

All right. Hey, everybody. Welcome to Valley Creek. We're so glad you're here with us today. Come on, whatever campus you're at, whether you're in Denton, Flower Mound, Gainesville, Lewisville, or online somewhere in the world. Can we just welcome each other together for a moment? We are so glad you're here with us. And if you're new, we are so glad you are here with us. We have been praying for you and preparing for you. And we're in a season where God's bringing all kinds of new people to all of our campuses. And if you're new, I believe you're here for such a time as this. If you need to rest, rest. If you need to be refreshed, be refreshed. If you need to heal, be healed in Jesus' name. If you need to seek, seek. And whenever you're ready, raise your hand, go to Valley Creek 101 so we can introduce ourselves to you and get to know you. But I believe God has brought you for such a time as this. We are not a "you should have been here when" kind of church. We're a "I'm so glad you're here now. Let's go write the next chapter together" kind of church. And if you're new, I just pray that your heart burns within you as you experience the resurrected Jesus through the word of God, the spirit of God, the grace of God, and the people of God. And if this is your church, God is bringing all kinds of new people here. So, be open and be on the lookout in two minutes of kindness and in the atrium and in your circles and your serve teams. Let's help connect people to Jesus and one another so we can keep becoming everything God has created and called us to be. We are in a collection of talks on movement, mission, and maturity. And we spent most of the fall wrestling through these concepts and we're now bringing it all together by wrestling through maturity. What is it, what does it look like, and how do we pursue it? And so, Holy Spirit, we just choose to be very aware of you right now for these next few moments. And we open our heart and our mind and our eyes and our ears to that which you want to say. We acknowledge that you are speaking. And so, we choose to position ourselves in such a way that we might hear the voice of God and respond by faith to continue to become who you have created and called us to be. You see, towards the end of his life, the Apostle Paul said, "But for 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 this, 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. All of us who are," say with me, "mature should take such a view of things." I don't know about you, but this passage captures me. It captivates me. This could be a vision for your life. Paul says, "I press on. I forget what's behind. I strain towards what's ahead. I want to know Jesus. I want to become like Jesus." And this is the heart of all who are mature. We want to know Him and walk with Him and experience Him and become like Him. And this is where we're going as a church.

You see, one of the things I do every summer when I'm on my summer break is I spend a bunch of time reflecting and praying and wrestling through where we are and what God's doing and

how we're doing. And this summer, as I was wrestling through all those things, I was just wrestling through this question in my heart. Are we a great organization? A great organization? Yes, we're a church, but also as a church, there's an organizational reality when you have multiple campuses and a college and a ministry center and all that stuff. So, I just was asking the Lord, like, are we a great organization? And what does that look like? And as I sat there and wrestled with it, I came up with these things just with the Lord. I was like, "Here's what a great organization looks like. It has a clear and compelling vision. It has the right people in the right roles. It has a very strong culture, an effective strategy, excellent execution, constant innovation, and the favor of God." And I started to wrestle through this and said, "Okay, we as the people of Valley Creek, does this describe us?" And I just walked through this. I was like, "Well, I feel like we have a clear and compelling vision." Our vision is to be a (movement of hope for the city and beyond).

I think it's really clear and really compelling. It's not something that just can be. It's something that must be in Jesus name. And we have the right people in the right roles. Do we have gift-based and passion-centric people? Is the body arranged the way that the body needs to be arranged, and staff and leaders and serve teams? And I wrestled through that, and I think for the most part we have the right people in the right roles. And then, I asked, do we have a strong culture? Culture always comes after people because people create culture. Do we have a strong culture like the DNA, the ethos, the identity, the values, the behaviors and beliefs that we share together? And I feel like we have a really strong culture. And then, do we have an effective strategy? I think so. And we want to raise up generations of hope carriers by doing five simple things. Weekend experiences, circles, serve teams, spiritual practices, transformative experiences, and then excellent execution.

We do our best to do things with excellence and run the play that God has invited us to run. Constantly innovating, trying to make things better and grow and try new and different things. And the favor of God is upon us. And so, I wrestled through that. And I would just submit to you that as I wrestled through that, I'd say the answer is yes. Not that there isn't room to grow or to change or to do better, especially probably in the execution phase. We always have the opportunity to grow in that. And if you have a business or a team or a group, you could wrestle through like, what does a great organization look like for you? And is there a place where it's missing? But as I wrestled through all that and came to the conclusion that overall, there's always room to grow, I would say we're a great organization. I said to the Lord, I said, "Then why doesn't that satisfy me? Why isn't that fulfilling? Why doesn't that create a great sense of contentment and gratitude in my heart?" And I felt like I heard the Lord say back, "Because you're asking the wrong question."

