

Alright. Hey, everybody. Welcome to Valley Creek. We're so glad you're here. Come on. Whatever campus you're at today. Denton, Gainesville, Flower Mound, Lewisville, Online. Just welcome each other because we are so glad you are here. And I hope you and your family had a great spring break between all of our campuses, cities, school districts. Spring breaks were spread out all over the place this year. So, everybody is scattered and smattered, and we're all kind of back together. Spring is here. Summer is around the corner, and we are on a great journey together. You see, a few weeks ago, we finished up a series called Missional Move: Create the Future. You remember? You remember this? Missional Move – when we take a next step so somebody else can take theirs. Create the future – that we were created to create the future with God. And we said that we felt like God was inviting us to do five significant things over the next five years, to literally create a future that doesn't currently exist with Him. And those five things are really simple, that we want to start a Prayer Center, sacred space where people can meet with God morning, noon, and night. We want to start a Training Center where VCLA can become Valley Creek College and we can go to the next level of raising up leaders that create the future. We want to start an Argyle Campus for the people on the western side of the metroplex. We want to start a University Campus right next to UNT for college students and young adults. And then, the 7 Continent Strategy. We want to find one strategic partner on all seven continents. Great people who are doing great things, leaders of movements of hope in their continent, and we want to partner with them over a long time to do significant things. So we just started saying, "Let there be these five things in Jesus' name." And we said this is the biggest thing that we've ever done. This is impossible with us, but it's very possible with God. There's a reason the last thing you say every time you leave service at Valley Creek Church is, "Everything is possible." So we want to be people that live like we actually believe that that's real. And we said, "Here's what it's going to take to do that." It's going to take \$50 million. We're going to have to find five strategic partners because we're North America, and our [Strategic Partner in Asia]. We're going to need 25 new staff members, 250 new leaders, 100 Valley Creek College students to add to the students we already have, and 2,000 new people we're going to have to reach. That is a lot. But everything we need to create the future is sitting right here. And I told you that we already have \$25 million saved. So to be able to do this initiative, to be able to make this mission move, to create the future, that we need \$25 million invested to be able to go with the 25 that we already have to be able to do it. And so, I asked everybody in our church to consider doing these three things. As every person, every family, would you pray about, would you wrestle with, would you seek God on these three things? To number one, just choose to commit to Valley Creek as your church, because you can't create a future that you're not committed to. For so many people, this was the most important one – to stop being a nomad, but to finally say, "I have a family, and I have a home." The second one was to give a sacrificial financial gift over the next two years above and beyond what you're already given to. In a sense, take what you might see as a treasure and use it as a tool to create a future that doesn't exist. And then, three, take one tangible next step of faith each year over the next five years. Two years of giving, but five years to do this project so we become the kind of people that can steward the future we're creating well.

And we talked about it for about five weeks. That was it. It was only a five-week series that we talked about it. And then, on the sixth week, we had the opportunity to make our commitment and decide what we wanted to do, what God was speaking to us. And I know people wrestled. I know people prayed. I know people sought the Lord. I know things were exposed and revealed. And there were challenges and hardships and wrestle and trust. And I want to tell you that more than 1,500 families committed \$23 million. And \$2.2 million has already been given to create a future that doesn't exist. More than 1,500 unique families committed \$23 million above and beyond what they already give over the next two years. And 2.2 million has already been given of that. And that doesn't include what I would believe hundreds of people that took a next step in their generosity. They may have not made a commitment to the Missional Move, but they took a next step in their generosity. And so, what I want to say to you is I am so proud of you. I am so grateful for you. I'm so inspired by your faith, hope and love. I'm so grateful that we are a church that says, "We want to go create the future." That we're a people that say, "We want to be disciples of Jesus." That we want to live in God's Kingdom. That we are not interested in comfort or convenience, but we want to create that which doesn't exist. That we want to missionally move forward in Jesus' name. I am so proud of you and so grateful for you. And this verse has really been the verse that I feel like captures our response to this Missional Move. Everyone who was willing and whose heart had moved Him came and brought an offering to the Lord for the work on the tent of meeting, for all its service and for the sacred garments. Everyone who is willing and whose heart was moved by God came and brought an offering to create a future that doesn't exist. And because of everyone who did that and where we're at, we can now move forward by faith and go after this Missional Move with everything that we've got. And I'm believing the things that are still needed are going to be discovered as we reach more people. Because the resources are in the harvest. And so, as we reach more people, they're going to come in and they're going to give of their life to create a future that doesn't exist. And as we reach more of your life, more of what you have is going to be given to create a future that doesn't exist. Because as God reaches more of our hearts, more of our hearts want to be a part of what He is doing. And so, together, we get to move forward by faith. And basically, if all of us will do what we've committed to do, and we keep reaching new people, we should be able to create a future that doesn't exist, stay debt-free, reach all the people, develop all the leaders if we stay willing with hearts moved and just give to the Lord. That's a big deal. That's a big deal. Now, if you're new to this whole thing, catch it. We didn't spend a year talking about it. That happened in five weeks. Five weeks – 90 days beginning to end. When we heard from the Lord as a leadership team this is what we felt like was next from the Lord to commitment weekend, 90 days. We didn't know anything about it before, but in 90 days, we put the whole thing together, shared it, because when it's God, it's easy to move with. When it's God, it's easy to trust. When it's God, it's easy to give. When it's God, it's easy to follow.

