. I move, I mission, He makes me into who I'm created to be.

So, here's the question. Do you have a vision for maturity? And if you have a vision for it, do you have a plan to accomplish it? Because isn't it interesting how we have a vision and a plan for almost everything else in our lives? We have a vision and a plan for retirement. We have a vision and a plan for our children. We have a vision and a plan for college. We have a vision

and a plan for our business. We have a vision and a plan for our finances. We have a vision and a plan for our bodies. Some of us, you have a super vision and a super plan for your body. You have a vision and a plan for your vacation. You have a vision and a plan for your hobby. Isn't it interesting? We have a vision and a plan, and that's why we actually see results. So, if there's no maturity, do you have a plan? And if you don't have a plan, do you have a vision? Because you won't just stumble into it. In fact, do you have such a vision and such a plan for your maturity in Jesus that if it was a business, would we invest in you? Would you invest in you? Is there such a clear vision and such a good plan that there's no way this isn't going to happen, that you would invest in you? The problem is, is I think for most of us, it's one year maturity 20 times because we don't have a vision and we don't have a plan. And you say, "Well, what's a plan?" Here you go, the best simple plan I can give you is simply this, find A, one, and only one, Jesus-focused, life-giving church. Fully plant yourself in it and get over the drive, the inconvenience, the offenses, the frustrations, the challenges, the people, and align your life completely with what God is doing in those people and do it with all your heart. That is a plan to achieve your vision of maturity. And I promise you, Jesus will make you exactly who He has created and called you to be. If you have a better plan, that's fine. Have one though. There is no such thing as a mature Christian who doesn't have a plan and a vision. So, if we ask you, what's your plan and what's your vision and you have none, you already know, "I'm stuck in the doldrums of immaturity," because none just happen. No one wakes up looking like a bodybuilder. You have a vision and a plan. No one has enough money to retire without a vision and a plan. No one's life is going to look like Jesus without a vision and a plan. And it's simply follow Him on mission and He'll make me. Whatever He tells you to do, just do it and watch what God will do. So, close your eyes. Come on, what's the Holy Spirit want to say to you today? The spirit of grace is in this room. Not condemnation and not shame. The spirit of conviction and grace of Jesus saying, "I have so much more for you. Let me mold you, let me shape you, let me make you into who I've created you to be, but work with me. Work with me. Come with me." Valley Creek, it's a season to leave the former things behind and press on towards what's ahead. It's a season that no matter what life behind you has looked like, there is a way and a future ahead of you. There is a hope and a goodness and a work of God. The best wine of your life, if you will, is in the days to come.

And so, Holy Spirit, give us a hunger and a thirst for righteousness. May we consider our ways and count the costs and truly choose you as our teacher. Thank You for calling us unto maturity. May we accept that invitation and become like You in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.