"You asked the question is, are we a great organization? The question you should be asking is, are we a kingdom movement?" And I said, "Okay, a kingdom movement, what does that look like?" And for the next few moments, the Lord just gave me these and I wrote them down. A kingdom movement is a divine stirring, insatiable hunger, passionate pursuit, extravagant

worship, loving obedience, radical holiness, and a supernatural outpouring. It's a divine stirring. There's a divine discontent, a sense that there is more of God. And I am not satisfied or content until I find more of Him. An insatiable hunger. I've tasted and seen that God is good. And now that I've tasted and seen, I want to feast and gaze on the goodness of God. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled, which leads to passionate pursuit. I'm willing to suffer. I'm willing to give it all up. I'm willing to leave the things behind to pursue Jesus like a treasure in a field. I want to sell all to find Him.

Extravagant worship. Jesus is worthy of my song, of my life, of my body, of my time, of my energy. Like David dancing before the Lord, I don't care what anyone else thinks. Jesus is worthy of my extravagant worship. Loving obedience. I obey not because I have to, but because I want to. Not out of duty or fear or obligation, but because He is worthy of the surrendered heart of my life. Radical holiness. I don't want to live like the world. I want to be set apart with no mixture contaminating my life. Getting rid of the things of the flesh and the things of this world and walking out with Him. A set apart life where I am working out my salvation with fear and trembling. And then, and only then, do we see the supernatural outpouring of God. This is maturity. And this is what we're moving toward. See, this is good American church. This is kingdom come. This is the seen. This is the unseen.

This is the natural. This is the supernatural. This is a wise mind, but this is a burning heart. These are the cultivated things, but these are the wild things. And this is who we're becoming. And this is where we're going. And this is what maturity looks like. See, this is structure, but this is spirit. And make no mistake about it, you need structure for the spirit to move upon. Think of Noah and building the ark. He had to build the ark. That was the structure, but the point wasn't building the ark. It was to get the animals on to save the world. Think of Elijah. He had to stack the logs, but the point wasn't stacking the logs. The point was the fire falling from heaven. Think of the 120 waiting after the resurrected. Jesus tells them to wait in the upper room. They waited, but the point wasn't waiting. The point was the outpouring of the spirit of God upon their life.

We need structure, but the point is spirit. And this is what maturity looks like. And this is what we're pursuing. And this is what we long for. And this is what has captured me. This is what has captivated me. See, I don't have a lot of interest anymore in my life of good American church. Most of us, this is all we've ever known in church. I hope you've had great organization church in your life. And we show up at church and we ask questions like this. Is it a great product with great service at a great price? Isn't that what we want to know? You come in here and you're like, "Is there a great product? Is this a good product for you? And then, is there great service of me and my family served the way that we want to be served? And is it at great price? Is it comfortable, convenient? And does it cost me almost nothing?" But what Jesus asks for is for us to offer our lives as a living sacrifice. To give Him all of our life. To pick up our cross, deny ourselves, and to follow Him with everything we've got.

See, as Americans, we're so fixated and focused on grandeur and quantity that we forget we're supposed to look for transformation and quality. We want these grand things that have lots of metrics and numerics that are marketable and presentable and look good on social media. But what we should be asking is, can I be transformed into the quality kind of person? And this is not marketable or presentable or Instagramable. How do you Instagram radical holiness? How do you market insatiable hunger? This is the quiet place. This is the secret place. This is the hidden life with God. It says, "I don't care if anyone knows or anyone sees or anyone understands because I want Him. I want Him to be the one thing, the main thing, the only thing, the everything. This is one thing I ask. This is what I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord."

This is seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and everything else will be added unto you. This is, "When you seek me with all your heart, then you'll find me." See, structure is very important, but it's all about spirit. And if we want to see the fruit of God grow in this place, fruit. Well, you need structure. Well, think of a tree that grows fruit. It needs deep roots and it needs strong branches because fruit is weighty. If you have ever seen a tree with a lot of fruit on it, it is very weighty. Well, the fruit of the kingdom of God is weighty because glory is heavy. So, we need a great structure with deep roots and strong branches. But the point isn't the roots and the branches. The point is the fruit of the life of God amongst us. And this is what a journey of maturity looks like. And you say, "How do we get there?" By beholding God.