And I just keep thinking about commitment weekend. And I don't know if you were here or not, but that was a very moving time to watch people at every campus lined up to come and bring their offering to the Lord. To literally watch people wait in line to give a gift to Jesus that they

felt like was worthy of Him. Families and individuals and singles and retired couples and students and kids, people waited in line. Waited in line, not for a cup of coffee, to offer a gift to Jesus because he was worthy of it. And I just keep thinking of that story of the woman with the alabaster jar in the Gospels. You remember that story? Jesus is on His way to the cross. He's at the end of His life on earth. And He's at this dinner party, and this woman comes in who had lived a very broken life. And she brings an alabaster jar, this beautiful jar that contained perfume in it, all she had of worth. And she broke the jar, and she poured the perfume all over Jesus. And she began to weep and worship Him and wash His feet with her tears and her hair. And in that moment, she changed the atmosphere. She changed the environment – not just for herself, but everybody who was in that room could now smell the fragrance of heaven. They could smell the scent of the kingdom. They were able to smell the aroma of worship because one woman brought her sacrifice, her worship, her submission, her surrender, her faith, her hope, and her love to Jesus. And while she is changing the environment and the atmosphere, there were a bunch of people on the outskirts, and they were judging her. They were condemning her. They were ridiculing her. They thought it was ridiculous. They thought she should have used that perfume for better purposes and sold it or turned it into a business or gone and served the poor with it. And Jesus rebuked them. He said, "What this woman just did for me was beautiful," He says it was beautiful, and she just anointed my body for my death, burial, and resurrection. And wherever this gospel is preached, her story will be told. In other words, her gift just became eternal. And what I love is that as she anoints Jesus's body, the very next thing He does is He goes and He picks up His cross. He denies Himself, offers His life as a living sacrifice. And she was the one who changed the environment and the atmosphere. And I think here's what happened a few weeks ago. You changed the environment and the atmosphere of our church. As you brought what was meaningful to you and laid it at the feet of Jesus because you believed that He was worth it, you changed the environment and the atmosphere of our church forever. There is now the fragrance of heaven. There is now the scent of the kingdom in this place. There is the aroma of worship, of submission, and sacrifice, and faith, and hope, and love. And even though everybody in your life didn't get it, or like it, or understand it. Just like that woman, other people didn't get it. Your spouse may have not gotten it. Your kids may have not gotten it. Your parents may have not gotten it. People in your circle may have not gotten it, and the person sitting next to you may have not gotten it, but Jesus called it beautiful. And He received it as you intended it, as something profoundly meaningful to Him. The widow who gave her Social Security. The student who gave up the money they've been saving for a car. The young family who's giving what they were saving to advance their life on earth. The middle-aged family who gave what they were going to use to upgrade their house, or their car, or their vacations. The retired couple who is giving of their retirements. The single person who is giving their trust and their security. Whether rich or poor, young or old, a lot or a little, Jesus called your sacrifice beautiful. And it became eternal. You took it, instead of being now stored up where moths and rust destroy, and thieves break in and steal. You send it to heaven, where now nothing can break in and steal and destroy, because it's been given to Jesus. And you anointed this body to now deny ourselves, pick up our cross, and offer our lives as a living sacrifice to create a future that doesn't exist. When that woman

gave that offering, she had no idea that the Missional Move she just anointed the body of Jesus for was going to reach your life. Whose life is going to be reached because you just anointed this body of Christ to go make a Missional Move, and deny ourselves, and pick up our cross, and offer our lives as a living sacrifice? So, I just say, "Can you smell it?" If you were here, the thing I said to you all those five weeks was, "Can you see it?" But now, can you smell it? Can you smell the fragrance of heaven, the scent of the kingdom, the aroma of worship? Can you smell the submission and surrender, the sacrifice, the obedience, the faith, the hope, the love? Can you smell the environment and the atmosphere that has now forever changed? Because people decided to give something to Jesus, believing He was worth it. So, I love you, and I am so grateful for you. And Jesus is so worthy. Come on. Can you just breathe in through your nose? Regardless of what you think about this Missional Move, regardless of what you did, regardless of if you're new or old – that is the fragrance of worship, the aroma of heaven, and we are now forever a different church. So, this body is anointed to go and do that which we couldn't have done without that anointing. We are now supernaturally empowered to go do that which we were not empowered to do as of just a few weeks ago.