2 Corinthians says, "But we all, with unveiled faces, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the spirit of the Lord." You see, you become whatever you behold. It's what it was telling us. You become whatever you behold. Whatever you behold, whatever you fixate on, whatever you're captivated by, whatever you look at, you will eventually become that thing. So, if I behold work, I'll become like my work. If I behold the world, eventually I will become like the world. If I behold social media, eventually I will become what I see in social media. But if I behold Jesus, eventually I will become like Him. And the Spirit will do a deep work inside of me, making me who I can never make myself on my own. And I'll go from glory to glory. I'll mature, attaining the fullness of the measure of Christ. You become that which you behold. You see, if you've ever heard me say this, I say it a lot, is you can't become what you haven't seen. You can't become what you haven't seen. But once I see it, I can have a vision for it.

And once I have a vision for it, I can pursue it. And then, when I pursue it, I will actually become like it. So, the question is, is do you have a vision to behold Jesus? Are you captivated by Him? Are you captured by Him? It's impossible to be a disciple of Jesus if I don't find Him fascinating. It's impossible to behold Jesus if I don't think He's glorious or beautiful or majestic or worthy of my love. You can't disciple a people that don't think that Jesus is beautiful. So, has He captured you? Has He captivated you? Is He someone and something that you want to look at and behold? I love what Jesus says to the disciples. The first thing He says to us, "Come,

follow me, and I'll make you fishers of men." We've looked at this through the whole collection of talks. Come, follow me, move. Fish for men, mission. And I will make you, maturity.

Come, follow me, move. Fish for men, mission. And I will make you, maturity. What I want you to understand is that from the moment Jesus invites you to follow Him, He invites you to a life of maturity. From the very moment He invites you to follow Him, He says, "So you know the end result is I will make you who you are currently not. I will make you who you are created and called to be. I will make you like me." So, to accept Jesus's invitation to follow Him is to accept His invitation unto maturity, which means I have now given up my right for immaturity. I've given up the option of an immature life. I've given up the freedom of living an immature life because I've decided to follow Him by faith, and then by grace, He will make me into that which I am currently not. In other words, Jesus says, "Come as you are and become who you are created to be. Come as you are and become who you are created to be." What I want you to understand is there is no invitation to come as you are and stay as you are. We got to get this out of the American church thought process. There is no invitation to come as you are and stay as you are. "Oh, come as you are. It's the only way we can come." With our brokenness and our pain and our baggage and our worldliness and our flesh and our sin, Jesus says, "Come to me as you are," but there is no invitation to stay that way. There is an invitation to now move by faith, and then by grace, He will make me into who He has created and called me to be. Whatever God creates, He calls unto maturity. So, He has made your body, and then He calls it unto maturity. And He has made you a new creation in your spirit, and He calls you unto maturity. He's made you in His image and likeness, and He calls you unto Christ's likeness. "Follow me and I'll make you," which means every place that you refuse to follow Jesus is a place where your life remains unmade. "Follow and I'll make." So, where I refuse to follow, I choose to live unmade. If I can't make myself, that means I can't make any individual area of my life. So, whatever area I refuse to follow or trust Him in is a place that I have chosen an unmade life. I will never achieve my potential. I will never accomplish my destiny. I will never become who I was created and called to be, and I will remain in a state of perpetual immaturity in that area because the only way I can be made is by following, moving, trusting, disciple, a learner, a student, a follower, one who becomes like the one they follow. This is why Hebrews is so profoundly impactful when it says, "We have much to say to you about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn." It's like there's so much more God has for our church. How do we take hold of the more that God has for our church? By being faithful in the little things so He can entrust us with greater things. By consider carefully that which we have already heard so He can entrust us with even greater things and say even more to us and give us even more revelation. This is why it's so important to not just be hearers of the word and nod and walk out and go back to our life, but to be doers of the word because if we'll be faithful with the little, He can entrust us with much. "In fact, by this time, you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again." By this time, if you're like, "Hey, I've been walking with Jesus for a while. I've been in church for a few years or for a few decades." "By this time," He says, "You ought to be a teacher." What is a teacher? It's not somebody who gets up here and talks. No, a teacher is somebody who

has such a grasp of the concept that it's not just knowledge in their head, it's actually an embodiment in their heart. A true teacher of any topic actually lives the message that they're teaching so people can look at their life and see the reality of the message they're trying to teach by the way that they live. So, by this time, we ought to be teachers. Not in word, but in action, where our life is our message and people look at us and they understand we have a grasp of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. We have a grasp of what it looks like to follow Jesus. We have a grasp of how to live in the kingdom of God and we can show other people that through the lives that we live. He says, "But 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 is for the mature who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish from good and evil."