And I know now some of you are sitting here, and this is your first time, and you gave that gift with fear and trembling, and you're kind of like wondering, like, "Now what?" Like, "Am I supposed to feel something? Does something magical happen? Does it just like manifest, and like, I'm going to wake up tomorrow, and boom." Like, "Now what?" Now, the journey begins. Now, we break camp, and we move on. It's like the Israelites. They spent a long time talking about the Promised Land and where they were going, but then the Cloud lifts, and it's time for the people to break camp and follow. The Cloud is lifted. Now we're moving on. The journey has begun. You're like, "Wait a second." It begins today, and the hard part starts now. You're like, "You know how hard that five weeks was?" Oh, I do. The hard part starts now. Why? Because now there's things to build, and people to reach, and people to serve, and leaders to develop, and teams to create, and things to do, and prayers to pray. Now the work actually begins. It's kind of like as they're on their journey, Moses summoned every skilled person to whom the Lord had given ability and who was willing to come and do the work. They received from Moses all the offerings the Israelites had brought to carry out the work of constructing the sanctuary, creating a future that didn't exist. And the people continued to bring freewill offerings morning after morning because they were so inspired about what God was doing. So, now, everybody who is willing and able is going to do the work, and we're going to use that which is given to create a future that doesn't exist. Now the work begins. Now the journey begins. Now we create, and build, and reach, and move, and by faith, advance, and this is the hard part. Listen. It is so easy to talk about a vision. It's really hard to accomplish a vision. It is really easy to cast a vision. It's much harder to pursue a vision. Like think about it like this. It's really easy to get saved. It's a lot harder to become a disciple. Oh, it's really easy to get married. It's a lot harder to love each other. It is really easy to create a New Year's resolution. It's a lot harder to actually walk it out. It's easy to make a commitment. It's much harder to follow through. It's easy to get excited about a Missional Move. It's much harder to missionally move. Fair? So, this is what separates, because everybody's got a good vision of what should

happen in the future, and everybody's got an idea of what a church should do, and everybody's got an opinion about how Valley Creek should move, but here's the deal. We don't want to be people that just talk about it. We want to be people that get after it. Let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and truth. We want to love with actions and move forward by faith. So, we want to journey well on the journey, and we can learn so much from the Israelites, from Egypt to the Promised Land. And so, three things I just want to frame for you as this journey begins, because I know this is all new for so many of you. So, this is my fourth Missional Move, and from Scripture and watching people's lives and the journeys that we've been on, let me give you three things to frame your life so you can journey well over these next two years and five years as a people. You with me on this? Really simple.

First thing is this: walk it out by faith. Walk it out by faith. It's really easy to have a vision. It's much harder to actually accomplish it. Walk it out by faith, and this is the hard part. Think of the Israelites. Four hundred years of slavery. God confronts Pharaoh, sets them free. They cross the Red Sea. Now what? We've been set free from Egypt. We've decided this was a good idea. We're hundreds of miles away from the Promised Land. Now what? The unknown. They've never been this way before. They're not sure how it works. They don't have GPS Coordinates or a compass nor a map. Now what? And this is where we often struggle. You see, the Bible tells us that we walk by faith, not by sight, and this is the struggle because we like to walk by sight. Here's how God often leads us. He will give you a vision. He will give you a reference point. He will tell you, "Here's where you're going. You're going from Egypt to the Promised Land. You're going from the present to creating a future that doesn't exist." And you're like, "Okay, God, we got it." And then, God says, "Okay, now step here." You're like, "Alright, got it. Okay. Now what? Okay, we're still going that direction? Okay." God says, "Okay, now step here." You're like, "Okay, I got it, I got this one. Okay. Okay, good. I can still see it. We're going that direction. Okay, God. Now what?" God says, "Okay, I'm going to give you one more for you." "Okay, God. I'm getting so close." And then, God says, "But now step here." And you're like, "But no. Over there. I thought." "Yeah, I know, just put here." "I mean, this is longer." "I know, I know. Remember, I gave you that third one. That was for you. So, this one now is for me, okay?" "Okay. It's okay. There must be a rock here. Okay, okay. Alright, okay. Now what, God? Now ready? I'm ready for the next one." And God says, "Yes, great, great job. Now, here again." "But with my eyes, I see that." "I know what you see. I see very different things than you. So, why don't we try here?" We say, "Okay. Alright, we'll give it a try." And then, we're like, "Okay, we got it." And then, God says, "Okay, now here." You're like, "Okay. Woo. Now we're talking." And then, God says, "Step there." That's where the game changes. Because by sight is that's foolish. I know what you've called me to do. So, I'm going to do it. I'll meet you there. And even if you got there by the shortcut, God will be like, "Great, I'm glad you got here. But there was something you forgot back there." So, now we got to go all the way, all the way, all the way, all the way. Okay, now you got it. Okay, now here." We walk by faith, not by sight. And as we go on this journey, it's going to be full of faith, not sight. There's going to be a lot of unknown. There's going to be a lot of I'm not sures. There's going to be a lot of moments where you're challenged and you can't see and you have situations and

circumstances that overwhelm you. I want you to think about this: for we walk by sight. Think about how you walk by sight. When you walk by sight, physically, what do you do? Based on what you see, you move forward, you move backwards, you speed up, you slow down, you move to the left, you move to the right, you move towards something, you move away from something. Well, walking by faith is exactly the same. When I'm walking by faith, I move forward or backwards. I speed up or I slow down. I move to the left or to the right. I move towards something or away from something, but not based on what I see – based on what I believe. To walk by faith is to live from the invisible towards the visible, to live from the superior towards the inferior, to live from the heavenly towards the earthly, to live from the kingdom towards this world, to live from the eternal towards the temporary. That's what walking by faith actually looks like. And we throw around the word "faith." It's this big word and we throw it around, and we think it means all kinds of different things. And we get confused and we get stumble. Let's use a really simple definition of faith for you. Faith is just to act as if God were so. That's faith. Faith is to act as if God were so, or let me say it another way. It's to act as if God were real and that He is exactly who He tells us He is. And if that's faith, to act as if God is real and that He is accordingly to who He tells me that He is, then my actions and my thoughts and my words and my motions and my steps will all be framed based around who God has told me He is, who I am, what the kingdom is like, how this world functions, and what He has created me to do – regardless of what my eyes see. To live by faith is to move according to the name, the character, the nature and the very principles of God, believing that they are superior to what I can see with my eyes. Believing that the fastest way to get there is to go backwards if He says backwards is the way, not to by sight override it. Walk by faith, which means action is the evidence of faith. You can say you have faith all day long, but faith is proved by action and moving as if God were so. This is why James tells us faith by itself, if it's not accompanied by action, it's dead. It's nonexistent, it is not real. But someone will say, "You have faith, I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. The evidence of faith is action. And that action is based upon the belief that God is real and that He is who He tells me that He is, even though I don't see it, feel it, understand it, get it, it doesn't make sense in the moment, but I'm going to act as if He is.

In fact, this is why it says, "Faith is being sure of what we hope for, certain of what we do not see." Our problem is, is we're more sure of what we have than what we hope for. And we're more certain of what we see than what we do not see. Listen to me, if you want to continue to live in the present, to live in the present, you just got to be sure of what you have. But if you want to create the future, you got to be sure of what you hope for. You want to live in the present, fine – just be certain of what you see. You want to create a future that doesn't exist, then you got to be certain of what you do not see and act as if He is and He is as He tells us that He is. Without faith, it's impossible to please God because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists. Wouldn't it make sense that it takes faith to please God if faith is just acting as if He were real? This verse, we can get so confused, be like, "I have to perform for God, I need faith, so He's pleased with me." This verse just says basically, like, "Hey, just believe that I exist, and that pleases me. Just believe that I am according to who I tell you that I

am: loving, gracious, kind, merciful, provider, protector. I'm your strength, I'm your source. Just believe and act as if I really were real. And you will be rewarded more than you know. Why? Not with treasures and things, but with a life that's lived free because you're living now according to the superior reality of the universe that God is and He is who He says He is." Does this make sense to you? So, see, as we go on this journey, you're going to have to walk it out by faith. You say, "Okay. So, that's great. What does that mean?" That means those three commitments that we made as you're journeying along, at some point, you're going to be challenged to by faith believe that I've committed to this church. This moment of faith where I'm going to have to believe that those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish. I'm going to have to walk out by faith that Jesus is building is His church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. I'm going to have to walk out by faith that I'm a part of the body of Christ and I no longer belong to myself. I don't see that or feel that most of the time. The giving. I'm going to have to actually walk out by faith that God says, "Give and it will be given to you." I don't see how this math is going to work. Well, just remind yourself that calculator math does not equate to kingdom math. I'm glad you passed math class, but that's not necessarily kingdom math. So, I'm going to have to by faith walk that out. I'm going to have to by faith walk out where my treasure is, there my heart is also. So, if I want my heart to go towards Jesus, then I got to move my treasures. I'm going to have to actually walk out that my God will meet all my needs according to His glorious riches, even though I don't see. "God, I got to go this way because I got to meet my needs and you're telling me to go that way. That didn't make any sense." That's called faith. I'm going to act as if you are so. Or I'm going to actually have to have faith to take those next steps over the next five years to believe that if I follow Him, He will make me even though it doesn't make sense. And I don't like it. So, your faith is going to be challenged. It's going to be stretched. It doesn't just happen and it's not by sight. So, let me be so, so clear to you if you're with us. As we journey over these next five years, there will be many moments where none of us know what to do. You're going to ask me, "John, what are we going to do?" I don't know. I've never been this way before either. This is unknown to me as well. What does that require? That requires that I stop looking with my eyes and start looking with my heart. This means that I'm going to actually have to trust. That's what faith is, is actually trust that He is exactly who He says He is. And I want to act, speak, think, move based on that reality, not based on what I see. And there'll be different things that we're all going to struggle with in our faith journey. I just straight up – my biggest faith journey for the next five years is going to be this. Here's my confession to you is, my challenge is believing that we will have enough leaders who want to do what we're doing to get in the game, take responsibility for other people's lives, make disciples, create kingdom culture, to do all that's in front of us, because I know how much it takes. That's my biggest faith challenge. So, when I look by sight, I can get really defeated and be like, "This isn't going to work, and I don't know." But when I look with the eyes of my heart as if God is who He says He is, and act as if that were real, then I can move forward. The same will be true with you. It might be with church. It might be with your journey. It might be with your marriage. It might be with your friendships. It might be with your health. I don't know. But you're going to have to walk this journey out by faith. And as we go into the unknown, a place we've never been before, there will be a whole lot of