What's the difference between milk and meat? Milk has been digested and processed by someone else. Meat, you have to digest and process yourself. A mother eats meat, digests it, processes it and then makes milk for her infant. And there is nothing wrong with milk when you're an infant. A mother eats meat, digests it, processes it and then sees her baby and says, "Oh, goo goo gaga, baby." Just to get the baby to eat, right? That's beautiful when it's a one-year-old. That's creepy if it's a 20-year-old. That's just creepy. Can you imagine a mom and a 20-year-old, "Hey, baby, goo goo gaga. Here's some milk for you. Come on, open up." Is that not the American church though in so many ways? We stay in perpetual immaturity and we get up here on these platforms and we entertain, "Goo goo gaga, baby." There is nothing wrong with milk for an infant. But once you mature, you now need meat. Here's what I want you to understand in our church. When anyone is new, when anyone is an infant, when anyone is first starting walking with God, we feed them milk. Look at how we talk about new people. Look at how we treat new people. Look how we're always trying to bring new people to the table. But if you declare that you're a disciple of Jesus and you're following Him, I am teaching you unto maturity. I am not offering or serving, nor making milk for you. I'm cutting up bites that are bigger than you can handle so that you will taste and see that He is good, so that you will have a desire to feast and gaze on His goodness. Which means you're training yourself to distinguish good from evil, Jesus from religion and grace from law and spirit from flesh and kingdom from the world where there's no mixture. Where there's no mixture, we're not bringing in the flesh and the world and religion into a Jesus-focused kingdom-oriented life. And the only way we go on to maturity is through repentance. Repentance. Changing our mind and changing our direction. Repentance. Sin repentance and revelation repentance. Sin repentance. I've done something that goes against God. I've been convicted by that, by the spirit, by His word, by His people. Repentance is acknowledging I have sinned against the Lord. And then, it's turning from that thing and turning towards the Lord. I want us to be a people that when we're confronted or convicted of sin, we don't defend it or deny it or argue about it. We turn to the Lord. We turn to the Lord. It's one of our main values is to be quick to repent. Why? Because we want to go on to maturity and because Jesus is worthy of me turning my back on sin and turning my face towards Him. In Revelation, repentance is something I didn't know, but now that He has showed it to me, I turn away from my ignorance and I start

now turning towards Him and actually acting as if it were so. How quick are we to turn from this world towards Him with a healthy godly sorrow, a cut to the heart, a conviction of, "Lord, I've sinned against you," or, "Lord, I've lived in ignorance," or, "Lord, I just didn't know. But now that I do, I turn to you." This is the journey of maturity and the journey that many of us are on. You see, as I prayed for you and wrestled through this week, I really believe that so many of us, our lives look like the rich young ruler. So many of our lives look like the rich young ruler. Now, if you're familiar with the story, at first, that's not a great compliment because we don't tend to like that guy and we teach it in a negative way, but let me just walk you through it as if you've never heard it before.