moments where we're stumbling and we're trying, and you have to remember to create the future disrupts the present. To innovate means we're interrupting the status quo. You say, "What does that mean?" That means the present and the status quo we all enjoy here is about to be interrupted. You say, "What does that mean?" That might mean your favorite leader in a certain spot is going to go to another spot. That might be our service order changes. That might mean as we're letting wild things grow and trying to go deeper into God's kingdom and let His Spirit move among us like today, sing out a new song to the Lord. You might be like, or you can buy faith, just be like, "I don't know, I don't like it. But we're creating a future and I'm going to act as if God were so. And if God were so and He was right here, I wouldn't have a hard time opening my mouth." But for some of you, that's a super hard step of faith. That's okay; that's my point. We're walking this out by faith. And faith doesn't come by looking at your faith. Faith comes by looking at the faithfulness of God. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God, and Jesus is the author and perfecter of our faith. So, if I fill my mind with the Word of God and I fix my eyes of my heart on Jesus, I will be full of all the faith I need to get from Egypt to the Promised Land or from the present to a future that doesn't exist in Jesus' name. You can do it. You can walk it out by faith. Just act as if God were so and that He is who He tells you He is. Can you do that? I know you can. So, in the moments when you're tested, remind yourself, "Stop. God is and He is so. And it's okay to say I don't know how He's going to do it. But I know all things work together for the good of those who love Him. And I know He who began a good work in me will be faithful to complete it. And I know what Satan intended for harm, God's going to use for my good. And I know my God will meet all my needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. And I know He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, will He not then in Him give me all things? I'm good. I can go."

Second thing, walk it out by faith. Second thing is pass the tests. I know I just gave a whole bunch of you test anxiety, right there. And you're like, "Pass the tests. Does that have an "s" on the end of it, like plural?" Yes, it does. And there will be many on the two and the five-year journey as we create the future together. Think about the Israelites. When they left Egypt on their way to the Promised Land, it was just one test after another. They faced test after test after test. And the point of the test was to expose and reveal who they really were, what they really believed, what their level of maturity was, what they really thought about God. I mean, think about it. Oh, it's fascinating. God comes, 400 years of slavery, confronts Pharaoh, the 10 plagues, parts the Red Sea, gives them a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. They are now set free. They're in the desert. They've walked for a total of three days. Everybody say three days. (Three days.) And they're thirsty. And they get to some water and it says the water is undrinkable because it's bitter. And in that moment, that bitter water revealed the bitterness in their heart. They grumbled. They complained. They were resentful. They were mad at Moses. They were mad at God. They wanted to go back to Egypt. In that moment, that test was there to show them that bitterness, not faith, was in their heart. You and I hear that. We've read that story. We're like, "You got to be kidding me." God confronts Moses, the 10 plagues, parts the Red Sea, dry ground, pillar of cloud is over you while you're being bitter, and