One day, a rich young ruler comes to Jesus and says, "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He comes to Jesus, he initiates. He calls Him good teacher. He sees the goodness in Jesus. He sees that He is good, that He is true, that He is right, that there's something different about Jesus and the way that He lives His life. And he knows there's something missing in his life and he's considered his ways and he's counted the cost, and he's like, "Jesus has this figured out. He's good and He's a teacher." So, he says, "Teacher, I'm here as a disciple, a student, a learner, I'm coming under you. Will you please help me?" There's a posture of humility that is longing for grace. "Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He wants eternal life. He's hungry not for heaven when he dies. No, eternal life is knowing God in the here and now and the forever more. So, he realizes that he has this sense of God but he wants even more of God. "What do I want? I want eternal life." His problem was, as he said, "What must I do?" And if you ever come to Jesus asking what you must do, He will always respond with the law. The law demands everything from you. It offers nothing to you. The law is heavy and weighty and cold and harsh. That's why the 10 commandments were written on the stone tablets. It's heavy, it's cold, it's unflexible, it's unwieldy. See, the law can tell you, do not commit murder, but it can't help you love your neighbor. And the law can tell you, do not commit adultery, but it can't help you love your spouse. And the law can tell you, do not steal, but it can't make you a generous person. The law demands everything from you, offers nothing to you, but grace empowers what the law demands. So, when you come to Jesus, don't say, "What must I do?" Say, "Jesus, what have you done?" And let Him answer that way. "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus says, "Keep the commandments." And he says, "Which ones?" He's honest, he's eager, he's hungry. And Jesus says, "Honor your father and mother. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal. Do not lie." And the man looks back at Jesus and says, "All these I've kept since I was a boy." Now, when we usually talk about that verse, when I usually talk about that verse, we pound that guy. We're like, "Yeah, right, bro. All these? How arrogant and prideful can one person be?" But what if he was telling the truth in that moment? What if ever since he was a boy, he had a heart for God? What if he tried his very best to walk out the commands of God? What if he longed for God and he wanted God and he went to the synagogue and he prayed and he fasted and he memorized the scriptures? And what if when he sinned and when he fell, he went to the temple and he offered the sacrifice for the forgiveness of his sins? What if he is very genuine in his hunger and his pursuit for God? And so, Jesus looks at him and loves him, and says, "One thing you lack," He said,

"Go, sell everything you have and give it to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come and follow me." At this, the man's face fell. And he went away sad because he had great wealth. Jesus looks at the young man and He basically says, "You have done so much so good. You have not only offered God some of your life, you have offered God most of your life. But you haven't offered God all of your life. You've given God not just some, you've given God most, but you haven't given them all. And there's one thing that's keeping you from the maturity, from the life that you long for. And so, I'm asking you to let that thing go so you can take a hold of all that I offer." And at that, the man's face fell sad, and he turned around and he went away. And I think that story defines so many of us beautifully. We come to Jesus like this man and we call Him good teacher. We see His goodness. We know He's a teacher. We know He has a grasp on reality that we don't have. And we want to know how we can obtain eternal life. We have a hunger and a thirst for the things of God. It's in our soul. We're crying out, we want more. And like this man, I think so many of us, since we were a child, have had a heart to God. We've gathered, we've come to church. We've done circles and serve teams, and we give and we pray and we don't do the things that all of our neighbors do. And we've done kids leadership and student leadership and VC College, and we try to worship and we try to get it right. And when we get it wrong, we try to – we do so much right. But like the rich young ruler, we have offered Jesus some, but not all. We've offered Jesus most, but not all. See, like the rich young ruler, I think there are one or two or three things that a lot of us just hold back from God. It's like we've offered Him almost everything in our life except these one, two, three things and we hold them back. It's like we've invited Him into our home and we've given Him free reign over our house except for those one or two rooms that we just leave locked. We've done so much so well, and we have a heart for God and we've given Him some, but not all. We've given Him most, but not all. And Jesus looks at us, and He loves us, and He says, "Hey, there's one thing that you're holding back." So, can I ask you what's the one thing you might be holding back from Jesus? Maybe like this man, it's money. Maybe it's time. Maybe you're holding back your marriage. Maybe you're holding back relationships. Maybe you're holding back your children or your parents. Maybe you're holding back singleness. Maybe you're holding back your business or your dream. Maybe you're holding back your body and the aging process. Maybe you're holding back your sexuality. Maybe you're holding back an attitude or a mindset. Maybe you're holding back an offense or bitterness or an entitlement. Maybe you're holding back some trauma. Maybe you're holding back your dream. Maybe you're holding back college. I don't know. What are you holding back from Jesus? Because if we want to go on unto maturity, we have to offer Him everything. Not some things, not most things, but everything. I have to give Him everything so I can take hold of everything. I have to offer everything so I can take a hold of the one thing, the only thing that matters, and that's Him. And this is why so many of us, our faces fall sad, and we live in this perpetual state of immaturity, defeated and discouraged, going through the motions, because there's one thing that we hold back. The Lord gave me a picture this week as I was praying through this, and I just thought of a little toddler sitting on the ground and they have all their toys, and they're playing with all their toys. And there's a father who calls their name, and the toddler hears the father's voice but refuses to turn around because he's playing with his toys. And then, you can