you can't trust God for some water? Don't you know that all of those Israelites who are now part of the great cloud of witnesses look at your life and my life and think, "You got to be kidding me. You're filled with the Spirit of the living God. You're included in Christ. You live in the kingdom. You are now a part of His body. You have the written Word of God, the living Word of God, and the spoken Word of God. And you're freaking out over what?" It's a test. And when that bitterness is exposed in their heart, Moses cries out to God. God tells Moses, "See that piece of wood? Pick it up and throw it in the water. And when he takes that piece of wood, which is a picture of the wooden cross, and he throws it into the water, the bitter water becomes sweet. When we go on this journey and we run into tests and we fail the tests, Jesus, and only Jesus, can make the bitter things sweet, can make the hard things soft, can make the dead thing alive, can make the doubting thing full of faith, can make the fearful thing full of love. Jesus can and will do that along the way. I mean, it flat out says, "Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the desert those 40 years to humble you and to test you." God led them in such a way that it was going to humble them, remind them that they're not in the center, that it's not about them to dismantle their pride and to test them, to expose what's actually inside of them, who they are, where they are, what they believe, to know what was in your heart. God already knows. He takes us through tests so we know and to see whether or not we will actually keep His commandments. See, a great question that you have to ask yourself is what is the point of a test? The point of a test is not to get an A, overachievers. The point of a test is to show you where you really are. The whole point of a test is to show you who you are, what you are, your level of maturity and wisdom so that you know what to actually work on. We think the point of a test is always to pass. Sometimes the point of a test is to fail so God can expose and reveal so he can heal and restore. He doesn't care that you got an F. He cares what you do when you get the F returned. In fact, check this out. "The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the Lord tests the heart." Missional Moves are a crucible for the soul. What is a crucible for silver and gold? It's a furnace. It burns it. It gets all the impurities out. So, Missional Moves are a crucible for the soul. It tests your heart. Don't you know that this Missional Move has already tested? It's already tested you. It's already tested your marriage and your faith and your obedience and your parenting and your friendship and your idols and your time and your money and your life and your commitments. It's already tested. You know it. You know the test you've had to face. I'm going to ignore God, or I'm going to lean into it. I'm going to have this conversation, or I'm going to walk away. I'm going to complain and grumble and make it about all the things that it's not, or I'm actually going to lean into the Lord and let Him do deep work in me. That's why I tell you Missional Moves, they're dividing lines or activation points. Why? Because it's a crucible. But the crucible is not for God to hurt you. It's for God to heal you. Satan tempts you to break you. God tests you to strengthen you. God will never tempt you. He doesn't want you to sin. He doesn't try to break you or destroy you. He tests you so that you will know the reality of the condition of your souls so that you can do something about it with Him to be healed and restored into who He has created and called you to be. This is why James can say, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith"—testing of whether or not I act as if God were so and that God is as He tells me He is – "develops perseverance. Perseverance

must finish its work so that I might be mature, complete, not lacking anything." God doesn't care about what the grade of the test is. He cares what you do when the test is handed back to you. And if I get a grade that I don't like and I fail a test, then what do I do? I confess. I repent. I bring it out of the darkness into the light. I don't hide it. I don't give shame. I don't feel condemnation. I say, "I failed that one." I was right here and God told me to go there, but I went there. I own it. Jesus, I submit, I surrender. I bring it out of the darkness into the light. I was tested and I failed, but You're using it now to make me mature, complete and not lacking anything. So take your cross and make this bitter thing sweet in my soul. See, here's what happens when we make a commitment, and this is why the commitment was so important. You make a commitment. A commitment becomes a waypoint and guardrails for your life. Every person that made a commitment made at least a two, if not a five-year commitment to their journey with God. You make a commitment as a waypoint, vision, here's where I'm going and now there's guardrails. Because I know now if I've committed to go there, I can't go to all these places. But make no mistake about it, as you journey along, you're going to be tested to go to the left or to the right. You made a commitment maybe to this is my church. Well, guess what? You might go along the journey and there might be a day where you're offended. You're like, "I'm out." There might be a day where your child, your spouse, or your parent says, "I want to go to a different church." That's a test. You might get an opportunity to make \$1,000 more the next town over at a job and you'd have to move there and no longer be able to drive here. That's a test. Are you going to pass it? You've made a financial commitment, so I have a waypoint and I have guardrails. Now what's going to happen is as I'm going to go along, I might all of a sudden have my car break down or get a medical bill I wasn't expecting or have a business opportunity to invest in a once in a lifetime thing. Am I going to pass the test? Because I've already committed that to the Lord. Or the five next steps that I'm going to take over the next five years. Well, you might be journeying along and you get tested and be like, "Ah. My kid's in select sports. I just don't feel like it this year." It's a test. Are you going to pass the test? Some of us think just because we make an offering to the Lord means that all of a sudden everything gets easy. No, God's now taking you to the good stuff. To the mountains and the valleys, to the desert for 40 years, the trials of testing. Why? To make you mature, complete, because you're predestined to be formed into the image of Christ. Not to get to the Promised Land, but to become like Jesus, which actually is the Promised Land. Listen. Colleen and I, as we prayed through in our journey, we wrestled through, literally the week we decided what our commitment was going to be. And I think it's important for you to hear this from me. It's the most amount of money we've ever given in our entire life. I told you in the series, we're moving to this place. I want to be the person that doesn't try to spend their life acquiring and hoarding and gaining. I want to become the kind of person that can give more and more away. So, it's the most we've ever committed to give. That week, an opportunity came into our life that something that I wanted, that I thought would be awesome, but I had already committed all that money to the Lord. So, now, what do I do? Let me ask. What do I do? Pastor me for a second. What do I do? It's really easy when it's not your commitment, isn't it? Oh, well, you've already committed, and you told us we should commit, too, so you have to. Here was the cool part. That was actually a very easy test to pass because I already know that that money is not