see it as it moves on, a toddler who's sitting there playing with the toys and the father calls his name, and the toddler scoops up all of the toys he has and turns around like this and starts coming to his father, but he's dropping one, two, three of them, and he's trying to pick them up. And the more he drops, the more he picks up, and when the father picks him up and the toys fall to the ground, he starts screaming and kicking because he wants to hold those toys. Now go one more. The toddler's sitting there and the father calls the toddler's name and the toddler leaves behind everything except one thing. Picks up his favorite car. She picks up her favorite dolly. They pick up their blanket and they turn around and they come to the father like this. When the father picks them up, they can grab ahold of the father, but with only one arm. Now picture the toddler when the father calls their name and they leave everything and turn around and run to the father, and when they get picked up, they can go like this. Jesus asks you to give everything so you can take ahold of Him, the only thing that matters with everything that you got. This is the journey of maturity. And while all this is happening and people are shocked, Jesus says, He looks around and says to the disciples, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God." See, whatever area you're wealthy in, that's a place that's hard for you to submit and surrender to the lordship of Jesus. Don't think wealth in terms of money. Think wealth in terms of abundance. When you're wealthy in a thing, it means you've valued it, you've pursued it, you've accumulated it over life. And when you're wealthy in something, it means you're self-sufficient in that area. You see yourself as self-sufficient, as self-made, as solo. Well, it's really hard to submit and surrender the only way you get in the kingdom of God when you're living a life of self-sufficiency. So, whatever you're wealthy in, whatever you have a lot of, when that toddler has a lot of toys or when you have a lot of things or this thing that you really value, that is the area you have to be profoundly intentional about submitting and surrendering to the lord because any area of self-sufficiency is an area that is very hard to submit and surrender to the lordship of Jesus. That's why He says, "To whom much is given, much is required." Whatever you have a lot of, that is an area that will be very hard for you to obtain the fullness of maturity that Jesus offers because you have to get over your self-sufficiency and submit it and surrender it to Him. Just look at these verses with me. "From this time, many of His disciples turned back and no longer followed Him."

Disciples, they followed Jesus. They did some, they did most, but not all. There was only so far they were willing to go until they turned around and went back. Or how about this next one? "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold," say it with me, "all he had and bought that field." The kingdom is like a treasure hidden in the field. And if we want to buy that field to get that treasure, it requires all, not some, not most, all. The problem is, is we try to buy that field with some or with most and that's why we never get it. And our problem is, is we often see Jesus as a field and the one or two things we're holding on as the treasure. But the truth is, Jesus isn't the field. He's the treasure in the field, and you have to sell that which you value so that you can buy the field to get the treasure. Or how about this next one? "What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul?" We talk about this verse a lot of times with the world. What good is it to gain the world and lose your soul? But think about it like this. What

good is it for you to hold one or two things back of this world and never obtain a healthy soul? What good is it for you to give some or most but to hold back one, two, three, four, five things, to hold back some things of this world and never obtain a healthy soul, a vibrant soul, an abundant soul? That's why we never really become mature, and our face falls sad and we go away. Or how about the next one? "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with," say it, "all your heart." Maybe the reason we never find more of God is because we seek Him with some or most, but not all. Or how about this last one that just says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." It doesn't say some or most, it says all. This is the journey of maturity. Jesus is not asking for some or most, He's asking for all. So, if we're serious about maturity, we have to figure out how to let go of all. See, if you were here last week, last week I talked about how you can be in church for 20 years but the question is, is do you have 20 years of maturity or one year of maturity 20 times? But for most of us that have been here, you've been a part of Valley Creek for a while, I don't think you have one year of maturity 20 times but you might have two years of maturity 10 times, or five years of maturity four times, or 10 years of maturity two times. Are you catching what I'm saying? What I'm saying is I don't think you've given nothing. I think you've given some, I actually think you've given most. The question is, have you given all? Who cares if you have one year of maturity 20 times or 10 years of maturity two times, the point is you're still not mature. The point is I'm still holding something back. Now don't you know that this rich young ruler when all this is happening, he's got to be looking at Jesus like, "You got to be kidding me? I've spent my whole life – I do things, I've given you just about everything." And Jesus would have looked at the man and He would have said, "You've done so well, but you haven't given me your heart." And don't you know that this rich young ruler would have had people in his life saying, "Don't do it." His dad would have been like, "Absolutely do not sell everything that you got." And if he's married, his wife's like, "Heck no, we ain't doing that." And his friends and everybody would have been against it and they would have been trying to shut the whole thing down. And he would have wrestled in his soul like, "Isn't this enough?" Isn't that what we do? "Isn't this enough?" And what we forget is Jesus always gives us back more than we ever give to Him. He asks you for your heart, but He gives you back His heart. And He asks you for your life, but He gives you back His life. And He asks you for your kingdom, but He gives you back His kingdom. Anything you give to Jesus pales in comparison to the cross. It pales in comparison. The problem is, is we always want to know what is there for us. Maturity gets to the point where it's like, "I don't know what there will be for me, but that's not the question I'm asking. Jesus, I offer this to you because you're deserving of it, because you're worthy of it, because you've asked for it, because you are King of kings and Lord of lords. I don't know what there will be for me, but it really doesn't matter because you are worthy of this." That's maturity. And I think what happens to a lot of us is we love God with all our strength. We often give the thing physically to God, but not with our heart or our mind.