mine. It's the Lord's, so I can't do anything else with it. And I know if I don't have it, that opportunity is actually not of the Lord for my life. So then, to pursue that thing, I already know it's not God because this is now set in that direction. Okay, but there's been other tests since the Missional Move of attitude, of mindset, of heart posture, that I've failed. So, some I've passed, and some I've failed. The ones I fail, can I see them as God maturing, using, shaping, forming? I don't have to get an A. I got a C maybe? And so, can I submit and surrender that to the Lord? Like you're going to be tested, and the question is, "Is what are you going to do about it when you're tested?" And if you fail, just bring it into the light. Confess and repent. Bring it before the Lord. It's actually His goodness and His grace in your life. In fact, if you are predestined to be formed into the image of Jesus, then you should love. Pray, "Search me, oh God, and know my heart. Test me. Test me not so that You know where I am. So I know where I am. Because I don't want to talk a big game. I want to live a big life. And I need to be tested to know where I actually am and figure out what offensive things are in me so that God can lead me in the way everlasting." Are you with me on this?

Here would be just a great thought. If you walk this journey out as if you were reading it five years from now, you will pass all the tests. If I live in the moment by sight, I will fail a lot of them. But if I, like the Scriptures, go back, we read the Israelites' journey, it's like so easy. So easy. Hindsight's 20/20. In the moment, very hard. If you can pass your test moments when God challenges you and shapes you and molds you and exposes you as if you were reading your story five years from now, you'll know exactly what to do. That was a super easy one for me. It's like it's not my money anymore. It's already been committed to the Lord. It doesn't matter what else happens in my life. That money is not mine. It's the Lord's. It's super easy to pass if I can think about it five years in advance.

One more, and then look for Jesus along the way. Look for Jesus along the way. Walk it out by faith. Pass the test. Look for Jesus along the way. Here was the Israelites' great problem. The Israelites' great problem. It's spring, and I'm going to start sweating again. I'm sorry, it's just really hot. I would live in the Yukon if I was allowed. But that would be a test I would fail. Even though that might have been the opportunity, you don't know. Harder than you think. The Israelites, they never looked for God. They were always so focused on bread and water, on comfort and convenience, on strength and security, on giants and gold, on circumstances and situations that they missed God. They missed God. The whole point of the Exodus journey was not to get to the Promised Land. "You yourselves have seen what I did in Egypt and how I carried you on eagle's wings and brought you to myself." The whole point was God was bringing them to Himself, that they would be His priests and a prophet and a holy nation devoted unto the Lord. And if we miss this, we miss the whole Missional Move. This is the difference between Moses and the Israelites. Moses didn't care what God was doing. He was so focused on God. Spoke face to face the way a man speaks to his friend. "God, if you don't go with us, don't send us from here, because I just want to be with You." But the Israelites were so focused on the hand of God. Moses was focused on the heart of God. Listen to me, as we journey through this Missional Move, the point of it is for you and Jesus to go deeper. There is

more. There's more revelation to receive and wisdom to have and encounters and experiences to experience in your life. You have yet to figure out how wide, how deep, how long, and how high is the love of God for you. So, as we journey as a people and as individuals, look for Jesus, because He's everywhere. Don't be like Martha, sitting there, scurrying around doing a Missional Move while Jesus is sitting in the room and Mary's sitting at His feet just enjoying Him. If we will enjoy God, we will fulfill the Missional Move. If we try to do a bunch of things for God, without God, we will utterly fail. In fact, this is why Jesus says at the end of the sermon on the mountain, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and in your name, drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me.'" "Lord, Lord, didn't we do a Missional Move? Lord, Lord, didn't we start a Prayer Center?" Yeah, but you never pray. "Lord, Lord, didn't we start a Training Center?" Yeah, but you never want to come and let me be your teacher and teach you how to live. "Lord, Lord, didn't we start campuses for other people?" Yes, but you went and created the future without me. And I invited you to create the future with me. We're not creating the future without God. We're creating the future with God, so the whole Missional Move is knowing Him – not doing something for Him. This is the most important thing for most of us because we will give and we will serve. And we'll do the things. And we'll clap and we'll cheer, and like it on Instagram. Know Him. Don't miss Him. That's already the first test. Don't miss Him now. Every Sunday for the next two years. You want a help? Here's a help. Every Sunday for the next two years before you walk into this room or come in this room five minutes early, sit down and posture your heart to say, "Jesus, the only reason that I'm here today is to meet with You. This is part of my Missional Move journey. This is the church I'm planted in as a part of the body of Christ, and I'm here to be planted in You. So, I'm here for You." Every time you give whatever you've decided to give, however you've decided to give – before you give, write the checks, and do the digital thing, put it in the box, whatever – stop and have a moment. "Jesus, I give this to You because I love You, and I worship You and I belong to You." Every time you're going to take one of those next steps or you move forward, don't just do it. I signed up for the circle. I went to the thing. Did I get points with God? No. Stop, and say, "God, I want to take this next step with You." You'd be amazed at what would happen in your life and mine.