And what I mean by that is we may let that thing go physically, but then we sit there and we meditate on it and we think about it and we fantasize about it. And in our heart, whenever it comes up, we often talk about how much we've done for Jesus and how much we sacrifice and

how much we give. Just so you know, if you're thinking about and talking about what you've surrendered to the Lord, you haven't actually surrendered it. Love keeps no record of wrongs. Love also keeps no record of what's been given. As if Jesus now owes me something. You'll see this in people that serve and lead or are on staff at church a lot. "Oh, I've sacrificed so much." The fact that that just came out of your mouth means you haven't sacrificed anything. Maybe in your strength, but not in your mind or in your heart. That's why it's there to bubble up and to be resentful and bitter. It's like the older brother and the prodigal son story. "All these years I've been slaving for you." Yes, you've done some things with your hands, but based on that statement, clearly not with your heart or your mind. That's why we're even talking about this. Does this make sense to you? And while all this is happening, look at this next verse. Peter said to Him, "We have left everything to follow you." Peter's like dumbfounded. If this guy doesn't cut it, there ain't no way. And in Matthew's gospel, he says, "What will there be for us? I've given it all." Wrong question, but it's okay to ask from time to time. "What will there be for us?" And Jesus says, "I tell you the truth, no one who has left home or brothers or sisters or mothers or father or children or fields for me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age and in the age to come, eternal life." In other words, Jesus says, whatever you give to Him, He gives you back a hundred times in this age and in the age to come. But that's not actually really what He gives you. What He gives you is eternal life, which is not going to heaven when you die. It's knowing God in the here and now. So, Jesus asks you for everything so He can give back to you the one thing, the only thing, the main thing. And that is the fullness of Him. He's asking you to give everything so you have enough space to actually contain the fullness of himself that He offers you. This is maturity. We don't give and create enough space, the things of our life to God so we always have a couple of closed hands like that toddler so He can never give us back. How wide, how deep, how long, and how high is the love of God? I can't receive all that He offers me because I'm still holding onto something in this world.

This is the journey of maturity. We go from giving God no things to some things, to most things, to all things. To all things. And this is why maturity is so deceptively confusing to us because we think maturity is knowledge or age or worldly success. No, maturity is a submitted and surrendered heart. That's why the most mature person in this room might be a 15-year-old student or an 80-year-old widow that has nothing because maybe, just maybe, they've fully done this so they can receive all that God offers. 1 Peter. 1 Peter says, "But in your heart set apart Christ as Lord." See, at the end of the day is, it's about choosing Jesus as Lord in your heart. And you say, "What does that mean?" It's about saying, "I surrender this thing to Him because He's asked for it."

And what I want you to understand is every place you refuse to offer to the Lord is a place where you have chosen to stay in perpetual immaturity. I can't make myself. So, when I refuse to offer Him something He asks me for, what I'm choosing to say in that moment is I am lord. This thing is lord. Actually, this thing is now the lord over me in this area. And because I'm holding it back, it means I will never become mature in. For the rich young ruler, it was finances.

Jesus didn't need his money, bro. He wanted to help that man become mature. And in that area, he would have stayed in forever immaturity, because how can you become mature in an area that's not surrendered to Jesus? If He's your teacher and you're His disciple becoming like Him in any and every area.

What I want you to understand is whatever you hold back from Jesus, you have chosen to stay. "I will stay immature in that area. I choose an unmade life in my sexuality, in my mindset, in my past, in my future, in my business, in my college, in my body, in my time, in my schedule, in my money." I think we get so confused and we think, "Oh, everybody just trying to –" nope, Jesus is trying to help you become mature. And if you hold on to that thing, you've said, "I'm content with immaturity in this area," which is okay. Just say that then. Don't make 19 excuses and blame 50 other people. Just say, "I'm just okay being immature in the area of work. I'm just okay being immature in the area of heart. I'm just okay being immature in my marriage. I'm okay with it. Why? Because I can't become mature. I can't make myself. So, if I don't give it to Him, how is it ever going to mature?" I feel like this is where I've lost all of you. I have so much more to say, but we are already in the red. Like the rich young ruler, I think Jesus today is looking at you, and He loves you. And I think there's so many people in this church that you have given God some, and you've offered God most. And in comparison with other people's journey, you may be way down the road, but you're not running a race against anybody else. You've been invited to become like Jesus. And He's looking at you and He's saying, "There's one thing that's keeping you from following, from maturing, from being made, from experiencing the fullness of life." The only question is, is what is it? And what are you going to do about it? It says, "At that, the man's face fell sad and he turned away." Can I just tell you, joy is on the other side of surrender. This is why so many Christians are so miserable for their 10 years of maturity two times. Why? Because there's no joy because there's not full surrender. Maturity is on the other side of surrender. This man leaves and he stays perpetually immature in the area of finance. Paradoxically, he's mature in the commandments and he's mature in the synagogue and he's mature in his desire for eternal life and he's mature in wanting more of God. Genuinely. But he is forever trapped in perpetual immaturity in the area of finance, which means he is unable to fully become like Jesus and live the fullness of life that God offers him. What good is it to hold back that one thing and not have a healthy, vibrant soul? That's what Jesus is asking him and that's what He's asking you. And you don't have to start with, "Oh, my gosh, every –" what's one thing? This week, one thing. One thing that the Holy Spirit is pointing out to you, confess it. Confess it to a godly relationship. Share it to somebody. "This is my rich young ruler moment. I think I've offered God some things. I may have even offered God most things, but I know I haven't given God my marriage or my this or my that or my whatever the thing is." Say it. The moment you bring it into the light, it loses power. Listen, you know what your life is like when you hold the one or two things back. What would your life be like if you surrendered those one or two things to Him? You don't know. Are you willing to trust Him, and try, and risk? Even Jesus on the cross said, "Father, into your hands, I commit my spirit." You want to go from the cross to the glorious resurrection? "Father, into your hands, I commit." What? For the rich young ruler, it was money. Maybe that's yours, but maybe it's not.

Maybe it's time. Maybe it's mindset. Maybe it's attitude. Maybe it's bitterness. I don't know, but He does. And He's calling us unto maturity. May you go from the toddler with his back to the father to being the toddler who lays it all down to run to the Father's open arms, and with open hands can take a hold of everything that is offered to you. That is the journey of maturity. Not knowledge, not church attendance, not age, not worldly success, submission and surrender. So, close your eyes with me. Holy Spirit, would you just speak to us? We acknowledge that maturity can be scary and hard to pursue. But you look at us and you love us. You love us. So, would you point out some of the things that we're holding back that are keeping us from you? Jesus, I long for us to be a mature church growing into the fullness of the measure of all you offer us. Whether it's one thing or many things, you're worthy of those things. May this week you wrestle and reflect. May you eat some of this meat and wrestle through maybe not understanding at all, but trusting that somehow God was speaking to you.

I think this message primarily is for so many people in our church who are like we're the rich young ruler and you've been here a long time. You've walked with God a long time. You know a lot about God. You have a great history with God, but you feel empty. You feel flat. You feel like you're going through the motions. You don't feel like there's a lot of joy or a lot of peace. You don't feel like there's any passion or vibrancy or fire between your relationship and God. Maybe, just maybe, this is the thing that God is trying to stir up in you. Your face is sad. Your heart is sad. Jesus wants to offer you joy and maturity if you'll work through this one thing, whatever that may be. Jesus, give us the grace for it. In your name we pray. Amen.