Let me try to pull all this together, okay? I'm trying to do mental math on the clock. You'll like this. Let me pull this together. One day, Jesus finishes teaching and He takes the disciples. And He puts them in the boat, and He says to them, "Let us go over to the other side. Let us go over to the other side." They get in the boat. They begin to row across the sea and Jesus falls asleep. And while Jesus is sleeping and the disciples are going across, the storm begins to develop. And as the storm gets larger and larger, the disciples start to panic. They start to freak out. They start to lose their mind until eventually they wake up Jesus and say, "Jesus, don't you care?" We're about to drown. Jesus looks at them and he says, "Why do you have such little faith?" And He calms the wind and the waves. And when they get to the other side, they say, "Who is this? That even the wind and the waves obey." See, the disciples missed the whole

point of the journey. The moment they got in the boat with Jesus and He said, "Let us go over to the other side," they were getting to the other side no matter what. The moment He said it, it had already happened. They were getting to the other side. They're not sure how. They might have to go through some unknown. They've never been this way before. It's not saying the situations and circumstances are going to be easy. But the moment He says, "Let us go to the other side." Oh, make no mistake about it. Every person in that boat is getting to the other side. So they had an opportunity to walk that journey out by faith, to act in that boat as if God were so, as if God were real and that God is who He has told us that He is. And they were tested. They were tested to not only not freak out when the situation and circumstances changed and the storm starts coming. That was test number one. But test number two was to take authority over the storm themselves because Jesus had already equipped and prepared them on the journey to have authority over snakes and scorpions. So, test one was just don't freak out. Test two was you take authority over that which I have placed you in. And then, the third thing was to look to Jesus, but they were so busy looking at the wind and the waves. They completely forgot Jesus was in the boat. You are on a journey now with God. And He has said to us, "Let us go over to the other side. Let us go create a future that doesn't exist." And you've been prepared for it. See a year of "A Different Way" prepared you. And even if you're new to our church and you don't know what that is, God has still prepared you for such a time as this. You're now in the boat on a journey you have to walk out by faith. He has said, "Let us go to the other side." He has said, "Let this be my church." He has said, "You can trust me with your resources." He has said, "Take a step a year and follow me." He has said, "Let us go to the other side." Okay. He has said, so now I have to walk this out by faith. Because He said it, so it's going to happen and I'm going to pass the tests. I'm going to be tested. When the situations and circumstances change, I'm not going to freak out. I'm actually going to take authority over them because we make commitments based on our current situations and circumstances. But commitment is supposed to transcend situations and circumstances. That's the whole reason you make a commitment in anything in life. And then, I have the opportunity to look at the wind and the waves or to look at Jesus. And if I will walk it out by faith and pass the tests and look to Jesus, when, not if, when I get to the other side, Jesus will look at me and say, "You of great faith." And I will say, "This is the one whom the wind and the waves obey. This is the one who has created all things and is making all things new. And I'm in His boat which means I'm getting to the other side." That's true for this Missional Move. That's true for our church. That's true for this journey. But take that for you. The way that the Lord says to so many people who come up to Him in moments and He says, "Go, your faith has healed. Your faith has made you well. Go with shalom." For you in a marriage crisis, in a body crisis, in a soul crisis, in a mental health crisis, you're in a journey. And He is saying to you, "Let us go to the other side." He said it, so it's not "if" – it's when. Now walk it out by faith. Pass the test because He is, and He is as who He says He is. And look to Jesus, not all the things around you, and you will get to the other side. And say, "Let me tell you. Let me tell you who He is and who I'm with." We are on a great journey together. Today gives you the update, the framework. I'm not going to talk every week about where things are at. I will bring you big highlights along the way. Next week, I have one more framing kind of conversation with you,

but we're not going to talk about it all the time. We are going to invite people into it along the way because it's a two and a five-year journey. And I don't want anybody to miss out on where we're going and what God wants to do in their lives. But I say to you, Valley Creek, well done offering the Lord a sacrifice that was worthy of Him, changing the atmosphere and the environment of this people called Valley Creek.

Thank you, Jesus, that every person here has anointed this body to deny ourselves, pick up our cross and offer our lives as a living sacrifice. So, Jesus, we start this journey today. And we ask You to give us faith through Your Word and through Your presence. We ask that You would help us when we're tested to pass those tests. And when we fail, to submit and surrender with confession and repentance joyfully because You're shaping and molding us into something better. And may we be a people that journey with our eyes fixed on Jesus and only Jesus. What a privilege to create a future that doesn't exist with God. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.